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Conflict Mediation across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns

Peter L. VanKatwyk

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the messianic self-consciousness of Jesus. That is unfortunate, because Wiebe has a lot to offer in the area of ethics. The texts (whether or not they can definitely be assigned to the Historical Jesus stratum) lead him to conclude that the ethics he has investigated represent an ethics of response and gratitude. If these findings are correct, Wiebe will have established an important link between the ethics of Jesus and the ethics of Paul, for whom, too, ethics is a matter of grateful response to the gracious acts of God.

Although "Jesus held to a near-expectation of the end," and although that end has not yet come even now, Wiebe contends against Jack T. Sanders that the ethics of the historical Jesus is all-sufficient for today.

The study is well documented, although one wishes Wiebe had made at least passing reference to the research currently being conducted by the members of the so-called Jesus Seminar. The book contains many fresh and stimulating insights into familiar texts and it is to be recommended for study by pastors as well as by university and seminary students and faculty.

Erwin Buck

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon

Conflict Mediation Across Cultures—Pathways and Patterns

David W. Augsburger

Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992

310 pages \$24.99

David Augsburger, a Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling originally at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries and presently at Fuller Theological Seminary, hails from the Anabaptist, non-violent tradition. Interestingly enough his first books, and he has written many, not only focused on the specialized topic area of anger and confrontation but more specifically on how these aggressive dynamics can and should be incorporated in caring and healing relationships.

In the early 1980s Augsburger started researching a new focus area in multicultural studies and ministry, culminating in a monumental work: *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures* (1986). In this original and long overdue book Augsburger presents major theological themes (related to, among others, culture and humanness, grace and values, the individual and the family, sickness and wholeness) from cross-cultural perspectives, thereby liberating the Christian consciousness and ministry from being predominantly defined in Western world, if not North American middle class, terms of reference.

In his latest book, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures*, Augsburgers seems to have synthesized his two major areas of specialization: conflict and cross-cultural studies. The result is a richly textured study in which conflict issues and attending cultural rituals of expression and mediation form a vast landscape which provides no instant resolutions but provocative maps for reframing and reorientation.

In contrast to current "one-day" workshop designs and training guides in "conflict management", Augsburgers visualizes a process of "conflict transformation", and "a model of a productive conflict cycle that utilizes the conflict to strengthen the concord of the community" (237). Rather than the utilitarian concern of how to control and overcome conflict, the book presents theological and psychosocial perspectives of how to understand and befriend conflict as a necessary process of community building: *If you haven't fought with each other, you do not know each other* (Chinese proverb, p. 73).

Rather than focusing on content issues, Augsburgers emphasizes the *process* of conflict, including such powerful human dynamics as honour, dignity, and face (*Do not remove a fly from your neighbour's face with a hatchet*. Chinese proverb); the violent emotions of anger, anxiety, and aggression (*Anger punishes itself*. Chinese proverb); the conflict politics of triangles (*When the first wife fights with the second, the husband gets his nose cut off*. Nepalese proverb); and gender differences and conflict styles (*Even God is not ripe enough to catch a woman in love*. Yoruban proverb).

Current trends of what is popularly referred to as "globalization" have impacted the protective boundaries and narrow securities of provincialism, not only in the worlds of commerce, politics, technology, and the arts, to mention a few, but also in terms of our Christian identity and mission. Augsburgers presents the global context as the present *locus* in which to theologize and to minister. This cross-cultural perspective will not just be of interest to missiology but will renew and refresh ministry as close and parochial as parish ministry.

Augsburgers has been a master teacher for close to 25 years and it shows. The book contains 27 diagrams, 12 tables, and assorted summary charts: truly a teacher's delight. The research both in the social sciences literature and personal field studies is thorough and extensive. I can understand one of my friends who complained that the book has "too many words", the material being "overly rich and dense" in its sheer abundance of content sources and theoretical constructs. A redeeming feature may be the fact that Augsburgers enlivens this heavy dish with the salt of the wisdom literature of many cultures through the playful incorporation of many folktales and proverbs.

Perhaps Augsburg's passion about the workings of anger and reconciliation is a bit overwhelming. But, as they say in Burma, "if a cock ruffles his feathers, it is easy to pluck him" (120).

Peter L. VanKatwyk
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church

Ada María Isasi-Díaz & Yolanda Tarango
Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992
123 pages

Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church (originally published in 1988 by Harper and Row) asserts that the voices of Hispanic women are "an intrinsic part of the human voice and therefore should be an intrinsic part of theology." There is no claim to objectivity in this book; rather it presents the subjective voices and words of Hispanic women commenting on their own reality in their homes, churches and communities.

The authors are two Hispanic women living in the United States. Ada María Isasi-Díaz identifies herself as a Cuban-born feminist and activist who teaches theology at Drew University. Yolanda Tarango is a Chicana activist who coordinated an American organization of Hispanic women. In this book, Isasi-Díaz and Tarango set out to work towards a Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology.

They gathered information for the book during weekend retreats with Puerto Rican, Cuban and Mexican-American women throughout the United States. The heart of the book is the women's verbatim responses to questions about their relationships with God and the church, the role of their families in religious matters, their faith and their doubt, their experiences with good and evil and their feelings about the Bible.

This book is clearly a valuable tool for anyone working with Hispanics in the Canadian church. The questions asked of Hispanic women are listed in the appendix and would be lively discussion-starters for any group of Hispanic women living in Canada.

But the book's relevance is not limited to those working in Hispanic ministry. This book is another voice to listen to in feminist theology and liberation theology, and it provides food for thought for anyone concerned about the health of the Canadian church in an increasingly pluralistic society. The insight this book gives into Hispanic women's private thoughts about their roles in home, church and community contributes to sensitivity to all women in the church, particularly those who have been marginalized for reasons of race, culture, language and class.

I was surprised that the authors did not include Central American refugee women in the interview process since women from El Salvador,