Sharon L. Baker and Michael Hardin, *Peace Be with You: Christ's Benediction amid Violent Empires* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, and Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2010)

A reader might do well to read the fourteen essays on Christian peacemaking in this volume one by one, with time to digest and ruminate after each entrée. Food for thought and action in these pages represents a wide spectrum of approaches and perspectives, mostly within a neo-Anabaptist frame of reference. Styles vary from accessible/popular to esoteric/academic.

Brian McClaren, for example, serves the first course with an approachable essay on "preemptive peacemaking." He says Jesus calls us to "go beyond cleaning up the disasters of war once they happen and instead to invest our best energies in preventing war, genocide, and injustice from happening in the first place." Derek Alan Woodward-Lehman, in stylistic contrast, calls on "white Christians to place themselves under the tutelage of nonwhite ecclesial communities whose *aversive* modernity is resistant to the white supremacy of *European* modernity."

The book grew out of a conference at Messiah College sponsored by Preaching Peace. Conference organizers and co-editors Michael Hardin and Sharon L. Baker say the purpose of the event was to "find a synergy that dealt with what Christianity without violence would look like." With allusions to John Howard Yoder and other Anabaptist lights, conference presenters and authors speak from their respective perches in homiletics, philosophy, ethics, theology, and biblical studies. The result is a rich array of approaches to peacemaking without much cross-fertilization or synthesis. Readers do not benefit much from the pushback and debate that presumably ensued between the presenters.

The book nevertheless makes a substantial addition to the peace shelf of any pastor, student, theologian, or ethicist. Pastor James F.S. Amstutz describes the struggle and joy of a congregation trying to let God's *shalom* permeate mission in a local community. Peacemaking-as-mission takes him and his congregation into a district courtroom to stand with an economically and socially vulnerable neighbor at risk of eviction. Author and teacher Richard T. Hughes laments that Christian leaders too often have been "fervent advocates of violence and war." Citing Franklin Graham and Tim

LaHaye as counter-examples to his own view, he says future church leaders need to abandon ideologies that merge faith with nationalism and "embrace instead both the idea and the rhetoric of the kingdom of God."

Bible scholar Reta Halteman Finger suggests that the number *twelve* for Jesus' core group of disciples was a "deliberate political act of resistance against Rome" because it symbolized restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel. Alluding to the current health care crisis in the United States, she notes how acts of physical healing by Jesus often redressed deleterious effects of the Roman Empire. She observes that he applied nonviolent resistance to economic injustice by cleansing the temple, and was viewed by the Romans who killed him as a political subversive. Historic Peace Churches, she contends, have experienced so much cultural assimilation that they risk losing the peacemaking message at the heart of the gospel.

Andy Alexis-Baker dismantles the comfortable truce many modern Anabaptists have made with policing in state and society. Policing frequently is corrupt or oppressive, he declares. Giving moral support to local or international police actions is "likely to make Christian pacifists into just war theorists under a different name." He even remonstrates against what he sees as the police-approving stance of the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Theology Project.

Addressing conflict from a pastoral perspective, Presbyterian Jean F. Risley draws on René Girard's work to show how scapegoating can do damage in a faith community. Dealing with such unhealthy conflict may require leaders to "introduce and model truth-telling about the reality that the community is experiencing." There will always be conflict in the church, she avers, but if handled well it can lead to growth and mutual love in a congregation.

Behind all these essays lurk the twin dragons of (American) empire and Constantinianism, realities with which Anabaptists in the West today must deal. While making no attempt to integrate the many strands of argument in the thirteen other essays, Sharon Baker provides three essential keys to peacemaking in the kingdom of God: (1) *love* of God, neighbor, self, enemies; (2) *forgiveness* which ends retributive justice; and (3) *reconciliation* which redeems our past and restores our future. She then points to an indispensable element of Anabaptist peacemaking: the body of Christ.

Through the church we are reconciled to God and to one another, and become ambassadors of God's healing presence in the world. That is good biblical and Anabaptist ecclesiology.

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Tripp York and Justin Bronson Barringer, eds. *A Faith Not Worth Fighting For: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Nonviolence*. The Peaceable Kingdom Series 1. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012.

A Faith Not Worth Fighting For is the kind of book every pacifist has thought of writing—perhaps after a frustrating conversation with a non-pacifist colleague, family member, or fellow congregant. As the editors state, its goal is to "answer the questions that many of us [pacifists] are often asked in a way that is accessible to anyone curious as to why this form of Christian discipleship may be at the heart of following Jesus" (8), which sometimes involves "complicat[ing] things a bit" (3). Thus, each of the thirteen chapters—not including a foreword by Stanley Hauerwas, an introduction by the editors, a conclusion by Tripp York, and an afterword by Shane Claiborne—address common questions about Christian nonviolence, often querying the assumptions behind the questions.

Hauerwas's foreword, it should be noted, raises another question: To what extent should *A Faith Not Worth Fighting For* be read as an extension of John Howard Yoder's work? Outside the foreword, Yoder is mentioned only occasionally, but he seems to lurk behind several arguments. At the same time, some authors take a decidedly non-Yoderian approach. Nevertheless, Hauerwas is probably correct that "Yoder would have read this book appreciatively" (ix).

Chapters 1–6 focus on practical questions and chapters 7–13 on biblical questions. C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell begins by asking whether pacifism is passive; then follow chapters on protecting third party innocents by D. Stephen Long, and on the classic "What would you do . . . ?" question