

The Century recommends

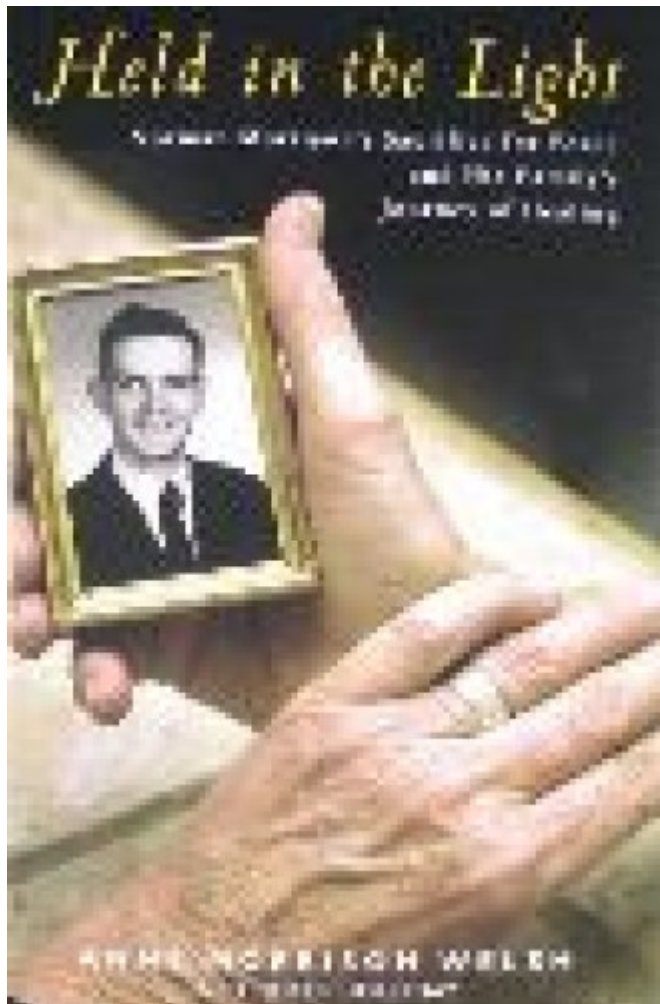
Books in the [December 16, 2008](#) issue

In Review



Disputed Truth: Memoirs II

Hans Küng
Continuum



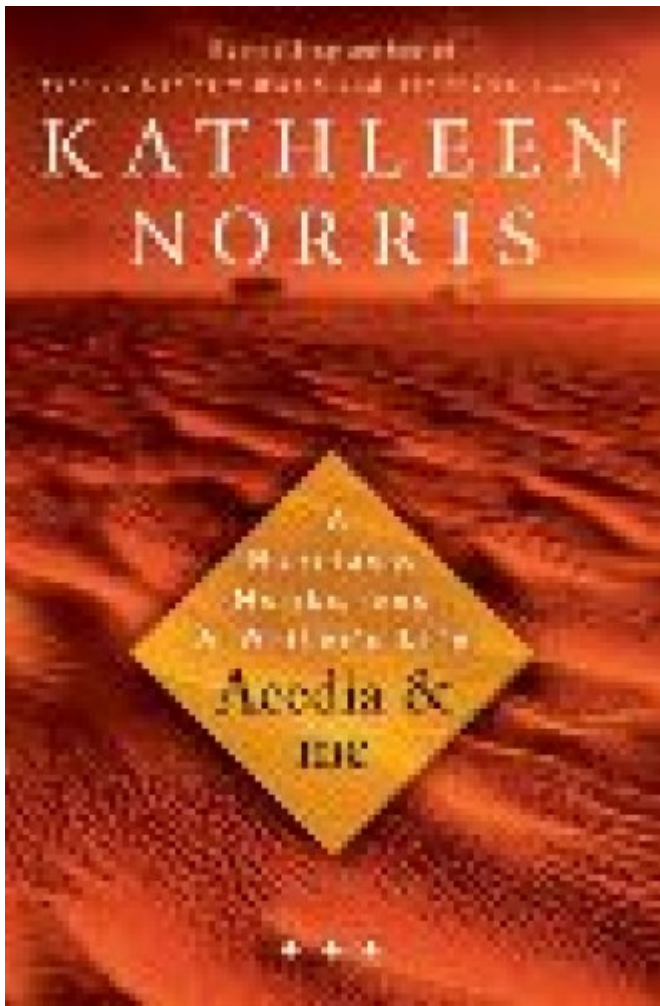
Held in the Light: Norman Morrison's Sacrifice for Peace and His Family's Journey of Healing

Anne Morrison Welch with Joyce Hollyday
Orbis



Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road: Exploring a New Path Between Two Faiths

Paul-Gordon Chandler
Rowman & Littlefield



Acedia and Me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life

Kathleen Norris
Riverhead

This volume begins with Küng as a young theologian making his mark at Vatican II and ends with the Vatican taking away his credentials as a Catholic theologian. As with virtually all memoirs, this is an exercise in self-justification. Küng offers his account of his decades-long struggle with the Vatican and in particular with Joseph Ratzinger, who went on to become Pope Benedict XVI. Küng likes a good fight, and his account of his theological skirmishes makes for engaging reading.

In 1965, Norman Morrison, a Quaker and the father of three young children, immolated himself at the Pentagon to protest the Vietnam war. Some 30 years later his widow, Anne Morrison Welch, and her two grown daughters traveled to Vietnam. They were warmly received there, and the experience helped Welch find healing.

Realizing the devastation of the war for the Vietnamese, Welch's daughter Christina declared, "Few Americans would support a modern-day war if they directly witnessed the horror of it."

At one level this book is a biography of the Syrian novelist Mazhar Mallouhi, who, following the example of Gandhi, became a follower of Christ without ever becoming a Christian. Mallouhi remains a Sufi Muslim, despite opposition from other Muslims because of his identification with Christ. At another level this is a study in interreligious understanding and points toward a model of Christian-Muslim relationships. The book concludes with an extended interview with Mallouhi.

Like most of Norris's works, this book blends personal memoir and theological reflection. Acedia, often known as the "noonday day" demon, is the spiritual aspect of sloth, according to Norris. It is often confused with depression, from which she has also suffered. She sees depression as an illness needing medical intervention, whereas acedia is a temptation that must be resisted with spiritual disciplines.

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