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Education for peace: testimonies from world religions

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minor when contrasted with the worth of the book itself. Indeed, none of the book's faults undermine or weaken its profound and timely challenges.

Bibby and his research colleagues have given to Canada's religiously committed (mostly Christians) a priceless gift. His *Fragmented Gods* is an x-ray into the profundity of our collective disease and a challenge to look honestly and courageously at ourselves and our churches. Church attendance and influence have been and are declining precipitously, and his hard data are blatant proof of that. However, his research and his analytical skills probe deeper. "In meeting a specialized age with a specialized religion," he asserts, "religious organizations are offering little more than a commodity, manufactured according to cultural guidelines." In short, Bibby insists that the churches are marketing religion like food on a menu by trying to serve up different dishes in ways palatable to people within our consumer-oriented culture. We have lost our unique message, he charges, and we are rushing pell-mell to grab our piece of a dwindling market. In short, we let the culture define us and no longer offer an alternative to the common values shared by all Canadians. He offers little comfort to either liberal or conservative church people; instead he portrays ably how both ends of the ecclesiastical spectrum have failed. And the hard data back him up.

However, there is hope. Historic religious faith has much to offer. It can challenge its own fragmentation and menu mentality by offering a gospel that addresses life around its three fundamentals—God, the self, society. The faith still has a vast potential audience, because Canadians, like most human beings, still struggle for meaning, still ask the basic life and death questions, still are struck by the mysteries of life and still are immersed in social networks. He calls on our churches to perform the risky and courageous mission of reintegrating these fundamentals. Thank you, Reginald Bibby, for placing before our eyes a reality and a task that we dare no longer avoid.

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Education For Peace: Testimonies From World Religions

Edited by Gordon Haim and Leonard Grob
Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987
240 pp.

Educators of whatever nature need to help people to entertain, to develop and to become committed to peace-fulfilling perspectives, peace-loving attitudes and peace-generating education which results in positive

action towards the development of peace in a family, in a community, in a nation and in international relations—in short, in human relationships. But this is not achieved through some wishful thinking, nor simply by advocating some noble ideal. It is accomplished—as the essays in this volume by a number of international scholars affirm—through genuine effort at understanding one another and through hard work at constructive dialogue.

It is the claim of this text that “in the current climate of heightened tension between nations possessing the capability to destroy the planet many times over, the need to deepen current efforts and to develop new initiatives in educating for peace is apparent. Indeed, it is no longer adequate to educate toward the goal of avoidance of conflict or warfare; peace educators must involve themselves with the contents and skills that will promote the positive art of peacemaking.”

Educating for peace is identified in this text as “a grassroots pedagogy to be employed in a wide variety of settings by parents, teachers, and community leaders”. The goal of such teaching is “the creation of a climate of thought within which political leaders will be spurred to work for the resolution of conflict between nations through nonmilitary means”. While it is acknowledged that the “realpolitik” may in fact be “power politics”, it is simultaneously claimed in conjunction with the writings and insights of Martin Buber, that a major source of inspiration for contemporary peace studies “is a call for an alternative politics, a politics that would enlarge the ‘realism’ of realpolitik to encompass the reality of authentic reconciliation between peoples and nations”.

It is contended by the editors that “this volume is informed by a vision of what may be called a ‘politics of peace’ in which individuals and nations alike are seen as able to transcend ‘self-interest’...Dialogical peacemaking proceeds neither on the level of the mere exchange of ideas, nor on the level of an exchange of good feeling. Rather, what is called for here... is nothing short of fundamental or ontological change, a change in the way of being of the parties involved in conflict, a change, therefore, that underlies both cognition and affectivity—and their sum.”

It is the further claim of this text that guidance in genuine peace-making must be provided by the great spiritual traditions in the cultural contexts. Part Two explores five major currents of religious thought—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. The central thesis underlying this whole section is that “at the core of these five major spiritual traditions lies a basic teaching on peace that—though often disputed, covered over by arid institutional forms, or even betrayed from within— remains to instruct peace educators with regard to their vocation of fostering peace through dialogue”. These religious traditions stand as witnesses for peace within distinctive cultures—not only as a basis for inter-religious rivalry and warfare. The road to understanding their value in educating for peace lies “not around these cultures” but “rather through them to a ground that demands of all of them the supreme effort to turn to one another in dialogue” and within this dialogical thrust, each participant must embody the “peacemaking core of one’s religious heritage”.

Education For Peace, which is addressed to students and professors in peace studies and comparative religion, as well as to those involved in studies and actions for the promotion of peace, takes seriously the global village and the pluralistic society in which we live. It challenges us to grow in our understanding of one another's religious and cultural heritages, and to do so through genuine dialogue. To fulfill the task of peace education, one must "educate one's pupils to embody in their everyday actions the peacemaking core of one's religious heritage".

This is a timely book. Its contents are provocative and challenging. But I believe that its real uniqueness lies in the fact that within the section on "Witnesses For Peace" the essays are written by scholars and practitioners from within— from within Judaism, from within Christianity, from within Islam, from within Hinduism, from within Buddhism. In each part of this text, the challenge to understand, to engage in dialogue and to become a "genuine peacemaker" is evident.

I can readily see this as a text in a university course on peace studies and comparative religion. I can also see its value in seminary courses, especially those dealing with contextual ministry. It is no longer adequate to be trained only in one's own faith; we must also seek to understand the faith of our neighbours, our fellow people. This is also a text that has value at the parish level, for personal study by the pastor, for use in adult study groups and particularly in ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues. Because of its provocative nature, this is not an easy book to read; it also touches a host of theological issues and does so more implicitly than explicitly— a factor which makes it a natural for dialogue.

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Homiletic: Moves and Structures

David Buttrick

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987

498 pp., U.S. \$24.95

This book could be named "The New Homiletic", for that is what it is. David Buttrick learned his homiletics from his Presbyterian father George and from Lutheran Paul Scherer; here he has established himself as one of the foremost North American homileticians by setting himself the task of re-thinking the homiletical discipline. It is therefore a big book and weighty reading, and extremely important.

Buttrick's "text" is from St. Paul: "Faith comes from hearing". If so, he argues, "then we must strive to be heard". He observes that Plato