

1-1-1999

Book Reviews

Nancy Thomas

Ron Mock

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thomas, Nancy and Mock, Ron (1999) "Book Reviews," *Quaker Religious Thought*. Vol. 93 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol93/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Quaker Religious Thought by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

BOOK REVIEWS

Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998, 267 pp.

REVIEWED BY NANCY THOMAS

Sanctify Them in the Truth is a loosely connected group of essays by Stanley Hauerwas that show the relation of truth and holiness. The essays are based on the assumption that theology is more than abstraction about what the church believes, that it cannot be separated “from the kind of life commensurate with holding such beliefs.” (5)

The essays in Part 1 challenge the distinction between theology and ethics. In Part 2, six essays use concrete issues in contemporary Christianity to explore the relation between holiness and truth. These include issues such as modern and postmodern views of self, gay friendship, and cultural Christianity. In the essay entitled “Timeful Friends: Living with the Handicapped,” one that Hauerwas calls the most crucial chapter in the book, the author shows how caring for and being with the handicapped exemplifies how we are to live in the world at large, learning “to be friends with one another and, yes, with God.” (156)

Most of the essays in Part 3 deal with truth telling in the academic realm. My favorite is the Ph.D. commencement address Hauerwas gave at Duke University in 1996, entitled “For Dappled Things.” Hauerwas notes that most of the brilliant graduates probably are not able to understand the dissertation titles of their peers. He points out the discipline, hard work, and love necessary to produce such specialized knowledge and notes “That we cannot read one another’s dissertation titles...may not be a sign of failure, but rather an indication we are rightly reflecting the truthful differences that make our world so beautiful.” (230) The fourth and final part contains an essay on preaching and several sermons that illustrate points made in previous chapters.

Hauerwas is not easy reading. Although he claims to write for the church at large, it is mostly academics who will understand this book. But it is worth the effort.

I appreciate Hauerwas's focus on doing theology as a ministry in and for the church. I appreciate his rooting of theology in the community of the faithful, and his modeling of the theological process through story, image, and contemporary issues. I also appreciate the connections Hauerwas makes—theology and ethics, truth and holiness, and all of these with the life of the church. Although there is a certain sense of scatteredness to this collection of essays, perhaps it's Hauerwas's integrative theologizing that gives the book its underlying coherence.

Daniel William Hallock, *Hell, Healing and Resistance: Veterans Speak*. Farmington: Plough Pub. Co., 1998. 408 pp., \$25.

REVIEWED BY RON MOCK

Peacemakers resist the temptation to indulge in comfortable simplifications ignoring moral complexity, because they do not want to impose outcomes based on one side's biased perspective. Ignoring the needs, dreams, and fears of people who see the world differently leads to injustice. "Peace" without justice is just a new form of oppression, with different victors and victims.

So peacemakers dig where ruling groups don't like them to dig. Peacemakers are sometimes troublemakers, shaking a comfortable status quo for the sake of those whose voices weren't heard when the status quo was established. Peacemakers often stand in tension with the prevailing worldview, pulling it toward a new understanding that combines the strengths of everyone's views.

In *Hell, Healing and Resistance*, the author works toward a peacemaker's perspective on war. A member of a Bruderhof community in Rifton, New York, and a veteran of the armed forces, Hallock combats the Hollywood version of our military history. For the book the author sought out interviews, corresponded, attended workshops, and otherwise canvassed for contacts with men and women who had been through military combat. Along the way, he also collected stories of family members back home and civilians in war zones.

Hallock quotes lengthily from these interviews and letters, offering in their own words recollections and reflections from veterans of every twentieth-century American war. Hallock starts with recruitment, then covers the tour of duty from boot camp to discharge. He also recounts the "battles" many have fought since discharge:

reintegration into society, mental illness, and antiwar activism. Although the author provides helpful connecting text, there is some skipping from one story to another. Hallock stays with war's obscenity and tragedy, however, and doesn't blink.

I have one serious criticism: Hallock reduces the world to a moral polarity. On one side are the human ones—the victimized veterans, civilians, and family members. On the other side are the dehumanized ones—presidents, commanding officers, policy makers, corporate executives. Unfortunately, what Hallock does has its counterpart among peacemakers. Why should we be careful to empathize with those in power? Because dehumanization is at the root of war, as Hallock so powerfully argues. We too are war makers when we respond to militarists by demonizing them, discounting their views so we don't have to give them any weight in our reflections.

Hallock presents the prosecution's case against war in the twentieth century, and his case is powerful. I will add Hallock to the optional reading list in my International Conflict and Peace course. But I will continue to require students to read John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* and watch *The Killing Field* because they make similar points without demonizing.