



Disquiet in the Land: Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities

Fred Kniss

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Mennonites have long referred to themselves as "The Quiet in the Land," but their actual historical experience has been marked by internal disquiet and contention over religious values and cultural practice. As Fred Kniss argues in his impressive study of Mennonite history, the story of this sectarian pacifist group is a story of conflict. How can we understand the ironic phenomenon of Mennonite conflict? How do ideas and symbols-both those of the American mainstream and those that are specifically Mennonite-influence the emergence and course of this conflict? What is the relationship between intra-Mennonite conflict and the changing historical context in which Mennonites are situated?

Through a rigorous analysis of a century of disputes over dress codes, congregational authority, and religious practice, Kniss offers the tools both to understand conflict within a specific religious group and to answer larger questions about culture, ideology, and social and historical change.



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