



# Defenseless Christianity: Anabaptism for a Nonviolent Church

*Gerald J. Mast, J. Denny Weaver*

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"I've been reading with interest the important work being done by Denny Weaver and others on violence in relation to our understandings of God, atonement, and eschatology. I've also been watching, with joy, the growing rediscovery of the nonviolent heritage of the Radical Reformation. So I enthusiastically await the release of *Defenseless Christianity*," observes Brian D. McLaren, Author/Activist (brianmclaren.net). Entering a field of ongoing controversy, this book dares to offer a new model or vision--defenseless Christianity--for understanding Anabaptism, both present and past. The authors content that an Anabaptism defined as defenseless Christianity should be seen as a nonviolent Christian movement with a world-reconciling theology even though some first-generation Anabaptists were not pacifists. Greg Boyd, Author, *The Myth of a Christian Nation*; and Pastor, Woodland Hills Church, expresses in the foreword his hope that "God uses this book to call Anabaptists along with other Jesus-followers back to the beautifully foolish, enemy-loving, cross-bearing center of our faith." Nancy R. Heisey, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Church History at Eastern Mennonite University as well as Mennonite World Conference president, reports that "My first reaction on reading *Defenseless Christianity* was, 'Them's fightin' words!' On further reflection, I'm grateful for the gift Weaver and Mast have offered by provocatively addressing a host of issues in Anabaptist historiography and theology on behalf of contemporary communities of Christ's followers. Mennonite vision for the church but also issues a compelling call to faithful living." Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship, Bethany Theological Seminary, adds, "Let the reader beware: the dynamic nature of Christ's peace permeates this text-not as a position to hold but as a way of creative engagement and witness to God's reconciling love for all creation." And Elaine Moyer, Associate Director, Mennonite Education Agency, concludes that "This book not only presents the peaceful Anabaptist-Mennonite vision for the church but also issues a compelling call to faithful living."

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