



Beyond the Barriers: Overcoming Hostility in the Church (Hull Legacy)

William E. Hull

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We live in a fractured world. Deep cleavages divide into competing camps those who could helpfully enrich and balance each other. As hostilities deepen, collaboration becomes impossible. Impasses develop that thwart any hope of progress. We lament destructive polarization in the political process, but the same kind of fragmentation has compromised the unity of most Christian denominations. When a rupture occurs, each side spends more time and energy attacking the other side than they do combating the true enemies of the faith. What is to be done about the tendency of the church to war with itself in ways that lead, not to reform, but to rigidity? Rather than turning to contemporary management theory for one more book on conflict resolution, Hull goes to the New Testament because he finds there the same challenges that confront us today such as ethnic and national differences, the role of women, and lay-clergy tensions. Taking us on a fascinating tour of the Jerusalem Temple, the author shows how this agenda became expressed in the architecture of the holiest shrine in Judaism. Against this unfamiliar background, Hull then shows how early Christianity overcame these limitations to become a world religion open to all on equal terms. Two contributors to this achievement are singled out for special study the work of Jesus in redefining his religious heritage, and the strategy of Paul in guiding his young churches to overcome internal controversy. Here we have interpretation by a New Testament scholar and application by a veteran pastor who has been in the thick of church controversy throughout his sixty-year ministry.



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