



Wise As Serpents Innocent As Doves: American Mennonites Engage Washington

Written by Keith Graber Miller

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Wise As Serpents Meaning

In July 1968, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) opened an office in Washington, D.C., for monitoring the actions of the federal government's various branches. Given American Mennonites' long history of noninvolvement in political affairs, this shift toward engagement was dramatic indeed. In this in-depth study, Keith Graber Miller shows how the church's distinctive traditions of pacifism, humility, and service have informed and shaped the nature of its activities in Washington. Graber Miller argues that Mennonites have both influenced the national policymaking debate and have themselves been influenced by their increasing exposure to it. *Wise As Serpents, Innocent as Doves* not only explores the twentieth-century transformations among American Mennonites but illuminates the larger issues of religious lobbying in the nation's capital. Graber Miller suggests that the Mennonites have helped redefine what it means to be a lobbyist. Because the Mennonites' numbers are too few to make them a politically significant force, he argues, their only credibility in Washington lies in an astute and accurate analysis of how the world is and in the integrity of their witness to the truth as they see it.

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