

C. Norman Kraus. *The Jesus Factor in Justice and Peacemaking*. Theological Postings, Volume 1. Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2011.

C. Norman Kraus has written this book for people engaged in Peace and Conflict transformation studies and work. Writing as a Mennonite theologian, he intends it for non-Mennonite Christians, as well as for persons from other religions and cultures than those of the United States. His goal is to show how Jesus factors into “the politicized process of professional conflict transformation and peace-building” (14). In many respects this volume reviews much that has previously been written by those who understand Jesus to set the paradigm for Christian peace witness. What it seeks to add is to make explicit how Jesus relates to the professional work of conflict transformation and peacemaking, and to explore how the perspective of Jesus’ approach to peacemaking relates to peace in other religious traditions.

The author sometimes leans precariously close to apologetics over against Christian traditions that view the peace God offers in Jesus as “the assuaging of God’s anger,” as an “inner release from a burden of fear, guilt, and inadequacy to keep God’s just commandments,” or that see peace as a Christian political strategy. Key to his argument for “the Jesus Factor”—what Kraus calls Jesus’ “style” or Gestalt (meaning the whole of Jesus’ life)—is the conviction that it is Jesus’ style, not only his saving action on the cross, that formed “a pattern change in the moral basis for peacemaking” (50, 51). With Jesus, God’s intention for *shalom* by reconciliation, not retribution, is most fully revealed.

Throughout the book Kraus engages with intramural Christian theological debates between pacifists and realists by inserting provocative questions, particularly around the relationship of Jesus to nonresistance and nonviolent coercion, and about how Jesus relates to contemporary social responsibility. A unique addition to the conversation appears in Chapter 3, where the author interacts with the wisdom found in other religious traditions. I appreciated his recognition that other religions have their own approaches to, and definitions of, peace that may share values with Christian traditions. His description of a Buddhist-Christian dialogue in this section is especially noteworthy.

While maintaining that God's will for humanity is *shalom*, a thick just peace, Kraus states that humans can fulfill this destiny only by finding God's "true and living way" through self-sacrificial love and nonviolence. Although he asserts that Jesus embodied "this only way," he also says people can find it "regardless of their culture and religion" (41). Kraus claims that the Jesus factor requires us to question religious exclusivism, since exclusivist truth claims are rooted in competition between religions that demand violent solutions rather than cooperation in mediation, conflict transformation, and reconciliation. He takes exclusivist claims to preclude dialogue, listening, confession, and collaboration—"the very methodology and goals of peacemaking" (36).

The author's insistence that we understand Jesus in his Jewish textual and socio-historical milieu is important. Kraus recognizes that Jesus is connected to Second Temple Judaism historically, ethically, and spiritually, but he misconstrues things by reading the New Testament too literally as a "historical" account of Second Temple Judaism, thereby participating in the polemic we inherit in the text: the Jewish community is portrayed in a singular, reductionist, and distorted manner. Amy-Jill Levine, author of *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (HarperCollins, 2007), observes that anti-Jewish, supersessionist readings construct Judaism and Jews as negative in order to show "how Jesus is in solidarity with the poor, with women, with the Palestinian population or any other oppressed group," thereby defining Judaism as "legalistic, purity obsessed, Temple dominated, bellicose, greedy and exclusivist" (Levine, 167). In his depiction of the law and the Temple, Kraus is prey to these pitfalls and fails to represent adequately the wide variety of Judaisms prior to, and contemporary with, Jesus' life. More worrisome is that in portraying what Jesus uniquely brings to peacemaking he fails to note explicitly the discontinuity of the First and Second Temple Judaisms with contemporary Rabbinic Judaism.

This volume is organized into eight chapters of about ten pages each, making it suitable for class assignments and group study. However, without an index and bibliography it does not point readers to where they could further pursue a given perspective. And, given the book's audience, I have

a quibble with the author's inconsistent use of terms such as peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping.

*Susan Kennel Harrison*, Ph.D. candidate in Theology, Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto

S. (Steve) K. Moore. *Military Chaplains as Agents of Peace: Religious Leader Engagement in Conflict and Post-conflict Environment*. Toronto: Lexington Books, 2013.

The author of this book is an ordained elder with the United Church of Canada who served as a chaplain in the Canadian Forces for twenty-two years. His main purpose is to offer a vision of “Religious Leader Engagement” (RLE) as an evolving domain of ministry among military chaplains internationally within the larger framework of the potential role of religion in peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict situations. RLE comprises military-supported systematic efforts to affirm, network, and partner with local, regional, and, sometimes, national religious leaders who share a commitment to peace and reconciliation.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I—Theoretical Consideration of the Role of Religion in the Conflict Environment—has four chapters, beginning with an introduction that describes the challenges of the contemporary context of conflict and the need for comprehensive integrative approaches. It continues with a discussion of a theory of conflict and the praxis of peacebuilding employed in the rest of the account. Chapters that follow consider the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding, and RLE as an emerging role for military chaplains.

Part II—Case Studies from the International Military Chaplaincy Community—contains five chapters that illustrate and analyze the RLE experience of a number of chaplains from Canada, France, the United States, New Zealand, and Norway. Part III—Religious Leader Engagement in Application—includes a chapter on the implementation of RLE, and another with a practical theology of reconciliation in theaters of war.

The content of the book reveals that the author has systematically