Richard McCutcheon, Jarem Sawatsky, and Valerie Smith, eds. *Voices of Harmony and Dissent: How Peacebuilders Are Transforming Their Worlds*. Winnipeg: Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2015.

"Imagine inviting wise elders of peace from different traditions around the world to a sharing circle focused on inspiring and sustaining peacebuilders. What if these elders were asked to share first-hand stories about their experience of working for peace over a life-time?" (19). This question, appearing on page 19 of *Voices of Harmony and Dissent: How Peacebuilders Are Transforming Their Worlds,* led to the consolidation of the Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP), held annually by Canadian Mennonite University. The intensive five-day course invites peacebuilders from different contexts and faith traditions to share from their life as peacemakers, both in theoretical and experiential terms.

This collection of essays by some of the invited peacemakers includes "men and women, Mennonite, Quaker, Indigenous, Catholic, and Buddhist. They are Thai, Canadian, Bosnian, and South African" (20). The authors' diversity is reflected in their various approaches and writing styles.

Two of the essays especially caught my interest. In a contribution on Peace Theology, Harry Huebner develops a historical and theological revision of how Anabaptists have addressed the question of social engagement, focusing on 16th-century Anabaptists and developments in the latter 20th century. From the earlier century, Huebner stresses the Anabaptists' separatist ecclesiology and an eschatology "rooted in their reading of what Jesus required of his followers in bringing about the new Kingdom" (132). More recently, the Anabaptist movement seems to have taken a less separatist interpretation of the role of the church, identifying it as witnessing peace and embracing nonviolent direct action as "a sign that although we are not in charge, the One who is in charge calls us to undermine the powers of evil by refusing allegiance to them. This is the alternative to violence—a way to say that peace is the desire of God from the very beginning of creation" (144).

What I found particularly interesting in this essay is the persistent issue of *participation*: how our actions—especially nonviolent actions—are connected with God's actions and plans, either in the form of "the last things" or by "restoring" the *shalom* order of creation. Nonviolent actions can be

measured, not in terms of effectiveness when compared with violent actions, but in terms of how they reflect God´s desired shalom and promised full restoration. This positive tension prevents nonviolence from becoming an ideology: acting nonviolently as a form of witnessing God's plan embodied in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection frames our hopes, expectations, and actions as part of a larger plan, not just our own personal ideology.

The other contribution that captured my attention was Ivo Markovic's account of the Pontanima Choir in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The author describes the religious component of the tensions, conflicts, and violence between people there, and presents the Pontanima (Latin *pons,* bridge, and *anima,* soul) choir as a nonviolent expression of art connecting to spiritual growth that has the potential to bring about reconciliation. The choir was founded in 1996 within a Franciscan monastery to bring people "from all the religions and beliefs in Sarajevo, people who, together, would sing a symphony of religions as a way of realizing the vision for positive relationships among religions" (206). The initial repertoire included Catholic and Jewish songs, but now includes Orthodox and Islamic songs as well. Pontanima performs in front of a wounded, polarized, and religiously diverse audience. Markovic describes how one woman expressed her dislike of the initiative at the beginning of a performance but ended singing along with the choir towards the end.

I can only imagine what it would be like for the singers to meet and create the potential for new possibilities and relations. Reconciliation is then not just a goal for the audience, but also the way that people from different, historically opposing, backgrounds can come together.

This book presents an amazing mosaic of peacebuilding experiences from personal stories to community and national/international settings, offering a vast set of examples of how-to work in peacebuilding, and of where one may stand, or take off from, on the journey. It will be a must-read for scholars dealing with mediation, advocacy, food wars, and peace theology; for practitioners and peacemakers, to motivate their imagination and creativity; and for all readers, to inspire them and identify embodied experiences of peacemaking even in the hardest times and contexts.

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