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## McEntyre's "Speaking peace in a climate of conflict" (book review)

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# Book Reviews

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McEntyre, M. (2020). *Speaking peace in a climate of conflict*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 205 pp. \$21.99. ISBN 9780802878144

In this follow-up to her *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*, Marilyn McEntyre offers a series of brief reflections on the stewardship of language, emphasizing strategies for speaking peace in a world embroiled by conflict. An author of several books on the intersection of faith and language, McEntyre explores a variety of topics such as euphemisms, allusions, fact checking, metaphors, and poetry, using examples from contemporary authors to demonstrate each concept in action. Her aim is to equip readers to speak peacefully (though not timidly) in the public sphere, whether that be in a church, a classroom, or on social media.

With clarity and grace, McEntyre guides readers through strategies such as reframing situations to startle others into looking at them more closely, or articulating outrage with civility. Not all will agree with McEntyre's conclusions, which are not politically neutral, but her introduction declares the impossibility of neutrality in writing, so she does not stray from her intent with politically charged language.

The book has a few weaknesses. Because of the variety and brevity of the reflections, the book's flow feels disjointed at times. Moving from the practical nitty-gritty of fact checking in one chapter to the rhetorical nuances of metaphor in the next requires a mental shift for the reader. Also, while the chapter on euphemisms articulates well how they can obscure and obfuscate, McEntyre's choice of examples may not seem as obvious to some as they are to her (e.g. harvesting), and she does not offer alternative language as a solution.

Though the book's intended audience is not explicit, the clarity and beauty of McEntyre's writing makes it accessible while not sacrificing depth of meaning, and it will appeal to a broad audience. Citations are relegated to endnotes so as not to interrupt the textual flow or give the vibe of a scholarly tome, and the end notes' content is limited to citations only, so those used to more academic works need not worry about missing important authorial musings if they do not refer to the notes. An additional bibliography lists many of the works mentioned in the book, along with some others that McEntyre deems relevant to the conversation. The end

matter includes discussion questions for each chapter, making the book suitable for individual reflection or group discussion. This book is recommended for church libraries and those who want to think more deeply about the words they speak.

**Reviewer**

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