ON THE ROAD

Journal of the
Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc.

No. 31 June 2006

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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

We are preparing to teach a course on church conflict. As part of our preparation, we have been reading the latest books on this topic. The Alban Institute (www.alban.org) from the United States is one of the best publishers of books about church life in all of its ups and downs and grittiness. Their books come from pastoral leaders and church conflict consultants who love the church and want to see it grow and be the instrument God created it to be.

We were hoping to write reviews for some of these books and include them in this issue but that did not happen. We will include a quotation from one, though, to whet your appetite for what some of these books have to offer.

Rick Barger is lead pastor at Abiding Hope Lutheran Church in Littleton, Colorado, a community in the news several years ago because of school shootings. Barger wrote ***A New and Right Spirit – Creating an Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture*** (Alban, 2005). He says:

As we wrestle with what it means to be an authentic church in today's consumer culture, hopefully we are aware that God is rolling the stone away again. The albatross of the Constantinian synthesis and its hangover is being lifted and put to death. There is a whole new world that awaits us. There is a powerfully transformational ancient and authentic church with its incredible true story being reborn anew and rising...The rebirth of the church will not be the result of more strategies, more programs, or more church-growth precepts. It will be reborn because we will let the story go to work on us. It will be reborn because the Astroturf that

On The Road

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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, Scottdale, PA, USA.

has kept the church from the rich soil around its fundamental roots will be stripped away. The rebirth of the church begins with a new and right spirit born of God. (136)

One book we did get a chance to review was David Augsburger's new one, ***Dissident Discipleship***. He picks up this theme of the biblical story working on us.

Those who read the Bible from an Old Testament prophets perspective, like Micah, Joel, Amos, and Isaiah and from the perspective of the Jesus of the Gospels will have great difficulty reconciling their faith with other-worldly spirituality, materialistic, individual fulfilment, nationalistic, rationalized perspectives and find themselves outside the mainstream of Christianity as dissident disciples and go to a church where discipleship to Christ is valued above spirituality, prosperity, security, or success – or will try fruitlessly to find such a church. (133)

While we did not get all the books reviewed that we wanted to, others did provide us with some of the fruit of their reading. We pass these reviews onto you. Hopefully they will inspire you to be dissident disciples, an ongoing part in the rebirth of the church in Australia and New Zealand.

Be sure to see the attached program for the next AAANZ Conference to be held in Perth, Western Australia 19-22 January 2007. Join others in this exploration of Anabaptism and hear the stories of what God is doing throughout the AAANZ network.

Thank you to those who responded after our most recent computer crash. We switched to using Thunderbird for our emails. We'll see how that works.

One good thing about our computer problems is that we get to hear from so many of you. Even little notes are encouraging at this end of the world-wide web. One example of the kind of comments we got is…"Very much love to get your mail-outs, sharing them with others, and so on. Actually, it's very useful stuff, very thought provoking. Very useful in informing our thinking, and in conversation with non-Christians who like to engage in thoughtful and intelligent conversation. Inspiring!"

Keep those little comments coming!

Mennonite World Conference General Council approves shared-beliefs statement

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA (USA) — The first official summary of beliefs shared by Anabaptists around the world was approved when about 220 Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from 50 countries gathered March 9-15 to nurture the global Anabaptist movement. They came for the Mennonite World Conference General Council, a meeting held once every three years to foster unity and cooperation among more than a million Anabaptist members worldwide.

In a historic action, the council approved a statement of shared convictions to give members around the world a clearer picture of beliefs they hold in common. The document's seven points describe basic beliefs shared with most Christians, such as salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as beliefs that Anabaptists especially emphasize, such as nonviolence. It is the first statement of beliefs adopted by leaders of the worldwide Anabaptist community.

It does not replace conferences' official confessions of faith. But it could be especially useful for those that do not have a formal confession, council members said. It also is intended to help define Anabaptism to others.

The first draft was written at the MWC assembly in Zimbabwe in 2003. Revisions were made based on responses received from member churches over the past three years.

Mennonite World Conference - A Community of Anabaptist-related Churches

Shared Convictions

By the grace of God, we seek to live and proclaim the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places, we hold the following to be central to our belief and practice:

1. God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness.

2. Jesus is the Son of God. Through his life and teachings, his cross and resurrection, he showed us how to be faithful disciples, redeemed the world, and offers eternal life.

3. As a church, we are a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith, and follow Christ in life.

4. As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ to discern God's will for our obedience.

5. The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need.

6. We gather regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.

7. As a world-wide community of faith and life we transcend boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century, who modelled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. We seek to walk in his name by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we confidently await Christ's return and the final fulfilment of God's kingdom. http://www.mwc-cmm.org/

Indonesian Mennonites Organize Aid for Quake Victims

JOGJAKARTA, Indonesia — Victims of the May 27 earthquake are receiving help from a new organization set up for that purpose in Bantul County. Mennonite Diakonia Service (MDS) has set up a command centre in Baran in the Pundong District of Bantul County, the area hit hardest by the quake.

(Photos - above: earthquake damage, top right: Pundong Mennonite church becomes supplies warehouse, below l: cluster point, right: Happy Tent, lower right trauma healing groups for adults))

Mennonites in the area mobilized quickly following the disaster. MDS first identified "refugee cluster points" where it focused its response ministries, including providing medical treatment and distributing food staples (valued at $0.35US per person/day), blankets, used clothing and personal care items.

A medical tent was set up at the command centre for patients able to come there. Severely injured victims unable to travel received treatment at the cluster points. Follow-up care is also being provided.

MDS is also offering "trauma healing" for adults through village gatherings and various activities such as cleaning up debris. Traumatized children can come to two "Happy Tents," safe havens where they can play for two hours mornings and afternoons.

Longer-term goals include reconstructing homes for 100 families and schools in Pundong destroyed by the quake and providing economic empowerment so that victims can re-establish a livelihood for their families. MDS plans to buy coconuts and rice harvested by quake victims. The rice will be processed by manually operated machines and used in its food distribution program.

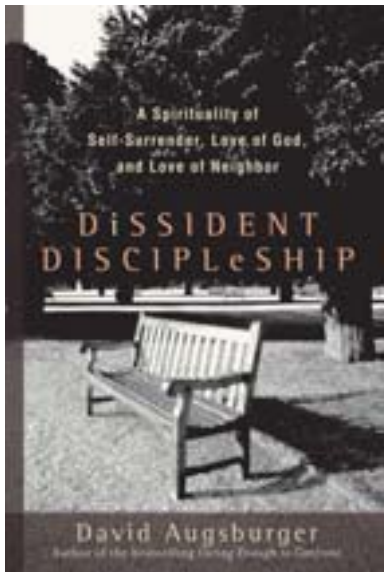
Bantul County covers an area of 506.85 square kilometres and has a population of 800,509 in 75 villages. Per capita income in 2004 was approximately $500US. The Mennonite church in Pundong has 80 adult members and 55 children in 41 families. The quake damaged all of their homes; 38 of them heavily damaged and only three lightly damaged.

MDS is offering assistance not only to Mennonite victims but also to the society at large around the command centre, according to reports from Jogjakarta.

-Ferne Burkhardt, Mennonite World Conference news editor

Dissident Discipleship – A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God, and Love of Neighbor

BY DAVID AUGSBURGER, BRAZOS PRESS, 2006



In the June 2005 issue of ***ON THE ROAD*** (No. 27) we published an article by Palmer Becker entitled "What is an Anabaptist Christian?" We turned the article into a brochure that can be downloaded from the AAANZ website (www.anabaptist.asn.au). This new book by Mennonite author David Augsburger is in many ways a book-length expansion of Becker's three points – Jesus is the centre of our faith, community is the centre of our life, and reconciliation is the centre of our work.

Augsburger is a professor of pastoral care and counselling and the author of over twenty books. His writing style is very readable, full of clear points and well-illustrated with stories from real life – including his own.

What he does in this book is take on the popular topic of "spirituality" and embody it in Anabaptist discipleship. William Willimon is quoted on the back cover saying, "If you thought 'spirituality' was mostly fluff and feathers, get this book. Building upon his cruciform Anabaptist tradition, David Augsburger gives us a substantial, faithful look at lives formed by Christ."

The book opens with an examination of 'spirituality.' Augsburger talks about *monopolar*, *bipolar* and *tripolar* spirituality. *Monopolar* "is the inner, subjective encounter with one's own inner universal self." (11) *Bipolar* is "both an inner, subjective experience of coming to know one's true self and an objective experience of existence before God." (12) *Tripolar* "possesses three dimensions: it is inwardly directed, upwardly compliant, and outwardly committed." (13)

Tripolar spirituality is based on "love of God and the neighbour as ourselves" (Matthew 22:37-39). "It is a radical alternative to both monopolar and bipolar spirituality. When love for God and neighbour are interdependent and inseparable, a pivotal redirection results, and an acute deviation from social norms ensues." (17)

This authentic spirituality is fully three dimensional. It "is self transforming, God encountering, and other embracing. It accepts no substitute for actual participation." (26-27)

It "is a spirituality of the road. We know him [Jesus] by following as we make the road by walking it, discover the way in obedient imitation, and participation in his life with us." (21)

The Anabaptist form of tripolar spirituality is "a communal spirituality of disciples (followers) following a cluster of practices, practices that are lived out in the relationship of community, where believers share in the rewarding struggles of faithful dialogue, discernment, and mutual discovery." (20)

This communal spirituality is one where "*transformation* is not just a word; it is the essential element. The *anastatic* (walking in the way of the resurrection) is the final goal.

"The '*anastatic* experience' is an embracing of a holiness, a sanctification that joins in an indictment of evil in all its forms – personal, social, communal, political, and results in a living out of the new covenant in community. (68)

Augsburger explores seven practices in the rest of the book. These are: radical attachment, stubborn loyalty, tenacious serenity, habitual humility, resolute nonviolence, concrete service, and authentic witness.

The book draws on sixteenth-century sources as well as modern authors like John Howard Yoder, Bonhoeffer, Brueggemann, Moltmann, and others. Augsburger always finds great stories for his books to illustrate his points. He comes up with some good quotes too like this Quaker proverb: "True community exists when the person you dislike most dies or moves away and someone worse takes that place." (57)

Augsburger in good Anabaptist style is not only concerned with the individual life of the believer, the goal of much current Christian spirituality, but with the life of the church. He quotes Mennonite theologian Harry Huebner in describing the church as a community of people with a shared identity and common virtues woven into a coherent story.

He makes a distinction between "values" and "virtues." "Community is where one learns virtues, not where one chooses values." He describes virtues as "practices formed by community, modelled in community, and taught by community, that express what is good, right and worthy. Virtues are habits, and what we do habitually, naturally, without pretence reveals our character." (73)

"To call the church a community of virtues is to identify the habits of the church. The church is that body which out of habit tells the truth; which out of habit loves enemies, feeds the hungry, forgives sinners; which out of habit praises God for what we have received,…prays and worships." (74)

He quotes Yoder in saying "nothing is real until it is embodied. The community of faith must be a community of deeds." (75) And from John Milbank he gets this:

"For one to belong to the church means one has become part of those practices of perfection that make us capable of becoming friends with one another, friends with ourselves, and friends with God." (76)

The book closes with helpful Appendices and a good Bibliography. This is a book for group study, discussion, and practice. Augsburger says if we take tripolar spirituality seriously "will we not inevitably be heard giving voice to subversive protest against the status quo, be seen in stubborn service that is not motivated by personal gain, be known for dissident discipleship that constantly points to another reign, that of our Lord." (210) I'm all for that!

-REVIEWED BY: MSH

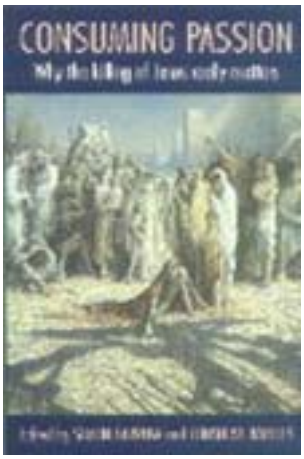
Rediscovering Resurrection?

An extended review of

Consuming Passion: Why the killing of Jesus really matters,

EDITED BY SIMON BARROW AND JONATHAN BARTLEY

DARTON, LONGMAN & TODD, 2005



Why this book will be a best seller or not

Consuming Passion has some of the elements that should just about guarantee good sales figures. It's about Jesus, violence and how the church has got it wrong. Unfortunately, one critical element is missing. The editors didn't get round to including a big conspiracy theory and a romantic interest. Seriously though, the editors have pulled together a timely and challenging book that deserves sustained attention across the divides between pulpit and pew, between church and seminary and between the faith community and the world in which it is inextricably engaged.

The contributors come from a variety of ecclesiastical affiliations including Baptist, Catholic, Anglican and Mennonite. The editors from the Ekklesia think tank and web site, while denying any easy labelling of their own theological stance admit that 'Anabaptist-influenced' is probably a fair description.

The back cover to ***Consuming Passion*** is provocative in its message.

> *Does the death of Jesus really matter in the modern world? How is it related to the conflict, division, suffering and violence we see around us?*
> *It is the extraordinary contention of* ***Consuming Passion*** *that many Christians have got it wrong about the central meaning of Jesus' killing – and the consequences of this misunderstanding are explosive.*

I need to acknowledge that I came to this book in a frame of mind that was strongly sympathetic to the case that the editors and contributors were making. Over the past few years I have become ill at ease with the taken for granted accounts of the significance of the death of Jesus, as expressed in many of our hymns, prayers, theology and preaching.

Sympathy is one thing. This book pushed me much further. I came away from this book convinced that the need to challenge popular theological understandings of the death of Jesus was far more pressing than I had previously been prepared to acknowledge.

Why language matters

In shifting from the language we use about the passion of Jesus from 'death' to that of 'killing', as the editors have done in the subtitle, in itself is to make an apparently simple, but deeply significant theological move. Think about the difference that replacing the word 'death' with the term 'killing' makes. The change brings to our attention that the crucifixion was a judicial act by agents of the Roman empire and took place in the context of Jewish longing for liberation from Rome and for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Our discussion has shifted into the world of empire and oppression, the world of history from the realm of theological generalisation and abstraction.

Social and political context and its influence on theology

Why have we been so slow to recognise the difficulties posed by current theological accounts of the killing of Jesus?

The reality that social and political context can influence our theological formulations, our questions and the way we go about answering them, has formed the basis for reductionist critiques of the Christian faith by secular critics in recent centuries starting with Karl Marx. For those of us who reject the reductionist form of this analysis, but agree that there are significant linkages from social context to theological formulations, there are a couple of consequences of such linkages that help explain our blindness on the one hand and suggest why a reassessment might be on the agenda now.

The first consequence is that the reality of social influence on theology has mostly been applied as an argument against one's opponents in debate within the church around social and ethical issues. "See," we say to our opponents, "your position on this issue is simply a result of letting your interpretation of Scripture be shaped by the spirit of the age." To which they reply, "Wrong, you are the ones who are letting the world unduly influence you." And the theological ping-pong match continues. Regardless of the difficulty of getting agreement on the way that the influence is working, and on whom, the issue is that the influence is there. The real question is whether we are willing to go back and assess the impact of context on our theology and seek to make adjustments where necessary to bring us back toward the path of faithfully following Jesus.

The possible relevance of this form of critique to more fundamental theological formulations from the Creeds onward has tended to escape our attention. Recently Stuart Murray has addressed the relationship between the emergence of Christendom and the content and rhetoric of the Creeds, an account to which I have drawn attention in "Listening to the Silences in the Creeds" in a previous issue of this journal (No. 27, June 2005). A helpful summary account of Murray's critique of the impact of Christendom on theologies of the atonement appears as one of the essays in this book.

The second consequence is that changing social and political contexts provide us with an occasion for a review of our theological accounts of what God as manifested in Jesus is up to in the world. As a rubric for this task we should note Paul's assertion that we see as through "a glass darkly" while keeping in mind that John reports the promise that there is yet more to learn and that the Spirit will guide us.

Critiquing penal substitution

The editors of this volume have taken up the task of reviewing theological accounts of the killing of Jesus, particularly those that fall under the heading of penal substitution through a critique that, among other things, draws attention to the social contexts in which this

theological account emerged. The occasion for such a review has been provided by the widespread public debate and engagement with Mel Gibson's film narrative of Jesus' execution in *The Passion*; a debate that has taken place against a background of renewed interest in the relationship between religion and violence, particularly since 11 September 2001.

In their Introduction to ***Consuming Passion*** the editors pull no punches.

> *While by no means agreeing on everything, the contributors to this volume think that many Christians have seriously misconstrued the central components and narratives of Christian talk about the death of Jesus and how this offers hope and life to the world. And they say that this matters a great deal whether you are a Christian or not, because theories of religious conviction that depend upon dividing the world into victim and victimiser and then using the language, assumptions and tactics of the victimiser – are positively dangerous. They lead to suffering torture and death, both physically and psychologically. (p3)*

This is a strong and highly disturbing claim. The argument runs something like this. The currently accepted account of penal substitution is that God becomes the victimiser and Jesus becomes the victim. Human salvation comes to depend upon the torture and murder of an innocent life with consequent implications for the way society views punishment more generally. A specific example of this process is the pressure that is put on those who are victims to simply accept their situation – women who are subject to domestic violence comes to mind as an example.

The secular world has suggested that the Church has the choice of either accepting the claim of fundamentalists and some evangelicals that their interpretation of the significance of the death of Jesus, penal substitution, is the "biblical" one or giving up on discussion of the issue.

The contributors refuse to accept the claim that the fundamentalist interpretation of the killing of Jesus is the only option for Christians who wish to follow Jesus. They do not want to give up on discussion of Jesus' killing and argue that there are good reasons for reclaiming the framing of such discussion from service to the cause of violence, to the cause of God, understood not as a tribal deity but as "…the non-violent, inviting, transforming and…non-manipulative love made available to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth."(p.4)

While the book is not devoted exclusively to Mel Gibson's movie, several of the essays pick up themes that specifically relate to ***The Passion***. Vic Theissen uses the movie as the focus for his chapter on "The Passion and God's Transforming Love". Ched Myers in "The Gospel of Christ confronts the Powers" provides an alternative reading of Marks Gospel in which, contrary to Gibson's movie, the God who is involved in the horrific torture and execution of Jesus is not a God who inflicts or justifies suffering and oppression but one who endures it. Anne Richards reflects in a powerful and confronting way on "Being Delivered from Gibson's hell".

The significance of resurrection

Other essays deal more directly with various doctrines of the atonement, how these doctrines have developed within the church, their social context and why they are problematic in the light of Jesus' life and teaching. Despite the relative brevity of these essays, the contributions on these themes by Denny Weaver, Simon Barrow and James Allison, in particular, are underpinned by substantial theological scholarship and cannot be lightly dismissed.

While not directly highlighted by the editors, the issue of resurrection lurks throughout the book as the key theme that is hinted at but not addressed at any length until the last chapter by James Allison. However, the discussion by James Allison on the resurrection does not stand alone. I would argue that the essays by David Wood, at a personal and ecclesiastical level, and Michael Northcott at a structural political level point toward a range of possible meanings of the resurrection and its significance for trying to articulate the meaning of the killing of Jesus.

Drawing attention to the presence of the theme of resurrection in ***Consuming Passion*** is relevant in that since the book was published, Simon Barrow has subsequently published two extensive editorials on the Ekklesia website (www.ekklesia.co.uk) that pick up the issue of what it means to talk of resurrection – 'Easter as Regime change' and 'Threatened with Resurrection'.

What options are on offer here to begin developing a fresh understanding of the significance of Jesus being killed? Because all the authors approach this issue in differing ways and to keep this essay within reasonable bounds, I want to highlight specifically the argument of just one of the authors. Giles Fraser, in his chapter "The Easter of Hawks, Doves, Victims and Victimisers" has made his case perhaps more directly and pungently than other contributors.

Fraser argues that there are two fundamental ways of understanding the theology of Easter – retribution or forgiveness. Retribution requires that sin has to be paid for by pain. Anything else is the equivalent of being soft on crime. Fraser's argument is that any account along these lines is fundamentally at odds with Jesus' teaching and practice of forgiveness.

Jesus' teaching and life

This is the point of the essay that really got through to me. When we look at Jesus' practice and teaching of forgiveness in his life, in his teaching and in his words from the cross, forgiveness and healing is etched deeply through everything he says and does. How then can we have lived so comfortably with an account of the significance of his crucifixion that stands so much at odds with his life and teaching? There is no sign of Jesus being committed to an ethic of retribution. As Fraser notes:

> *Jesus does not oppose the brutality of his treatment by an equal and opposite show of force. And in not returning violence with violence he initiates a fragile and vulnerable community of non-retaliation known as the kingdom of God. (pp.17-18)*

It seems clear then that any account that we give of the significance of Jesus being killed will need to be consistent with how he lived and taught. The doctrine of penal retribution and its predecessors clearly fail that test. Steve Chalke coming from a very different theological

tradition to that of Fraser is in fundamental agreement with him on this issue.

> *… in Jesus' own parabolic account of his Father's relationship with humankind, the prodigal son, the father is not presented as angry or vengeful, or as seeking justice or retribution, - instead he simply runs to greet his wayward child, showers him with gifts and welcomes him home. The father in the parable is wronged, but chooses to forgive to restore a broken relationship – there is no theme of retribution. Instead the story is one of outstanding grace, of scandalous love and mercy – how different it would read if penal substitution was the model of atonement offered. (p.23)*

While the case against much of the existing theological accounting of the significance of the killing of Jesus is well made, the direction we should take in providing an alternative account is less well marked out. Denny Weaver provides the most ambitious attempt in his chapter "Jesus' death and the non-violent victory of God" with an approach which has the merit of trying to point forward to the resurrection as an integral element in any such account.

However, I am uneasy about how we should go about the task of providing an alternative doctrine of the atonement. In fact I am highly dubious about whether development of doctrine as it has been traditionally done is the way to go. It may well be that what is needed is a variety of re-narrations of the killing of Jesus and his resurrection. A well told story is more powerful that a 'doctrine.' Doctrines privilege the intellectual caste and those with control of ecclesiastical institutions who then become the authorities on doctrine. Doctrines as intellectual formulations tend to suggest that if we can get our categories righ, we can have God under a measure of human control.

Ched Myers' chapter offers a partial example of the sort of re-narration that is needed in moving beyond traditional atonement theology. While he makes some intellectual moves to justify why he can retell the story the way he does, for much of the chapter Myers simply retells Mark's account of Jesus life, and how and why he was put to death. The account of why Jesus was killed contrasts sharply with Mel Gibson's narrative. Myers is clear. "The way Jesus died, from Mark's perspective, cannot be understood apart from the way he lived." (P.72)

In conclusion

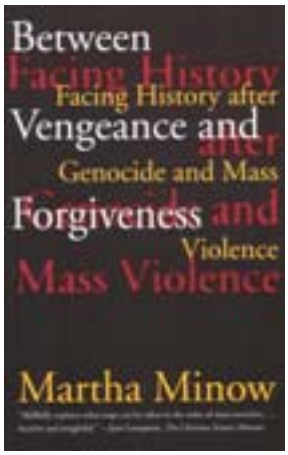
The essays in Consuming Passion are relatively short and are not overly academic in style. Go out, purchase it and read and argue about it with your friends. But be prepared to have some assumptions challenged and sacred cows put to the sword as you tease out the consequences of this new understanding for worship, church life and social engagement. The implications of the questions raised by this book run deep and go wide and are more easily avoided than confronted. Which is perhaps what we should expect as we begin to recover the threat of resurrection.

-Reviewed by: Doug Hynd

Between Vengeance and Forgiveness:

Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence,

Martha Minow, Beacon Press, 1998



The title ***Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*** caught my eye on the Eastern Mennonite University bookshelf two summers ago. My interest in what happens in post-war situations was piqued during my years in southern Africa during the post-Apartheid years and subsequently contact with the truth commission in East Timor. As a person committed to Jesus' third way, I was interested in hearing about third way options that various societies have used in national healing processes after war, genocide or other mass trauma. What could lie between vengeance and forgiveness and what assumptions are made by an author that these two are poles in the quest for restoration?

One working premise that Minow goes on, while not explicitly backing it as an absolute, is that there are two extremes in choices when deciding on societal response to mass violence, justice and truth. For the justice example Minow uses the Nuremberg trials of the Nazis after WWII. For truth, she cites the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission process to validate the systematic violence of Apartheid. These two extremes are both inadequate for individuals and collective peoples coming to terms with what happened to them during any given violent conflagration.

Minow explores a third, more central option, reparations. For detailing this response, the author looks at the journey of recognition for those Japanese-American citizens who were interned in concentration camps in rural America during World War II. Reparation is not limited to only money, since one could never buy back a loved one, recapture a lost opportunity or undo a physical deformation. Reparations also include acknowledgment and token gestures that symbolize admission of error. As a response between vengeance and forgiveness she also elaborates on restorative justice, restitution and apology as subcategories of reparations.

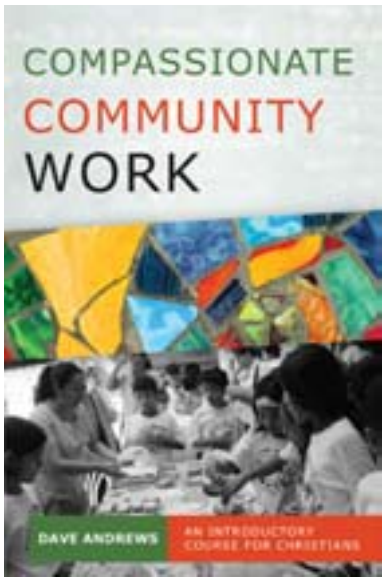
While I am not in total accord with the way Minow classifies the choices open to societies recovering from mass genocide, torture or rape, I do respect her careful historical research of many of the global atrocities which have afflicted the world in the last century. With more than fifty pages of end notes, this book is a wealth of information about the topic. Anyone wishing to study societal recovery from mass trauma would do well to use this book as a reference.

History is never one story, Minow tells us toward the end of the book. And the telling of history involves a certain settling of accounts. (143) However, telling our story is key in recovering our sense of self. But in the end, between vengeance and forgiveness lies the path of recollection and affirmation and the path of facing who we are, and what we could become. (147)

-Reviewed by Jon Rudy, MCC Asia Peace Resource

Compassionate Community Work

Dave Andrews, Piquant editions, 2006



There are very few books that speak creatively and practically about missionally engaging with our communities. And even fewer that speak to our Australian context. ***Compassionate Community Work*** is one of those books. It is a rich feast of Biblical reflections, practical input with applications that culminate in a more informed and compassionate understanding of a community wherever the reader is located.

This is a book for activists, those who are crazy enough to believe that they can change their part of the world and foster communities of hope. Dave Andrews shows that it is not that hard – just step out of our familiar comfort zone and talk with those around us. Its not rocket science but Dave Andrews reminds us of becoming intentional in our relationships where there are many surprises to be found.

His book is based on the conviction that God is at work when we get to know people in our communities, hear their stories and explore common dreams. There is an energy that emerges from a co-operative effort and deep relationships forged in a way that rarely could occur through traditional attractional models of mission.

I believe in what this book is about – I live it, walk and talk with people in an inner city public housing community, and am constantly surprised at the depth of conversations that emerge as authenticity and respect are conveyed.

We live in an era where mission needs to take on new shapes and approaches. Engaging with people in our community, forging relationships and responding to those around us are the essential ingredients in a post Christendom world. It takes time. Dave Andrews' book walks the reader through a step by step missional approach that fosters self reflection and engagement with people that is respectful.

The book is not one of those books where you feel inspired but could never replicate what is written about. Rather the book gently walks us through some community work principles and skills needed to become subversives and catalysts for change.

The book is divided into two sections. The first encourages the reader to grasp the principles in building friendships in the community. From working through fear and futility to bringing about social empowerment Dave Andrews skilfully unpacks the very approaches used by the Master in engaging with people.

The second section explores the reality of engagement with a community from research to persevering.

Coming from a practitioner's perspective Dave Andrews recognises the emotional ups and downs of connecting with people. He adopts a useful strategy of encouraging the reader to work in a group context as well as recruit a supervisor with whom reflections and insights can be shared.

At a personal level I am employed as a community development worker in an inner city public housing area. It is a rewarding and demanding experience. The processes outlined in the book make sense. I have used aspects of his book in staff training and peer supervision.

Just prior to reading this book I became discouraged and ambivalent about the impact we were making in the community. The exercises and reflections helped change the way I saw the landscape of this fragile community. I emerged with renewed hope and vigour. I am also committed to working through his book in more detail.

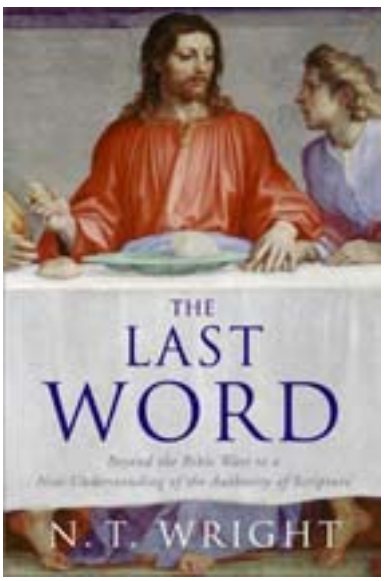
This is a must read book for all people who want to see their communities revitalised and shaped by Kingdom values. In the process we will be changed as we authentically relate to people around us. It is doable and Dave shows us how. And this is what mission is all about!

-Reviewed by Ross Coleman

The Last Word

Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture

N. T. Wright, Harper SanFrancisco, 2005



The author of this book needs little introduction to readers of this journal. The swashbuckling Bishop of Durham – widely regarded as one of the most interesting and insightful voices in contemporary New Testament scholarship – has visited this country on a number of occasions, and his 30 some books are widely read throughout the world. Tom Wright is not only a fine biblical scholar; he is also a superb writer, always clear, often humorous, a master of metaphor, self-assured and invariably passionate. He is also someone whose commitment to the church impels him to write books for people in the pews, not just for his peers in the academy. This book is a case in point. It is addressed to the church at large, urging believers of every theological stripe to recover a proper respect for the primacy of scripture and a proper understanding of what biblical authority really means.

As is typical of his other writings, Wright takes no hostages in his treatment of the subject. Both the liberal left

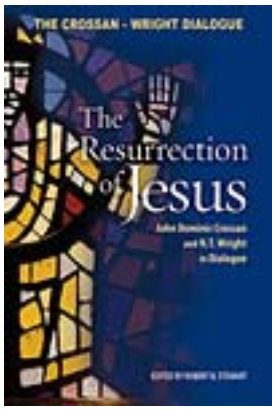
and the conservative right wings of the church are equally charged with misreading the Bible and misconstruing its function. Against those who see scripture as one among several sources of authority (along with reason, tradition and experience), Wright is adamant that scripture alone is the source of ultimate authority in the church. Reason, tradition and experience (the latter of which Wright is particularly scathing about) must not be seen as autonomous and supplementary sources of guidance and truth; they are better understood as tools for enabling the church to grapple more profoundly with the meaning of the biblical text. Against those who proudly champion *sola Scriptura*, Wright is equally adamant that final authority does not actually reside in scripture *per se* but in the person of the living God of whom scripture speaks. This indeed is Wright's central thesis – that the phrase "authority of scripture" is shorthand for *the authority of the triune God exercised through scripture*. The Bible possesses, in other words, a delegated or mediated authority. It has authority only because God speaks in and through scripture to empower the church for participation in God's larger mission of judging and renewing all creation.

Wright's other major thesis is that the kind of authority scripture exercises must be determined by its predominant genre of *story*. The Bible's own character is distorted if it is merely used as a source book for reliable doctrinal or ethical or devotional information. The Bible is primarily a narrative, so the authority it exercises must be a narratival kind of authority. Stories exercise authority insofar as they shape the way readers understand the world and themselves. They open up readers' imaginations to new possibilities and grant insights into how they can live their lives more wisely and truthfully. This is how biblical authority works too. Wright uses here again his very helpful analogy of the Bible as a five act play, with the church now living in the fifth act. In this situation the church simultaneously stands under the "authority" of the earlier acts (which narrate the story of creation, fall, Israel and Jesus) while being free to "improvise" forms of obedience that help carry the story forward to its conclusion.

As it lives freely and creatively in the fifth act, scripture has an indispensable role to play in keeping the church on track with the larger story of God's larger redemptive activity. Yet scripture serves as more than just a reminder of how God has acted in the past. It also serves as the primary means by which God continues to speak in the present, addressing his people anew with a fresh word of judgment and healing. To view the Bible in this way *requires* that we are ever open to fresh insights into the meaning and application of scripture. The irony, indeed the tragedy, of so many churches and Christians who claim to be Bible-honouring is that they have long since silenced the Bible by assuming they already know what it teaches. They therefore respond to new interpretations with suspicion and scorn. But if the Bible really is the principal means by which the Word of God is heard today, it is an act of loyalty to scripture itself to be ever receptive to new insights. This is not an excuse for clever innovation for its own sake, much less for the "hermeneutics of suspicion", both of which so dominate post-modern theological endeavour. New interpretations are only acceptable if they are consistent with the themes, harmonies and rhythms of the story thus far, and if they serve to build up, rather than tear down, the mission and life of the church.

Wright sets out a thoroughly persuasive, and a potentially liberating, account of biblical authority narrative-style. Sadly he offers little specific comment on how such a conception of authority might help advance some of the debates that currently preoccupy the church, such as those over sexuality. No doubt this is deliberate on his part. Wading into current controversies would have easily detracted attention from his primary agenda of reconceptualizing biblical authority. Perhaps Bishop Wright should be invited to write a follow-up volume that earths his "new understanding of the authority of scripture" in the specific turmoils of our time.

-Reviewed by Chris Marshall, Victoria University



The Resurrection of Jesus

John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in Dialogue

Robert B. Stewart (ed.), Fortress Press, 2006

Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright are two of the most popular and prolific New Testament scholars in the world today. They take markedly different approaches to the interpretation of the New Testament, and especially of the Jesus-tradition, with Crossan representing the best of what might be called 'liberal' scholarship and Wright the most engaging and creative expression of more 'conservative' scholarship, though neither label is a very helpful. Wright's most recent scholarly publication is the monumental 800 page study entitled ***The Resurrection of the Son of God***. By any standards, this book represents a massive contribution to the centuries-old debate about whether Jesus really rose bodily from the grave or whether New Testament reports of his resurrection are best understood metaphorically or symbolically. It is easily the most significant book to appear on the subject in over a generation. Such is its importance that already a secondary literature is developing around it, of which the present book is an example.

Edited by Robert Stewart, who recently completed a PhD comparing the work of Crossan and Wright, the book comprises the transcript of a dialogue between Crossan and Wright on the subject of Jesus' resurrection, a number of essays by well known scholars commenting on the work of both men, and a highly stimulating appendix by Crossan urging us to move the debate about the resurrection away from the question of its "mode" (literal or metaphorical) and on to its "meaning" (its role as evidence that "God's Great Clean Up" operation is underway and that it is time to take back God's world from the thugs who currently run it).

The chapters in the book which offer critical commentary on Crossan's and Wright's perspectives are all

very interesting and useful. But what makes the book a sheer delight to read is the transcript of the sparkling discussion between Wright and Crossan themselves. The dialogue took place before a packed house of nearly a thousand people at New Orleans Baptist Seminary in March last year. There must have been much laughter on the night, for both participants display such delicious wit and effortless fluency that it is hard to credit their interchange was wholly extempore. What also shines through is the affection each has for the other. If all theological debate could take place on such a humorous and respectful basis as this, how much less fractious the church would be.

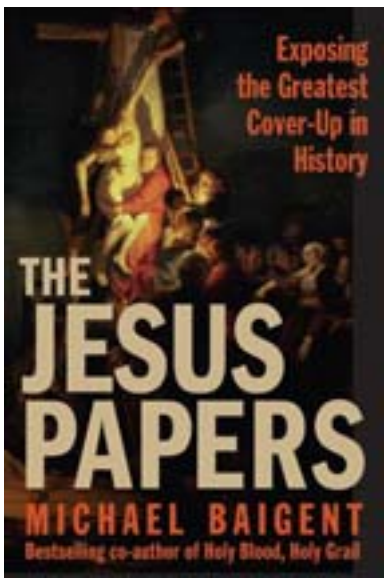
What, for me, is most significant in the dialogue between Wright, who firmly defends a literal resurrection, and Crossan, who sees it in metaphorical terms, is the way both agree on the practical, or even better, political implications of the resurrection message. Both see the raising of Jesus as an event that announces the transformation of this concrete world, not simply as a proof of post-mortem existence in heaven. Both see it as a revolutionary message that summons Christians to active engagement with the powers that be. Crossan stresses – to my wholehearted agreement – that it is the power of non-violent justice that most distinguishes the new age from the old, and he coins the wonderful term "collaborative eschatology" to characterise how Christian believers are "called to live the radical ethics of a new creation or a transformed life and thereby to co-create with God a non-violent world of justice and peace" (178). To my mind, such radical commitment makes much more sense, and is much better grounded theologically, in the material or bodily resurrection of Jesus than it is in some metaphorical perspective. One might say that Wright furnishes a better foundation for Crossan's account of the meaning of the resurrection than Crossan himself does, while Crossan articulates with greater precision and punch the ethical and political ramifications of bodily resurrection than does Wright.

I have often found it curious that those with the "best" theology do not always have the best ethical practice, while those with the best practice – with the best grasp of the radicalism of discipleship – often lack the biblical or theological grounding to sustain it. While this cannot be said of such brilliant minds as Dom Crossan and Tom Wright, both of whom are masters at uniting theology and ethics, it does frequently apply to lesser lights who insist that liberal and conservative theological options are mutually exclusive accounts of truth. This book proves otherwise. Both Crossan and Wright set my heart singing, one with the sheer wonder of Jesus' historical resurrection, the other with the immensity of its importance for grappling with the issues of everyday life.

-Reviewed by: Chris Marshall, Victoria University

The Jesus Papers Exposing the Greatest Cover-Up in History

Michael Baigent Harper Collins, London, 2006.



New Zealander Michael Baigent recently shot to international fame when he sued Dan Brown, author of ***The Da Vinci Code***, for plagiarism. Baigent's case failed, and he was left with a £2 million legal bill. No doubt he hopes sales of his latest book, ***The Jesus Papers***, will offset his losses. He may get lucky. There is always a market for grand conspiracy theories, especially when the conspirators are holed up in the Vatican.

Baigent claims that everything we have been told about the origins of Christianity is not simply wrong, it is a calculated deception perpetrated by the guardians of orthodoxy. Jesus himself never claimed a divine status. That identity was foisted on him at a later date – as late even as the Council of Nicea in AD 325, which "created the literally fantastic Jesus of faith and adopted the pretence that this was a historically accurate rendering". But Baigent has now finally blown the gaff on "the greatest cover-up in history".

The *real* Jesus was a Jewish spiritualist who derived his craft from Egypt and sought to impart to others the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" – a phrase which Baigent takes to denote the path to the Far World, the world of the dead, to which even the living, if suitably initiated, can travel and return from. It is Baigent's fascination with religious mysticism, together with his antipathy towards the Vatican, that drives his whole project. He spends the central chapters of the book recounting personal visits to archaeological sites where mysterious events allegedly transpired. This is perhaps the most interesting part of the book. Much less compelling is his attempt to link the life and teaching of Jesus to this larger mystical scenario.

The Jesus Papers, unlike ***The Da Vinci Code***, is not a novel. It claims to be sober history, from the pen of a "religious historian and leading expert in the field of arcane knowledge". But it is Baigent's cherry-picking historical method that creates all the problems. His starting point is that the New Testament gospels have little historical value. They are a mixture of fact, fantasy and dogmatic spin, and provide no secure basis for discovering the historical Jesus. Once freed from the control of the New Testament documents (except when it suits him), Baigent is free to create, pretty well out of thin air, a brand new Jesus. Unsurprisingly it is a Jesus who shared Baigent's love of mysticism.

This Jesus was raised as a Zealot, a Jewish revolutionary. But he later abandoned a political path in favour of a mystical one. His fellow Zealots were enraged by his betrayal, and demanded his crucifixion. To appease them, Pilate condemned him to death. But he colluded with Jesus' friends to ensure that Jesus survived his execution.

After being a little bit crucified, Jesus was taken down from cross unconscious, revived in the tomb, and departed for Egypt, with his wife Mary Magdalene.

Baigent concedes that much of this is speculation. But so too, he claims, are all attempts to retell the life of Jesus, since we have no reliable source material to hand. That is simply untrue. Certainly the gospel accounts need to be handled with critical care. But to dismiss them as almost wholly legendary is an all-too convenient way of exempting his own implausible reconstruction from accountability to the evidence.

It is also untrue that Jesus' divine status was invented at the fourth century Council of Nicea. Already in the earliest Christian documents we possess, the letters of Paul, some of which date from no more that 20 years after the time of Jesus, divine qualities are being unselfconsciously, and without any hint of intramural controversy, ascribed to Christ.

And what of Baigent's central claim in the book – that he has personally held in his hands papyrus documents that provide "incontrovertible proof" that Jesus was alive in AD 45? A momentous claim indeed that cries out for independent verification. Sadly the anonymous owner of these documents is not ready to make them available for scholarly scrutiny, and the photographs Baigent took of them have mysteriously disappeared. So we just have to take Baigent's word for it.

So does this book contain "explosive new evidence that challenges everything we know about the life and death of Jesus"? Who's kidding who?

- Dr Chris Marshall is Senior Lecturer in the Religious Studies Department at Victoria University. This review appeared in the Wellington newspaper the *Dominion Post* on June 10, 2006.

Theology In A Third Voice

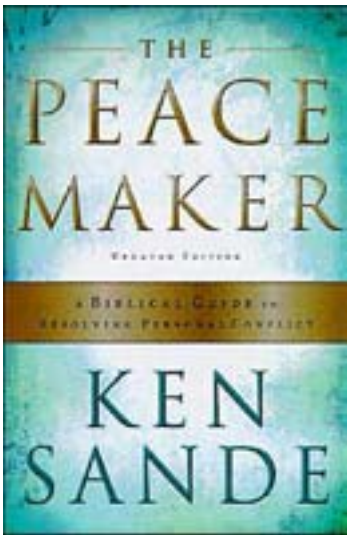
edited by Doug Hynd, James Barr and Gordon Preece, ATF Press, 2006

The Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society (http://www.zadok.org.au/) marked its 30th anniversary on 3 June with a book launch. ***Theology In A Third Voice*** presents a collection of essays from Zadok's thirty years of publishing covering diverse topics from Australian theology to workplace practices.

The Peacemaker

A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict,

Ken Sande, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991



I co-facilitate peacemaking and peacebuilding courses at the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute. Many of the frameworks and methodologies I use have been derived from Mennonite thinking over the years. From our Christian base, the materials we use have a unique "branding" which has received wide acclaim for their practicality and usefulness. When a colleague in my men's prayer breakfast handed me a book called ***The Peacemaker***, with a publication date of 1991, I was a bit skeptical. So much has been published since the early 1990s that I thought this book would be a bit behind the times. I was pleasantly surprised when I began reading.

Sande has developed, what he calls, a systematic theology of conflict resolution that has gained wide acceptance in evangelical circles. His outline starts from the premise that everything we do should glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). Next he urges us to "get the log out of our own eye" (Matt. 7:5). After that, we are to go and show our brother or sister their fault (Matt. 18:15) and finally to be reconciled (Matt. 5:24). While at times I feel overwhelmed at the scripture references in this book, it is solid in constructing the case for God's desire for reconciliation among people and a methodology of doing that.

As I read the book, I realized that there are pieces of Mennonite conflict transformation and peacebuilding frameworks that may not be as explicit as what is stated in this book. Take, for example, the role in glorifying God. This kind of spiritual preparation for a mediation session would not go over well in many of the secular multi-cultural settings in which I function. Humility, forgiveness and our own complicity with sin are other facets that may not bode well outside Christian circles. Yet from a Christ-centered orientation these parts of peacemaking make sense and are critical for restoration of relationships.

One area Sande spends a fair bit of time on is examining our part in any conflict. What attitudes and actions, on our part, contribute to the conflict? The closest I now get to this self examination in peacebuilding courses I facilitate is to work at inner peace. Yet Sande's perspective asks tough questions about our complicity to conflict. Granted, peacebuilding frameworks that tackle intractable international conflict are not geared toward personal inner work.

This book is a useful tool for anyone trying to introduce peacemaking and conflict transformation to a group of people whose primary orientation is scripture. From the starting point Sande lays out, specific strategies for peacebuilding like victim offender reconciliation, mediation, negotiation, getting to yes, transitional justice and do no harm frameworks can be more easily added and accepted.

-Reviewed by Jon Rudy, MCC Asia Peace Resource

Honest Patriots Loving a Country Enough to Remember its Misdeeds

Donald W. Schriver, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Donald Shriver is a highly respected public theologian in America. Some ten years ago he published an important book on the neglected place of forgiveness in the panoply of political virtues. There he argued that forgiveness at a collective or political level requires a combination of four things – a morally-attuned remembering of past wrongs, a refusal of revenge, an empathy for the opponent's humanity, and an active commitment to repair fractured relationships and build community. He furnished three case studies for exploring the political face of forgiveness: America's relationship with Germany and Japan following the wars between them, and the struggles of the black community in America for equal citizenship. ***Honest Patriots*** forms a sequel to that book on forgiveness. It offers an even deeper analysis of the crucial role of moral memory in a healthy society and affirms the collective responsibility of all citizens to recover the wrongdoings of their nation's past and address the negative consequences that flow into the present. This is the essence of true patriotism, Shriver urges, a love of country so strong that it is prepared to honestly face its past crimes in the interest of preventing their repetition in the future.

Once again Shriver offers three detailed case studies of how "honest patriotism" works in practice. In each he blends historical reportage, autobiographical reflections and theoretical analysis of the key principles at work. The first case study is an account of the extraordinary efforts modern Germany has made to uncover in depth and detail the horrors of *Die Nazizeit* and to honour its victims. No country has done more to own its evil deeds and to guard against their recurrence than Germany. It has done so in several ways: by instituting anniversaries of past atrocities, by creating thousands of visual memorials across the country where citizens can recall and mourn the victims of Nazi brutality, by including in the school history curriculum a detailed study of the Nazi period and the failure of ordinary citizens to resist it, by instructing military personnel in their duty to disobey unjust orders, by the payment of reparations to victims and to Israel, and by stunning symbolic gestures by German political leaders to acknowledge and repent of the nation's previous transgressions. As the temporal gap between the present and the Nazi past increases, the determination of younger Germans that such a thing will never happen again seems to grow ever stronger.

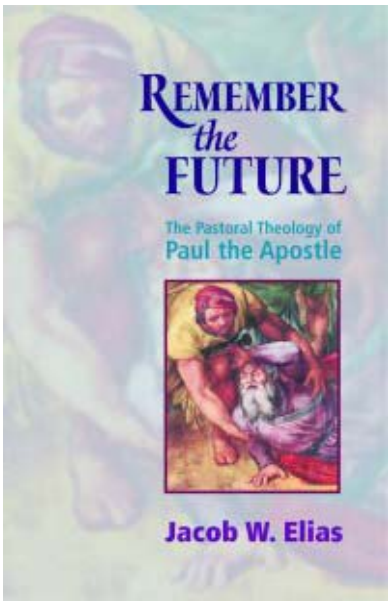
The second case study is of South Africa's recent, and largely non-violent, transition from the totalitarian abuses of the apartheid era to the constitutional democracy of today. Shriver again notes the importance of anniversaries, museums, memorials and history text books for exposing and empathising with the sufferings of the past. Added to this is South Africa's new Constitution and Bill of Rights which itself memorialises the past, not least by spelling out in great detail the legal rights of those who are arrested, detained or accused of crimes. Shriver gives most attention however to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which has attracted both international acclaim and a good deal of domestic disdain. In a highly perceptive analysis, Shriver draws out seven lessons from the TRC about how societies can deal with their negative pasts in constructive ways. He is not blind to the weaknesses of the TRC, but finds especially in its approach to truth-telling instructive insights into how traumatised communities can embark on the long and hard road to reconciliation.

His third case study looks at his own country in two lengthy chapters. One chapter deals with America's involvement in the unique evil of slavery. From the history of abolitionism, segregationism and the civil rights movement Shriver draws lessons about the preconditions that are necessary for a society to reckon with its wrongful past. He then presents a persuasive moral case for the payment of reparations to the descendants of former slaves. There are some parallels here with the arguments that swirl around treaty settlements in New Zealand, both in terms of the inescapable responsibility governments have to remedy the damage done by past administrations, with which they stand in unbroken continuity, and in terms of the parallel duty all citizens have to address the baleful legacy of these wrongs. To those immigrant groups (in both countries) who insist that their ancestors weren't even in the country when the wrongs were done and so they have no responsibility for righting them, Shriver responds that it is impossible to become a citizen of any country without inheriting the burdens as well as the benefits of its past.

Shriver's next chapter looks at the much less well-rehearsed story of the dispossession and devastation of the Indian nations that inhabited North America when European settlement began. Again sensitive to parallels with the New Zealand situation, I was struck by the repeated failure of English colonists to honour the hundreds of treaties they made with Native Americans. The English thought themselves superior to the Indians, whom they considered barely human. As the superior party they felt free to break any agreement with them at their convenience. As one Sioux elder said in 1891: "They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one: they promised to take our land, and they took it" (217).

In the closing chapter of the book, Shriver spells out what honest patriotism might mean for America at the dawn of a new century. In a word, it means power-with-humility. "Supercertainty of its own virtue", Shriver observes, "ill becomes a superpower" (281). If current indications are anything to go by, it may be some time before we see such humility emanating from the top echelons of the American political establishment. But as long as there are such sensitive and profoundly truthful commentators as Donald Shriver around speaking to American power, there is always hope.

- Reviewed by: Chris Marshall, Victoria University



Herald Press Books

• ***Remember the Future: The Pastoral Theology of Paul the Apostle*** by Jacob W. Elias

"By coupling Paul's letters with careful research of the Greco-Roman world in which he lived, Elias creatively reconstructs Paul's own story and the stories of each congregation he planted reminding us of the huge cast of characters that launched the story of the church."-Reta Halteman Finger

Why should 21st-century readers bother with Paul? Some people find his letters abstract, complex, and unrelated to real life. Others cringe at passages that address relationships within the household. In a culture that values stories, Paul's letters appear to be concerned mainly with doctrine.

Jacob W. Elias highlights the ways in which Paul draws on narratives as he ministers via letters to congregations throughout the first century Mediterranean world. Paul frequently alludes to his own personal story as a Jew who encountered the risen Christ. Repeatedly Paul reminds his readers about Jesus's life and faithfulness, although he nowhere shares that story in any detail. Paul draws on Old Testament stories and the narratives and images of the Greco-Roman world. And Paul demonstrates his awareness of each congregation's story.

"Elias brings Paul's letters to life by illuminating their context of ecclesial struggle, pastoral concern, and above all a passion for the gospel of Jesus Christ."-Tom Harder, Co-Pastor, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church

Jacob W. Elias is the author of ***1 & 2 Thessalonians*** in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series. He studied at the University of Saskatchewan, and graduated in 1968 from Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He began pastoral ministry at Mountainview Mennonite Church, Vancouver, and in 1978, earned a ThD in New Testament from the Toronto School of Theology. He has been teaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary since 1977.

• ***Priority Parenting: Reclaiming Your Home for Heaven's Sake*** by Steve Ganger

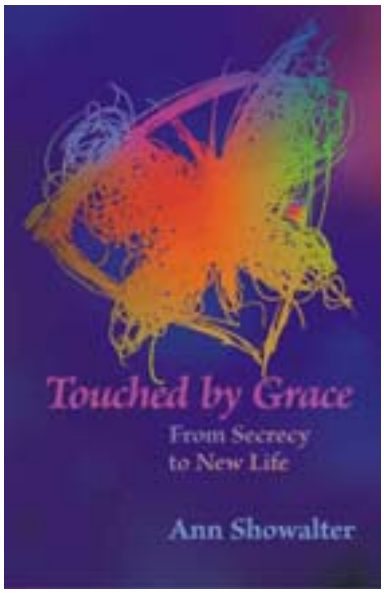
Parents in charge of their children. A novel concept, isn't it? Sadly, in many homes today, it is the other way around. There is a revolution afoot in America - a revolution where children commandeer the home. So challenges author, minister, and counsellor, Steve Ganger. But, he says, "take heart," and provides very readable chapters with guidelines for reclaiming the home as a loving place for heaven's sake. Ganger explores:

* what constitutes a real home
* the over commitment in your schedule
* the hurried lifestyle we are passing along to our kids
* what God really intends childhood to be
* ideas for making your house a home that truly worships God.

Steve Ganger is a pastor, writer, counselor and seminar leader who works as director of stewardship education for Mennonite Mutual Aid, a stewardship agency of the Anabaptists. Ganger is author of ***Time Warped: First Century Stewardship for 21st Century Living***.

Cascadia Publishing House Books

• ***Touched by Grace: From Secrecy to New life***, by Ann Showalter



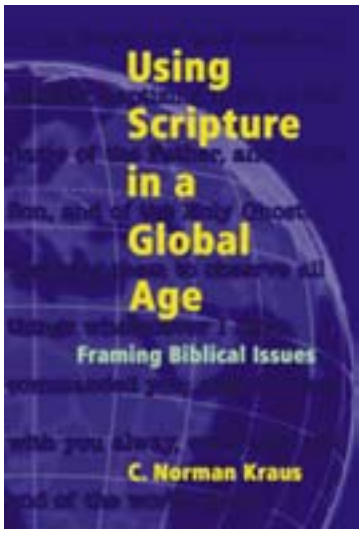
"Ann's honesty and courage in the face of her husband's homosexuality and AIDS not only brought healing to Ray and to their family but shaped the future of her ministry as a Mennonite pastor. In addition, this book offers the Mennonite church a new model for dealing with the homosexual persons in their midst." - Norma S. Sutton, Professor of Theological Bibliography at North Park Theological Seminary, and Episcopal priest

The book is co-published with Herald Press. Explore it in depth at http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/tbg/tbg.htm.

• ***Using Scripture in a Global Age: Framing Biblical Issues***, by C. Norman Kraus

"I remember vividly the relief I felt my first day in Kraus' class in Christian Faith at Goshen College in 1967. Oh, I thought, I can think and believe. Norman's careful and loving address of faith and life issues, something I found so nurturing then, returns here in coherent essays that reflect a lifetime of his ministry of ideas." - Mary H. Schertz, Professor of New Testament, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

How should one read that ancient book called the Bible these many centuries after its formation? How can its instructions to civilizations of three and four thousand years ago be relevant to our modern technical age? This book wrestles with such questions. Each chapter, a whole in itself; addresses some aspect of how the Bible may speak today as Kraus engages a variety of major issues, including Christology, hermeneutics, peace, sexuality, creationism, miracles, social justice, and spiritual reality. Several concluding autobiographical chapters also set the larger book in the context of the author's long experience as a teacher of the Bible and theology in many different cultures.



C. Norman Kraus, Harrisonburg, Virginia, has been a teacher and scholar, including in many cross-cultural settings; historian of theology, civil rights activist, churchman, peace and justice advocate. He was Goshen College Professor of Bible and Religion for 30 years and during part of that time Director of the Goshen College Center for Discipleship, which he helped found. Among the many books Kraus has written or edited, recent titles include ***An Intrusive Gospel?*** (Intervarsity Press, 1998) and ***To Continue the Dialogue*** (Pandora Press U.S., 2001).

The book is copublished with Herald Press. Explore it in depth at http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/usg/usg.htm.

An evangelical minister called on an Amish Bishop in the community near Shipshewana, Indiana. New to the area, he wanted to meet fellow Christian leaders and perhaps arrive at some understanding of their faith in relation to his fundamentalist framework. At the end of several hours of conversation, thoroughly laced by quotations from and references to scripture by both men, the minister rose to leave, then paused to ask a final – and for him, the crucial - question.

"What I really want to know," he said, "Are you saved, truly born again through a personal faith in Christ?"

"You're asking the wrong person," the Amish Bishop replied. "You do not ask that question of me. You ask my neighbours, you ask my people. Here, I will give you the names of people who have known me for years, of those who have been critical of me, or have real differences with me. Ask them. That is who you must ask if you want an answer to that question."

-***Dissident Discipleship***, p. 180

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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