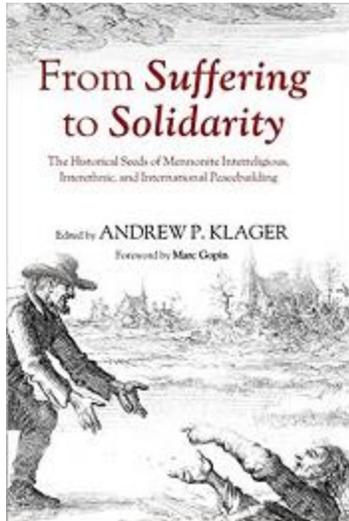


Andrew Klager, editor. *From Suffering to Solidarity: The Historical Seeds of Mennonite Interreligious, Interethnic, and International Peacebuilding*. Pickwick Publications, 2015. With a foreword by Marc Gopin.

Book reviewed by Ron Dart



The publication, *From Suffering to Solidarity*, is a must read “plough-to-soil” book. The tome is multilayered and conveys, in the most poignant and convincing manner, the various and varied seeds that have produced the best of Mennonite peacebuilding. There are a variety of books (past and present) on Mennonite peacebuilding, but few embody the sheer depth and breadth of *From Suffering to Solidarity*. Andrew Klager deserves many a generous kudo for both the authors he has brought together to contribute to this book, and for the quality of the essays within each section of this finely wrought portal into Mennonite peacebuilding.

*From Suffering to Solidarity* is divided, wisely so, into three parts: 1) Historical Conditions of Anabaptist-Mennonite Peacebuilding Approaches; 2) Analysis of the Historically Conditioned Mennonite Peacebuilding Approaches; and 3) Application of Mennonite Peacebuilding Approaches in Conflict Settings. Each of the seventeen chapters, in different ways and means, alights and often lands well on the relationship between theory and practice in the Anabaptist-Mennonite peacebuilding tradition (then and now).

The subtitle of the book is also a significant pointer to the content of the text – peacebuilding within interreligious, interethnic and international contexts – and the burnished gold of this tome also faithfully ponders the many historic seeds that have produced such ripe fruit on the Mennonite peacebuilding tree. In short, *From Suffering to Solidarity* highlights, in the wisest and most graphic manner, the best of the Mennonite tradition; how Mennonites have allowed the much suffering they have lived through to give them a practical and “in the trenches” solidarity with others who have suffered – such is the in-depth genius of both the finest of the Mennonite way and of the beauty of this book.

There are a couple of issues I would have enjoyed seeing better reflected in this well wrought book. First, the time has certainly come when the impact of Erasmus on the first generation of Anabaptists-Mennonites can no more be ignored nor denied. The impact of Erasmus is suggestively but not substantively pondered in *From Suffering to Solidarity*. Second, and in a sense a correlation to the Erasmus-Anabaptist-Mennonite connection, the relationship between the state and society – that is, top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding – could have been delved into much deeper. There is a tendency amongst Mennonites to be suspicious of statist top-down peacebuilding and to overemphasize society bottom-up approaches to peacebuilding. Erasmus held high the significance of living in the dynamic tension of state/society as a means of peacebuilding, and the Mennonite way could learn much from Erasmus in this more nuanced model of peacebuilding.

Nevertheless, *From Suffering to Solidarity* is a must-read gem of a book – pure gold.

The task of reading, inwardly digesting and living forth the best of the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite peacebuilding way could not have been better told than by Andrew Klager's careful crafting and synthesizing of such finely written articles.

Ron Dart teaches in the Department of Political Science, Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley.