

Without Spot or Wrinkle

Reflecting Theologically on the Nature of the Church

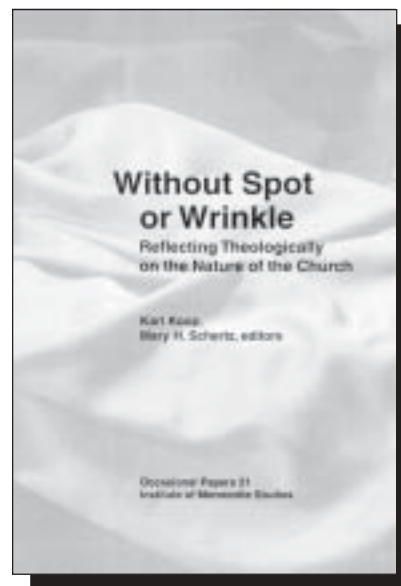
Edited by Karl Koop and Mary H. Schertz

In this collection of essays, Mennonite leaders and scholars reflect on the nature of the church and respond to challenges their church bodies in North America have been facing, which bear on issues of biblical authority, hermeneutics, church polity, and discipline.

The phrase “without spot or wrinkle” comes from Ephesians 5:27, a text addressing relationships between husbands and wives. It also has symbolized what some Mennonites have believed about the nature of the church. Anabaptists, and Mennonites who came after them, have sometimes assumed that the true church is a gathering of reborn and spiritually regenerated Christians free of moral failure. At present, however, some are questioning elements of this conceptual legacy and expressing doubts about its practical adequacy and theological tenability.

The essays in this volume do not provide a unified argument; they suggest directions for Christians seeking to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What the authors have in common is concern for the church and commitment to faithfulness. Readers are invited to reflect on the issues and make their own assessments.

These pieces were originally presented at an ecclesiology conference sponsored by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, February 5, 2000. The writers “have not ironed out all the wrinkles, but have given us a fresh view of the rich fabric that makes up the church” (from the foreword by J. Nelson Kraybill).



Editors

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