Gordon Mark Zerbe. *Citizenship: Paul on Peace and Politics.* Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2012.

It is gratifying when a scholar not only agrees with your half-formed ideas but develops them in greater depth than you ever could have. Such was the case when I read the first essay in Gordon Zerbe's book arguing that "fundamentally, Philippians is an exhortation on the 'practice of Messianic citizenship.'" Beyond the common view that Philippians is a "warm, friendly letter," he shows how it is also "deeply political and subversive" (19). Yes! For this American Mennonite, a subversive Paul communicates!

Zerbe is Professor of New Testament at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Rather than writing a book on a single topic, he compiled twelve essays on distinct topics under the overarching theme of "Paul on peace and politics." Six were previously published in various books or journals; six are new. In these essays, he roams at will over all seven of the undisputed Pauline letters: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

Zerbe first defines citizenship in Paul as loyalty to Jesus as a (political) Messiah that supersedes any other political association. He challenges our individualism and our traditional interpretation of Paul's language as religious "church words." Rather, Paul's usage of these same terms is more broadly political and social (2-7).

The essays fall into four parts titled Loyalty, Mutuality, Security, and Affinities. The author translates *pistis*, the Greek term we usually call "faith," as "loyalty." Rather than "believers," which may imply little more than verbal assent, faithful Jesus-people should be called by the stronger, more political term, "loyalists." Essays in the Mutuality part include topics such as unity and diversity in "Messiah's body politic," Paul's economic theory, and the relevance of Paul's "eschatological ecclesiology" for ecumenical relations. The idea that the restoration of creation (Rom. 8:18-25) and "God will be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28) implies that "God's reign will ultimately embrace all humanity" (66) is a new one for me, and I want to explore it further.

Part Three, on Security, deals with the function of military imagery in Paul's letters and his ethic of nonretaliation and peace. How violent are some of Paul's own attacks, such as "beware of the dogs" in Phil. 4:2-4? Is it

a "slanderous anti-Judaic invective or rebellious assault on empire" (171)? Zerbe here discusses criticisms of Paul by scholars who see the apostle as "inherently violent" (Joseph Marchal, 176) or "kyriarchic" (Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 177). Though he recognizes these "evident deficiencies (relative to modern sensibilities)," Zerbe concludes that "Paul's overall message of peace and justice is a crucial resource for continued reflection on the challenges facing our own future" (180).

Part Four, on Affinities. includes a fine essay on Paul's view of human anthropology, where he defines Greek terms such as *soma, pneuma,* and *psyche*. Zerbe affirms Paul's insistence on bodily resurrection, noting also how reserved Paul is about a conscious existence "between death and the final arrival of the reign of God" (192). Though I agree with his evaluation of Paul's eschatology, it is quite different from the conventional comfort offered at funerals in our churches.

I found these essays provocative and exciting. They are well-documented with 59 pages of endnotes that include references to more academic books than I will read in a lifetime! Most essays are worth re-reading. Zerbe has advanced our thinking relative to current emphases in New Testament studies on the social-economic-political contexts of the texts and their authors. Placing Paul within his context in the Roman Empire can help us redefine many of our "religious" terms as also political. As Paul resists the values and practices of Rome, so "loyalists" today must challenge the values and practices of current global empires—both governments and private corporations.

*Citizenship* seems primarily directed towards academics used to an erudite vocabulary and lengthy endnotes. Its density makes for slow going, though the rewards are great. Zerbe's last chapter on Paul among four philosophers stretched the limits of my understanding (are all those words *really* in the dictionary?). My biggest caveat, however, has to do with the lack of two essentials: an index and bibliography. One can read forward but cannot go backward to search for an author or important term. Otherwise, this is a stimulating book which I plan to reread and raid for ideas for my own writing and teaching.

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