

A note about John Howard Yoder. In their preface, the authors acknowledge the challenge that Yoder's legacy presents for talking about nonviolence. This work is partly motivated by a desire to rescue nonviolence from the blanket charge of being Yoderian (ix). So, Cramer and Werntz honestly acknowledge the influence of Yoder's thought without centering it, and the remainder of the book demonstrates a much larger and more complex territory of Christian nonviolence—each stream of which contains its own challenges. The final chapter on anti-violence then brings the conversation full-circle to offer a way to respond to the history of sexual and gender-based violence in Yoder's thought and actions, as well as in Christian history and theology more broadly.

This book would be useful as an introduction to the range of approaches to nonviolence for students who are already familiar with some basic theological concepts and 20th century world history. It could also be used for adult education or facilitated small group study in a congregational context where there is interest in discerning ways for the church to engage the world for peace.

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Jonathan Dyck. *Shelterbelts*. Wolfville, NS: Conundrum Press, 2022.

When reading Jonathan Dyck's *Shelterbelts*, I was reminded of the miles of trees planted on our family farm and other farms across the prairie. I remember the wall of spruce trees that surrounded our farmyard, offering shelter from wind, framing our space in the parklands of Saskatchewan. I remember the toil, summer after summer, of planting rows of trees, Siberian and American elms and Manitoba maples provided by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Association, designed to prevent the soil drift of the Depression, outlining quarter sections of farmland, being weeded and watered until they rooted and became part of the landscape. And they did offer protection, shelter from winds, capturing snow, shading homes and gardens; but they were also constraints, obscuring farmyards, enclosing spaces with trees meant for other topographies.

Dyck's graphic novel captures those two sides of shelterbelts—protection and constraint—for the inhabitants of Hespeler, a rural Mennonite community on the Canadian prairie. The physical form of the graphic novel can also be viewed as the prairie landscape, each frame a field, its borders a

shelterbelt, bringing a tidy order to the wildness of nature or the rambling of storytelling. Moments in the characters' lives are framed as we see them struggle with the constraints imposed by the community order or the protection they feel by living in the known.

The novel features twenty characters in eleven individual but overlapping stories that explore the various issues that confront the inhabitants of Hespeler as they grapple with faith, sexual identities, Mennonite theology and history, the environment, and relationships. The format of the graphic novel enhances the telling of these stories by establishing visual contrasts and plot details. The opening story begins with young adults drinking and doing donuts on the parking lot of the new megachurch—a story that does not need words and one that many of Dyck's readers will recognize. That opening story sets the stage for the other eleven chapters, teens pushing boundaries, pastors struggling with sermons, differing views of theology. Gerhard Suderman, pastor of the progressive Jubilee Mennonite Church, in conversation with his gay daughter about his unfinished sermon, identifies the central theme of the novel:

Well, the text is from 1 Peter, so I was thinking...I'm going to speak about being called out...The Greek word used for the early church—*ekklesia*—it literally means those who are called out, as in called out of darkness and into the light. We tend to focus on what we're being called out of...But it's really about what we are being called into (6).

While it would be easy to caricature the citizens of Hespeler, dividing them into binaries of politically and religiously conservative or progressive, Dyck gives us brief glimpses into the complexity of each character as they seek to discover truth. There is a restlessness to this novel, a restlessness that cannot be resolved because there are no easy answers, no clear truth despite Pastor Wall's declaration that only God has the power to free us. His megachurch invites in those who want to see truth in binaries, right or wrong, in or out. Dyck's artful storytelling lets the readers glimpse the complexity of each character and the subtle changes that are transforming a community.

Ultimately, this is a novel about relationships—relationships to God, to neighbours, to the land, to history, and to self. Hespeler serves as a microcosm where current global issues are being played out. It is easy to read this graphic novel as a critique of rural Mennonite communities that have spent decades sheltered in the safety of tradition and are now struggling with the

incursion of modernity, but Dyck has done more than that. Like Miriam Toews's *Women Talking* (2019), *Shelterbelts* provides the reader with insights into a community grappling with change and deciding if the past is a protection or a constraint.

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