

how he conceptualizes reconciliation. Yet if “we understand peace and peacemaking as an indispensable part of our common faith” (Kärkkäinen 407, quoting the World Council of Churches in “Glory to God and Peace on Earth: The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation”), then there ought to be more engagement with the Historic Peace Churches and their nonviolent theologies of the Spirit, salvation, and reconciliation. Kärkkäinen doesn’t give any significant attention to such theologies.

In the introduction, Kärkkäinen makes the point that theology is about hospitality—that genuine theology is about giving and receiving gifts. I am still trying to receive the gift he is offering me. It’s still mostly an unwrapped gift. But I hope to return to it again in the future and give it another chance. If I do, I’m sure I will discover much that I was unable to receive the first time.

*FRED REDEKOP lives in Elmira, Ontario, located in the contested Haldimand Tract lands of the Six Nations. A former pastor who is still waiting for God to reveal his next calling, Fred is currently using his gifts working for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.*

**Helen Richmond, *Blessed and Called to Be a Blessing: Muslim-Christian Couples Sharing a Life Together*, Oxford, Regnum, 2015. 168 pp. \$23.00. ISBN: 9781908355898.**

A few weeks ago, I joined some high school students from my church as they traveled to our local Sikh temple. We are a part of a program called *Walking the Walk*, which brings together young people from a variety of faith traditions to learn from one another. We participated in the service, joined a group of Sikh high school students for *langar* (the open meal served at the temple), and then the youth spent an hour asking some Sikh leaders about their lives. They were particularly interested in what it was like for Sikh people to live in Philadelphia as a minority—how they hold on to traditions, how they feel about inequality in our city, what it is like to be visibly Sikh at all times. As a mentor for the program, I am blessed to listen to these youth talk, to watch them work out what it means to care for each other and to share a city.

Of course, we can’t get very far into a conversation before the broader political world breaks in. For the young folks from our church, who live in a diverse city and believe deeply in sharing their lives with people from other traditions, our country’s decision to vote for racist and Islamophobic policies—embodied in the Trump presidency—is scary. As we talked, I heard fear, uncertainty, anger—emotions I share with them. As a millennial (I’m 25) and a person in an interreligious relationship, I often don’t know exactly what to do with people in my church and my country who oppose a vision of faith communities living together.

Helen Richmond's *Blessed and Called to Be a Blessing* engages this fear and uncertainty about life together, and wisely does so from a particular vantage point. Focusing on marriages between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia and Australia, she offers models for how people in multi-religious marriages can support each other and navigate their faith communities. Richmond is herself a Christian woman married to an Indonesian Muslim man, and she unapologetically explores what frameworks and strategies can help Christians and Muslims live together.

Rapid globalization has spurred both a deep interest in plurality and interreligious community (as is evident among the young people in *Walking the Walk*), and reactionary movements against religious minorities. With so much uncertainty, we might all benefit from understanding how our different legal and theological legacies inform the present moment. This book can be an important contribution to that education, as Richmond spends the first part of her book tracing the history of Christian and Muslim attitudes toward intermarriage, as well as the histories of legal rulings on interreligious marriage in Indonesia and Australia.

These sections will interest readers differently, depending on their context. For example, I am less interested in the history of legal rulings in a country like Indonesia, where I have very little historical context to help make sense of changes in laws relating to intermarriage. On the other hand, as a Christian, I was helped by reading about the history of Christian intolerance toward others, which contrasted with early Islam's commitment to allowing marriages to other "People of the Book." Richmond's treatment of this issue helped me understand the historical depth of hatred that makes it difficult for Christians to accept people from their community marrying Muslims.

The second part of Richmond's book concerns itself with the concrete lived experience of interfaith couples in Australia and Indonesia. Drawing from interviews with these couples, Richmond shares stories of communities welcoming or rejecting interfaith marriages, parents arguing over how to raise children, and religious leaders supporting young couples in finding new ways to make meaning together. These stories force us to be honest with the complexity of living interfaith lives in communities that can be deeply exclusive. In the interviewees' questions about conversion and fidelity to family and tradition, I saw myself and my own struggles to live in an interfaith relationship.

Some of the passages that carry the greatest emotional impact grapple with couples' doubts about whether God has truly called them to live together in marriage. Some experience that doubt because of community pressure, and they come to believe their marriage is now a mistake. Others rejoice that they have found their *jodoh*, the Indonesian word meaning "soul mate." Richmond tells the story of one couple reflecting that the interfaith nature of their marriage, though rare in Indonesia, is a

blessing that has “sustained them and enabled them to live out a sense of vocation” (137).

Richmond finishes the book by exploring the range of approaches to interfaith marriage. Leaving aside coercive marriages, she finds various positive ways of making a life together, of sharing that sense of shared vocation. Some couples affirm a “Theology of Joint Witness,” where they find ways to affirm each other’s traditions and work together for the betterment of their community. Others practice a “Theology of Respectful Witness,” where difference is deeply respected and upheld. Neither is held up as the “best” way to live in relationship; instead, Richmond leaves us with a sense that every interfaith couple (and each supportive community) must navigate life together in their own way, finding ways to affirm each other’s differences while also working together. The balance between respect and compromise will be different for each of us.

In troubling political times, it can be tempting to close off our relationships, to confuse similarity with safety. Without downplaying the difficulties of interfaith relationships, Richmond gives us hope for life together. Her book walks us through the lives of real people struggling with real theological, legal, and interpersonal challenges. Their lives and her reflections birth strategies and frameworks that are useful for anyone looking to navigate an interfaith relationship or support others in doing so. As racist and Islamophobic violence becomes more explicit and common in the United States (as well as in Canada and Europe), it is even more important for everyone to work on these interfaith relationship skills. The witness provided by interfaith couples becomes a bright star in dark times.

*JOHN BERGEN is the Associate Pastor at Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

**Drew G. I. Hart, *Trouble I’ve Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*, Herald, Harrisonburg, VA, 2016. 189 pp. \$16.99. ISBN: 9781513800004.**

What does it mean to live as a racially oppressed group within a society? And why is it so hard for those of the dominant social group to see this racism? Drew Hart’s book *Trouble I’ve Seen* explores the ways we think about racism and how we can go about listening to those in our society who are racially marginalized. I write this review as a woman of color in Winnipeg, Manitoba—a land with an ongoing legacy of violent settler colonialism and racialization that has impacted Indigenous peoples in particular. Hart speaks from his context of being African American and explains what it means to be “black” in the United States.

If you have watched American news and tried to understand the dynamics of the racial tensions and injustices south of the colonial border, this book is for you. I