

operated at the Welcome Inn in Hamilton and in St. Catharines.

This book should be on the shelves of university and church libraries. It provides an excellent resource for researchers on Canada's history and culture.

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Trevor Bechtel. *The Gift of Ethics: A Story for Discovering Lasting Significance in Your Daily Work*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014.

It is not often that one considers storytelling as a medium for ethical reflection and learning. Yet, in *The Gift of Ethics*, Trevor Bechtel argues for just that. In the opening chapter he states that “stories are the most useful way for us to begin to learn about ethics in a biblical worldview” (1). He contends that stories offer an important and necessary component for ethical reflection, because they structure our worldview and actions. Stories can articulate the complexities and messiness of life while also captivating and inviting us into the narrative without coercion. In this manner, they are transformative and “more useful than goals or rules” for those striving to be ethical (2). It is within the framework of storytelling, both from scripture and his own life, that the author reimagines and constructs ethics within a biblical worldview.

The Beatitudes act as a foundation for the author's ethical imagination. Following Socrates, Bechtel argues that happiness is at “the heart of ethics” (2). Although at first glance the Beatitudes seem counterintuitively directed to this end, he argues that they are an essential source for understanding what it means to be happy and to live the good life. The Beatitudes “let Jesus define what happiness is” (9). Further, they are not merely descriptive; they also function ethically and performatively, inspiring action. Lastly, the “gift structure” of the Beatitudes strongly mirrors the moral structure seen throughout scripture, and thus they offer an understanding of ethics within a biblical worldview.

Throughout this 94-page book, Bechtel interweaves the Beatitudes with personal stories, scriptural interpretation, and philosophical reflection. Readers are invited to collaborate with him in imagining a Beatitudes-focused ethics that is capacious and contextual. He reconfigures ethics, suggesting that it is more than following the right rules or seeking the right goals (which do still serve a purpose). Chapter two argues that ethics is more than learning how to make difficult decisions; it also involves self-discovery, figuring out not only who we are but who we desire to be, the “best version of ourselves” (20).

In subsequent chapters, Bechtel argues that ethics can be viewed as a process in which we become “ethical people” (39). Through moral paradigms and stories we learn about the complexities of life and virtues from others. Through virtuous practices and habits we begin to embody ethical behaviors and relations. And through a Christ-centered imagination, we envision what it might mean to follow Christ in the diversity of our lives. During this process, we learn about ourselves and live into who we are called to be in relation with one another.

Bechtel also includes formal approaches to Christian ethics, drawing on Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and others. He walks readers through the development of the categorical imperative as well as the development of human rights language. But in the end he departs from these formal modes. Although helpful in achieving “a basic level of treatment,” they inevitably reinscribe “the human person into a rugged autonomous individual” and universalize the human experience (88). The author concludes that we become ethical when “we put ourselves in situations and places where we can be ethical and around people with whom we can be ethical” (91). Becoming ethical and becoming happy involves being in community with those to whom we are accountable and from whom we can learn how to be good.

The author convincingly argues for the importance of storytelling and the Beatitudes for constructing ethics within a biblical worldview. Yet, some readers may be concerned with how a storytelling approach to ethics might engage contemporary issues such as racism or sexism, which have become imbedded within our cultural and theological narratives. However, the author does challenge us to consider how we form relations of accountability and how we often refuse “to receive the gift of relationship” with others (94).

Some seasoned readers may find this succinct volume limited in the extent of its ethical and philosophical analysis. Nevertheless, it does cover a wide range of topics in the development of philosophical and Christian ethics, and this makes it suitable for new students, church members, and study groups. Many would find that Bechtel's text and intimate style offer an enjoyable, approachable, and accessible introduction to Christian ethics.

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Andrew P. Klager, ed. *From Suffering to Solidarity: The Historical Seeds of Mennonite Interreligious, Interethnic, and International Peacebuilding*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015.

According to editor Andrew Klager, *From Suffering to Solidarity* sets out to examine how Mennonite history and specifically “narratives, memories, and myths of suffering and nonviolence . . . in the midst of persecution” have shaped Mennonite solidarity with those who suffer (2). The volume is not intended, however, as a contribution to Mennonite self-understanding but as a case study of how one tradition draws on its past in its present peacebuilding efforts. Klager hopes this book will inspire peacebuilders to investigate their own traditions' histories as resources for peace and to be open to the contribution of religion to their work (5).

The first of three sections covers “the historical conditions of Anabaptist-Mennonite peacebuilding” in chapters on early 16th-century Anabaptism (John Derksen), Russian Mennonites during the Soviet era (Walter Sawatsky), North American Mennonites (Royden Loewen), Mennonite Central Committee (Esther Epp-Tiessen), and global and neo-Anabaptisms (John D. Roth). Although much of this material will be familiar to Mennonite readers, overlooked and emerging narratives also come to the surface in illuminating ways, particularly in the pieces by Sawatsky and Roth. This section could be helpful for teachers of Mennonite history looking for a concise and up-to-date (albeit selective) historical overview from origins