

Finally, I was impatient with two small matters of *Patient Ferment*. Where is discipleship in all of this? While we might forgive the Mennonite Kreider for not wanting to over-do the obvious comparisons with Anabaptism, I was a little puzzled to not find this familiar word even once in the index. Isn't discipleship just a fancy way to say habitus?

While Kreider makes a strong case for the patience theme throughout the book, and especially as he shows how the church's commitment to it was essentially sabotaged by Constantine and Augustine, he seems to spend even more time making the case for habitus. It seems to me that habitus has more to do with ferment than patience does. So while the title is not incorrect, the ubiquity of habitus in this story certainly justifies a prominent place for it in the title credits.

JOHN F. LAPP is incoming Senior Executive of Global Ministries for Mennonite Mission Network.

**Curtis W. Freeman, *Contesting Catholicity: Theology for Other Baptists*, Baylor University Press, Waco, TX, 2014. 466 pp. \$49.95. ISBN: 9781481300278.**

Many denominations face deepening polarities as they engage in the social issues of our day. This isn't new. In the modern era, these polarities have been splitting along the lines of fundamentalism and liberalism. It is easy to blame the source of these polarities on secular political campaigns of the recent decades. It is rarer to assign responsibility for these divisions to the religious communities themselves. In his book, *Contesting Catholicity*, Curtis Freeman demonstrates the formative influence of the Baptist tradition in North America on disagreements that occur in the town square. Citing Carlyle Marney, Freeman suggests that fundamentalists have "stuck the window shut" while liberals "have stuck it open." In both cases, "one loses the use of the window" (56). In most organizations, the tendency is to compromise in managing these polarities. The third way is cast in terms of hope for a "middle" way. But there is "an invisible wall between liberalism and fundamentalism" that will not allow a way forward to emerge "without a paradigm shift" (86–87).

In his reading of modern church history, Freeman rightly names fundamentalists and liberals as "siblings under the skin." Both "inhabit the same type of theology (i.e., modern) even if they operate within different paradigms (Scripture vs. experience)" (86). Neither of these "possess sufficient resources for the constructive theological work that lies ahead" (87). In coming to terms with its own alterity (i.e., otherness), the church will find that the third way is not a compromised middle way but a *different* way.

Following in the furrow plowed by James McClendon, Freeman boldly explores the possibility of recovering and reclaiming the oneness of church for "Other Baptists,"

particularly where sectarian tendencies contribute to fragmenting that oneness. For Freeman, Other Baptists can contribute something essential to the church's self-understanding. "The church catholic stands ever in need of such a tradition of radical contestation to call into question the Christendom assumptions that inhibit the church from being the church" (52). By "engaging the otherness at its borders, the church may come to terms with its own alterity and in so doing come to understand its true identity" (52). Freeman offers a careful and well-documented reading of significant Baptist scholar-preachers from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries—teachers and preachers who have opened the field for Other Baptists to recover and reclaim their catholic identity.

A hopeful future in which Other Baptists recover and reclaim their oneness with the church catholic will not be conservative, liberal, fundamentalist, or an identity in between. Freeman hopes that "pilgrims who are sturdy enough to follow a new vector might regain the use of their windows by moving beyond fundamentalism and liberalism toward a liberal orthodoxy" (92). This is the preferred vocation of Other Baptists. Other Baptists are those who embody this different way by affirming "beliefs and practices characteristic of identity and mission of baptistic communities" while locating their primary identity within the historic Christian tradition (92).

Appealing to the sixteenth-century reformers Martin Luther and Dirk Philips (38), Freeman argues for abandoning attempts to define the true church in a set of foundationalist doctrinal propositions. Instead, the third way is embodied by recovering Christian practices that are the marks or signs of the faithful church—practices that cause Christians to become Christian.

In the last chapter of Part 1 of his book, Freeman describes the five signs of generous liberal orthodoxy that constitute *contesting catholicity*. These signs are (1) confessional faith, (2) regulative guidance, (3) ecclesial Christianity, (4) ecumenical communion, and (5) discerning belief. Several of these signs will bring Other Baptists and Anabaptists into important conversations as pilgrims of two traditions seeking to recover and reclaim their identity as part of the church catholic.

Confessional faith and regulative guidance, for example, will be points of generative conversation not only within the community of Other Baptists but also for Other Baptists in conversation with Anabaptists who follow John H. Yoder's ecclesiology. Freeman argues that those who are seeking a third way will need to practice a confessional faith that recites the ancient creeds of the church as the unifying witness of the church catholic. As regulative guidance, Other Baptists will adopt the "inclusive purpose" these creeds play in articulating a centered-set of beliefs more than the "exclusive purpose" of "keeping some people and their ideas out" (106–7). Yoder affirmed that "creeds tell the story of how 'God has chosen to lead his confused people toward perhaps at least a degree of understanding

of certain dangers, certain things not to say if we are to remain faithful' ” (107). Freeman’s point is that the “regulative aspects of the creeds, to be sure, ruled out heterodox notions that arose, but more importantly they ruled in orthodox ones” (106). This is an example of the many ways Mennonites and other Anabaptists will find in Freeman a helpful and provocative conversation partner as they consider their place in the church catholic.

In Part 2 of his book, Freeman teases out the implications for how Other Baptists will practice these signs as they emigrate from a place of self-imposed exile back into the landscape of the church catholic. Of particular interest to Anabaptists who may feel stuck by divisive polarities, Freeman’s chapter on biblical discernment, “More Light from the World” (chapter 7), will provide significant grist for thinking about the role and authority of Scripture for third-way people. Here we see an insightful story where church leaders found more light from the Word in the credentialing of a female preacher in the 1960s. Freeman describes this hermeneutic as having the following qualities: “every voice is heard and none is silenced, no outcome is predetermined except that all are seeking the mind of Christ”; the necessity that “advocates and adversaries are essential to the search for new light”; “all participants must listen and be heard”; “dissenting voices cannot be trumped by majority opinions or the loudest voices”; “the ruled readings of the community are listened to carefully and the community attends closely to the plain reading of the text”; and, all of this is done in the hope of finding “a path to the reconciliation envisioned in the text,” not reducing the process to “shortcuts of authority or autonomy.” Reassuring as this idealistic vision is, it will be a mature community of believers indeed who can embody the final necessary ingredient: “patience to wait for the coming of the full light that shines from the horizon of the future” (308–9).

Reading *Contesting Catholicity* from beginning to end, one can feel as though one is eavesdropping on a family dinner conversation. All good book introductions provide a roadmap so the reader can anticipate the author’s argument and methodology as well as gain a grasp of the specialized terms framing the author’s argument. Freeman, however, doesn’t explicitly define his terms as they are introduced; one is deep in the book before grasping what he means by “Other Baptists,” what is being “contested,” and what definition of “catholicity” he has in mind. It isn’t clear what role the word “liberal” plays in his “generous liberal orthodoxy.”

Overall, Freeman makes a refreshing contribution to the question of Christian unity. One looks forward to a further installment from him when he might be more explicit in describing how alterity helps the church reclaim its identity not only as the church catholic engages the gifts of the churchly “Other” but also as the whole church engages the gifts and challenges of the worldly “Other.” This would place Freeman’s quest to recover and reclaim the church’s missional identity.

DAVID W. BOSHART is the Executive Conference Minister for Central Plains Men-

*nonite Conference and current moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA.*

Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ed., *Proselytization Revisited: Rights Talk, Free Markets, and Culture Wars*, Equinox, London, 2008. 480 pp. \$36.76. ISBN 9781845532284.

“We have shown you the mountain, and now it is up to you to climb it.” So spoke Commissioner Murray Sinclair as he and the other Commissioners made their preliminary report at the close of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) last June. There was a sense that this was an unveiling, a revealing of a mountain that had dominated the landscape for so many indigenous peoples in this land but had previously been hidden from the view of the rest of Canada. There was in the Commissioner’s invitation a sense that non-indigenous Canadians would need to practice keeping this mountain in view if we had any hope of climbing it. It is in fact this task of shifting perspective that is so critical in the work of decolonizing and pursuing just and right relationships. *Proselytization Revisited* provides an international lens through which to look at some of the Calls to Action set forth for the church by the commissioners, particularly the recommendation that asks all faith groups in Canada to formally adopt and comply with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a framework for reconciliation. For evangelical and post-evangelical faith communities, this may prove to be one of the most challenging of the recommendations. Hackett’s book helps to stretch non-indigenous paradigms for engaging this path for reconciliation and gives global context for the concerns of indigenous people here and abroad.

The focus on proselytism in this book is an examination of a method gone wrong. The authors choose to focus on proselytism, rather than conversion, in order to look at the methods that are employed “to bring about a significant change in the pre-existing religious commitments, identity, membership or lack thereof of others” (77). Proselytization is the term used in human rights conversation to delineate where sharing one’s own beliefs comes to infringe on the rights of another person or group.

The three questions I believe will serve the discussion in the church regarding the adoption of UNDRIP are: How does religious freedom play out in situations of unequal power? What are the circumstances that can cause evangelism to become coercive? And finally, what might be the markers of a decolonized and authentic evangelism?

While religious freedom has been promoted in the West as a basic tenet of democracy, it is experienced by many in other parts of the world and those on the margins in the West as an arm of Western imperialism. Jean-Francois Mayer raises the issue