# THE CONRAD GREBEL REVIEW

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# The Conrad Grebel Review

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# Foreword

This issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review* presents an array of scholarly articles and reviews. In the coming months we will produce an issue on the theme of Teaching Ethics, as well as a special double issue emerging from the 2016 Global Mennonite Peacebuilding Conference and Festival. In format the double volume will resemble our recent "Sound in the Land: Music and the Environment" issue (33, no. 2 [Spring 2015]).

We welcome Melodie Sherk to the position of Circulation Manager, and we thank her predecessor, Katie Gingerich, for her service in that role.

We value your comments on material published in CGR.

*Jeremy M. Bergen*
Editor

*Stephen A. Jones*
Managing Editor

# The Lived Economics of Love and a Spirituality for Every Day: Wealth Inequality, Anthropology, and Motivational Theory after Harlow's Monkeys

*Christian Early*

## Introduction

The current inequality of wealth is at an all-time high, and the best estimates indicate that inequality will only increase in future. This is true not only in North America but globally as well. A recent Global Wealth Report states that less than one percent of the world's adult population own just below forty percent of global household wealth.[1] In America, the top quintile own eighty-four percent of the country's wealth, while the lower two quintiles combined own less than one percent of it.[2] What are we to make of the widening gap between rich and poor? What, if anything, does it say about who we are as human beings?

In *The Heart of L'Arche: A Spirituality for Every Day*, Jean Vanier proposes a spirituality centered on what he calls "the mystery of the poor."[3] All human beings carry a burden of brokenness and deep needs, he argues, which cries out for healing through friendship. The real difference between the rich and the poor, aside from their financial status which is in plain sight, is that the rich are capable of hiding their brokenness from others and from themselves. It is difficult for them to own their own (true) poverty. The poor, by contrast, cannot hide it; they know too well that they are trapped in a broken self-image and stand in need of others. The acknowledgment of their situation—their inability to hide their predicament from themselves—is their gift. The poor, then, have something to give to the rich, and the rich have something to give to the poor; they need each other. For Vanier, the

[1] "Global wealth has soared 14% since 2010 to USD 231 trillion with the strongest growth in emerging markets": https://publications.credit-suisse.com/tasks/render/file/?fileID=F2425415-DCA7-80B8-EAD989AF9341D47E, accessed July 4, 2016.

[2] Michael I. Norton and Dan Ariely, "Building a Better America—One Quintile at a Time," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6, no. 9 (2001): 9-12.

[3] Jean Vanier, *The Heart of L'Arche: A Spirituality for Every Day* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).

good news of Jesus is that

> [H]e came to gather together in unity all the scattered children of God and give them fullness of life. He longs to put an end to hatred, to the preconceptions and fears that estrange individuals and groups. In this divided world he longs to create places of unity, reconciliation and peace, by inviting the rich to share and the poor to have hope. This is the mission of L'Arche, of Faith and Light and of other communities: to dismantle the walls that separate the weak from the strong, so that, together, they can recognize that they need each other and so be united.[4]

In support of Vanier's claims about the human condition and the vision of Jesus of Nazareth, I will argue that we need each other and that the task is to create places of reconciliation and peace.[5] Problematically, the currently reigning anthropology—*Homo economicus*, which sees human beings as units of production that (ideally) maximize revenue streams by using cost-benefit analysis—supports the resulting inequality between rich and poor; it does not support Vanier's spirituality for every day. This leaves economic theorists, theologians, and ordinary followers of Jesus with a tough choice: either live with a two-worlds dualism between the "real" economic world of every day and the "unreal" spiritual world of a gospel-oriented vision, or concede the dualism by giving up on one of those worlds.

I propose an alternative: if we cannot give up on the claim that the kingdom of God is a possible future reality for all humankind and a present reality for those who orient themselves after Jesus—what James McClendon calls the "baptist vision"[6]—we should look for an anthropology that supports Vanier's claim that the vision of Jesus offers a this-worldly, real spirituality for every day.[7] Therefore I must show that (1) there are problems with *Homo*

[4] Ibid., 26.

[5] L'Arche is not a church but an international movement dedicated to creating and growing homes, programs, and support networks with the intellectually disabled. Its presence suggests that one can take up the task of creating spaces of reconciliation and peace almost anywhere.

[6] James Wm. McClendon, *Ethics: Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2012).

[7] The significance of this option is that it does not give up on either of the two wor(l)ds, economic or spiritual, arguing they both have a grip on reality. Along the way, however, I will need to shift the definitions of 'economics' and 'spirituality'—that is, I must define what it means to be human differently.

*economicus* and (2) there is an emerging, alternative anthropology, which I call *Homo caritas*, that is available even if not yet articulated. Much is at stake here. If we change our philosophical anthropology, we may also need to change much more than conceptions of economic theory and spirituality, for the simple reason that philosophical anthropology has inserted itself into our entire way of life.

First, using the insights of Michel Foucault, I will investigate the wide-reaching implications of how we came to think of human beings as essentially economic (*H. economicus*). This view's current pride of place is contingent and in principle open to reconsideration. My choice to follow Foucault may seem surprising, given the ultimate goals of this paper, because he was deeply suspicious of the essentialism and hegemonic politics often accompanying any account of "human nature." Foucault saw, perhaps better than anyone, the socio-political function of philosophical anthropology: its wide network of connections and the way it gets embodied in institutions and policies, becoming an integral part of a regime. As well, he noticed how economic theory takes an empirical turn as it attempts to transform itself into a science even as it simultaneously becomes involved in government policy. This turn is an important constructive path for the latter half of this paper, as it leads to what I call "lived economics."

Second, using Harry Harlow's ethological work with monkeys, I explore the beginnings of an alternative anthropology (*Homo caritas*). This too may seem surprising, because it raises questions about what can be learned about being human from studying monkeys. My sense is that our conception of human nature has become so overdetermined and locked in by the long history of theological and philosophical reflection, and by its role in the order of things, that it is nearly impossible to imagine alternatives. In using Harlow's studies, I hope to bypass much of this over-determination so that we might see ourselves in a fresh light. Like Harlow, we might grasp the importance of the lived experience of love in shaping who we are and how we navigate the world—by looking at monkeys.

By 'caritas,' I mean to signal a loving responsiveness towards each other, such that we experience a facing-of-life-together. According to *H. caritas*, the more fundamental human need than food or possessions is a felt sense of togetherness—to be loved. *H. caritas* suggests that what heals

and restores us—vulnerable as we are to becoming disfigured and to hiding our disfigurement through protective measures—is the dynamic, responsive dance characteristic of friendship. This view of the human being, emerging out of the lived economics of love, lends support to Vanier's spirituality for every day. It also has the great advantage of making contact with current motivation research, neuroscience, and perception studies. Aside from helping overcome a dualism, there are therefore good independent reasons to reject *H. economicus* and adopt *H. caritas*.

## Unearthing a Contingent Philosophical Anthropology: *Homo Economicus*

The opening of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* offers a striking contrast between two rituals of punishment merely eighty years apart.[8] The first ritual is enacted before the main door of the Church of Paris on March 2, 1757. Convicted for attempting to kill Louis XV, the king of France, Robert-François Damiens was taken in a cart to the place of execution.[9] Foucault includes a long eye-witness account of the execution, but the short version is that Damiens was theatrically tortured, drawn and quartered, and finally had his limbs consumed by fire. The second ritual also takes place in Paris but inside the protective walls of the House of Young Prisoners. The ritual is a timetable outlining a daily eleven-hour schedule for the young prisoners to follow. It is a sequence of tasks such as dressing, eating, working, reading, praying, and undressing, each announced and initiated by drum-rolls.

Foucault discerns in these contrasting rituals two penal styles, two theories of law and crime, two understandings of the justification of the right to punish. One obvious difference between them is the location of torture. In the old penal style, torture was a public spectacle and it was important that many people see it. In the new style, correction is hidden and very few administer and witness it. Foucault names the new style the *carceral* system, and finds it in places other than the prison: schools, factories, and military academies participate in this system as well (which may explain why those buildings tend to look alike).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault does not investigate what caused

[8] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).
[9] Ibid., 3.

the shift from one system to the other; he simply shows that one replaced the other, probably to highlight the contingent and arbitrary nature of the shift.[10] This change minimally had to include a different conception of what it means to be human, an alteration in philosophical anthropology. In the old style, human beings found their place and station in the great chain of being stretching from heaven to earth.[11] Heaven and earth were linked by priests and noblemen—most importantly, the pope and the king. To attempt to kill the king was to try to rupture the great chain of being and to rebel against the way *cosmopolis* is fundamentally ordered.[12] Torture and punishment *had* to be public: to instruct all who witness it never to commit such a crime. To be a good human being, you must accept your place in the overall order and be loyal to those above you.

In the new style, there is no such link between heaven and earth. Human beings have no station or inherent place in *cosmopolis*. Instead, they must understand who they are in terms of their property. The fundamental crime, the only one that actually counts as crime, is stealing—taking property that does not belong to you, even if it is someone else's life. This is why military academies, schools, factories, and prisons must proceed according to a timetable: it is the regulated, rule-following discipline that yields productivity. Prisoners work nine hours during their day because they must learn to (love?) work so that they can increase property and thus avoid the temptation to steal.[13] To be a good human being, you must engage in economic conduct—that is, you must understand yourself in economic

[10] This changes in Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), in which the author singles out economic theory and the adoption of *H. economicus* specifically as the reason for the shift. I focus on *Discipline and Punish* and on Michel Foucault, *Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) in order to bring out the contingency of *H. economicus* and its embeddedness in our way of life.

[11] See Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1936).

[12] See Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

[13] In his interview with J.J. Brochier, Foucault argues that pointless work—work for work's own sake—was used to shape individuals into the image of the ideal laborer. See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 39-42.

terms. On this view, we are *Homo economicus*; we are what we (usably) own—capital.[14]

It did not take Foucault long to address this complex shift in anthropology. In *The Order of Things*, he discusses the role of biology, economics, and philology in constructing and articulating the modern conception of human nature.[15] In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, he discusses the effects of *Homo economicus* especially as it links with the political theory of liberalism and later neoliberalism.[16] He concludes that *H. economicus* and liberalism come together to form a totalizing vision of everything, a utopian vision for society and a how-to manual for social engineering that manifests itself in institutions and procedures.

What Foucault finds interesting is that in so doing, the discipline of economics itself undergoes a significant transformation: its subject matter becomes human behavior. Economics in Adam Smith and in Karl Marx is the analysis of mechanisms of production, exchange, capital, and labor. However, as economics moves to the center of governmental policy and social engineering, it adopts the task of "analyzing a form of human behavior and the internal rationality of this behavior."[17] Economics becomes the science of what we do and why we do it.

> Analysis must try to bring to light the calculation—which, moreover, may be unreasonable, blind, or inadequate—through which one or more individuals decided to allot given scarce resources to this end rather than another. Economics is therefore the analysis of processes; it is the analysis of an activity. So it is no longer the analysis of the historical logic of processes; it is the

[14] "You-are-what-you-usably-own" becomes a widespread view during the Enlightenment. See Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992) for the way in which forestry changes, and James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1998) for an account of changes in statecraft.

[15] See Foucault, *The Order of Things*.

[16] For Foucault, the feature of liberal and neoliberal statecraft is the government's theoretically informed awareness and involvement with the market.

[17] Foucault, *Biopolitics*, 223.

> analysis of the internal rationality, the strategic programming of individuals' activity.[18]

From an economic point of view, now the only relevant optic, the task is to understand the rationale of a worker's activity. Why does a worker engage in this activity instead of that one? The answer is always a calculation. Economic theory adopts the point of view of the worker, not as an object but as an active subject. Why do people work? They work, so the intuitive answer goes, to earn a wage, an income. Earning an income is now the only reason, the only real motivation, to engage in work.[19] Income is the product of a capital, where capital is defined as anything that can be the source of income. Capital, more concretely, is the total set of physical and psychological abilities to earn a wage; it is the human wage-earning machine that produces an income.

This view effectively sidesteps the Marxist analysis of workers as alienated from their work: workers cannot be alienated from the work, since they work to produce earnings for themselves. Nor can they be separated from their earning-machine, because they *are* that machine. A wage-earning machine produces an earnings stream. The earnings or revenue stream begins low when the machine is first being used, rises over time, and then tails off as the machine ages and becomes obsolete. The entire worker/wage-machine/earnings-stream complex should therefore be thought of as a whole—as an ensemble. An individual worker is consequently best imagined as an "enterprising unit." Foucault says that "an economy made up of enterprise-units, a society made up of enterprise-units, is at once the principle of decipherment linked to liberalism and its programming for rationalization of a society and an economy."[20]

On this view, we are all capitalists, and there is no fundamental difference between owners and workers, haves and have-nots. All face the same economic maximizing problem in life: How can I make the most earnings, given my abilities? This question enables us to conduct a totalizing analysis of the whole environment of a human being's life that measures and

[18] Ibid.

[19] Note that the worker here is understood as being motivated purely by external rewards. This will become problematic later. See below.

[20] Ibid., 225.

calculates that life in terms of costs (investments) and benefits (increase of revenue stream), the potentials and possibilities of investment in human capital. This is the fundamental human task from the economic point of view. It follows from this view and this anthropology that nothing is wrong or deplorable about the current inequality of wealth.[21] Rather chillingly, the present state of affairs makes good sense.

**Monkey Business Part I: *Homo Economicus* in Crisis**

Our investigation could now go in two directions. We could try to pursue an eventual fit between economic theory and the Kingdom of God along liberal lines, by teasing out how *H. economicus* supports and combines with neoliberalism to create a framework within which Kingdom-of-God-ish social policy could be constructed (a common Protestant strategy). Or we could advocate for a return to an older conception of *H. economicus* grounded in metaphors of gift-giving instead of commodified versions of buying and consuming, and then propose an alternative, sacramental theological view with an accompanying alternative political economy for critiquing the current state of things (a common Catholic strategy). These two possibilities have often been pursued.[22]

I wish to explore an alternative—a possibility opened up by ethology, the science that emerges out of looking closely at the life of an animal engaging its world. The reason for this empirical line of investigation is two-fold. First,

[21] Some economists recognize that there is something wrong. See Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2013), and Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2014).

[22] For an overview of 20th-century theological ethics, see Gary Dorrien, *Social Ethics in the Making: Interpreting an American Tradition* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). On the side of a common "Protestant" strategy, see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1930), and Robert Benne, *The Ethic of Democratic Capitalism: A Moral Reassessment* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1981). For a recent example of the "Catholic" strategy, see William T. Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). The two categories do not imply church affiliation, so the Catholic Michael Novak can write *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), and the Methodist Daniel M. Bell, Jr. can write *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

it recognizes the fundamental significance of (philosophical) anthropology. How we think about who we are as human beings plays a central role in the shape of *cosmopolis*, our notion of the order of the universe and society, and how we discipline and punish. Second, it acknowledges that there is something right in new economic theory—looking at the *actual behavior* of an animal (human animal included) in order to understand who and what that animal is. This is the possibility explored by Charles Darwin in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. More recently, it is what philosopher Alva Noë calls "the biological view" as distinct from mechanical and dualist views. It was perhaps first articulated by Aristotle in his dictum that "the best method of investigation is to study things in the process of development from the beginning."[23]

There are many places to pick up that line of exploration. One is the work of Harry F. Harlow, who in the 1940s established one of the first laboratories for studying primate behavior.[24] He constructed two experiments relevant to our discussion: a puzzle-solving experiment and a mother experiment.[25] I will discuss the puzzle-experiment and its relation to economic theory first. Harlow and two other researchers gathered eight rhesus monkeys for a two-week experiment at the University of Wisconsin. They devised a simple mechanical puzzle, a lock on a door, which could be solved using three steps: pull out a pin, undo a hook, and then lift the hinged cover. It may sound simple, but it is not easy for a rhesus monkey. The puzzles were placed in the monkeys' cages to familiarize them in preparation for the tests, but immediately something very strange happened. Unprompted by any reward, the monkeys began playing with the puzzles. They showed determination, focus, and, surprisingly, enjoyment. By day thirteen, they solved the puzzles

[23] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872). See Alva Noë, *Out of Our Heads: Why You are Not Your Brain and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009); and Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, 2, 1252a24.

[24] We can learn more about ourselves from studying primate behavior than we have thought. For an excellent account of the issues involved, including where and why analogies break down, see Robert Sapolsky, *Monkeyluv: And Other Essays on Our Lives as Animals* (New York: Scribner, 2005).

[25] See Deborah Blum, *Love at Goon Park: Harry Harlow and the Science of Affection* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2002).

in less than a minute.

Why was this surprising? The then reigning conception of animals and humans—of living things in general—was that behavior was motivated by biological drives and environmental stimulation. The biological drive was about food and sex, and the environmental stimulation was about external rewards and punishments. None of these factors was present in the experiment, however, which left the behavior entirely without explanation. The "solution," says Harlow, "did not lead to food, water or sex gratification."[26] The behavior manifested in this investigation, he concludes, "poses some interesting questions for motivation theory, since significant learning was attained and efficient performance was maintained without resort to special or extrinsic incentives."[27] Harlow speculated that perhaps the performance of the task itself provided sufficient enjoyment to explain the behavior. He suggested that the reward was intrinsic to the activity: the monkeys simply enjoyed solving puzzles.

If they enjoyed solving puzzles, Harlow reasoned, perhaps they would enjoy it even more and perform better if there were a food reward at the end, an incentive. But this did not turn out to be the case: the monkeys performed worse, sometimes much worse, when given incentives. Introduction of food into the experiment "served to disrupt performance, a phenomenon not reported in the literature."[28] The monkeys' behavior went strictly against what was predicted by motivational theory, and on this basis Harlow recommended that scientists should "close down large sections of our theoretical junkyard" in order to develop better accounts of motivation and behavior.[29]

The question to be raised here concerns the analogy between the behavior of rhesus monkeys and that of humans: Does Harlow's puzzle experiment tell us anything about what it means to be human? The answer is yes. Human beings consistently behave similarly to Harlow's monkeys—extrinsic incentives have negative effects on performance when engaging

[26] Harry Harlow, Margaret Kuenne Harlow, and Donald R. Meyer, "Learning Motivated by a Manipulation Drive," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 40 (1950): 228-34, 231.
[27] Ibid., 233-34.
[28] Ibid., 234.
[29] Ibid. For a perspective on Harlow's findings and economic theory, see Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009).

in complex tasks. Dan Ariely recently conducted a study in India to test the effectiveness of extrinsic incentives on behavior.[30] Researchers devised several tasks and offered rewards for reaching certain performance levels. They divided participants into three groups, offering each group a different level of reward for reaching performance targets. Theoretically, the group offered the greatest reward would be the most motivated and thus deliver the best performance, but actually it performed the worst. Ariely concluded there is no direct relationship between incentives and performance.

This finding is not isolated. Scholars at the London School of Economics recently analyzed fifty-one separate experimental studies of financial incentives in employment relations. They found "overwhelming evidence that these incentives may reduce an employee's natural inclination to complete a task and derive pleasure from doing so."[31] It gets worse: financial incentives may also "reduce ethical reasoning"—in particular, complying with fairness as a social norm. Current research suggests that whatever directs and motivates behavior, making calculated decisions to acquire more goods (being properly "incentivized") is not at the heart of it. In a now famous paper written forty years ago, Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman suggested that many decisions are based on intuition.[32]

The deep challenge here is to the very idea of the human being as *H. economicus*. Economist Herbert Gintis states that as a discipline, economics

> fosters the belief that rationality implies self-interest, outcome-orientation, and time-consistency. If this were correct, we would have to call real-life humans hopelessly irrational.

[30] See Dan Ariely, Uri Gneezy, George Lowenstein, and Nina Mazar, "Large Stakes and Big Mistakes," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Working Paper No. 05-11 (July 23, 2005). See also Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions* (New York: Harper, 2008).

[31] "When performance-related pay backfires": www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/-2009/06/performancepay.aspx, accessed July 4, 2016.

[32] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases" *Science* 185 (1974): 1124-31. For a more recent treatment, see Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2011). Kahneman is the second psychologist to receive the Nobel prize in economics, an indication of the motivational-behavioral turn the discipline has taken. He argues that we have two systems for decision making: a fast, intuitive system and a slow, calculative one.

> The economist's treatment of rationality, however, cannot be supported. . . . [While] economic theory has much to offer . . . its contributions will be considerably more valuable when *H. economicus* is replaced by a more accurate model of individual choice and strategic interaction.[33]

Some economists, such as Bruno Frey, call for a revision of *H. economicus*.[34] Others, such as Gintis, propose an entirely new human, *Homo reciprocans*, who "comes to strategic interactions with a propensity to cooperate, responds to cooperative behavior by maintaining or increasing his level of cooperation, and responds to non-cooperative behavior by retaliating against the 'offenders,' even at a personal cost."[35] *H. reciprocans* is therefore neither a selfless altruist nor a selfish hedonist.[36]

For roughly the past fifteen years, economists have been disagreeing about the nature of the human being. This is not unimportant, because political theory (neoliberalism), conceptions of rationality (calculative rationality), ethics (rational choice theory), and possibly the entire carceral system (prisons, schools, factories, and military academies) are intricately connected to a conception of the human being as *H. economicus*. If the philosophical anthropology were to change, adjustments would have to be made throughout the web of beliefs. It is a high-stakes game.

**Monkey Business Part II: The Chain of Love**

For an alternative understanding of motivation and what it might mean to be human, I will return to Harlow and the second, better known, experiment. After the puzzle experiment, he had become suspicious that curiosity might be a more potent motivating force than food. During a delayed response experiment, graduate student Robert Butler added a mirror so he could see

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[33] Herbert Gintis, "Beyond *Homo economicus*: Evidence from Experimental Economics," *Ecological Economics* 35 (2000): 311-22, 320.

[34] Bruno Frey, *Not Just For the Money: An Economic Theory of Personal Motivation* (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar, 1997)

[35] Gintis, "Beyond *Homo economicus*," 311-22, 316.

[36] *H. reciprocans* would not be a Platonist either, since Socrates rejects the ethics of retaliation in Book I of *The Republic*. Tit-for-tat is *not* the most successful strategy. See Martin Nowak and Roger Highfield, *SuperCooperators: Altruism, Evolution, and Why We Need Each Other to Succeed* (New York: Free Press, 2011).

what the monkeys were doing during the delay. What he saw astonished him. Butler and the monkeys found themselves looking at each other. The monkeys were so interested in him that they lost their concentration, fumbled through their challenges, and abandoned their food rewards.

Butler devised a box—later named the "Butler Box"—with movable windows. When pushed, a window would slide open for thirty seconds, allowing the monkeys to see their surrounding world. In one experiment, Butler alternated placing food or an electric train making noises outside the window. The monkeys wanted to look at the food, but looking at the train became an obsession. "The windows flew up and down like winking eyelids."[37] In one experiment, a monkey opened the window just to look at the people in the room.

Not long after that, Harlow became interested in the social nature of his monkeys and in mother love. He used the Butler Box in new experiments. Strange trains and strange people in the room evoked curiosity in the animals, but were nothing compared "to the way the baby monkeys would doggedly raise the panel to see their mother's face."[38] They would open the window ceaselessly throughout the day. One opened it for nineteen hours straight. Harlow started calling the box a "love machine."[39]

Harlow then became interested in experiments directed at love and bonding. Can love be reduced to mechanisms (food, sex, reward, and punishment)? Or is it, like curiosity, a separate source of motivation? If so, how does it compare with other sources of motivation in strength? While discussing love in a scientific context was almost impossible in the 1950s,[40] it is still difficult to address love outside of literary, philosophical, or theological contexts and be taken seriously. Harlow had to devise an experiment that was both convincing and conclusive. His now familiar cloth-mother and wire-mother experiment was it. Monkeys were given a choice between a

[37] Blum, *Love at Goon Park*, 110.
[38] Ibid., 111.
[39] Harry Harlow, "The Nature of Love," *The American Psychologist* 13 (1958): 673-85, 680.
[40] There were notable exceptions. See, for example, Pitirim Sorokin, *The Ways and Power of Love: Types, Factors, and Techniques of Moral Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954). Sorokin's work has been picked up by Stephen G. Post; see his *Unlimited Love: Altruism, Compassion, and Service* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2003). These exceptions prove the rule.

cloth-mother that did not have food to give and a wire-mother that did. If baby monkeys were indifferent to touch, caring only for food, they would prefer the wire-mother. The result was unequivocal: monkeys as young as five days old would instantly go to the cloth-mother. As they got older, they found ways of holding onto her while feeding so as not to lose the felt security of touch. In a 1958 speech, "The Nature of Love," Harlow drew this conclusion: "These data make it obvious that contact comfort is a variable of overwhelming importance . . . whereas lactation is a variable of negligible importance."[41] The need for love is much stronger than the need for food.[42]

The simple experiment could be manipulated in seemingly endless ways to produce significant data. In one variation, researchers introduced a scary object (such as a toy dog barking) into the lab to observe fear response behavior. The monkeys would run, sometimes even fly, to the cloth-mother, "burrowing their faces into that warm fluffy body, closing their eyes."[43] She had become their base camp. They would sleep on her at night, and during the day while exploring the cage they would check that she was still there. This led to an important discovery: the link between curiosity and a felt sense of safety. As long as the cloth-mother was present, the monkeys would confidently explore the room. Without her, they behaved as lost and scared. This link was confirmed by variations in which the wire-mother replaced her. The wire-mother provided no felt sense of safety and was just another scary object, even for monkeys accustomed to being fed by her. They looked and behaved like abandoned children, seeking the wall and corners for safety.

Monkeys raised by the cloth-mother did not, however, grow up to become healthy, thriving adults. While she could provide initial comfort and touch, she was missing a crucial ingredient for their development: interactive responsiveness. Having noticed this, Harlow explored the dark side of love—what its absence can take away. Through isolation experiments lasting up to a year, researchers created monkeys that were emotionally, physically, and socially paralyzed: they did not explore their world or play, and barely even

[41] Harlow, "The Nature of Love," 675.

[42] Harry Harlow and Abraham Maslow were very close friends but fundamentally disagreed about human motivation. See Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

[43] Blum, "Love at Goon Park," 161.

moved. In one variation, researchers added hopelessness to the paralyzing emotional mix by placing a monkey in an inverted pyramid chamber from which it was impossible to escape. After only a couple of days, normal healthy monkeys could be turned into withdrawn, depressed, and scared loners.

Harlow wondered whether the loners could ever become healthy, thriving monkeys again. It would be disastrous to re-introduce the loners to peers—they would be instant targets for bullying—but what if he paired them with three-month-old youngsters raised on the cloth-mother? These young monkeys would gaze lovingly at the cloth-mother for hours, they cuddled, and they were just starting to become interested in social play. Harlow found that with these monkeys' help, the loners could very slowly regain their old monkey self. By studying monkeys, he discovered the healing power of friendship and how it can restore a broken sense of self.

**The Lived Economics of Love: The Benefit of Holding Hands**

The paper began by unearthing the conception of *H. economicus*, which has embedded itself in social policy without interrogation until quite recently when its explanatory and predictive capacities were challenged by research. Some economists have begun looking for an alternative conception of human nature. A clue to such an alternative is found in Harlow's discovery that incentives do not improve problem-solving performance in monkeys. Their confident and curious engagement with the world was related to a felt sense of comfort and social connection, not to food or rewards. It was possible radically to alter their engagement with the world—to shut everything down—through isolation. A monkey's social narrative, what Harlow thought of as "a chain of love" starting with the mother-infant link, profoundly shapes its motivational capacity to engage the world and to solve transactional problems. The deep story of behavior for monkeys and, I suggest, for humans, is a love story.[44]

[44] The conclusion of the vast mother-infant literature is that the need for social interactions characterized by loving responsiveness is even more true for human beings. John Bowlby's work on attachment theory as a theoretical framework is important here. See, for example, John Bowlby, "The Nature of the Child's Tie to His Mother," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 39 (1958): 350-73. For an attempt to bring attachment theory into conversation with Anabaptism, see Christian and Annmarie Early, eds., *Integrating the New Science of Love and a Spirituality of Peace* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013).

Economic theory has had an inadequate conception of the human, at least partly because it ignores the fact that human beings are mammals, born vulnerable and dependent, who come to every situation with a social love narrative profoundly shaping their motivational capacity to engage the world and thus their behavior. If economic theory were to take this into account, it would begin to give a much more adequate account of human behavior in transactional settings.

Does the idea that human beings are best understood as having a social love narrative spell an end to viewing their behavior economically? No, and I want to explore the reason for thinking so, namely that life together takes less energy than life alone. Life in social community makes good economic sense, if by "economic" is meant the energy it takes to solve the problems of being alive. If life together is good for us, then community maintenance becomes essential, a matter of life and death. The ancient understanding of *oikonomia* is "the rules of the household," which have the ethical and political goal of sustaining our shared life. That life together is less costly, and good for us, because of who we are offers a richer conception of economics that resonates deeply with the good news of Jesus of Nazareth as Jean Vanier describes it.

To show that life together is more economical than life alone, bio-energetically speaking, I will draw on the ethological work of James Coan, who has studied the effects of hand-holding.[45] He sends a person into an fMRI machine, which randomly shows the subject an image (a red X or a blue O). If shown a red X, there is a twenty percent likelihood that the subject will receive a painful electric shock. This scares the brain. The fMRI machine takes images of the scared brain to monitor its level of activity and its location compared to the same brain at rest. Coan does this with subjects in three conditions: alone, holding the hand of a stranger, and holding the hand of a partner. He found that the brain is most active during the alone condition, less active in the stranger condition, and much less active in the partner condition. This is predicted by the "down regulation" model. In this model, when the brain is frightened, it perceives that it has a number of tasks to solve (for example, get the body ready to run), thus regulating activity up.

[45] James Coan, "The Social Regulation of Emotion," in *Integrating the New Science of Love and a Spirituality of Peace*, 42-59.

Social contact, however, activates a parallel system regulating activity down. In this model, the brain responds the same way to a scare prompt, but the social situation may also provide a down-regulation, somewhat like stepping on the brakes and the accelerator at the same time.

However, the problem with the down-regulation model is that after looking for the actual mechanism and the systems involved, researchers have found nothing. Coan argues they are looking for something that is not there. The model seems persuasive because of a presupposition that the alone condition is the normal starting place, the baseline, and that the partner condition adds something to it. But what if it is the other way around, namely that the alone condition takes something away from the social condition? What if the brain gets more active the more disconnected the human being is, because the size of the trouble (the number of problems to solve and their perceived severity) is increasing? Coan calls his model *social baseline* theory. It claims that we are meant to face life being socially connected, because it takes much less energy. Love, in short, is bio-energetically green.

I suggest calling this the "lived economics of love," where "lived economics" describes the real energy cost of solving the problems of life for an organism, and "love" describes the dynamic relational responsiveness between two living beings (parent-child, partner-partner, friend-friend) that creates a felt sense of togetherness rather than aloneness. In real life, to be alone is stressful and dangerous—a condition profoundly shaping how we engage the world and our decisions in particular situations. Our love narrative, the story of the twists and turns of our felt sense of togetherness or aloneness with other living beings, is the most fundamental aspect of who we are and how we behave. It impacts how the world shows up for us and informs everything that we do in it. We are *Homo caritas*.

I must make two important qualifications. First, to argue that the human being is best understood as *H. caritas* is not to signal a new romanticism. Instead, it highlights how vulnerable human beings are and the nature of their vulnerability. It helps explain why betrayal is so devastating, why we do seemingly crazy and convoluted things to try to protect ourselves from it, and how those things make connecting to others so difficult. It allows us to acknowledge the ways things go wrong, ways in which lack of care and protective measures disfigure who we are. It is to see, with Harlow,

the darkness of what a lack of love can take away from us and how quickly it can happen. Second, to call the human being *H. caritas* is not to signal a new idealism. The emphasis is not on avoiding ruptures in the chain of love but on what it takes to repair them. Even from a highly disfigured place it is possible to come back with the help of patient, caring friends and so regain a sense of self. The appropriate mood is neither romanticism nor idealism, but honest and hopeful realism.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that the conception of *Homo economicus* is inadequate. Economists themselves are realizing this. I have also suggested, using the insights of Harlow's "chain of love" and Coan's "social baseline theory," that a better account of human nature is to think of human beings as *Homo caritas*—vulnerable beings who need a sense of togetherness to thrive—and to understand economics not as capital, production, and exchange but as the lived economics of solving life's problems. This alternative economics-*cum*-anthropology is not fully articulated—it is barely more than a theoretical possibility—yet it seems to cohere with Vanier's interpretation of the vision of Jesus and its embodiment in the L'Arche community.

The prophets of Israel were surely right to cry out against the deep and unjust divides of their world, and we ought to cry out against the divides of our world as well. In Vanier's jubilee vision, the rich have gifts to offer the poor, but there is an important sense in which the rich are destroyed in the unity that Vanier imagines—"rich" understood here as a category defined as separate and above the "poor." As Ched Myers says, "the kingdom of God is simply that social condition in which there are no rich and poor."[46] The reason it is difficult for many rich to enter the kingdom of God is that they want to remain rich—even if it will be their undoing. A *H. caritas* anthropology points with Vanier to the real human need: a sense of togetherness and a sense of being cared for, loved, in the mundanity of life. It is a spiritual ethics, an *oikonomia*, for every day.

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[46] Ched Myers, *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics* (Washington, DC: Tell the Word, 2002).

# Mennonites in Latin America: A Review of the Literature

*Benjamin W. Goossen*

Mennonites hold a special place in the literature on German diasporas.[1] Since the mid-19th century, experts on Germans abroad have identified German-speaking Mennonites as model communities, especially regarding their ability to maintain German dialects in foreign settings and to perform characteristically "German" pioneer work. Fascination among the German public and German academics for their diasporic "co-nationals" peaked between Otto von Bismarck's acquisition of a colonial empire in 1884 and Adolf Hitler's bid for East European expansion during the Second World War, leading to an extensive literature on Mennonites-as-Germans in Ukraine, Poland, Siberia, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, and the United States. Yet even after the fall of the Third Reich and the relative decline of irredentist German nationalism, interest in German-speaking Mennonites around the globe persists.

Like Weimar and Nazi-era historians, journalists, and anthropologists before them, prominent German media outlets such as *Der Spiegel* find wide audiences for articles and documentaries about conservative Mennonites abroad. According to migration historian Dirk Hoerder, ethnicity among the millions of people with German heritage living beyond the borders of the post-World War Germanies became largely "symbolic," limited to fond stories and traditional foods but no longer expressed through transnational relationships or the German language. "Only among the distinct group of the Mennonites," Hoerder qualifies, "did a diasporic connectedness between Russian, North American, and South American colonies last through the

[1] The sources for this article were collected during the research process for my forthcoming book, *Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2017), with funding from the Fulbright Commission, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and Harvard University. I wish to thank Rachel Waltner Goossen and Alison Frank Johnson as well as three anonymous reviewers for their comments. All translations are my own.

*The Conrad Grebel Review* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 236-265.

1950s and beyond—but this was religiocultural, not ethnocultural."[2]

Hoerder's distinction between "religious" and "ethnic" cultural dynamics invokes the central tension at the heart of the scholarship on Mennonites as diasporic Germans. If commentators ranging from pre-World War I officials of the Association for Germandom Abroad (*Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*) to Heinrich Himmler's Ethnic German Office (*Volksdeutsche Mittelsstelle*), a subsidiary of the SS, consistently identified Mennonites as unusually good at being German, they typically amended such sentiments by noting that this was due not to some deep commitment to the German nation but rather to their "strong religious affiliation."[3] In other words, Mennonites' most profound characteristic—and also the most apparent wellspring of their Germanness—was their pious, conservative faith. That some Mennonites considered religion more important than ethnicity helps to explain why certain congregations began participating in overseas mission work as early as the 1820s. Desiring to export their faith to "heathens" abroad or to spread it among non-believers at home, Mennonites in Europe and North America had established mission stations in colonial Indonesia by the 1850s and among American Indians during the 1880s, as well as in China, India, Nigeria, and Armenia by the first decade of the 20th century. Today, the world's 2.1 million Anabaptists make their homes in 87 different countries. A majority are people of color and live in the Global South.[4]

Recent literature on Mennonite history has attempted to reflect the religion's ethnic and geographical diversity. In addition to a longstanding historiography on Mennonite missiology, new works have explored the globalization of Mennonite worldviews, institutions, aid organizations, and movements.[5] Others have considered the experiences of communities

[2] Dirk Hoerder, "The German-Language Diasporas: A Survey, Critique, and Interpretation," *Diaspora* 11, no. 1 (2002): 33.

[3] EWZ-Kommission XXVII-Sonderzug Gesundheitsstelle, "Bericht über die Durchschleusung der Russlanddeutschen im Warthegau," June 29, 1944, R69/418, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

[4] For population estimates, see Mennonite World Conference, "World Map," 2015, www.mwc-cmm.org. This source does not include Church of the Brethren members in Latin America; some conservative groups are likely underreported.

[5] Examples include John A. Lapp, "The Global Mennonite/Brethren in Christ History Project: The Task, the Problem, the Imperative," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 283-

composed primarily of non-whites, such as African Americans in the United States, or have looked at the changing role of humanitarian organizations like Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) from feminist or postcolonial perspectives.[6] Most prominent has been the five-volume "Global Mennonite History Series," a project begun in the late 1990s and completed in 2012, through which Mennonite scholars in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America have written the histories of the faith on their respective continents.[7] Nevertheless, a popular and scholarly understanding of Mennonitism as a distinctively Germanic tradition continues. Histories and sociologies of Mennonite communities around the globe disproportionately focus on white, English or German-speaking "ethnic Mennonites," a term used to distinguish members of European extraction who often claim to trace their lineage to the 16th-century Reformation against more recently converted whites or (usually) people of color. While studies of "ethnic" Mennonites generally take whiteness as normative, they rarely treat the denomination monolithically; works on the variation among different forms of Germanic Mennonite "ethnicity" in fact constitute a substantial subgenre.[8]

90; Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in the Global Village* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2000); John A. Lapp and Ed van Straten, "Mennonite World Conference, 1925-2000: From Euro-American Conference to Worldwide Communion," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 77, no. 1 (2003): 7-46; Steven Nolt, "Globalizing a Separate People: World Christianity and North American Mennonites, 1940-1990," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 84, no. 3 (2010): 487-506; John D. Roth, "'Blest Be the Ties That Bind:' In Search of the Global Anabaptist Church," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 5-43.

[6] Lucille Marr, "The History of Mennonite Central Committee: Developing a Genre," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 23 (2005): 47-58; Tobin Miller Shearer, *Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010); Alain Epp Weaver, *A Table of Sharing: Mennonite Central Committee and the Expanding Networks of Mennonite Identity* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2011).

[7] Hanspeter Jecker and Alle G. Hoekema, eds., *Testing Faith and Tradition: Europe* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2006); John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder, eds., *Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts: Africa* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2006); Jaime Prieto Valladares, *Mission and Migration: Latin America* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2010); John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder, eds., *Churches Engage Asian Traditions: Asia* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2011); Royden Loewen and Steven M. Nolt, *Seeking Places of Peace: North America* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2012).

[8] Recent works include Rodney J. Sawatsky, "Mennonite Ethnicity: Medium, Message and Mission," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 9 (1991): 113-21; Daphne Naomi Winland, "The Quest for Mennonite Peoplehood: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Dilemma of Definitions,"

This essay analyzes the English and German-language historiography of Mennonites in Latin America—a region firmly at the crossroads of history-writing about Mennonitism.[9] With an estimated population of 200,000, Latin America is home to arguably the most diverse set of Anabaptist congregations in the world.[10] Its communities include substantial numbers of both "ethnic" and non-"ethnic" Mennonites, as well as conservative/isolationist and progressive/assimilated Mennonites. A small sample of the descriptive prefixes used to distinguish various groups include Latino, Sanapaná, Sommerfelder, Bolivian, white, Old Colony, Ñandéva, indigenous, Paraguayan, Indian, black, Puerto Rican, Beachy Amish, Chulupí, aboriginal, Holdeman, Toba, *Kleine Gemeinde*, Jamaican, Chilean, *Allianz*, Russian, Lengua, and Canadian. Historically perceived as underdeveloped or even

*Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology* 30, no. 1 (1993): 110-38; Steven M. Nolt, "A 'Two-Kingdom' People in a World of Multiple Identities: Religion, Ethnicity, and American Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73 (1999): 485-502; Hans Werner, "Peoplehoods of the Past: Mennonites and the Ethnic Boundary," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 23 (2005): 23-35; James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe—Russia—Canada, 1525 to 1980* (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 2006), especially 205-28; Royden Loewen, "The Politics of Peoplehood: Ethnicity and Religion Among Canada's Mennonites," in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, ed. Paul Bramadat and David Seljak (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2008), 330-64; Benjamin W. Goossen, "From Aryanism to Anabaptism: Nazi Race Science and the Language of Mennonite Ethnicity," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 90, no. 2 (2016): 135-63.

[9] A similar analysis of literature in Spanish and Portuguese would be most welcome. Readers interested in Spanish-language overviews of Mennonites in Latin America should consult Jaime Prieto, *Misión y migración: Colección de Historia Menonita Mundial, América Latina* (Guatemala: Ediciones Clara-Semilla, 2010); Jaime Prieto, *Menonitas en América Latina: Bosquejos Históricos* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2008); and Rafael Falcón, *Historia del Menonitismo Hispanohablante: 1917-1990* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), part of the series Colección Menohispana.

[10] Earlier surveys of the field include Willard H. Smith, "Mennonites in Latin America: An Annotated Bibliography," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 26, no. 4 (1952): 298-318; Herbert Minnich, "Mennonites in Latin America: Number and Distribution," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 48, no. 3 (1974): 385-88; Juan Francisco Martínez, "Latin American Anabaptist-Mennonites: A Profile," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 74, no. 3 (2000): 463-77. See also Walter Sawatsky, "Mennonite Historiography and the New Mennonites of Asia, Africa, and Latin America: Attempting a Critical Evaluation," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 95-113, for an overview of efforts to integrate missionized communities into broader histories of Anabaptism.

"backward," Latin American countries have attracted both traditionalist communitarians seeking to escape assimilation in democratic Canada and the United States, as well as many of the evangelically-minded among their more progressive neighbors, enticed by the region's broad mission fields.

Several states have granted special privileges and semi-autonomous zones to conservative groups, allowing the maintenance of an insular lifestyle as intriguing to scholars of the German diaspora as it is incomprehensible to many of the continent's Mennonites of color who see conversion, in part, as a ticket to wealth and modernization. Latin America has long held a special place in the global Mennonite imagination: once as the potential site of a separatist "Mennonite State," a new homeland to refugees from Bolshevism, more recently as the location of the first Mennonite World Conference (MWC) to be held outside North America or Europe, and since 2012 home to MWC's official headquarters. By examining the ways that scholars have written about the history of Mennonitism in Latin America, I hope to illuminate the dominant modes of narration that have shaped academic understandings of diverse Mennonite groups, including the interactions or non-interactions between these strands.

**"Canadian" Mennonites**

Histories of Mennonitism in Latin America often open with the migration, beginning in the 1920s, of some 10,000 conservative German-speaking Mennonites from Western Canada to Mexico and Paraguay. During the First World War, these Mennonites' separatism, German language, and refusal to participate in military service had set them at odds with more patriotic Canadians, and after Canadian lawmakers banned German-language schooling, a number of communities resolved to leave for Latin America. Embedded within a broader literature on Mennonite mobility and anti-modernism, scholars have typically placed this story within a longer trajectory of Mennonite movement prompted by persecution.

In 1927, Orie O. Miller, a lay leader from Indiana and the first historian of the Latin American migration, compared it to three major previous migrations: first, the resettlement beginning in the 17th century of Amish and Mennonites from Central Europe to colonial North America and the early United States; second, of their coreligionists in East and West

Prussia to South Russia during the 18th and 19th centuries; and third, of approximately one-third of those same South Russians to Canada and the United States at the end of the 19th century. Combined with yet another wave from the former Tsarist empire to Canada after the Bolshevik Revolution, Miller noted that the size of the 1920s migration "exceeds the sum of the other three." In the decade since the First World War, "more Mennonites will have taken such a step," he calculated, "than was the case during our whole previous four centuries' history. . . . Historians a century hence will undoubtedly appraise this present movement as epochal in our history as a people and as a denomination."[11]

Nearly a century on, Miller's words have proven prophetic. While historians have paid much greater attention to the movement of Mennonites from the early Soviet Union to Canada, scholars have recently taken a new interest in those who during the same years transplanted from the British Dominion to Mexico and Paraguay, as well as their many descendants. Higher levels of education among Mennonites in Canada, including a greater propensity to establish their own institutions of higher education and to pursue graduate degrees, as well as federal Canadian support for ethnic studies programs, have facilitated this disparity in the literature, while also helping to explain why most academic works about conservative Mennonites in Latin America are produced in Canada and the United States.[12]

In 2013, Royden Loewen, chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, published the most extensive study to date on these communities. Entitled *Village among Nations: "Canadian" Mennonites in a Transnational World, 1916-2006*, Loewen's volume drew on longstanding tropes of Mennonites, like Jews, as a "nation among the nations"—a people united by faith and heritage but dispersed among multiple states with different majority populations. Analyzing the 250,000 Low German-speaking Mennonites now scattered through secondary migrations

[11] Orie O. Miller, "The Present Mennonite Migration," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 1, no. 2 (1927): 9.

[12] Much of this work is supported by the Manitoba-based Plett Foundation: www.plettfoundation.org. Since 1999, one major Latin America-based center of research has developed around the Verein für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay, which publishes a *Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay*. See also *Lexikon der Mennoniten in Paraguay* (Asuncíon: Verein für Geschichte und Kultur in Paraguay, 2009).

across East Paraguay, British Honduras, Bolivia, Belize, and Argentina or through return migrations to Canada, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, his book demonstrates how these individuals often held onto their Canadian citizenship across several generations, migrating through North and South American states "without pursuing either social or cultural citizenship in them." In Loewen's estimation, "They were thus not Mexican Mennonites or Paraguayan Mennonites as much as Mexico Mennonites and Paraguay Mennonites, a subtle, but significant, difference."[13]

Adopting a "transnational" lens to analyze his subject, Loewen followed a trend among scholars across a broad swath of the historical profession. Rather than bounding their topics with the borders of nation-states, these historians have rejected "methodological nationalism" for approaches that favor comparison, interaction, reception, and cross-border movements of people, goods, ideas, and institutions. As Loewen ably shows, this methodology is well suited to Mennonite history. It provides a framework to understand not only the physical movement of Mennonite people but also the cultural formations that have allowed populations to think and dream on a trans-continental scale.

Thus we can integrate the story of the first Mennonites to arrive in Latin America—three agricultural workers from the Netherlands who in the 1640s came to what is now Brazil and petitioned the Dutch governor to allow the migration of their persecuted coreligionists in the Holy Roman Empire—with the imaginative discussions of economically and politically repressed Mennonites in 19th- and 20th-century Russia and Germany, for whom the region constituted a potential destination alongside Australia, Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere. In each case, Latin America appeared as a place of refuge for a people under attack. But if transnational methodology has helped scholars tell more geographically expansive and theoretically nuanced tales, it has at the same time tended to emphasize the relative isolation of Mennonite communities. Thus in *Village among*

[13] Royden Loewen, *Village among Nations: "Canadian" Mennonites in a Transnational World, 1916-2006* (Buffalo, NY: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2013), 5. Loewen had previously explored some of these communities in his monograph *Diaspora in the Countryside: Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Twentieth-Century Rural Disjuncture* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2006). See also Lorenzo Cañás Bottos, "Transformations of Old Colony Mennonites: The Making of a Trans-statal Community," *Global Networks* 8 (2009): 214-31.

*Nations*, conservative Low German-speakers have little in common with those outside their own faith community, including more progressive US missionaries in Argentina, who in 1919 had already established the first permanent Mennonite community in Latin America.

Traditionalist Low German-speaking Mennonites in Latin America are generally seen to have more in common with other conservative Anabaptist groups in Canada and the United States, including Amish, Hutterites, and Old Order Mennonites. In a short "Introduction to the Conservative Low German Mennonites in the Americas," Loewen opens with quotations from nine of the most prominent scholarly works on North American Amish, casting his own subjects in the paradigms of this deeper, better-established literature.[14] Like other so-called "plain peoples" in Canada and the US, conservative Low German-speakers typically hold church services in German, eschew musical instruments and higher education, run their own schools, and adhere to rural agrarian lifestyles. Around half do not use cars or electricity and remove rubber tires from their farm equipment. Anticipating an acculturated, North American audience, Loewen presents these features as unusual. That some Mennonites would choose such a lifestyle seems out of step with mainstream values in an age of modernity: "The idea that an immigrant would make an economic sacrifice for a specific cultural goal seems strange in a world where middle-class values seem to dictate most social action."[15] Through such representations, conservative Low German Mennonites are depicted in opposition to "modern" forms of technology and living, intended both to complicate readers' assumptions about the desirability of their own choices and to demonstrate the possibility of an alternative path.[16]

But if these Mennonites question change, they are far from frozen in time. Just as recent works on North American Amish have reassessed the characterization of anti-modernism—emphasizing many communities' selective use of technologies ranging from cell phones to Facebook—scholars

[14] Royden Loewen, "To the Ends of the Earth: An Introduction to the Conservative Low German Mennonites in the Americas," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 82, no. 3 (2008): 427-28.
[15] Loewen, *Village among Nations*, 13.
[16] See especially Royden Loewen, *Horse-and-Buggy Genius: Listening to Mennonites Contest the Modern World* (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 2016).

of conservative Low German-speakers have argued, seemingly paradoxically, that they have in many cases exercised a modernizing influence on Latin American states. Historian Jason Dormady, for example, has argued that the influx of Old Colony Mennonite settlers to Chihuahua in the early 1920s helped to re-stabilize the region's economy after the Mexican Revolution. And today, subsequent generations have found creative methods of adapting their social and agricultural practices to a 21st-century Mexico troubled by drug violence and rapid climate change. Old Colony Mennonites, Dormady writes, "are as likely to follow global currency and stock exchange rates as read the Bible."[17]

Similarly, in her history of nation-building in early 20th-century Paraguay, Bridget María Chesterton has shown how public debates about whether to invite conservative Mennonites from Canada (and about what kind of privileges to grant them) hinged on notions of progress, modernity, and civilization. Just as Mexican President Alvaro Obregón had in 1921 promised Mennonite settlers from Canada freedom from military service, exemption from oaths, permission to establish parochial schools, and significant legal autonomy in order to stimulate agricultural development, the Paraguayan government extended in the same year similar measures to those willing to tame the "wilderness" of the country's Gran Chaco region.[18]

Perhaps the most thorough critique of the Mennonites-as-static narrative has come from social anthropologist Lorenzo Bottos. In *Old Colony*

[17] Jason Dormady, "Mennonite Colonization in Mexico and the Pendulum of Modernization, 1920-2013," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 88, no. 2 (2014): 189. On Old Colony Mennonites in Mexico, see also J. Winfield Fretz, *Mennonite Colonization in Mexico* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1945); Calvin Wall Redekop, *The Old Colony Mennonites* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1969); Harry Leonard Sawatsky, *They Sought a Country: Mennonite Colonization in Mexico* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971); David M. Quiring, *The Mennonite Old Colony Vision: Under Siege in Mexico and the Canadian Connection* (Steinbach, MB: Crossway Publications, 2003).

[18] Bridget María Chesterton, *The Grandchildren of Solano López: Frontier and Nation in Paraguay, 1904-1936* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2013), 97-101. On this settlement, John B. Faust, "The Mennonite Colony in Paraguay," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 3, no. 3 (1929): 183-89; Martin W. Friesen, *Neue Heimat in der Chacowildnis* (Loma Plata, Paraguay: Sociedad Cooperativa Colonizadora, 1997); Jacob A. Braun, *Im Gedenken an jene Zeit: Mitteilungen zür Entstehungsgeschichte der Kolonie Menno* (Loma Plata, Paraguay: Geschichtskomitee, 2001).

*Mennonites in Argentina and Bolivia: Nation Making, Religious Conflict and Imagination of the Future*, Bottos challenges the notion that Old Colony Mennonites are stuck in time, building his analysis around their conceptions of the future. "Not all societies or groups need imagine the future in the same way," he explains, "and the evolutionary narrative of modern western society should be taken as but one among many other possibilities."[19]

Overturning both popular representations of conservative Anabaptists as backward holdovers from a distant past and nostalgic accounts by acculturated Mennonite historians, who have often portrayed more traditionalist communities as idyllic and harmonious, Bottos focuses on internal conflict, showing how dissent and its resolution contribute to order, boundary making, and identity formation in Old Colony communities. Drawing on the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben, he argues that the special privileges enjoyed by Low German-speaking Mennonites in Argentina and Bolivia have enabled them to construct "embedded sovereignties" within larger territorial countries. While these "states of exception" have helped to bolster their host nations' legal authority, Mennonite settlers' sense of independence depends on a silencing of this relationship. Within the colonies, tools of community regulation such as excommunication are used to maintain social and religious control as well as to avoid external intervention; but they are also applied judiciously to avoid mass defection and the formation of yet another exceptional state.[20]

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[19] Lorenzo Cañás Bottos, *Old Colony Mennonites in Argentina and Bolivia: Nation Making, Religious Conflict and Imagination of the Future* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2008), 2.

[20] Lorenzo Cañás Bottos, "Order and Dissent among Old Colony Mennonites: A Regime of Embedded Sovereignty," in *Permutations of Order: Religion and Law as Contested Sovereignties*, ed. Thomas Kirsch and Bertram Turner (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 107-24. See also Anna Sofia Hedberg, *Outside the World: Cohesion and Deviation among Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia* (Uppsala: ACTA Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2007), much of which focuses on transgression, departure from community, and return; the ethnographic essays in Carel Roessingh and Tanja Plasil, eds., *Between Horse & Buggy and Four-Wheel Drive: Change and Diversity among Mennonite Settlements in Belize, Central America* (Amsterdam: VU Univ. Press, 2009); and papers from a 2011 conference on "Anti-modern Pathways: Horse and Buggy Mennonites in Canada, Belize and Latin America" in *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 31 (2013): 51-201.

**"Russian" Mennonites**

If current debates about Latin America's conservative "Canadian" Mennonites center on questions of modernity and nationality, these discussions owe much to the historiography of a smaller but more heavily studied group: German and Low German-speaking "ethnic" Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union. Between 1929 and 1934, an international community of Mennonite leaders from Canada, the United States, Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and the Soviet Union worked with the League of Nations and multiple national governments to resettle some 4,000 Russian-born Mennonites in Paraguay and Brazil. While these colonists arrived from various locations, including Ukraine and Siberia via Moscow, interwar Poland, and a refugee camp in northern China, most had fled collectivization and "dekulakization" as instituted by Joseph Stalin's "Revolution from Above."[21]

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, a second wave of 5,000 refugees from the Soviet Union arrived in Paraguay, while another 1,000 from the formerly German provinces of northern Poland relocated to Uruguay.[22] While these various groups generally settled among themselves, forming their own colonies with organizational structures similar to those they had known in Russia and the Soviet Union, several did maintain contact with the already extant conservative Mennonite community in

[21] See James Casteel, "The Russian Germans in the Interwar German National Imaginary," *Central European History* 40, no. 3 (2007): 429-66; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2001), 319-21; John B. Toews, "Die Flucht rußlanddeutscher Mennoniten nach China (1929-1934)," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 36 (1979): 27-48.

[22] On these movements, see Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus* (Altona, MB: Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962); Peter and Elfrieda Dyck, *Up from the Rubble: The Epic Rescue of Thousands of War-Ravaged Mennonite Refugees* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991). Most internal histories written by these groups have been regional or national in scope, such as Johannes Bergmann, *Neue Heimat in Uruguay: Der Weg der Mennoniten von Danzig, Westpreußen und Polen nach Uruguay* (Montevideo: Grund Technischer Mängel, 1988); Reynolds Herbert Minnich, *The Mennonite Immigrant Communities in Parana, Brazil* (Cuernavaca, Mexico: Centro Intercultural de Documentación, 1970). However, some have adopted a transnational focus: see Willy Janz and Gerhard Ratzlaff, *Gemeinde unter dem Kreuz des Südens: Die mennonitischen Brüdergemeinden in Brasilien, Paraguay und Uruguay 1930-1980* (Curitia, Brazil: Imprimas, 1980).

Paraguay. Indeed, it was largely because these "Canadians" had negotiated immigration rights from the Paraguayan government that so many of their "Russian" coreligionists were able enter in the first place.

Early scholarship on the "Russian" Mennonite settlements in Brazil and Paraguay developed along two interrelated tracks. First, chroniclers associated with North American Mennonite aid organizations, especially MCC, cast the settlers as participants in an audacious experiment in communal religious living. Writers like the historian and MCC leader Harold S. Bender praised their pioneering abilities, drawing on tropes of both Christian utopianism and European civilization to contrast the Mennonite colonies with the supposedly empty and wild land around them. During a 1930 "World Aid Conference" held in Danzig to decide the fate of the refugees from the Soviet Union, Bender had suggested that their relocation to Paraguay could facilitate the formation of an autonomous "Mennonite State." Given the chance to build a new homeland in "one of the largest fertile, undeveloped lowlands in the world," he explained, the "little Mennonite nation, with its culture and its faith, can live in peace under the best conceivable conditions."[23]

Bender returned to the topic nine years later in a wide-ranging essay on "Church and State in Mennonite History." Along with an earlier phase of Mennonite self-government in Tsarist Russia—a phenomenon that subsequent historians have referred to as the "Mennonite Commonwealth"—he identified Paraguay as playing host to a smaller Mennonite country. Anticipating Bottos's notion of embedded sovereignty, Bender noted that Paraguayan laws had never been applied within the Mennonite settlements, no police officer or government official had ever exercised jurisdiction there, and none of the national courts had brought inhabitants to trial. In sum, "the

[23] Harold Bender, "Die Einwanderung nach Paraguay," *Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz vom 31. August bis 3. September 1930 in Danzig* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1930), 117-25. On Bender, see Albert N. Keim, *Harold S. Bender, 1897-1962* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998). On MCC's involvement in Latin America, see Gerhard Ratzlaff, *Das Mennonitische Zentralkomitee in Paraguay, 1930-1980* (Asunción: Oberschulzenrat der mennonitischen Kolonien Menno, Fernheim, Friesland, Neuland und Volendam, 2014); Robert S. Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: The MCC Experience* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 249-96.

Mennonites of the Chaco do constitute an absolutely independent state."[24]

The work of Bender and others associated with MCC echoed for decades in scholarship on the "Russian" colonies. During the mid-20th century the Kansas-based sociologist J. Winfield Fretz, in particular, studied Mennonite colonization in Paraguay as an exercise in "immigrant group settlement." Fretz's work aimed both to contribute to the burgeoning field of Mennonite sociology and to provide a usable set of guidelines for directing the future transfer of Mennonite populations to new locations. A prolific writer and speaker, Fretz helped to popularize the story of Paraguayan Mennonitism among North American audiences while also casting the "Russian" Mennonites of Latin America as a normative subject for sociological research.[25]

The close links between knowledge production in North American Mennonite colleges and the Latin American development work sponsored by organizations like MCC and Mennonite Economic Development Associates—including frequent correspondence, circulation of articles, and visits between Paraguay, Brazil, Canada, and the United States—helped to cement pioneering as a dominant mode of historical narration at both the popular and academic levels.[26] Unsurprisingly, this has provided a significant idiom for internal colony histories, often written by Mennonites in Latin America to mark the twenty-fifth or fiftieth anniversary of a settlement's

[24] Harold S. Bender, "Church and State in Mennonite History," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 13, no. 1 (1939): 100. See also Harold S. Bender, "With the Mennonite Refugee Colonies in Brazil and Paraguay: A Personal Narrative," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 13, no. 1 (1939): 59-70.

[25] J. Winfield Fretz, *Mennonite Colonization: Lessons from the Past for the Future* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1944), *Pilgrims in Paraguay* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1953), and *Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay: A Study in the Sociology of Colonization* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1962). See also Hertha Kraus, *International Relief in Action, 1914-1943* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1944), 211-15; Hendrick Hack, *Die Kolonisation der Mennoniten im paraguayischen Chaco* (Den Haag: Drukkerij Albani, 1961); Hermann Schempp, *Gemeinschaftssiedlungen auf religiöser und weltanschaulicher Grundlage* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1969), 199-225, 315-18.

[26] On transnational humanitarian and development projects, see for example Gerhard Ratzlaff, *The Trans-Chaco Highway: How it Came to Be* (Asunción, 2009); Gerhard Ratzlaff, *Hospital Mennonita Km 81: Liebe, die tätig wird* (Asunción: Gemeindekomitee, 2001).

founding.[27] In 1948, Paraguayan leaders' report to the fourth Mennonite World Conference was entitled "Carving a Home Out of the Primeval Forest," while one co-founder of the Association for the History and Culture of Mennonites in Paraguay (*Verein für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay*) examined the role of education in Mennonite cultural and economic development.[28] Even the respected Paraguayan Mennonite historian Peter P. Klassen—whose two-volume histories of Paraguay and Brazil, in addition to other works, remain the most comprehensive accounts of "Russian" Mennonites in Latin America—constructed his books primarily as group-historical narratives of settlement, pioneer work, expansion through migration or evangelization, religious reconstruction, financial growth, and agricultural improvement.[29]

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[27] Examples include Walter Regehr, ed., *25 Jahre Kolonie Neuland Chaco Paraguay, 1947-1972* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1972); Martin W. Friesen, *Kanadische Mennoniten Bezwingen eine Wildnis: 50 Jahre Kolonie Menno* (Asuncíon: Artes Graficas Zamphiropolos, 1977); Peter Pauls, Jr., *Mennoniten in Brasilien: Gedenkschrift zum 50 Jahr-Jubiläum ihrer Einwanderung 1930-1950* (Witmarsum, Brazil: Festkomitee für die Jubiläumsfeier, 1980); Peter Wiens, *Geschichte der Mennonitengemeinde Fernheim 1930-1990* (Filadelfia, Paraguay: Mennonitengemeinde Fernheim, 1990).

[28] J.W. Warkentin, "Carving a Home Out of the Primeval Forest," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 24, no. 2 (1950): 142-48; Jakob Warkentin, *Die deutschsprachigen Siedlerschulen in Paraguay: im Spannungsfeld staatlicher Kultur- und Entwicklungspolitik* (Münster: Waxmann, 1998). On education, see also Andreas F. Sawatzky, *50 Jahre Fortbildung der Kolonie Menno: Entstehung und Entwicklung der Zentralschule, 1951-2000* (Loma Plata, Paraguay: Geschichtskomitee der Kolonie Menno, 2009), and *Glaube und Schule unserer Väter: Ein Beitrag zum 80. Jubiläum der Kolonie Menno im paraguayischen Chaco* (Loma Plata, Paraguay: Geschichtskomitee der Kolonie Menno, 2007).

[29] See Gerhard Reimer's helpful review: "The 'Green Hell' Becomes Home: Mennonites in Paraguay as Described in the Writings of Peter P. Klassen," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 76, no. 3 (2002): 460-80. Klassen's publications on Paraguay include Peter P. Klassen, *The Mennonites in Paraguay: Kingdom of God and Kingdom of this World*, vol. 1 (Hillsboro, KS: Print Source Direct, 2004), *The Mennonites in Paraguay: Encounters with Indians and Paraguayans*, vol. 2 (Winnipeg: Mennonite Books, 2002), and *Immer kreisen die Geier: Ein Buch vom Chaco Boreal in Paraguay* (Filadelfia, Paraguay: Imprenta ASCIM, 1986). On Brazil, see Peter P. Klassen, *Die russlanddeutschen Mennoniten in Brazilien: Witmarsum am Alto Rio und Auhagen auf dem Stolz-Plateau in Santa Catarina*, vol. 1 (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1995), and *Die russlanddeutschen Mennoniten in Brazilien: Siedlungen, Gruppen und Gemeinden in der Zerstreuung*, vol. 2 (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1998).

Only recently have historians begun to deconstruct this Mennonite-as-pioneer paradigm. In an important essay in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, Ben Nobbs-Thiessen has analyzed the writings of Fretz, showing how his monographs and other publications in periodicals like *Mennonite Life* helped Mennonite readers in North America develop a sense of transnational peoplehood that allowed them to embrace assimilation in their own democratic contexts while simultaneously championing the "traditional" circumstances of colonists in Paraguay. Following recent work on the place of Amish in the US imagination, Nobbs-Thiessen demonstrates how Fretz, Bender, and others referred to conservative Mennonites in Latin America as "brethren" and "cousins," constructing the notion of a common Anabaptist identity spanning religious and geographic boundaries. Descriptions of colonists' homes as neat and orderly contrasted with the supposedly wild and even animal-like abodes of neighboring Indians. Invoking such distinctions allowed North American writers to justify the settlers' presence in rural Paraguay as a civilizing force; yet doing so also functioned as a means of foreclosing the notion that they could integrate into the surrounding culture, allowing them to appear culturally static and unchanging.[30] Writing about Mennonite immigrants to Paraguay during the 1920s and 1930s, historian John Eicher has examined the ways that communities reinvented themselves in an unfamiliar context. Focusing on politics of memory and narration, he elegantly destabilizes longstanding assumptions about diasporic Mennonite peoplehood, showing how the absorption and redeployment of literary tropes allowed colonists to imagine themselves in relation to their old and new homelands.[31]

The second and equally important trajectory of scholarship on "Russian" Mennonites in Latin America owes its origin to nationalist writers in Weimar and Nazi Germany. During the early 1930s, the first refugee transports to Brazil and Paraguay were supported by the German state and drew widespread popular interest in interwar Germany. Prior to the Second

[30] Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, "Mennonites in Unexpected Places: Sociologist and Settler in Latin America," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 28 (2010): 203-24.

[31] John Eicher, "Diaspora Hermeneutics: Mennonite Refugee Narratives between the World Wars," in *New Perspectives in Diasporic Experience*, ed. Connie Rapoo, Maria Luisa Coelho and Zahira Sarwar (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014); John Eicher, "Now Too Much For Us: Mennonite Migrations between the World Wars" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2015).

World War, the most prolific scholar of Mennonites in Paraguay was Walter Quiring, a Germany-based Russian-born Mennonite and Nazi sympathizer who completed much of his research—including field work in Paraguay and Brazil—with funding from the German Foreign Institute (*Deutscher Auslands-Institut*), an organization dedicated to the study and support of Germans living outside German borders.[32] Drawing on depictions dating to the 19th century of Mennonites in Russia as ideal German settler colonists, Quiring cast the migration to Paraguay as an important step not only for "Russian-German" Mennonites but also for the German nation. This is how he began his 1936 book, *Germans Exploit the Chaco* (*Deutsche erschliessen den Chaco*): "Exceptional are the centuries-long paths of these world-wide wanderers through countries and continents, from west to east, from east to west, from north to south—an unbroken and persistent struggle for Germandom, faith, and soil."[33] Such assertions were taken up elsewhere in both official and unofficial propaganda about Germans abroad. In 1935, for example, the popular *Book of German Race* (*Das Buch vom deutschen Volkstum*) informed readers that Mennonite migrations to Latin America and elsewhere could "serve as an allegory for the entire fate of Germandom . . . across the entire earth."[34] Nor was Quiring the only pro-Nazi scholar to visit the colonies, as testified by their prominent treatment in a work on German agricultural settlements in South America by the Kiel-based geographers

[32] On Quiring, see Ted Regehr, "Walter Quiring (1893-1983)," in Harry Loewen, ed., *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership among the Russian Mennonites (ca. 1880-1960)* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003), 313-36. See also works by Walter Quiring: "The Canadian Mennonite Immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco, 1926-27," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 8, no. 1 (1934): 32-42; "The Colonization of the German Mennonites from Russia in the Paraguayan Chaco," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 8, no. 2 (1934): 62-72; *Deutsche erschliessen den Chaco* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1936); and *Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1938).

[33] Quiring, *Deutsche erschliessen den Chaco*, 9.

[34] Hermann Rüdiger, "Zahl und Verbreitung des deutschen Volkes," in Paul Gauß, *Das Buch vom deutschen Volkstum* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1935), 4. I have translated "*Volk*" and "*Volkstum*" as "race" in contexts where the original texts inflect these words with racial connotations. On the emergence of Mennonitism as a racial category in the Third Reich, see Benjamin W. Goossen, "Measuring Mennonitism: Racial Categorization in Nazi Germany and Beyond," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 34 (2016): 225-46.

Oskar Schmieder and Herbert Wilhelmy.[35]

If scholars in Hitler's Germany took interest in Latin America's Mennonite settlements, many colonists were themselves keen observers of the Third Reich. Most prominent was Fritz Kliewer, a teacher and organizer who in the mid-1930s traveled from Paraguay to Germany to write his dissertation, *The German Racial Group in Paraguay* (*Die deutsche Volksgruppe in Paraguay*).[36] Along with other Nazi supporters, Kliewer generated enthusiasm for National Socialism among Paraguay's "Russian" Mennonites, many of whom hoped to resettle in Germany. As German national sentiment gained prominence in several Paraguayan colonies, as well as in Brazil and Mexico, it generated tensions with a variety of actors: internally (with separatist-minded Mennonites), with Latin American governments (which eventually declared war on Germany), with the North American MCC (which opposed Nazi militarism and aimed to bolster nonresistance among Latin America's Mennonites), and even the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (keen to monitor Nazi influence in "America's backyard").

In Paraguay, the pro-Nazi movement's eventual eradication—culminating in a case of moderate inter-Mennonite violence and the intervention of the state military—left such a bitter aftertaste that the topic has remained contentious, if not taboo, for more than half a century. In 1990 Peter P. Klassen produced the first full-length book on the "period of German-racial enthusiasm in the Fernheim colony."[37] While Klassen

[35] Oskar Schmieder and Herbert Wilhelmy, *Deutsche Ackerbausiedlungen im südamerikansichen Grasland, Pampa und Gran Chaco* (Leipzig: Deutschen Museums für Länderkunde, 1938). On this work and its context, see Ulrike Bock, "Deutsche Lateinamerikaforschung im Nationalsozialismus: Ansätze zu einer wissenschaftshistorischen Perspektive," in *Der Nationalsozialismus und Lateinamerika* ed. Sandra Carreras (Berlin: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2005), 7-22.

[36] Fritz Kliewer, *Die deutsche Volksgruppe in Paraguay: eine siedlungsgeschichtliche, volkskundliche und volkspolitische Untersuchung* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1941). See also Fritz Kliewer, "The Mennonites of Paraguay," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 11, no. 1 (1937): 92-97. On Kliewer, see Jakob Warkentin, "Kliewer, Friedrich (Fritz)," *MennLex V*, www.mennlex.de/doku.php?-id=art:kliewer_friedrich_fritz.

[37] Peter P. Klassen, *Die Deutsch-völkische Zeit in Der Kolonie Fernheim, Chaco, Paraguay, 1933-1945* (Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1990). See also Warkentin, *Die deutschsprachigen Siedlerschulen*, 182-280; Alfred Neufeld and Wilma Neufeld, eds., *Nikolai*

focused on National Socialism in a single community, the US historian John D. Thiesen later took up the topic with an expanded scope, examining Nazi influence among German-speaking Mennonites across Latin America. Although the bulk of his findings concerned enthusiasm for Nazism in Paraguay, Brazil, and less prominently in Mexico, Thiesen also brought to light the divisiveness of this issue, including the presence of a substantial anti-Nazi movement based on religious opposition, separationist ideals, and nonresistance.[38]

The formal end of Nazism among Latin America's German-speaking Mennonites did not, however, curtail representations of their communities as diasporic German settlements. A number of familiar authors reinvented themselves and continued publishing. In 1953, the former propagandist Walter Quiring, who was now based in Canada, compiled a coffee-table book on Mennonites in Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Mexico, while Walter Schmiedehaus, a former Nazi consul, published two monographs on Mexico's Old Colony Mennonites.[39] Postwar efforts on behalf of MCC and others to brand Mennonite refugees from the USSR as nationally Dutch rather than German helped to revitalize an older debate about the communities' national origins, but with the exception of a dissertation by Johan Sjouke Postma—a Dutch-born Nazi collaborator who had fled to Paraguay with a false passport—the balance of literature on Latin America favored a "German" designation.[40] Focusing on the years 1949-1973, Nikolaus

*Siemens, der Chacooptimist: Das Mennoblatt und die Anfänge der Kolonie Fernheim, 1930-1955* (Weisenheim am Berg: Agape Verlag, 2005). On Paraguayan Mennonites' engagement with this history, see the essay series by Alfred Neufeld and others in the April to July 2015 issues of the *Mennoblatt*, published in Filadelfia, Paraguay.

[38] John D. Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi? Attitudes Among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1999).

[39] Walter Quiring, *Im Schweisse deines Angesichts…: Ein mennonitisches Bilderbuch: Paraguay, Brasilien, Argentinien, Uruguay und Mexico* (Steinbach, MB: Derksen Printers, 1953); Walther Schmiedehaus, *Ein feste burg ist unser Gott: der Wanderweg eines chirstlichen Siedler Volkes* (Blumenort, Mexico: G.J. Rempel, 1948), and *Die Altkolonier-Mennoniten in Mexiko* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1982). On Schmiedehaus, see Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi?* 43.

[40] Johan Sjouke Postma, *Das niederländiche Erbe der preußisch-rußländischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika* (Leeuwarden: A. Jongbloed, 1959). On Postma, see Gabe G. Hoekema, "Idealisten en baasjes met oogkleppen voor: Voorgangers van doopsgezinde

Barbian's recent study has demonstrated how various Mennonite colonies retained formal connections to cultural and development organizations in West Germany, such as the Association for Germandom Abroad, well after the end of World War II.[41] By the mid-1950s, generous repatriation policies even enabled a number of Latin American Mennonites to relocate to the Federal Republic, consummating an unfulfilled promise of the Nazi era. Finally, West German and Israeli efforts to locate Nazi war criminals who had fled to Latin America also helped to perpetuate the association between Mennonitism and Germanness.[42]

**"Missionized" Mennonites**

English and German-language literature on non-"ethnic" Mennonites in Latin America is, relatively speaking, less extensive. One reason may be that many Latino or indigenous congregations have emerged in recent decades; in many cases there has simply been less time to study them. Another explanation may be the continued association, acknowledged or otherwise, of Anabaptism with white members of European heritage. While scholars of the religion have long since abandoned the crude racism characteristic of many 19th and early 20th-century studies, the skewed source base perhaps echoes older senses that converts could become Christian, but not quite Mennonite. Thus Fritz Kliewer, writing in the late 1930s to the German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*): "That an Indian could become a Mennonite is a thing of impossibility."[43] Even mission enthusiasts not

gemeenten die van 1933 tot 1945 aangesproken werden door het gedachtegoed van de NSB of tijdens de oorlog meewerkten met de Duitse bezetter," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 41 (2015): 224-36.

[41] Nikolaus Barbian, *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und "Auslandsdeutsche" in Lateinamerika 1949-1973* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2014), especially 463-65.

[42] In one bizarre episode, a Ukrainian-born Mennonite novelist—currently a well-known Holocaust denier—investigated rumors that the Nazi doctor Joseph Mengele had spent time among Mennonites in Paraguay. See James C. Juhnke, "Ingrid Rimland, the Mennonites, and the Demon Doctor," *Mennonite Life* 60, no. 1 (2005), http://ml.bethelks.edu/issue/vol-60-no-1/article/ingrid-rimland-the-mennonites-and-the-demon-doctor/. On Rimland, see also James Urry, "Fate, Hate and Denial: Ingrid Rimland's Lebensraum!" *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73, no. 1 (1999): 107-27.

[43] Quoted in Manfred Kossok, "Die Mennoniten-Siedlungen Paraguays in den Jahren 1935-1939," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 8 (1960): 370-71.

uncommonly referred to converts primarily with ethnic or tribal appellations rather than as Mennonites.

Recognition of this past by subsequent interpreters—including a commitment to wrestling with the inequalities that such language has engendered—may have served to keep scholarly focus on white communities. While "ethnic" Mennonite historians now generally recognize the broader church's heterogeneity, many remain committed to the "preservation of our [German] cultural and spiritual heritage."[44] If such introspection reflects increasing attunement to the dynamics of interethnic relations, it simultaneously grants renewed license to academic contributions centered on white kinship, German language use, and the transmission of European worship or culinary practices.

Prominent discussions about the equality of ethnic and non-ethnic Mennonites first emerged in the 1960s, when white leaders in North America—prompted by the Civil Rights movement, decolonization, and the vocal criticism of members of color in their own church—contemplated a recalibration of power along lines of racial privilege. A watershed, if deeply controversial, event was the ninth Mennonite World Conference held in Curitiba, Brazil, in 1972. While all eight previous World Conferences had occurred in Europe or North America, the planners of the Curitiba assembly opted to hold their event in the so-called Third World, not least because of the confession's rapidly changing demographics. "One third of the Mennonites in the world today are non-white," Executive Secretary Cornelius J. Dyck reported in his address to the presidium and delegates. "If MWC is to continue as a useful instrument in the world brotherhood, it must be more than an ethnic gathering to celebrate a great past. It must be a part of the mission Mennonites are being called to in the world, not just white, Western Mennonites, but all Mennonites. Whether they are in Asia, Africa, Latin America, or from minority groups in North America, all must feel that this is their conference too."[45] This and future Mennonite World Conferences,

[44] Gerhard Ratzlaff, "Die Pflege unseres kulturellen und geistlichen Erbes," in Gerhard Ratzlaff, ed., *Auf den Spuren der Vaeter: Eine Jubilaeumsschrift der Kolonie Freisland in Ostparaguay, 1937-1987* (Asunción: Verwaltung der Kolonie Friesland, 1987), 238.

[45] Cornelius J. Dyck, "Report of the Executive Secretary to the Presidium and Delegates," in *Jesus Christ Reconciles: Proceedings of the Ninth Mennonite World Conference, July 18-23, 1972* (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite World Conference, 1972), xxii-xxiii.

including events held in India, Zimbabwe, and Paraguay, provided forums for leaders from around the world to envision a global religious community supportive of multiple kinds of diversity.

One outcome was a new interest in the history of mission and more specifically the histories of Mennonites of color. As Cornelius J. Dyck had argued at the 1972 conference, these communities "do not care much for Luther's sixteenth-century Europe, which ethnic Mennonites consider important." At least in a direct ancestral sense, the Reformation was "not part of their history."[46] Yet for Dyck these congregations were not entirely without histories, an assumption that would have been self-evident to many earlier commentators. Now, the challenge was to write them. While a number of pamphlets, articles, and manuscripts on Mennonite missions and development work among native Latin Americans had appeared in North America, Europe, and Paraguay, academic treatments increasingly took people of color seriously as members of the Anabaptist church community. A kind of evolution-in-miniature can be traced in works about Paraguay: in 1980 the US-based sociologist Calvin W. Redekop produced the first full-length monograph on "Mennonite and indigenous relations" in the country. In *Strangers Become Neighbors* he told a story of inter-ethnic engagement between Mennonites and Indians in the Gran Chaco, arcing from uncertainty to fraternal associations.[47]

Redekop's book was followed in 1991 by Peter P. Klassen's second volume on Mennonites in Paraguay, bearing the subtitle "Encounters with Indians and Paraguayans."[48] If Klassen's book continued to treat this subject from an "ethnic" Mennonite perspective, the US writers Edgar Stoesz and

[46] Ibid.

[47] Calvin W. Redekop, *Strangers Become Neighbors: Mennonite and Indigenous Relations in the Paraguayan Chaco* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980). On indigenous peoples in the Chaco, including their relationships with "ethnic" Mennonites, see Walter Regehr, *Die lebensräumliche Situation der Indianer im paraguayischen Chaco* (Basel: Wepf & Co., 1979); Verena Regehr and Walter Regehr, *Chacoindianer gestern und heute* (n.p., c. 1975); Elmer S. Miller, ed., *Peoples of the Gran Chaco* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999).

[48] Peter P. Klassen, *Die Mennoniten in Paraguay: Begegnung mit Indianern und Paraguayern*, vol. 2 (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1991). See also Hans J. Wiens's account of Mennonite missions in the Chaco: "*… Dass die Heiden Miterben seien*": *Die Geschichte der indianermission in paraguayischen Chaco* (Filadelfia, Paraguay: Konferenz der Mennoniten Brüdergemeinden in Paraguay, 1989).

Muriel T. Stackley sought to narrate an integrated account of "ethnic" and non-"ethnic" Mennonites in their 1999 *Garden in the Wilderness*, a richly-illustrated popular history of Mennonites in Paraguay.[49] Subsequent studies have continued to differentiate between "ethnic" and indigenous Mennonites, yet authors now stress that "most of the 'Indians' are as Mennonite as the immigrant colony settlers."[50]

Scholarship on "missionized" Mennonites in Latin America is extremely uneven. The richness of work on evangelism in Paraguay contrasts with the comparative paucity of English and German-language literature on the tens of thousands of Mennonites of color living in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Grenada, and Trinidad-Tobago. One explanation for this disproportionality lies with the nature of inter-Mennonite relations in Paraguay. The landlocked country is home to Latin America's largest population of progressive, mission-oriented "ethnic" Mennonites, meaning that the country's indigenous and Latino churches were organized primarily by local evangelists as opposed to foreign missionaries from Europe or North America. The presence of a substantial number of Mennonite settler colonists created unusual conditions for proselytism. Most obvious was the joint evangelization-colonization initiative—developed during the 1950s and expanded with the help of MCC between 1967 and 1980—in which eight "indigenous agricultural colonies" comprising 69,000 hectares of central Chaco land were founded for Enlhet, Nivaclé, Lengua, Toba, and Sanapaná families.[51] This history has proven intriguing to Mennonite scholars in North America, as well as to "ethnic"

[49] Edgar Stoesz and Muriel T. Stackley, *Garden in the Wilderness: Mennonite Communities in the Paraguayan Chaco* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1999).

[50] Alfred Neufeld, "Foreword," in Edgar Stoesz, *Like a Mustard Seed: Mennonites in Paraguay* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2008), 11; Gerhard Ratzlaff, *Ein Leib – viele Glieder: Die mennonitischen Gemeinden in Paraguay* (Asunción: Associatión Evangélica Menonite del Paraguay, 2001).

[51] Prieto Valladares, *Mission and Migration*, 110-12. On the environmental dimensions of settlement and mission activities among indigenous Paraguayans, see Rosa del Carmen Garay-Flühmann, "The Social Ecology of the Central Chaco in Paraguay: The Mennonite Colonies and Adjacent Indigenous Settlements" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2000).

Mennonite scholars in Paraguay itself, who have been far more engaged in chronicling their own history than have those in other Latin American countries.

Treatments of Paraguayan settlement projects have generally exhibited a triumphalist or apologetic tenor. Former missionaries continue to write positively about the "settlement of the Indians in the Central Chaco and their evangelization," sometimes framing their narratives against the criticisms of "anthropologists from Europe, who have no idea of the original situation of the Indians" but who insist that "the whites robbed the Indians of their ideal life and perfect culture."[52] While such defenses accurately note the humanitarian impulses often undergirding mission enterprises, they tend to obscure the degree to which early evangelists framed their projects with the language of primitivism and savagery, or the extent to which "civilizing" ideologies continue to serve white Mennonites' economic interests through the production of cheap labor. Commenting on the separate land-holding, financial, and insurance opportunities available to white versus indigenous residents of the Chaco, as well as on their enormous wage disparity, human rights observers have issued searing critiques. As recently as 2009, United Nations investigators charged German-speaking Mennonite employers with supporting a "system of forced labour" that involved "grave violations of international instruments supported or ratified by Paraguay."[53]

If the historically imperial or quasi-imperial relationship between white missionaries and converts of color is by now well studied in the wider academy, it has only rarely influenced scholarship on Anabaptist missions in Latin America. One prominent exception is Elmer S. Miller's 1995 intellectual autobiography *Nurturing Doubt*, which traces the author's transition from Old

[52] Bernhard M. Funk, *Wer konnte das bewirken? Die Sesshaftmachung der Indianer im zentralen paraguayischen Chaco und ihre Missionierung* (Loma Plata, Paraguay: Druckerei Friesen, 2008), 4.

[53] United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, "Mission to Paraguay: Report and Recommendations," 2009, www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/-NPFII_Mission_Report_Paraguay_EN.pdf. See also Miguel Chase Sardi, "The Present Situation of the Indians in Paraguay," in Walter Dostal, ed., *The Situation of the Indian in South America* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1972), 173-217; Stephen W. Kidd, "The Working Conditions of the Enxet Indigenous People of the Chaco," in *Enslaved Peoples in the 1990s: Indigenous Peoples, Debt Bondage and Human Rights* (Copenhagen: Anti-Slavery International, 1997), 151-80.

Mennonite missionary in the Argentinian Chaco to trained anthropologist studying the Toba people of the same region. Through close readings of letters and diary entries, Miller explores how his experiences in Argentina forced him to confront personal doubts about both his proselytism and, later, his academic commitments. *Nurturing Doubt* provides a thoughtful analysis of intercultural exchange, including its transformative potential in the context of Anabaptist witness, as well as a compelling injunction to question modes of writing that "unwittingly support self-definitions by providing descriptive accounts of an exotic Other."[54]

Works examining Mennonite evangelism in Latin America—including monographs on Costa Rica, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica—more typically resemble the group-historical treatments of German-speaking settlers.[55] They tend to move chronologically, emphasizing church planting, membership growth, and the expansion of humanitarian and social services. If such narrative strategies often mirror accounts of other, non-Mennonite Christian missions, this may in part reflect a sense that proselytism is, historically speaking, un-Anabaptist. Indeed, scholars often characterize the emergence of Mennonite missions during the 19th century as a decisive break with church tradition. "Except for their beginnings in the sixteenth-century European Anabaptist movement," one author notes, "history has known Mennonites more as the

[54] Elmer S. Miller, *Nurturing Doubt: From Mennonite Missionary to Anthropologist in the Argentine Chaco* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1995), 202-203.

[55] Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, *Die mennonitische Mission in Costa Rica 1960-1978* (Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1992); Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, *Indianermission im Tal von Talamanca, Costa Rica 1891-1987* (Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1995); Dallas Witmer, *The Guatemalan Cry: A History of the Mission Work of the Conservative Mennonite Fellowship Missions in Guatemala, Central America* (Seymour, MO: Edgewood Press, 1974); Rafael Falcón, *Mennonite Memories of Puerto Rico* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014); Marieta Zimmerman, *25th Anniversary of The Evangelical Mennonite Church in the Land Columbus Loved Best* (Fort Wayne, IN: Commission on Overseas Missions, Evangelical Mennonite Church, 1971); Twila Y. Brunk, *Together in the Lord: The Jamaica Mennonite Church 1955-1980* (Harrisonburg, VA: Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, n.d.). On Mennonite Brethren missions, see J.J. Toews, *The Mennonite Brethren Mission in Latin America* (Winnipeg: The Christian Press, Ltd., 1975). On the church in Central America, see the special August 1984 issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

quiet in the land than as heralds of the gospel."[56]

Thus, while internal explanations have described Mennonite evangelism as a spontaneous renewal, attributable to "the grace of God," more historicist interpreters have invoked the trans-denominational context of modern Christian evangelism. In his account of the establishment of Mennonite missions in Colombia during the late 1940s, for instance, James C. Juhnke has noted that General Conference evangelists were "only a tiny fraction of the large North American mission force which had been shut out of China [after the communist takeover in that country] and now looked for new openings in Latin America."[57] Mennonite missionaries in Colombia shared many of the same concerns and experiences as representatives of other Protestant churches, contending with civil conflict and political corruption, as well as the challenge of winning souls in a predominantly Catholic country.

Efforts to read Anabaptist theology back into the evangelical commitments of many 20th-century Mennonites (or to track the distinctively Mennonite qualities of their Latin American church plants) have likewise tended to privilege the perspectives of missionaries rather than the missionized.[58] Identifications of Mennonite evangelism with peace witness, decentralization, rural proclivities, and practical emphases may help to illuminate how some Anabaptist converts experienced Christianity differently from those entering other denominations. Yet the sources used to substantiate these claims disproportionately constitute written materials produced by white missionaries themselves or by their sending agencies.[59]

A range of alternative possible interpretations is revealed in *How Beautiful Is Your Voice* (*Wie schön ist deine Stimme*), a 2014 collection of oral

[56] Victor Harold Wiens, "From Refugees to Ambassadors: Mennonite Missions in Brazil, 1930-2000" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2002), 315.

[57] James C. Juhnke, *A People of Mission: A History of General Conference Mennonite Overseas Missions* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1979), 151.

[58] Articles interrogating the theological underpinnings and practice of Anabaptist missions in Latin America can be found, for example, in the journal *Mission Focus*, published between 1972 and 2012, and appearing since then under the title *Anabaptist Witness*.

[59] Jaime Prieto has advocated oral history as one methodological strategy for moving beyond such missionary-centered approaches. See Jaime Prieto, *Mennonites in Latin America: Historical Sketches* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2008), 39-52.

histories gathered among natives of the Gran Chaco. Reflecting collaboration by Paraguayan Mennonites of various backgrounds, the book moves beyond traditional, record-based archives to "give the Enlhet [Indians] a voice," providing a space for Enlhet men and women to share memories of their lives, including relations with "ethnic" Mennonite evangelists.[60] "We children ran away when the Mennonite came," one respondent recalled of early encounters—"'Why is the Mennonite coming here? He will bring disease among us!'"[61] Others recounted their families' transition to settled life, the adoption of European-style clothing, intercultural communication in German or Spanish, and religious conversion. That many Enlhet are now preachers or active church members serves as a reminder that Christianity is spread not only by white missionaries, and that accounts of Anabaptist evangelism must consider the agency of people of color.[62]

One model for future works on missionized congregations might be Filipe Hinojosa's 2014 publication, *Latino Mennonites*. Although this study is limited to the 20th-century United States (including Puerto Rico), it provides an excellent window onto the lives of often mobile Mennonites whose language and physiognomies set them apart from their more numerous "ethnically" Mennonite coreligionists and who remain deeply connected with Spanish-speaking family and friends in countries to the south. Perhaps more important, *Latino Mennonites* reminds us that "Latin America" does not stop at the US-Mexico border. Just as Mexico's Old Colony Mennonites have been as likely to move to Canada as to Argentina, non-"ethnic" Mennonites are also transnational. From the first Mennonite missions among Latino populations in Chicago, New York, and elsewhere to contemporary questions of political and religious belonging, Hinojosa examines the complex processes of negotiation between white Mennonites and members of color, paying close attention to issues of race, gender, and the

[60] Hannes Kalisch and Ernesto Unruh, eds., *Wie schön ist deine Stimme: Berichte der Enlhet in Paraguay zu ihrer Geschichte* (Münster: Monsenstein und Vannerdat, 2014), 7.
[61] Ibid., 297, 299.
[62] That missionaries from Anabaptist congregations in North America and Germany have undertaken "renewal" work among conservative, German-speaking congregations in Latin America further blurs the conceptual distinction between white evangelists and converts of color, raising questions about white Mennonite indigenization and the politics of intra-group proselytism among "ethnic" members.

intersection of minority freedom struggles from the Caribbean to the Civil Rights movement to California fruit farms. At the heart of *Latino Mennonites* is the insight that religions take on new meanings in changing circumstances: "being Latino and Mennonite also meant being part of a larger family of *evangélicos* (Latino evangelicals), that included their Pentecostal and mainline Protestant neighbors."[63] Extended to Latino and other Mennonites across Latin America, this approach could yield fascinating studies about the ever-changing forms of a vibrant, dynamic church.

**Conclusion**

The history of Mennonitism in Latin America is a multifaceted story encompassing both the immigration of white "ethnic" Mennonites from Europe and North America, as well as the conversion of large numbers of local people, a duality captured fittingly in the title of the Latin America volume of the Global Mennonite History Series, *Mission and Migration*.[64] This book—the only comprehensive account yet published—is essential reading. Masterfully researched by Costa Rican scholar Jaime Prieto, *Mission and Migration* provides a bird's-eye view of the origins, interactions, and transformations of a bewildering variety of communities across nearly one hundred years. Reminiscent of the group-historical approaches of Harold S. Bender and J. Winfield Fretz, yet tempered by the integrative global vision of Cornelius J. Dyck (a perspective taken up by series editors John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder), it posits Latin American Mennonitism as a unitary, albeit internally variegated, subject. If such an approach runs the risk of homogenizing groups that have (or want) little to do with each other, it nevertheless provides a necessary corrective to a longstanding bias in the literature for "ethnic" Mennonite protagonists. Prieto's study reflects a growing tendency among scholars in and beyond Latin America to treat Mennonitism as plural. That this development has its analogues in broader wings of religious and ethnic studies, including the historiography of German nationalism, is an encouraging sign.

Future scholars will undoubtedly find new means of exploring

[63] Felipe Hinojosa, *Latino Mennonites* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2014), 3.

[64] Prieto, *Mission and Migration*. See also the extensive notes to Prieto's book: www.pandorapress.com/LatinAmericaNotes.pdf.

difference among Latin America's Mennonites. While significant attention has been paid to the distinctions between various religious groupings, much could be done to deconstruct these ideal types, which too often base their representations on male authority figures. Growing efforts among Mennonite institutions and scholars to be inclusive of communities of color have done comparatively little to challenge patriarchal structures—a disparity encapsulated in Mennonite World Conference's simultaneous embrace of ethnic diversity and continued refusal to engage questions of sexual orientation.[65] Nevertheless, the study of gender (and to a lesser degree sexuality) is already providing a set of alternative perspectives with the potential to reframe the field. To date, the most groundbreaking work remains Marlene Epp's *Women Without Men*, a history of the disproportionately female Mennonite refugees who migrated from Europe to Paraguay and Canada after the Second World War. Through extensive oral interviews, Epp recovered the stories of thousands of women living in a world of upended gender relations; in 1948, not a single adult man lived in one Paraguayan settlement, colloquially known as *Frauendorf*, or "Women's Village."[66]

More recently, scholars of social work and economics have begun to study how gender shapes every aspect of Mennonite life in and beyond Latin America, ranging from employment opportunities to mobility, faith, and dress. "The double-bind of transnationalism," Luann Good Gingrich and Kerry Preibisch argue in their essay on the migration of Low German-speaking Mennonite women from Mexico to Canada, "is inherently gendered in nature, as the meanings of and responses to migration are different for men and women."[67] Following the widely-reported news of horrific "ghost rapes" in Bolivia's Manitoba Colony during the 2000s, the history of Mennonite

[65] Lisa Schirch and Jacob Mack-Boll, "No Pink in MWC's Rainbow," *Mennonite World Review*, September 14, 2015, www.mennoworld.org/2015/09/14/opinion/opinion-no-pink-in-mwcs-rainbow/.

[66] Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2000), 100.

[67] Luann Good Gingrich and Kerry Preibisch, "Migration as Preservation and Loss: The Paradox of Transnational Living for Low German Mennonite Women," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, no. 9 (2010): 1512. See also Carel Roessingh and Linda Mol, "Working Ladies: Mennonite Women in the Enterprises of Spanish Lookout, Belize," *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* 5, nos. 3/4 (2008): 241-56; Loewen, *Village among Nations*, 205-26.

sexual abuse will surely receive new attention as well.[68]

Among the greatest challenges for future studies of Latin American Mennonitism will be integrating the interrelated yet contradictory literatures of German national and Mennonite religious history. As Jaime Prieto and others have demonstrated, viewing Mennonite history through the lens of a single German diaspora no longer constitutes a viable methodology. Historian H. Glenn Penny's call to uncover the "polycentric" nature of German identity may offer one means of reinterpreting Mennonite history within the context of German studies.[69] Understanding how some Mennonites in Latin America generated different conceptions of Germanness, many of which were not oriented toward a distant German nation-state, might yield innovative ways of parsing the paradox noted at the beginning of this essay, namely the fundamentally religious motivations behind many conservative Mennonites' German language use and adherence to other "German" cultural traditions.

Pieter M. Judson and Tara Zahra's notion of "national indifference" could likewise prove a useful tool, especially if paired with increasingly robust literatures on missiology and spiritual formation.[70] Innovative scholarly works have already appeared on specifically Latin American permutations of Mennonite religious thought, including "The Anabaptist Vision of the Church of Central America," Anabaptist liberation theology, and the influence of Pentecostalism.[71] The status of nonresistance and Mennonite peacemaking

[68] Scholarly work has not yet appeared on this topic. Journalistic accounts include Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, "A Verdict in Bolivia's Shocking Case of the Mennonite Rapes," *Time*, August 17, 2011, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2087711,00.html; Nicole Akoukou Thompson, "The Demons in the Church: At Least 100 Women Raped by Nine Mennonite Men in Bolivia," *Latin Post*, November 8, 2013, www.latinpost.com/articles/3641/20131108/tranquilized-raped-religious-community.htm; Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, "The Ghost Rapes of Bolivia," *Vice*, December 23, 2013, www.vice.com/read/the-ghost-rapes-of-bolivia-000300-v20n8?Contentpage=1. The topic of John Howard Yoder's sexual abuse has also been taken up by some Mennonites in Latin America: see the September 1 and September 16, 2015 issues of the *Mennoblatt*.

[69] H. Glenn Penny, "German Polycentrism and the Writing of History," *German History* 30, no. 2 (2012): 265-82.

[70] Pieter M. Judson and Tara Zahra, "Introduction," *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012): 21-27; Tara Zahra, "Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93-119.

[71] Mario Higueros, "The Anabaptist Vision of the Church of Central America," *Mennonite*

across the Global South is also a subject of longstanding interest for those seeking sources of commonality in an ethnically diverse global church.[72]

The negotiation between faith and place will continue to be a defining feature of Latin American Mennonitism. This much was already clear in the 1920s to a young Orie O. Miller. Traveling to Mexico to observe the movement of Old Colony Mennonites from Canada, he met one member near the San Antonio railway station. Miller recalled the self-description of his conversation partner, narrated as a kind of transnational, multi-generational saga: "'Great-grandfather migrated with his family from Prussia to South Russia via the wheel barrow method. Great grandfather lies buried in Russia. Grandfather with married sons and daughters came to Canada in 1873. Grandfather lies buried in Manitoba. Now father, an old man, has brought his family to Mexico where they are again starting over.' One could not help asking, 'Where next?' and the answer was a shrug of the shoulders, the attitude meaning, 'Mexico only as long as we can here live out the principles we deem vital and essential.'"[73] Whether Miller's friend ever left Mexico is impossible to know. Today his descendants could be in Bolivia, Kansas, or any number of other places. But if the specific outcome of this story is unclear, the sentiment at its heart—as well as its innumerable possible resolutions—reflects a mode of thinking that would resonate with Mennonites across Latin America of every conceivable background.

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*Quarterly Review* 69, no. 3 (1995): 389-404; Daniel Schipani, *Freedom and Discipleship: Liberation Theology in Anabaptist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989); LaVerne A. Rutschman, "Latin American Liberation Theology from an Anabaptist Perspective," *Mission Focus* 9, no. 2 (1981): 21-26; Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, "The Pentecostal Experience in the Anabaptist Churches of Latin America (1971-1999)," *Mission Focus Annual Review* 10 (2002): 71-85.

[72] See Peter P. Klassen's study: *Kaputi Mennonita: Eine friedliche Begegnung im Chacokrieg* (Asunción: Imprenta Modelo, 1980). For a helpful framework on Mennonite peacemaking and peace theology in a global context, see John D. Roth, "The Emergence of Mennonite Peacebuilding in an International Perspective: Global Anabaptism and Neo-Anabaptism," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 89, no. 2 (2015): 229-52.

[73] Miller, "The Present Mennonite Migration," 16.

# From Community to Consumers: The Wedding Industry's Impact on the Ritual and Theological Meaning of Mennonite Weddings

*Kimberly L. Penner*

Rituals deepen human understanding and aid movement through rites of passage and transition using symbols, symbolic acts, and symbolic language. However, many religious rituals have been greatly altered by globalization and the emergence of a consumer society. For example, births (baby dedications), marriages (weddings), and deaths (funerals) have been commodified in the consumer capitalist economy. In the process, the focus of these rituals has shifted away from religious meaning and identity formation within the context of the church to consumer-producer relationships. According to Rebecca Mead, staff writer for *The New Yorker* and author of *Billion Dollar Bride: How the American Wedding Industry Ran Off with the American Wedding*, the average American bride and groom together spend $22,000 dollars on their wedding day.[1] This has a significant impact on the ritual practice of the religious wedding and the theology of marriage it seeks to embody.

In this article I analyze the wedding industry's impact on the ritual function and theological meaning of weddings in North American Mennonite communities, specifically Mennonite Church Canada (MC Canada), because, as a Mennonite, I want to promote wedding rituals that are consistent with Anabaptist-Mennonite biblical and theological commitments (e.g., understandings of covenant and marriage within the community of faith and the community's ethics) and that provide support for couples entering into marriage. While I draw on examples of weddings within MC Canada in order to ground my argument in a particular context and understanding of what it means to be Mennonite, my conclusions have implications for the wider Anabaptist-Mennonite community.

[1] Rebecca Mead, "You're Getting Married: The Wal-Martization of the Bridal Business," in *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, third ed., eds. Kieran Scott and Michael Warren (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 314-25.

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I will begin by analyzing the current capitalist consumer economy's effects on rituals in general. I will then explore the wedding industry's impact on religious wedding rituals in particular, and will reveal tensions between the values promoted by that industry and those of Anabaptist-Mennonites. I will outline criteria for Christian wedding rituals based on Anabaptist-Mennonite values as they pertain to theo-ethics. While such weddings may incorporate products from the wedding industry, they are first and foremost ecclesial practices integrally connected to the church's discipleship ethics.

**The Capitalist Consumer Economy and Ritual Function**

The word "ritual" carries a variety of meanings and characteristics. This article adopts a widely accepted definition of ritual as a repetitive act in which *symbol* (that which both speaks for itself and points to something else, as opposed to *signs*, which point only to something else),[2] symbolic action, and symbolic language come together.[3] Ritual has an inherent social function. Theologian Gerard Lukken asserts that "[a]s the self finds identity in and through ritual together with the other, so the members of a group or larger community, precisely as members of that group or community, find their identity in and through ritual."[4] Thus, rituals play an important role since "the community realizes itself in and through ritual."[5] Additionally, rituals are not static but change over time, "if only because the physical or social materials that are available in one period and one place often will not be available at a later time or different location."[6] Frequently these changes reflect shifts occurring in society at large.[7] It is important to pay attention to how rituals change, what causes the changes, and how these changes affect the meaning of ritual (identity formation of self and community) and its function (a repetitive act incorporating symbol, symbolic action, and symbolic language).

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[2] Gerard Lukken, *Rituals in Abundance: Critical Reflections on the Place, Form, and Identity of Christian Ritual in our Culture* (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), 46-47.
[3] Ibid., 39.
[4] Ibid., 70.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, *Wedding as Text: Communicating Cultural Identities through Ritual* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2002), 28.
[7] Ibid.

At present, the prospects for rituals are mixed. On the one hand, there exists a "strong and positive foundation for authentic ritual."[8] Part of the positive foundation for the effective making of meaning through ritual is the shift to postmodernism, which questions our ability to know the truth.[9] It is now widely accepted in psychoanalytic circles, linguistics, semiotics, and contemporary philosophy that "we have no direct access whatsoever to truth or reality, and are always imprisoned in a network of mediators,"[10] such as language and other forms of communication. These mediators can disclose only a partial reality; they both reveal and obscure, and are constructed and culturally defined. As a result, reality will always remain other. As Lukken puts it, "There is a culturally determined symbolic order to which we are captive, and in and through which we must repeatedly and constantly discover and find our identity as human beings. . . . [T]hat symbolic order condenses intensively in ritual, so that it plays an essential role in giving meaning to life—both everyday life and its crucial moments."[11] In this way, postmodernism has created a space for ritual practice in society, as that which mediates reality, but also reveals the limitations of doing so, since the search for truth is particular or culturally determined.

On the other hand, the prospects for rituals that effectively point beyond themselves are negative as well, partly because "the symbolic order is under threat of being overrun, through its domination by the economic order."[12] One way that the economic system manifests itself and dominates ritual is through advertising. Advertisements approach people as consumers and urge them to acquire new objects in order to become happier.[13] In

[8] Lukken, *Rituals in Abundance,* 272.

[9] I am working with Lukken's definition, namely that postmodernism is "a phase in Western culture which casts doubt on belief in progress, the strength of human rationality, the authority of modern science, and on the great ideologies, including those of religions"; it "resists the manner of thinking in which all phenomena are ultimately traced back to one fundamental source, and stresses differences" (*Rituals in Abundance,* 234). While I demonstrate one positive aspect of postmodernism on rituals here, I also note the effect of globalization and the capitalist consumer economy throughout the article as another, more recent, phenomenon shaping Western culture.

[10] Lukken, *Rituals in Abundance,* 273.

[11] Ibid., 273-74.

[12] Ibid., 272.

[13] Ibid., 276.

some cases "the exchange value of the object is so strongly emphasized that merely its purchase alone would appear to bring satisfaction."[14] Objects function as products for purchase rather than symbols, which point both to themselves and beyond themselves. In advertising, meaning "opens only in the direction of the product to be acquired and possessed."[15] In the case of weddings, advertising presents the wedding dress, cake, etc. as desirable consumer products disguised as symbols pointing to romance, happiness, and prosperity, but which are in fact "desymbolising signs of [products] that the advertiser wants to sell us."[16] In order for a product to function symbolically as part of a ritual, it must be used by the participant as an element of a narrative that aids her in transitioning from one state to the liminal state, whereby she "passes over the threshold (Latin: *limen*) and enters a 'border situation,' leaving the zone of the strong structures of the social order"[17] to a new state in community. The advertising industry itself does not have the capacity to guarantee such a thing. Nor does it necessarily offer product narratives in line with the theo-ethical values of the consumer or of the community in which religious ritual takes place.

While the economic order threatens their function, rituals can retain their symbols, symbolic acts, and symbolic language in an age of consumerism—if given the right conditions and attitudes. For example, a relationship between ritual and economy that lays the ground work for ritual is possible, if ritual participants accept the market's ability to sell products that can be transformed into ritual symbols or if the product's focus is not on "having" but on "being."[18] Through a study of first-time brides currently living in the United States, qualitative data analyst Susanne Friese claims that the wedding dress, a consumer product, is significant as a symbolic ritual that is part of the bride's identity formation[19] and thus helps with

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 277.
[17] Ibid., 128.
[18] Ibid., 278.
[19] Identity formation is a key part of ritual. In the context of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, identity formation is linked to discipleship, at the heart of which is the goal of being formed into the likeness of Christ. Ecclesial practices play an important role in this process as they shape the character of the community of faith. Worship practices can thus become a lived

the transition into marriage. She discerns this by examining the meanings that brides attach to wedding attire and the "consumption practices used to extract these meanings."[20]

According to Friese, postmodern understandings recognize that consumption is not merely about creating things to be used but about creating things *of value* to be used. Consumer goods, then, are "signifiers that serve to create and construct desired self-identities through their symbolic properties."[21] Thus, the capitalist consumer economy, while it promotes "having" and consumption as ends in and of themselves, is not inherently a barrier to the revitalization of making meaning in rituals.

The choices that postmodern consumers make reflect their identities and their freedom to choose who they wish to become by way of what they purchase. In the case of the wedding dress, Friese determines that this product takes on a ritual/symbolic function through the process of selecting, purchasing, and wearing it, which helps the bride transition from one social location (single), through the liminal stage, and finally to another social location (married). The exchange value of the object is not emphasized in such a way that its purchase alone would appear to bring satisfaction (one of Lukken's criteria for distinguishing products as de-symbolising rather than symbolising[22]). Instead, it points to something beyond itself. Thus, the economy and the wedding industry can facilitate rituals that can function as such by offering consumer goods that convey various meanings and identities granting consumers the freedom to choose their own narrative. As Lukken frames it, there can be an economic foundation for ritual if participants are not attached to the economic perspective—that is, not completely controlled by outside commercial factors.[23]

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ethic. See John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1992). On performative ritual participation in worship liturgy as it moves disciples from narrative to action, see Irma Fast Dueck, "The Performance of Worship and the Ordering of our Lives," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 79, no. 1 (January 2005): 51-67.

[20] Susanne Friese, "A Consumer Good in the Ritual Process: The Case of the Wedding Dress," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 11, no. 2 (1997): 47.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Lukken, *Rituals in Abundance,* 278-79.

[23] Ibid., 278.

In order to determine whether or not this is the case, Lukken asks the following questions: Are the predominant value patterns consumption, possession, results, and power—in short, "having"? Or are they patterns of integrity and integral experience of identity, of an experience of meaning that leaves things open, of value patterns such as mutual relationships, and commitment to a better society—in short, patterns that have more to do with "being"? If they are about consumption, is the consumption passive, merely about possessing an object?[24]

Lukken rightly argues that the predominant value patterns present in ritual, which its participants exhibit, help to determine its authenticity. With regard to the influence of the economy in particular, it is possible to determine ritual authenticity by discerning whether the predominant value promoted in purchasing a consumer good is "having" or "being." If a ritual is focused merely on consumption, then it cannot contain the symbols, symbolic acts, and symbolic language necessary in ritual practice. However, if it values consumption, but "there is evidence that it is not purely and simply a matter of possessing an object, but is at least as much if not more the experience and expression of a certain 'lifestyle,'" then it may be viewed positively as "an experience of the symbolic order" and, thus, authentic.[25] The remaining challenge is to ensure that consumption is not the driving force behind ritual meaning.

The relationship between the capitalist consumer-based economy and ritual is unavoidable and varied. In many ways the values of the economic system do not facilitate ritual and identity formation, but instead promote consumption for consumption's sake; objects that traditionally functioned as symbols in rituals are dominated by the economic system. This threatens the existence of authentic rituals. Friese shows that products can take on symbolic properties and aid in ritual processes (e.g., the wedding dress). While Lukken makes more tentative claims, he notes that consumptive tendencies can be part of a particular experience of the symbolic order. Opinions regarding conditions for authentic rituals are obviously mixed. While rituals can be enhanced by consumer products, the overwhelming risk is that consumerism will continue to dominate rituals negatively by shifting the focus from "being" to "having."

[24] Ibid., 278-79.
[25] Ibid., 279.

**The Impact of the Wedding Industry on Weddings in MC Canada**

Just as there is evidence that the economy has had an impact on rituals in general, there is evidence that the wedding industry has had an impact on religious wedding rituals in particular.[26] This is not surprising, given the close relationship between social institutions and changes in social life, which can have an effect on the theology and form of ecclesial practices. As feminist theologian Mary Hobgood aptly states: "[t]he social meanings given to sexuality [for example] (like those given to race, religion, culture, and all facets of capitalist life) are always in dialogue with economic arrangements."[27] Thus, in order to assess the ritual and theological health of Christian weddings in the material and ideological world of 21st-century capitalism, we need to assess how such weddings have been harnessed to the needs of capitalism.[28]

Most notably, the wedding industry contributes to the secularization and economization of religious wedding rituals. This is measured, for example, by the amount of money spent on weddings. Weddings have become opportunities for large-scale marketing campaigns, garnering the attention of religious and secular brides alike. The industry itself is worth between $40 billion to $100 billion per year.[29] As Mead states: "Bridal-industry sources like to point out that the amount spent on weddings is more than the national revenues of McDonald's and PepsiCo (in the United States); it is also far greater than the gross domestic product of, for example, the Bahamas ($5 billion) or Aruba ($2 billion) or many other island nations to whose beaches the newlyweds are likely to repair after the ceremony is over."[30] These numbers indicate that the wedding industry is having an enormous impact in dictating what couples ought to buy and how much

[26] A wedding can be understood as a ritual of transition or a rite of passage, which are related areas of study. What makes this so is that a wedding "marks a change in someone's life, from being a social individual to part of a new social group, a couple…marking a major change in status" (Leeds-Hurwitz, *Wedding as Text*, 26).

[27] Mary E. Hobgood, "Coming to Our Senses: Erotic and Economic Discipleship and the Transformation of Gender," in *Body and Soul: Rethinking Sexuality as Justice Love*, eds. Marvin Ellison and Sylvia Thorson-Smith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 334.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Leeds-Hurwitz, *Wedding as Text*, 9.

[30] Mead, "You're Getting Married," 317.

they should spend in order to have "the perfect day."[31]

The wedding industry's narrative associates consumption with happiness and prosperity. If a couple buys the right dress, tuxedo, flowers, cake, and so on, their wedding will be more meaningful and joy-filled, and will promote an air of success and wealth to their friends and family, which is deemed desirable. Meaning, joy, and status are thus linked to physical appearances and displays of wealth. In this regard, Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz observes that "a display of wealth has become such an expected requirement that many families willingly go into debt to pay for the ceremony."[32]

The financial impact of the wedding industry and its emphasis on consumption is evident in the experiences of Mennonites in MC Canada. In recent years, contributors to the *Canadian Mennonite* magazine have reflected on changes in wedding rituals. In "Christian Values Shape Wedding Plans," Sherri and James Martin-Carman articulate their "disappointment that even Christian weddings have become more elaborate and expensive."[33] They observe that "the first decision is often booking the right hall a year or two in advance of the wedding and filling all the engagement time with frenzied planning: wardrobe, reception, dinner, dance, music, flowers, decorations, gift registry, guest list, invitations, photographer, parties, honeymoon. Finally, almost as an afterthought, a quick visit with the pastor takes care of the ceremony itself."[34] In "Throwing a Mennonite Wedding," Susanne Guenther Loewen claims that "many Mennonite weddings these

[31] The myth of the perfect wedding is a particularly dangerous narrative. Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley relate how fairy-tale expectations separate those getting married from the human stories that each brings to the relationship, as well as from the Divine narrative as it intertwines with their own. Myths of perfection have theological implications. The question, "How is God an active partner in forming the marriage covenant?" is irrelevant when perfection, something that can be achieved apart from the Divine, is taken as a realistic goal. Revitalizing the wedding ritual in the Christian context thus means emphasizing the importance of personal, familial, ecclesial, and divine narratives as they pertain to the wedding and marriage of a couple, and deconstructing the narrative of perfection. See Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 76.

[32] Leeds-Hurwitz, *Wedding as Text,* 9.

[33] Ferne Burkhart, "Christian Values Shape Wedding Plans," *Canadian Mennonite*, September 3, 2007, 19.

[34] Ibid.

days are not much less extravagant than their secular counterparts, meaning that when it comes to weddings, that sensible Mennonite thriftiness seems to be going out of style."[35] And Rachel Bergen laments that many weddings "include diamond engagement rings, expensive wedding gowns, the bride being given away, extraordinarily expensive flowers and cakes, and spending way beyond one's means in order to celebrate a lifelong commitment."[36] Bergen offers two examples of Mennonite couples who chose to orient their weddings around different values.[37]

Historically, Mennonite weddings were not always a lavish affair. Historian Marlene Epp notes that prior to the 1920s and the professionalization of the wedding industry, Mennonite weddings were held in homes and required the support of the community for food preparation, passing along a single handwritten invitation from household to household, and cleaning and decorating the property.[38] However, as the industry developed, Mennonite weddings also modernized, becoming more costly and more extravagant. In addition, their communal character diminished. More work fell to the bride's mother, "who became responsible for organizing all the food preparation, or, in some cases, preparing everything herself or giving direction to the church's catering group."[39] In addition, popular

[35] Susanne Guenther Loewen, "Throwing a Mennonite Wedding," *Canadian Mennonite*: *Young Voices*, June, 15, 2011. youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org/blog/susieguentherloewen/throwingmennonitewedding, accessed November 26, 2014.

[36] Rachel Bergen, "A Marriage is More Than a Wedding," *Canadian Mennonite: Young Voices*, 2010. youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org/articles/marriagemorewedding, accessed November 26, 2014.

[37] Ibid. The Loewens used homemade or second-hand clothing for their wedding, had a post-ceremony chili potluck at their church, and gave each other simple wedding bands without diamonds. The Thorpes gave almost 80 percent of their guests a role in the wedding, and made the wedding dress a matter of prayer, trusting that something would come along instead of seeking out a designer gown—which it did, fifteen days prior to the event.

[38] Marlene Epp, *Mennonite Women in Canada: A History* (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 2008), 68.

[39] Ibid., 69. There is disagreement over whether the growth of the wedding industry in 20th-century North America increased or decreased the work of women in MC Canada, who were always heavily involved in wedding planning. While Epp argues the industry increased women's work, Pamela Klassen contends it decreased their work, since items such as food, clothes, and decorations could be purchased rather than made from scratch, thus lessening the time and energy needed to produce these things. See Pamela Klassen, "Practicing

wedding culture began to dictate new ideals for the perfect wedding and the corresponding products. Thus, says Epp, "From the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries, weddings underwent a cultural transformation from a home-based community event that was nevertheless primarily a religious union, to a church-based but commercialized reflection of popular culture."[40]

An emphasis on consumption as the key to happiness is theologically problematic for the religious wedding ritual among Mennonites, broadly speaking. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is a particularly formative text. There Jesus lifts up the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers as blessed. The text also promotes loving one's enemies, taking care of the poor, and placing hope and trust in God rather than in material possessions. None of these teachings values money or associates consumption with happiness. They imply the opposite: money and status can be in tension with the values of the Kingdom of God. Thus, for Mennonites, for whom the Sermon on the Mount is particularly normative, wedding rituals ought to embody values of peace and justice for the poor rather than wealth and status.

Another characteristic of the wedding industry that has altered the wedding ritual and led to its secularization is its emphasis on the individual rather than the community. The industry's target audience is the bride. As Mead states, "The bride-to-be, whose initial ignorance of what her nuptial role entails is matched only by her anxiety that she play it to perfection, is one of the most assiduously courted customers in America."[41] With the wedding dress as the most important purchase the bridal consumer makes, it is perhaps not surprising that "the romance that the retailer is most interested in promoting is not the one between bride and groom but that between bride and gown."[42] Brides are bombarded with ads featuring products they "must

Conflict: Weddings as Sites of Contest and Compromise," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 72, no. 2 (1998): 228. These different findings suggest that Mennonite women in Canada and the US experienced the industry's growth in various ways, and caution against taking particular experiences as normative.

[40] Epp, *Mennonite Women in Canada*, 66.

[41] Mead, "You're Getting Married," 316.

[42] Ibid., 318. The language of "bride and groom" also reveals the heteronormativity of the wedding industry in North America, which does not adequately incorporate the diverse nature of wedding participants in Canada and the US where same-sex marriage is legal.

have" in order to experience joy on their wedding day. As previously noted, the common marketing technique that associates feelings and identities with purchases has a negative effect on the function of rituals to point both to themselves and beyond themselves.

While consumer products claim to promise happiness, romance, and love, they are incapable of doing so by their purchase alone, and are only products disguised as symbols. These products easily distract from central aspects of the religious wedding ritual not associated with the industry, such as relationships. Further, this characterization of the bride and the role she should play as a "princess" in a story narrated by the industry reinforces patriarchal gender roles as opposed to what it means to be created in the image of God, in relationships of mutuality and reciprocity.

Womanist theologian Kelly Brown Douglas emphasizes "loving relationality" as the essential characteristic of being created in the image of God, and thus the defining characteristic of Christian marriage.[43] Loving relationality is modeled by the relational nature of God, who is *trinitas* and models mutuality and reciprocity. It is also modeled by Jesus and his relationships with the outcasts and marginalized.[44] Douglas thus offers a guiding principle for Christian weddings that align with lives lived in Christ.

As the articles from *Canadian Mennonite* indicate, the wedding industry's emphasis on the bride is reflected in Mennonite weddings where the role of the church and the couple's relationship together in Christ is diminished in light of the bride and her wishes or the "perfect" venue, cake, dress, church, and so on. This shift from community to individual is in tension with theological understandings of marriage in which the community of faith plays a key role. According to Article 19 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Christian marriage is "a mutual relationship in

Hobgood attributes this heteronormativity to "the capitalist goals of limitless profit making and managerial control" which "require and reproduce a system of gender polarization in order to function adequately." Gender polarization benefits the economy, since a sexual division of labor and unshared power increases profits in a hierarchical system (Hobgood, "Coming to Our Senses," 335).

[43] Kelly Brown Douglas, "Contested Marriage/Loving Relationality," in *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection,* 2nd ed., eds. Marvin M. Ellison and Kelly Brown Douglas (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010): 380-89.

[44] Ibid., 383.

Christ, a covenant made in the context of the church."[45] Additionally, "The church is called to help couples strengthen their marriage relationship and to encourage reconciliation in times of conflict. The church is also to minister with truth and compassion to persons in difficult family relationships. As the family of God, the church is called to be a sanctuary offering hope and healing for families."[46] According to these confessional statements, marriage is inherently linked to the community of faith. The role of the community is to support the couple as they make the transition from single to married, and throughout the challenges they face in the course of their lives together. Weddings are to be structured so that the covenantal relationship between the couple in Christ, supported and witnessed by the community, is central to the ritual. The predominant values are covenant and community, and they shape the identities of the people transitioning from singleness into marriage.

*Weddings: Ideas and Resources from Mennonite Church Canada*, a resource for MC Canada pastors, further supports this emphasis in Mennonite theology.[47] Its articulation of a theology of Christian marriage, which incorporates an understanding of weddings as worship, reiterates the significance of the community of faith and God's blessing in the wedding ritual. The document stresses the ritual's value as an outward sign of what God is doing both outwardly and inwardly, that it is God who joins the couple, that marriage is a context for discipleship, that a wedding/marriage is an opportunity to participate in God's new creation, and that it ought to embody hospitality.[48] While this resource does not explore these themes in detail, its emphasis on the wedding covenant as triangular (couple, God, community of faith) and the wedding as a worship service—in which God is thanked for the couple's love for each other, asked to bless the wedding vows, and the congregation pledges to support the couple—is particularly valuable.[49] It offers a countercultural narrative to the wedding industry's

[45] General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995).
[46] Ibid.
[47] Karen Martin Zimmerly, ed., *Weddings: Ideas and Resources from Mennonite Church Canada* (Winnipeg: Mennonite Church Canada, 2004).
[48] Ibid., 7-8.
[49] Ibid.

focus on the bride, and should continue to be a resource for those planning weddings in MC Canada. That said, because it was published prior to the beginning of MC Canada's "Being a Faithful Church" process, it does not engage the ongoing conversation about potential changes to the church's theology of marriage.[50] Current resources on weddings and marriage in MC Canada will need to engage these theological conversations and consider their implications.

The Anabaptist principle of *Gelassenheit* (yieldedness) also makes the community central to Anabaptist theology and spirituality. Early Anabaptists believed that human beings respond to God's call by yielding "inwardly to the Spirit of God, outwardly to the community and to outward discipline, and finally, in the face of a hostile world, believers might have to "yield" by accepting a martyr's death."[51] The individual and the community, as well as notions of "being" and "doing," are integrally related.[52] *Gelassenheit* is thus an element of a wedding ritual that flows from the Anabaptist-Mennonite ecclesiology and resists the wedding industry's emphasis on consumerism and the individual.

The tensions between the industry's values and those of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology are also revealed in an understanding of ecclesiology as ethics. Anabaptist-Mennonite approaches to ethics claim that ecclesial

[50] The "Being a Faithful Church" process is a multi-year effort to "strengthen [the church's] capacity as a church to discern the will of God through the church's efforts to interpret the Bible for our time," paying particular attention to matters concerning sexuality. Mennonite Church Canada is currently engaging Part 6 of the process titled "Unity, Christ's Love, and Faithfulness in Discerning Matters of Sexuality," which considers same-sex committed relationships. The entire process is intended to be completed in 2016. Feedback from Part 5, "Between Horizons: Biblical Perspectives on Human Sexuality," found that a "significant majority of responses [of congregations] reflect the historical affirmations as implied in the 'Resolution on Human Sexuality' (1986 & 1987) or Article 19 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (1995). At the same time, responses express a desire to be more compassionate and welcoming of those individuals who are same-sex attracted" (1). General Board Mennonite Church Canada, "Being a Faithful Church 6: Unity, Christ's Love, and Faithfulness in Discerning Matters of Sexuality" (Winnipeg: Mennonite Church Canada, 2014), www.commonword.ca/FileDownload/19849/BFC-Book.pdf, accessed July 15, 2015.

[51] C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: Revised Student Edition* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1997), 152. The communal dimension of Anabaptism is also apparent in the ritual practices of baptism, the Lord's Supper, discipline, and economic sharing.

[52] Ibid.

practices are political as they form disciples of Christ in ways that model the ethics of the Kingdom of God. It is thus important to consider how the wedding ritual functions as something that flows from a life in Christ and an understanding of what it means to be "the church."

Drawing on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and John Howard Yoder, Anthony G. Siegrist offers a helpful articulation of the nature of ecclesial practices and their relationship with the divine that has implications for the Christian wedding ritual. He proposes that "contemporary Anabaptist theology should affirm that God acts through the church and that people encounter God through the lives of congregations as these communities continue to respond to Jesus Christ in worship and the training of those apprenticed in his way of life," which reflects the "dynamics of God's use of the church as primary locus of his presence and work in the world."[53] With specific regard to believer's baptism, he reiterates that "the practical thrust of the gospel is enacted in the church's practices, which not only signify the good news, but participate in it."[54]

While weddings, and in turn marriage, are not uniquely ordained by Jesus for the community of believers, like baptism and communion,[55] they are occasions to demonstrate the social character of the Christian community as an extension of life in Christ. The theological meaning of weddings for Anabaptist-Mennonites depends on their ability to demonstrate an alternative cultural vision of what it means to be "married" and to be the church in the world. To be formed into the character of Jesus with regard to the wedding ritual means to embody the commitments in the Sermon on the Mount and to foster loving relationality as demonstrated by the Divine. Weddings can also demonstrate an alternative vision of what it means to be church in the world, by inviting the congregation to be involved and to participate in ways that are subversive and revolutionary in the eyes of the wedding industry.

The biblical and theological understanding of "covenant relationship" can make weddings and marriages "be the church" in the world. The

[53] Anthony G. Siegrist, *Participating Witness: An Anabaptist Theology of Baptism and the Sacramental Character of the Church* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 65.
[54] Ibid., 64.
[55] Ibid., 79.

language of covenant is "the basic scriptural and theological category that defines the relationship, according to which God chooses to be the God of Israel" and in Christ in whom God extends covenant relationship to both Jews and Gentiles.[56] In this relationship God's promise to God's people is met in return with their promise to be God's people, which also reflects the relational nature of the Trinity.[57] Understanding marriage as covenant, and the wedding as a ritual marking a transition to covenant relationship between the couple and the Divine, runs counter to both the wedding industry's emphasis on short-term gratification based on consumption and its romantic narratives touting perfection as a norm. Promises made in a covenant, viewed biblically, are long-term and acknowledge the hard work involved in maintaining such a commitment. Understanding marriage as covenant reflects this commitment—the realization that marriage requires work and the support of the community of faith—as well as the importance of the couple's relationship to each other and to the Divine.

In sum, the wedding industry in the capitalist consumer-based economy promotes the following values that are in tension with Mennonite theology: 1) consumption and financial status over yieldedness to God, which includes commitment to the poor, 2) individual (i.e., bride) over community, and 3) the couple's relationship to each other as unrelated to, or more significant than, their relationship in Christ. From a Christian perspective, the industry is an example of the fallen structures of power in creation. Thus it is not surprising that it does not embody the values of the gospel. Nor should it necessarily. The church, which embodies a different way of being and commitment, is called to resist the industry and to offer a countercultural alternative. To live in Christ is to commit to embodying the character of Jesus, and to value covenant, individual, and community, the interconnection of human narratives and the divine narrative, and biblical notions of love shown in relationships of mutuality. Weddings, as part of the church's lived ethic, are occasions to embody the character of Jesus.

[56] Robert Song, *Covenant and Calling: Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Relationships* (London: SCM Press, 2014), 10.
[57] Ibid., 11.

**Criteria for Anabaptist-Mennonite Weddings**

Differences between the wedding industry's values and those of the Gospel indicate that an Anabaptist-Mennonite vision for meaningful wedding rituals must come from elsewhere. The Sermon on the Mount offers one potential source for such a vision. Drawing on Matthew 5-7, biblical understandings of covenant and loving relationality, the history of the wedding ritual in the Mennonite tradition, as well as from the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, *Weddings: Ideas and Resources from Mennonite Church Canada*, and understandings of authentic ritual emerging from the work of Lukken and Leeds-Hurwitz, I propose that a ritually meaningful (for Lukken, "authentic"), wedding in the Mennonite church will:

> 1) be a symbolic act incorporating symbols and symbolic language in order to convey identity—"being" rather than "having"—which within Anabaptist-Mennonite communities means formation of the self, the couple, and the community into disciples of Christ; and
>
> 2) confirm the existence of the Mennonite community of faith as the larger group within which the ritual makes sense.

Theologically, a ritually meaningful wedding will:

> 1) embody Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount rather than the wedding industry's emphasis on material wealth and financial status;
>
> 2) be situated within the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of ecclesial practices as part of the church's lived ethic, and thus be political, countercultural, examples of what marriage, symbolized by the wedding ritual, means;
>
> 3) be communal/covenantal rather than individual, by returning attention to the covenantal relationship between the couple in Christ and within the community of faith reiterated in the theology of Christian marriage in *Weddings: Ideas and Resources from Mennonite Church Canada*; and

> 4) be a celebration in the form of a worship service, which directs attention to God, as opposed to the bride in particular or the material aspects of the wedding itself.[58]

Creativity should be strongly encouraged in embodying and enacting these criteria in the wedding ritual. Ritual function sanctions verbal and nonverbal forms of presentation.[59] The ritual's presentational aspects could thus appeal to any or all of the senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch). As mainly occasions of worship, rituals could include, for example, scripture passages revealing the relational character of God as love, which in turn demonstrates how both the couple getting married and the congregation are called to live in loving relationality, as well as silence, prayer, song, dance, and creative use of space to convey the ecclesiology and ethics of the church, and to help the couple transition into their new social state as married. Counter to the wedding industry's narrative of consumption tied particularly to the bride, the couple could give a symbolic gift to the congregation and to God, verbal or physical.

These weddings could also include potlucks organized by the congregation, an increased role for the pastor (e.g., a full-length sermon, premarital counselling), opportunity for the couple to share a testimony of their love shared in Christ, and opportunities for the congregation to be involved in the ceremony and reception (e.g., offering a blessing for the couple, giving a symbolic gift, laying on of hands, prayer). There is a necessary link between theology and practice. By participating in the wedding as worship in counter-cultural ways, both theologically and ritually, all open themselves to be formed into, and examples of, the likeness of Christ.

## Conclusion

My analysis of the wedding industry's impact on the wedding ritual suggests two main conclusions signaling that the ritual is in crisis. First, the wedding's capacity to function as an authentic ritual of transition within the church is inhibited by the dominance of the capitalist economic system. This system approaches individuals as consumers and largely eliminates the possibility of symbolism in wedding rituals. Instead of embodying predominant value

[58] For worship resources for planning a wedding ritual, see Zimmerly, *Weddings*, 47-64.
[59] Lukken, *Rituals in Abundance,* 359-70.

patterns of "being" based on identity and movement from one reality into another, industry-style weddings reflect value patterns of "having" and consumption often detrimental to ritual function. Second, the industry promotes values in tension with Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, such as individual over community, and material possessions over God. Anabaptist-Mennonites should thus be critical of the industry's support of the status quo, and should draw from other sources of authority, most notably scripture, to learn how to practice weddings as both the medium and the message of the gospel.

While the economy will continue to impact religious rituals, participants can orient rituals to avoid prioritizing consumerism and the individual, and to support identity formation and mutual relationships, including those between people getting married and their relationship with Christ and the community of faith. As for wedding rituals in MC Canada and in Anabaptist-Mennonite communities more broadly, I have argued that the theological and ritual meaning of weddings flows from seeing them as an ecclesial practice within the context of Christian discipleship. Weddings, and subsequently marriages, are occasions for believers to continue to be formed into disciples of Christ within the community of faith, as sexual partners committed to loving relationality and mutuality, and for believers to think primarily in terms of relational goods rather than consumer goods.

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# Capitalizing Church: On Finding Catholicism Inevitable

*Gerald W. Schlabach*

Writers have a problem, editors have a problem, and theologians have a problem. But it is a problem to which Mennonite thinkers and others in "Free Church," Pentecostal, as well as many Protestant traditions generally have not paid much attention. The problem is how and when to capitalize the word "church."[1] This problem may seem small to the point of trivial—the sort of question over which only an English teacher who has never been to a party would obsess. But even if small, it is only so in the way that a map is small in comparison to the land it represents. As a writer, editor, and theologian who has been trying all my life to identify with all that God is doing to form a global pilgrim people, the search to learn how to capitalize "church" turns out to map with much of my spiritual and intellectual journey.

## Capitalization

To be sure, the most basic editorial guidelines are clear enough. If one is providing a proper name for the Community Bible Church down the road, or the Presbyterian Church USA, one must render "Church" in upper case. If one is referring to a congregation or even a denomination, but not for the moment by its proper name, one writes of it as a lower-case "church." But what if one is writing about Christ's c/Church, which the Holy Spirit has been nurturing down through the centuries and that is now at work—however incomplete or beset by sin—as flesh-and-blood Christians who are gathered and spread throughout the world? After all, this church, t*he* Church, has a theological significance calling forth capitalization in much the same way that theologians distinguish *the* Holy Spirit from any *other* spirit however holy, or affirm that Jesus is *the* Christ truly and unlike some messianic pretender, or when they praise the God of Abraham, Isaac, and

[1] An abridged version of this paper was first presented at a conference entitled "Ex-Mennonite, Near Mennonite: Liturgical, Non-denominational, Secular," hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, October 3-4, 2014.

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Jacob as the one God. In fact, the honor that we give to the three persons of the Trinity through capitalization is not uniquely theirs. One also finds capitalized the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Cross or Crucifixion, the Eucharist, the Annunciation, Scripture, and so on.

If a theologian only ever needed to write of "the Church without spot or wrinkle" which Christ will present to himself at the end of days (Ephesians 5: 27), that would be clear enough. But part of the Church's theological significance is precisely that God is already at work among those "flesh-and-blood" Christian human beings—among *us* in our still wrinkled and spotted lives, amid our very unfinished pilgrim journeys. Or so we pray. Such a reality cannot be merely abstract or angelic. It must have some identifiable empirical sociological reality. This identifiable reality will not be the ultimate fullness of that reality called Church, but it must be one in which—to use a very technical Roman Catholic term—this fullness "subsists."[2]

Admittedly, Christians have fought wars and, even short of physical violence, have caused much pain by fighting over the institutional identity of "the one true Church." Thus we all have good reason to exercise reserve lest we press the question too hard. But the editorial problem of when to capitalize c/Church is not the only thing that should warn us not to refuse the question. Even if we humbly and rightly defer any *ultimate* judgment about the exact borders of the Church and leave it to God, the very effort to participate faithfully in the life of *a* church requires us to account for what we think we are doing. Christians who seek to follow Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, after all, have a responsibility to let our "yea be yea and [our] nay nay."

**Map as Memoir**

What follows is my own incomplete map from a journey. Formed in the Mennonite tradition but baptized in a nondenominational Charismatic church with a strong commitment to world mission, my Christian life has been marked by a desire to identify with the global people called Church. When fundamentalist (more than Charismatic or Pentecostal) theology proved unconvincing, and I began to recognize ways that institutions and

[2] Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* [The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church] (1964), §8. Conciliar and papal documents cited in this article are available at www.vatican.va.

traditions can actually contribute to God's work, I made what in hindsight was my first step toward Catholicism: I joined a Mennonite congregation at last. It would take more than twenty-five years, collaboration with Catholics in peacebuilding work in Latin America, a fuller sense of all twenty centuries of church history, and a growing appreciation for the Second Vatican Council as a world-historical event for all Christians before I would enter into communion with the Roman Catholic Church, at Pentecost 2004. But seeking on every leg of this journey to affirm all God is doing to form a global people of service to all peoples and honor to God's name, I have not wanted to renounce my Mennonite identity or debts to Charismatics and Pentecostals either. Thus I helped to found and lead the grassroots movement of Mennonites and Catholics for dialogue and unity called Bridgefolk, and I continue to identify as a "Mennonite Catholic."

No map is ever complete.[3] No typology does justice to reality in all its complexity.[4] No memoir chronicles every detail of a life. What follows partakes in each of these genres as a kind of theological memoir of my attempt to capitalize c/Church, thus mapping encounters with six different types of church life. The implicit typology that is the result comes with no claim that I have surveyed all the scholarly terrain or detailed all the debates regarding the ecclesiologies I have encountered. Nor would I claim to have encountered all major ecclesiologies.[5] It simply explains why my search for

[3] A famous one-paragraph short story by Jorge Luis Borges, "Del rigor en la ciencia," humorously demonstrates why. An empire bent on perfecting the art of cartography eventually produced a map so detailed that it corresponded, inch-by-inch, with the territory itself and was thus completely useless.

[4] Cf. Talcott Parsons's summary definition of Max Weber's ideal types in his introduction to Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947), 13. Also see Rolf E. Rogers, *Max Weber's Ideal Type Theory* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969), 90.

[5] A thorough treatise on ecclesiology would need to attend to the largest gap in this paper, Eastern Orthodoxy. Now teaching a class on Global Christianity, I have come to recognize my acute need to learn more about ancient non-Western forms of Christianity, especially Eastern Orthodoxy. But since encounter with these has not played a role in my own journey, it would seem artificial or even disingenuous to try to work Eastern Orthodoxy into my story or typology. As a Mennonite whose path to greater Christian unity led to Catholicism, my eastward-looking assumptions have been two: (1) my own obligation to work for healing should take me above all to the fissure where we as Anabaptists broke off; (2) having come into communion with the Roman Catholic Church, I can leave it to that church to do the

capital-C Church has led, with a certain sense of inevitability, to Catholicism.

**Church Widened**

The problem of how to capitalize c/Church is not simply my own, however. Notice what has happened again and again as church workers like those in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) have gone to work in regions of the world in which their denominations had no official presence. Or notice what already was happening to traditional missionaries of previous generations as they have worked in places where Christians were a small and struggling minority. Back at home they might have avoided those strangely named Foursquare Gospel churches or wondered whether Catholics were Christians at all. But now in a rural outpost where they were just glad to find another Christian believer, or in a teeming urban neighborhood where international Christian agencies needed grassroots partners if they were to do their work well, suddenly Christians became ready to recognize one another as members of the same body.

John Lapp, former executive secretary of MCC, often stated as a matter of settled policy: "We work with the church." He did not mean that MCC *only* partners with other Christians in a sectarian or exclusivist manner, but that even in places where no churches of his denomination were present, MCC would seek out partnerships with those Christian churches it found. It would work with Chaldean-rite Roman Catholics in Iraq, with Anglicans in South Africa, with Pentecostals in Guatemala, and so on. Sometimes MCC might also work with Buddhists or Marxists or Mormons, of course, but these have been coalitions that were not quite what Lapp meant by "we work with the church." Sometimes such coalitions have actually been easier to arrange and involved more comfortable working relationships, thanks to the clarity that comes with limited operational objectives. Lapp often needed to tell MCC representatives that "we work with the church" precisely because those church relations were not coming easily. Yet something about the bond between Christians in the worldwide body of Christ that we call the c/Church has elicited the commitment and required the extra effort.

So, how to name that bond? How have MCC workers recognized *the* Church in that phrase "we work with the church?" To evade this question

work of healing its even older break with the East.

is to evade the call to let our yea be yea, our nay nay, and our church Church. Indeed, to recognize one another as fellow Christians only in "the mission field" but then to avoid the hard work of seeking full Christian unity wherever "back home" may be, is even more problematic. For then we are doing what Peter was doing when Paul had to rebuke him harshly for eating with gentile Christians, but only until his critics showed up (Galatians 2:11-14). For formerly persecuted or dissenting church groups, ecumenical yearning need not be a matter of wanting to gain acceptance from "mainline," "established," "Constantinian" Christians at all. It is quite as easily, and far more authentically, a response to growing awareness among followers of Jesus that they are first of all citizens in a global peoplehood that crosses the borders of every nation-state and bears the name Church.

**Six Options**

Now, because we cannot avoid the continuing effects of Christian dis-unity, there admittedly may be no perfectly satisfying answer to the question of how to capitalize church, even when we are resolved to face it without evasion. But there are some worse and better options. I have encountered at least six:[6]

*(1) Thoroughgoing congregationalism* Anyone who cares about c/Church at all is likely to agree on this much: One cannot really participate in the big-C church without participating in a small-c church. The original Greek word for church is *ekklesia*—a gathering or assembly. The habit of gathering our voices and our bodies together at specific times and locales in the name of Jesus Christ is basic and essential to all else that constitutes church as a "flesh-and-blood reality." Thus, one possible answer to the question of when to capitalize c/Church is to claim this: Not only is there no Church without churches, in the sense that there is no beach without grains of sand, there is no such thing as "The Church" at all, no whole greater than

[6] Again, the options that follow are in effect "ideal types." Those who construct typologies should recognize that their usefulness and their limitation comes as they isolate realities, abstract them, and sometimes take them to their logical extremes. If I am right in my critique of some options, no one *can* in fact espouse them in their pure forms, because to do so either is incoherent or requires mixture with other options in order to be coherent. Yet no option appears here simply to round out my typology. They may not all enjoy the footnotable backing of a John Calvin or H. Richard Niebuhr, much less a church council, but all are lively enough that I have heard serious theologians and church leaders entertain each.

the sum of its parts. According to this view, what we call "The Church" is simply an abstraction, a projection of our minds or a linguistic convenience. Philosophers will recognize here a kind of nominalism. If we cannot say precisely where the Church starts and stops, this is because it is indeed very much like a beach, really just a mental zone whose border is perpetually shifting with every wave.

The problem with this view is that it does not account well for Jesus' own words. Jesus promised to build something singular against which the gates of hell cannot prevail (Matthew 16:18). For Roman Catholic apologists to claim that Jesus had the whole grand architecture of the Roman church in mind here certainly risks anachronism; communities like the Matthean one which first received these words could not have understood Jesus that way, for they needed centuries to formalize and institutionalize the network by which they loosely related. The necessary point here does not require an apologetically Roman ahistorical claim, however. For the implication of the biblical text is clear enough. What prevails against those infernal gates is substantive and singular. It must cohere as a real and unified *something*, not lots of little things.

Unsurprisingly, then, even those who emphasize the priority of actual gathered Christian community cannot really follow through by speaking only of churches. They must soon begin to name the patterns by which churches relate to each other—conferences, synods, dioceses. Unless they want to argue that such patterns and relationships have no reality but are mere mental projections, they must name some whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The purely congregationalist answer to the question of when and how to capitalize c/Church is not really an answer at all. Rather, it is simply a way to avoid the question.

*(2) Go it alone* In a faith with the cross and resurrection at its center, with a Lord who expects his followers to take up their own crosses, there is something right about a refusal to answer any other call or to buckle under social pressure. Jesus never promised his followers popular acclaim or majority support. To be sure, persecution in and of itself is not an automatic indicator of faithfulness to Christ. After all, other causes have provoked persecution, and so have divergent flavors of Christianity. Thus the claims of the persecuted cannot all be equally valid, nor their practices equally faithful

to Christ. Still, there is something right about resisting prominent voices *just because* they are prominent or claim the names Christian or Church.

The nonviolent follower of Jesus certainly must be humble and nonviolent toward the truth, whatever its source, so that a stubborn commitment to the way of Christ cannot be an obnoxious sectarianism. But if Christians are going to know when to listen humbly to the counsel of others and thus perhaps to bend—and when to refuse to be moved—they will have to be like trees that put strong roots down through the rich soil of Christian faith, reaching all the way down to the bedrock of Christ himself. They will need, in other words, a clear sense of identity rooted in Christ. So too with churches, who must know who they are, and be well rooted in the soil of their own faith traditions in order to keep their loyalty to Christ primary, even when faithfulness to him requires them to reach out in relationships with others as part of his loving, reconciling way.

Reinforced no doubt by memories of persecution and models of costly unswayed discipleship in the past, some Mennonites thinkers have thus endeavored to write Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and shape the life of their churches without any obligation to align that theology with even the most core doctrines of other Christians, as expressed for example in ancient creeds.[7] The key word here is "obligation." The competent Mennonite theologian or church leader these days must be familiar with other theological traditions and ready to learn from their ideas. Mennonite theology will often coincide with that of other church traditions on many or even most doctrinal points. But according to the go-it-alone approach for capitalizing c/Church, it does not *have* to do so, and when it does it will always be coincidental, on the basis of purely Anabaptist-Mennonite reasons and historical precedents. The goal and standard is that Mennonite theology and church practice always be "sui generis"—its own thing, springing up from its own sources alone, accountable to none but Jesus as encountered and understood within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition of which living communities are the discerning edge.

However, absent an honest and forthright theology to name the

[7] The Mennonite theologian who has articulated this view most deliberately is J. Denny Weaver. See for example his article, "The General Versus the Particular: Exploring Assumptions in 20th Century Mennonite Theologizing," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 28-51.

relation of Anabaptist-Mennonite and other "free churches" to a wider, capital-C Church, the implication is that one's own church alone is *the* Church. The logic is frankly sectarian after all. Of course no modern university-trained Mennonite theologians will be so impolite as to say this. Some of their Anabaptist heroes would have said that only adult-baptized, sword-renouncing, firm-yet-harmless lambs were members of Christ's true flock. And the implication of some Mennonite theology is that only pacifist Christians are true Christians. But few will actually say this and fewer still—as they either cite other Christian thinkers or draw upon other models of church life or form working relationships with other Christians—will in fact act this way.

Maybe they *should* say this! Maybe they should in fact treat all Christians who kill or support killing as excommunicated, false, or unfaithful Christians. Maybe they should treat churches that support such practices as sold-out devious "whores of Babylon." Obviously I hope not; I am simply pointing out the disconnect that keeps Mennonites implying but not saying or consistently acting like their church—or perhaps some collective of historical and new emerging peace churches—constitutes the one true Church. That disconnect requires attention. For to follow Jesus' teachings by letting our yea be yea and our nay be nay means Christians in this tradition must either frankly embrace a go-it-alone approach to capitalizing c/Church or look elsewhere for an ecclesiology that allows them to maintain their nonviolent rigor without ex-communicating everyone else.

*(3) Invisible Church* By now, many readers will instinctively be making a theological move explicit at least since John Calvin,[8] and implicit at least since Augustine wrote of that part of the "heavenly city" still on pilgrimage, intermixed within the "earthly city."[9] The true church, they will be concluding, can only be known to God alone.

Ultimately, who can argue with that? The Church belongs to God not to us, so it is God's to recognize, even as God creates and nurtures it through

[8] For a careful discussion of the relationship between the visible and invisible Church in John Calvin, see Klauspeter Blaser, "Calvin's Vision of the Church," *Ecumenical Review* 45, no. 3 (July 1993): 316-27.

[9] Augustine elaborates throughout his massive *De civitate Dei* [The City of God], but for summaries of his schema see 1.35, 11.1, and 19.17, also noting 12.9 and 18.49.

the work of the Holy Spirit. The unfinished character of the church means that any definitional boundaries are properly subject to flux, as God woos the hearts of some at the edges, and continues to convert the lives even of those who seem long and firmly centered in church life. Longtime churchgoers, after all, may be the ones most subject to pride and complacency. In contrast, the struggling young Christian, or even the weak Christian who seems prone to backslide out of Christian commitment, may know a grateful trust in God's grace that the stalwarts take for granted. To attempt to sort these matters out ourselves in any conclusive way would thus be to risk the worst sort of self-righteousness. This is the kind Jesus warned against in Luke 18, when he recounted a tax collector beating his breast in the temple while a self-satisfied religious leader arrogantly looked on.

Again, Christians have already inflicted all kinds of pain and even violence upon one another by trying to definitively identify the visible church. For many, therefore, Christian charity should oblige us to call a truce. According to this approach we should abandon not only the impossible task of judging hearts that only God can see, but also the attempt to see the Church in any one institution—or in any human institutions at all. Even Catholics, for all that they seek and emphasize the "visible unity of the church," blur that vision a little by also speaking of "the mystical body of Christ."[10] They blur it further in a more practical yet complicated way by recognizing the trinitarian baptisms of other Christians, and since Vatican II by recognizing them as "separated brethren." Indeed, the more we think globally and identify the church with the communion of true Christians through the centuries, spread through many lands, the more difficulty we will have identifying the Church as neatly coterminous with any institution at all.

Why not admit, therefore, the wisdom of the invisible c/Church approach? Because visibility is so much of what God's project has been about at least since Abraham! *How much should I hide from Abraham*, God debates in Genesis 18 (my paraphrase), *seeing that I have chosen him in order to create a "great and mighty" people whose greatness will be to bless other nations rather than hoard my blessings?* Abraham and his children are to do this by keeping

[10] See Pope Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi* [Encyclical Letter on the Musical Body of Christ] (1943).

the Lord's way, doing righteousness and justice. The Lord draws Abraham into divine counsel because all of this assumes the visible witness of a visible people. So Abraham had better learn that way of the Lord as intimately as possible. Hidden mystical intimacy alone is not the purpose of God's work, but rather its seal and confirmation. God wants to do something visible in the world through the people God raises up and forms.[11]

A Christian tradition such as the Anabaptist-Mennonite one must therefore insist that God intends a visible church. To live a faithful Christian life is only possible through God's work of regeneration, not our own labors, of course. But such a life must indeed be *lived*—following Christ in life and in the reconciled healing of relationships. Discipleship both depends upon and issues in community, therefore. Communities that endure do so by ordering their relationships through ongoing, accountable social patterns—which is to say, identifiable institutions. When more radical Christians object to the "institutionalism" of some churches or traditions, they are really calling for *different*, more organic, more accessible, more accountable institutions. If they claim they can dispense with institutions entirely, all one must do is watch them for a generation or two. If their communities prove sustainable, they will soon be creating institutions to hold community life together. At every level, then—from the gathering of two or three Christian disciples, to the communities of reconciliation that grow from these gatherings, to the institutions that order, form, and allow for the discernment of these communities—if we want to speak truly of church we must speak of visible c/Church. That visible c/Church is still on pilgrimage, incomplete, and often sinful, to be sure. Its fullness is eschatological and in that sense, invisible. But to give up on the visibility of c/Church is to despair of God's purposes.

*(4) Denominationalism* It is easier to see visible, local, congregations or parish communities than it is to see the worldwide people of witness which God has been calling forth through Abraham and Jesus, in the people of Israel and the people named Church. So, if the theory of the invisible c/

[11] Indeed, even as Calvin articulated his theory of what we have come to label "the invisible church," he remained "interested principally in its visibility" for which he needed to provide a basis and elaboration in the Reformation context. Protestants had broken with the visible institutions of the Roman church, and now had to work through internal debates about the Church's proper role in the economy of salvation. See Blaser, "Calvin's Vision of the Church," 318.

Church does not quite work, we confront all the more forcefully the challenge of how to capitalize the c/Church as Christians form relationships not only *within* visible gathered communities but *between* communities. Christians in different traditions structure their trans-local relationships in different ways, and there are important theological nuances to each of the names they use—conferences, synods, meetings, dioceses, communions, and so on. The name that has come to apply most commonly to the institutional structures that are the result of relationships between local Christian communities (at least in English, and especially in North America) is "denominations." More than local churches, but generally not claiming to be The Church, denominations exist in a strange and theologically unstable zone, however accustomed to them we have become.

Protestant theologian H. Richard Niebuhr offered what may be the best theological defense of this denominational system of mutual Christian recognition: Like all human phenomena, no one church tradition or institution ever captures the fullness of God's will or Christ's gospel. With their respective emphases and especially heart-felt convictions, each church tradition witnesses to all the others with its particular gift. None is complete or perfect, but Christ is at work in all of them together, bringing forth the fullness of the gospel amid the flux of history. What the apostle Paul said of individual Christians complementing one another with their ministries in any local Christian community thus holds for individual churches as they relate to *the* Church: There are many gifts, many members, making up the Body of Christ, and none dare think of itself as the Whole. Yet the One Lord is embodied and at work through their multiplicity.[12]

Niebuhr's formulation comes naturally for Christians living in

[12] H. Richard Niebuhr expressed something of this approach in the opening pages of his book *Christ and Culture*: "The belief which lies back of this effort ... is the conviction that Christ as living Lord is answering the question in the totality of history and life in a fashion which transcends the wisdom of all his interpreters yet employs their partial insights and their necessary conflicts." See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 2. This was with reference to the various "types" of Christian involvement in the world that Niebuhr was to lay out. With regard to denominations per se, see H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education*, in collaboration with Daniel Day Williams and James M. Gustafson (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 16-17.

pluralistic societies that enjoy a rough social consensus in which no difference seems important enough to risk impoliteness, much less die for. But that hints at two of its difficulties, at least.

For one thing, many of the differences between Christian denominations may appropriately be complementary matters of emphasis, but surely not all. Some truth-claims and doctrines are mutually exclusive. God either does predestine some of humanity to damnation or does not. Jesus either expected his followers to renounce all killing or did not. The Book of Mormon either is divinely inspired scripture or it is not. And there we see the problem. Niebuhr probably would not have considered Mormons to be among the recognizable "Christian denominations" he was accounting for. Or, if he would have found a way to include Mormons, then perhaps Jehovah's Witnesses would have stretched him too far, or certainly Scientology, which calls itself a church but owes no allegiance to Jesus Christ at all. This suggests the limits of Niebuhr's formulation: Its generous mutual recognition can only go so far before tougher identity questions become unavoidable.

That generosity is certainly welcome. We do need to practice ecumenical patience as we sort out which differences are complementary and which are non-negotiable on the way to greater Christian unity. And the civic truce that is the denominational system is entirely appropriate for modern, constitutionally agnostic, political orders; Mormons may participate as appropriately as anyone in the vague faith of American civil religion, in which a politician need not and dare not invoke any particular divinity in order to end a speech praying "God bless America." But serious theologians such as Niebuhr eventually need greater precision if they are naming the people called Church.[13]

Otherwise, one's Church actually defaults to America, or perhaps Western civilization, or perhaps the global march of Enlightened progress! This is the second difficulty in Niebuhr's formulation, and it should be all the

[13] John Howard Yoder's judgment of the "lazy solution of pluralism, which we call 'denominationalism'" thus applies even to H. Richard Niebuhr's best-possible defense of the system: It "may be the best way to manage a civil polity, but it dodges the truth questions." See John Howard Yoder, "On Christian Unity: The Way from Below," *Pro Ecclesia* 9, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 177.

more of a concern to radical or nonviolent Christians whom Anabaptism has trained to resist the idolatrous claims of nation-states and empires. The very word "denomination" has been hinting at this problem all along, for one meaning of the word is "portion" or "division" or "part." "Denomination of what?" we can ask.

"Denomination of what?" we *must* ask, or else we are simply begging the question again. What is the whole of which any one denomination is a part? Even a rigorous Protestant thinker such as Niebuhr may not be able to answer the question without either relying on the invisible church theory or sounding uncomfortably open to a Catholic approach. But then, with no real option for naming a capitalized Church that is taking visible concrete shape in history, a Niebuhr not only defaults to America or the march of civilization as the greater whole to which denominations are contributing, he actually *needs* such a quasi-Church to *be* his Church. He knows, after all, that God's work in history must be concrete and visible and transformative, even if it may never be complete until the fullness of Christ at the end of history. But he has nowhere else to posit his hope.

*(5) Pentecostal catholicity-from-below* There *is* a way to insist on the visibility of the Church, without insisting on more precision about exact boundaries than either human fallibility or Christian humility allows. There is a way to insist that the Church must always be finding expression in local congregations, without acting like one's own genealogy or cluster of congregations has ever gone it alone or could go it alone. It is a small-c catholic approach to the problem of capitalizing c/Church that does not capitalize the word "catholic" itself, much less employ the adjective "Roman." In fact, few of its proponents are likely to describe themselves as "catholic" at all.[14] Yet, as Christianity enters its third millennium, it is this way of becoming and being Christian—this way of worshipping God in gathered communities—that is spreading around the world, crossing class divisions,

[14] I thus depend, as Pentecostal theology itself often depends, on a sympathetic interpreter to make the connections between Pentecostalism, catholicity, "free church" ecclesiology, and indeed the Radical Reformation. In particular, I owe the notion of Pentecostal catholicity-from-below to Yoder, "On Christian Unity: The Way from Below." Miroslav Volf, whose roots are in Pentecostalism, does take up the topic of Free Church catholicity in "Catholicity of 'Two or Three': Free Church Reflections on the Catholicity of the Local Church," *The Jurist* 52 (1992): 525-46.

and reconciling ethnicities at a pace that no other form of Christianity matches. It is thus a surprisingly small-c catholic phenomenon, whether we use the word "catholic" or not. Spreading with little of the top-down institutional guidance that we associate with Roman catholicity-from-above, it deserves recognition as catholicity-from-below. It is Pentecostalism.

If a Pentecostal theologian were to propose an authoritative definition of the capital-C Church, it would probably go something like this: *The Church is present anywhere and everywhere that the Holy Spirit is at work gathering people to study and proclaim the Word of God together, respond with trusting gratitude, and worship the God and Father of their Lord Jesus Christ with all of the gifts and energy that the Holy Spirit gives them*. This definition might, like that of some other approaches, seem to be punting or begging the question of just where that "anywhere and everywhere" is happening—except that Pentecostals are nothing if not confident that the Holy Spirit is a visibly active agent in human affairs. So together with the invisible Church approach, they deliberately leave the work of capitalizing c/Church to God. The difference is that they expect God to do this work visibly in the here-and-now lives of Christians. In short, they expect signs and wonders.

Pentecostal catholicity-from-below, then, is probably the best Protestant, Free Church, answer to the question of how to capitalize c/Church. Historical marginalization and fundamentalist habits of biblical interpretation have often taken Pentecostals in a sectarian direction, but nothing about Pentecostalism *per se* requires this. In fact, much in Pentecostal theology requires its adherents to anticipate, open themselves to, and invite the Holy Spirit's breaking out in unexpected ways.[15] From the Spirit thrusting Peter into the Gentile arms of Cornelius to the 20th-century Charismatic Movement thrusting Pentecostals into fellowship with Christians from mainstream churches, Pentecostals simply narrate too many stories of God breaking out of the very boxes we thought God had made, to allow them to settle comfortably or perpetually into any anti-ecumenical, go-

[15] Volf reflected this conviction when he wrote that "The minimal requirement for catholicity in regard to relations between churches is each church's openness to all the others. If one church is closed to the other churches of God in the past or the present, it denies its own catholicity. In effect, a church cannot anticipate the eschatological catholicity of the totality of the people of God, and at the same time isolate itself from other churches." See Volf, "Catholicity of 'Two or Three,'" 539.

it-alone sectarianism. After all, this is what speaking in tongues is supposed to signify.

Pentecostals who are nervous about where this argument is leading will rightly object that both the Bible and their own experience have taught them to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1).[16] None less than the apostle Peter needed his experience with Cornelius tested through accountability with other church leaders. The Pentecostal outpouring of God's Spirit on the household of Cornelius became God's word to the entire Church only through the then church-wide Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.

Precisely here we see Pentecostalism requiring more than Pentecostal ecclesiology to be true to itself, however. Catholicity-from-above and catholicity-from-below needed each other at the Council of Jerusalem—and still do now. Pentecostalism alone has no mechanism for accountability beyond the congregation, and that is finally why it cannot quite offer an adequate answer to the question of how to capitalize c/Church.

Pentecostal freedom to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit has no doubt issued in great vitality and worldwide growth; that is its great strength and the reason why catholicity-from-above needs it, sometimes desperately. But without accountability to the longer traditions and broader counsel of other Christian communities, that freedom is wide open to the tossing and turning of "every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). Dispensationalist theories and speculation about end-time events is too recent an innovation to qualify as orthodoxy and is not particularly Pentecostal in its pseudo-rationalist 19th-century origins, but many Pentecostals embrace it as though it were orthodox Christian doctrine. The good news to the poor that Pentecostalism has offered to millions upon millions of marginalized people around the world—as it has offered healing, deliverance, community, and culturally embedded styles of worship—has often been hijacked by a Prosperity Doctrine that equates God's blessing with upward mobility and consumer goods. Flashy church leaders have cashed in on all of these dynamics by making their flocks accountable to them, while remaining unaccountable themselves. For all of its promise and vitality, therefore, Pentecostalism ends up underscoring the need for an upper-case Church,

[16] Also see 1 Corinthians 12:10 on the "discernment of spirits," and 1 Corinthians 14:28 on how such testing was to take place in the early Church.

but cannot quite do the capitalization alone. And so we face the need for another option.

*(6) Rapprochement with Catholicism* Yes, the Roman kind. I have occasionally referred above to the historical records and limitations of other approaches to the problem of capitalizing c/Church. So I do not want to dismiss the reasons that Protestants have protested the Roman Church and found it wanting. My argument is therefore humble, not triumphalist: We are stuck with it. Once we see the need for Christ's Church to take form and shape in flesh and blood human lives among people who inevitably organize their lives through institutions in order to share any social life at all, the task of identifying with such a capitalized Church will drive us toward something like the Roman Catholic Church. But then the very recognition that we will not find the body of Christ anywhere except in real historical bodies pretty much rules out casting around for some other, more angelic, Church outside the history that we have. As Lutheran theologian Robert W. Jenson has remarked, if the Church of the ancient Christian creeds "subsists" anywhere, it is hard to see where else it subsists other than in the Roman Catholic Church.[17]

The very attempt to capitalize c/Church shows why. In order to work, every other approach either founders, or would need to move closer into communion with the only Catholic Church available to us in history. Yet moving into communion with the Roman Catholic Church need not mean losing the charism and identity of each tradition or approach. The Catholic Church does not go unchanged as it participates in an exchange of gifts with other Christian communities. It needs their gifts and indeed their fraternal admonition—aka prophetic critique—in order to review, reform, and most importantly grow in holiness. It also offers ways to preserve and integrate what is best about all the other approaches.

Consider the ones we have named while surveying ways to attempt to capitalize c/Church:

> *Congregationalism*? Catholicism insists that the Church is more than the sum of all its congregations or parishes, yet as each local church community gathers to proclaim God's word

[17] "God's Time, Our Time: An Interview with Robert W. Jenson," *Christian Century*, May 2, 2006, 35.

and celebrate the sacraments, each becomes the sacramental presence of the whole Church, as it were.

*Invisibility*? On the other hand, Catholicism recognizes the mystery of that larger whole, the "mystical body of Christ" that is still being realized as the Church proceeds through history in its pilgrim incompleteness, thus acknowledging the proper invisibility that even the visible Church must confess.

*Denominationalism*? Along the way, like any Christian community that reads what St. Paul had to say about the many members that make up the body of Christ, Catholicism recognizes what is true about denominationalism—that collectively, not just individually, the body lives and moves and thrives through a diversity of callings, gifts, and cultural expressions. Thus, its long experience with religious orders and recognized non-Roman rites gives it many ways to hold its own "denominations," so to speak, together in communion.

"*Go it alone*"? Schism is obviously antithetical to Catholicism, insisting as it does that no local Christian community or historical strand of communities can "go it alone" vis-à-vis the Christian whole. Still, Catholicism does cherish, remember, and preserve what is right about even this approach—the resoluteness of the martyrs and the *ressourcement* that allows Christians to stay rooted in their core identity whenever other loyalties tempt them.

*Pentecostalism*? Perhaps the greatest challenge but also the most pressing need that Roman Catholicism faces is to open itself to the unpredictable vitality and surprising guidance that Pentecostalism represents, just as Peter needed Cornelius. Pope John XXIII invited a "new Pentecost" as he urged the Roman Catholic Church, its episcopal leaders, and its curial bureaucrats to throw open the windows to let the Holy Spirit blow in through

> the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council.[18] But just as the early Church took longer to appropriate the first Jerusalem Council than Acts 15 suggests, the Church in the modern world is still coming to terms with Vatican II. Meanwhile, Pentecostalism spreads around the world, sometimes competing for the hearts of the Catholic faithful but sometimes invigorating Catholic piety and practice in unpredictable ways. Meanwhile, as we have seen, Pentecostalism needs catholic accountability as much as Roman Catholicism needs pentecostal vitality; simply to learn to talk and pray together across their cultural and theological divides is to begin exchanging gifts.

* * *

If there is another way to capitalize c/Church, I have not been able find it. Perhaps another theologian of Mennonite, Pentecostal, or ecumenical Protestant background can do better than I. But this has been my resolution—to work at sustaining the best charisms of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition that formed me, through a rapprochement with Catholicism.

It should not really be strange to be a "Mennonite Catholic." That there are Benedictine or Franciscan Catholics is so ordinary that we do not even bother with such names. If we did, we would be naming the way that Benedictines and Franciscans live out a charism and clearly maintain their own communal identities while finding ways to be in, and stay in, relationship with the larger communion of the Church. Learning to do this is not and need not be every believer's vocation to the same degree. What I ask of most Mennonites for now is not that they all become Catholics *en masse*, but two simpler things.

First, given that their emphasis on salvation-in-community lived out in active discipleship already makes them as much Catholic as Protestant in crucial ways, they should become as literate and even comfortable in the Catholic world as they have come to be in the Protestant world. Second, they should recognize that for some of us to take a Mennonite charism into

[18] Pope John XXIII, "Gaudet mater ecclesia," Opening speech to the Second Vatican Council (1962).

full communion with the Roman Catholic Church is itself a ministry of reconciliation and peacebuilding.[19]

It is because I am still very much a Mennonite formed in the Believers Church tradition that I am convinced that church must always take concrete, visible, identifiable form, even if its earthly pilgrimage remains necessarily incomplete and its fullness thus "invisible." And because I am a Mennonite committed to placing bonds of brother/sisterhood above every national and ethnic border, I yearn to see that church take shape through just, global, and accountable relationships. The Roman Catholic Church is still on pilgrimage through history, as the Second Vatican Council insisted. But it is the way I have learned to capitalize Church.

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[19] For fuller development of these themes, see Gerald W. Schlabach, "Catholic and Mennonite: A Journey of Healing," in *Sharing Peace: Mennonites and Catholics in Conversation*, ed. Gerald W. Schlabach and Margaret Pfeil (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 159–78, and Gerald W. Schlabach, "You Converted to What? One Mennonite's Journey," *Commonweal*, June 1, 2007, 14-17.

Curtis W. Freeman. *Contesting Catholicity: Theology for Other Baptists*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014.

In this book on Baptist ecclesiology, Curtis W. Freeman, Research Professor of Theology and Baptist Studies at Duke Divinity School, starts with the diagnosis that Baptists are sick and the root cause of their sickness is their alterity—their determination to maintain a sectarian denominational identity. He suggests that the cure is a rediscovery of a lowercase 'catholicity' that recognizes that the church as the body of Christ is ultimately one or it is not the church at all. He proposes that Baptists should identify as 'contesting catholics': catholic, as they reclaim the early Christian creeds as a part of their own identity, but also contesting, as they claim space for their distinctive theological commitments as a legitimate part of the Christian tradition.

In Part I of the two-part volume, Freeman proposes a third way beyond two types of Baptist theology: a fundamentalist-evangelical spectrum and a liberal-moderate spectrum. He argues that both are limited by their desire to accommodate theology to modernity. In contrast, he embraces a postliberal theology as an alternative that moves beyond the liberal-conservative divide. He locates his work in continuity with Baptist theologians like Carlyle Marney, Warren Carr, and James McClendon, Jr., whom he identifies as "Other Baptists," since they each argued in their own ways that Baptist theology is strongest not when it is isolated but when it is in critical conversation with the wider Christian tradition. Building on their work, Freeman's third way reclaims threads of Baptist theology that connect it to the early Christian creeds and by extension to all churches affirming the creeds.

The author's argument hinges on convincing readers that Baptist theology is congruent with creedalism, even though he acknowledges that many Baptists are noncreedal. He is convinced that only the ancient ecumenical creeds can "provide a kind of rule of faith that effectively regulates and guides the reading of interpretive communities" (136) and offer common ground for engaging in genuine ecumenical conversation. Affirming the creeds offers Baptists a way beyond individualism, fundamentalism, and biblical criticism "toward the bedrock of catholicity" (138).

After working to establish the validity of creedalism for Baptists in

Part I, Freeman then uses the creeds as a basis for interpreting the catholicity of the Baptist tradition in Part II. He engages in a theological *ressourcement* (return to the sources) of the Baptist tradition, focusing on a trinitarian theology of God, anthropology, ecclesiology, biblical hermeneutics, communion, and baptism. With each theme, he presents a wide diversity of perspectives in the Baptist tradition. His historical study helpfully shows the origins and influences of current Baptist beliefs and practices, and highlights untapped theological resources to propose a more 'catholic' Baptist theology. He hopes that his interpretation of 'contesting catholicity' will offer a bridge for Baptists from a sectarian exclusivism to a more inclusive theology.

Although Freeman intends to cure Baptist alterity, I am left with the impression that he doesn't offer a solution to sectarianism as much as he widens the sectarian circle. While it may be outside the scope of this book, it is still surprising that he only hints at essential questions about the relationship of the 'church catholic' to an increasingly pluralistic society. In an age of post-Christendom, he looks forward to focusing "on the proper business of asking what it means for the church to be the church without worrying about what the world may think or say" (391). Yet he affirmatively quotes McClendon, who observes that "'the line between church and world pass[es] right through each Christian heart'" (35). If this is so, then the church can never be the church without worrying about what the world thinks.

*Contesting Catholicity: Theology for Other Baptists* gives serious attention to curing ecumenical rifts within the church, but this is just a first step. The sickness of alterity that the author describes has already metastasized into in the wider 'church catholic' in the United States. The further challenge is for churches and theologians to engage generously, not just with one another but with the interreligious, national, cultural, and political worlds in which Christians live.

Overall, the author's search for a third way is timely and commendable for imagining an alternative to the intractable theological-political divisions in many churches today. Besides those interested in Baptist ecclesiology and post-liberalism, his book is a useful conversation partner for anyone concerned with the tension between theological dissent and ecumenism.

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John C. Nugent. *Endangered Gospel: How Fixing the World is Killing the Church.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016.

In his latest work, John C. Nugent offers a proposal for how Christians should understand the church's relationship to the world. In contrast to popular paradigms which view the mission of the church to be that of "making this world a better place," he asserts that the church's role is primarily "to be the better place that God has already made and that the wider world will not be until Christ returns" (20). For Nugent, this approach, which he labels the "Kingdom-centered" model, is marked by prioritization of the Christian community, rather than the world, in every aspect of a Christian's life. To defend this argument, he provides a survey of the biblical narrative, calling attention to the unique social position to which God calls his people, one whose primary mission in the world is that of "forming communities that embrace, display, and proclaim God's kingdom, and scattering them throughout the world as witnesses to God's accomplished work in Christ" (171).

*Endangered Gospel* is dependent on an inaugurated eschatology to undergird its thesis. For Nugent, the Kingdom is here and now among God's people, the church, but nevertheless awaits its maturation in the age to come. The church's mission, therefore, is to be a witness and a foretaste of God's reign, testifying to Christ's victory at the cross while it awaits the passing away of the present order and the renewal of God's creation. While God's reign is understood to transcend the boundaries of the church, the author nevertheless argues that obedience to Christ's specific directives to his people should result in the church recognizing that it has a special role to play in the world: that of providing a unique and explicit witness to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in both word and deed, with particular attention to maintaining its own common life and integrity.

Thus, Nugent argues, the church's operational strategy for engaging the world should be one that is "*vocal* in proclaiming the gospel of God's kingdom, and *visible* in living it out as a community" (167). For the author, such an approach untangles Christians from the distractions of partisan politics and culture wars, and liberates them to focus on embodying God's Kingdom in the life of the church. He outlines the practical implications of

this principally ecclesial view of Christian social engagement in the third part of the book, where he describes what this vision of the church as "the better place that God has already made" (20) means for discipleship, friendship, political witness, fellowship, family life, vocation, and mission.

Nugent can be simultaneously excessive and vague in making his point. Prioritizing the local church, he naturally wants Christians to raise their expectations of church membership. Unfortunately, in doing so he can be graceless and perfectionistic. For him, "Attending one or two weekly meetings, giving a set portion of your income, and finding a few concrete ways to serve the body will not do" (124). This critical admonishment demonstrates lack of pastoral tact at best and legalistic idealism at worst, leaving a reader asking what level of commitment would satisfy the author's demands. Daily prayer? Common-pot income sharing? Refusal of insurance in favor of church-based support? Unfortunately, Nugent never provides an answer. While his calls for Christians to "commit to a local body" and "join a revolutionary people movement" (127) are valid, he fails to sympathize with the everyday struggle of the average North American Christian trying to order her life towards God's Kingdom and righteousness while being relentlessly subjected to the culture's counter-narrative. Nugent instead categorizes her as a lesser member, one who can be identified among the false disciples of Matthew 7 to whom Jesus says, "Away from me, you evildoers!" (127). Readers not already convinced by the author's vision of the church are likely to be ostracized by such moral elitism.

If one can look past its penchant for perfectionism, *Endangered Gospel* nevertheless succeeds in offering a lay-accessible vision of the church in Anabaptist perspective. Small groups and individual congregants of churches seeking an alternative way to engage with the world will be enriched by its scholarly yet approachable exploration of ecclesiological themes in scripture. Unfortunately, the book's relatively steep price and its publication on an academic imprint may limit its viability for congregational use.

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Samuel J. Steiner. *In Search of Promised Lands: A Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario.* Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2015.

Without a clear guidebook, the complexity and diversity of Mennonite groups can seem confusing. Samuel J. Steiner's *In Search of Promised Lands: A Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario* has answered the need for a clear history of Mennonites in the Canadian province. This volume is excellently written, extensively documented, solid in its research, and presented in an accessible style.

Steiner begins by mentioning his upbringing in "an eastern Ohio Mennonite home" (17), and traces his personal journey into the Ontario Mennonite community. He identifies himself as an "assimilated Mennonite" as distinct from those who are "separated Mennonites." Between these two poles exists a fascinating continuum of doctrine and practice. To help the reader understand this dense tapestry of Mennonite life in Ontario, Steiner draws on the story of Abraham, noting that "the startling diversity of Mennonites in Ontario in the twenty-first century can partly be explained through their search for the promised land" (24). He portrays the exodus of Mennonites from Russia to North America, settlement in Canada, and the intervening influence of movements, including Pietism, in rich detail.

Steiner's narrative follows Mennonites as they settle in what became Ontario during the 18th and 19th centuries, experience change and division through the influence of renewal movements, develop initiatives in missions and service, experience discrimination and conscription during two World Wars, encounter new arrivals from the Soviet Union, wrestle with preserving tradition and welcoming change from the broader society, welcome newcomers from Asia, South and Central America to the Mennonite world, develop distinctive Mennonite schools and universities, and continue to discern how best to be faithful in terms of cultural adaptation into the 21st century.

Each chapter begins with a biographical account of a Mennonite personality and situates the stories of Mennonite immigration, settlement and change within the broader narrative of national and international events. Readers encounter early Mennonite Brethren missionary Alexander W. Banfield, the leader of the first 20th-century Women's Missionary Society

Ella Mann, and Old Order bishop Jesse B. Bauman. At times the connection between the biography and the rest of the chapter could be clarified, but the biographies serve as reminders that Mennonite history is composed of people with rich and interesting lives.

Steiner describes the experiences of pioneer men and women, including the challenges faced by widows with young children. He gives due attention to the role of women in ministry, especially among the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, noting that women were "the backbone of city missions" for that denomination (173).

The author's approach to Mennonite history is objective and at times sobering. For example, he writes that "alcohol addiction among the aboriginal population became a significant concern after white settlers, including Mennonites, introduced drink to them" (72). He also discusses the Poplar Hill Development School, a residential school for aboriginal children operated by Mennonites from 1962 to 1989. However, his account also includes moments of humor, whether noting the fate of Joseph E. Schneider's barn as competing fire companies turned their hoses against each other, or telling stories of cross-cultural miscommunication between Mennonites and their neighbors.

While Steiner identifies himself as an archivist, "not a trained academic historian" (18), he demonstrates his knowledge of the academic literature by drawing on the studies of prominent scholars in sociology, anthropology, history, theology, and political science. The endnotes are impressive, demonstrating a firm grasp on a wide range of material. They also contain some surprises. For instance, I wasn't aware that pop star Justin Bieber had attended Hidden Acres Camp in New Hamburg for four years (717, note 32), or that in 1944 the Mennonite Central Committee office in Kitchener was owned by Dr. J. Hett, a spiritualist who practiced séances in another room of the house (694, note 21).

Charts and tables provide excellent resources throughout the book, which also includes a glossary and an appendix on the future of Mennonite groups in Ontario. I did find that I needed to refer to GAMEO for further information on some phrases—for example, 'Defenseless Mennonites' (652, note 9)—as they didn't seem to be explicated in the text. I was also hoping to read something about Mennonite Voluntary Service, a program which

operated at the Welcome Inn in Hamilton and in St. Catharines.

This book should be on the shelves of university and church libraries. It provides an excellent resource for researchers on Canada's history and culture.

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Trevor Bechtel. *The Gift of Ethics: A Story for Discovering Lasting Significance in Your Daily Work*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014.

It is not often that one considers storytelling as a medium for ethical reflection and learning. Yet, in *The Gift of Ethics*, Trevor Bechtel argues for just that. In the opening chapter he states that "stories are the most useful way for us to begin to learn about ethics in a biblical worldview" (1). He contends that stories offer an important and necessary component for ethical reflection, because they structure our worldview and actions. Stories can articulate the complexities and messiness of life while also captivating and inviting us into the narrative without coercion. In this manner, they are transformative and "more useful than goals or rules" for those striving to be ethical (2). It is within the framework of storytelling, both from scripture and his own life, that the author reimagines and constructs ethics within a biblical worldview.

The Beatitudes act as a foundation for the author's ethical imagination. Following Socrates, Bechtel argues that happiness is at "the heart of ethics" (2). Although at first glance the Beatitudes seem counterintuitively directed to this end, he argues that they are an essential source for understanding what it means to be happy and to live the good life. The Beatitudes "let Jesus define what happiness is" (9). Further, they are not merely descriptive; they also function ethically and performatively, inspiring action. Lastly, the "gift structure" of the Beatitudes strongly mirrors the moral structure seen throughout scripture, and thus they offer an understanding of ethics within a biblical worldview.

Throughout this 94-page book, Bechtel interweaves the Beatitudes with personal stories, scriptural interpretation, and philosophical reflection. Readers are invited to collaborate with him in imagining a Beatitudes-focused ethics that is capacious and contextual. He reconfigures ethics, suggesting that it is more than following the right rules or seeking the right goals (which do still serve a purpose). Chapter two argues that ethics is more than learning how to make difficult decisions; it also involves self-discovery, figuring out not only who we are but who we desire to be, the "best version of ourselves" (20).

In subsequent chapters, Bechtel argues that ethics can be viewed as a process in which we become "ethical people" (39). Through moral paradigms and stories we learn about the complexities of life and virtues from others. Through virtuous practices and habits we begin to embody ethical behaviors and relations. And through a Christ-centered imagination, we envision what it might mean to follow Christ in the diversity of our lives. During this process, we learn about ourselves and live into who we are called to be in relation with one another.

Bechtel also includes formal approaches to Christian ethics, drawing on Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and others. He walks readers through the development of the categorical imperative as well as the development of human rights language. But in the end he departs from these formal modes. Although helpful in achieving "a basic level of treatment," they inevitably reinscribe "the human person into a rugged autonomous individual" and universalize the human experience (88). The author concludes that we become ethical when "we put ourselves in situations and places where we can be ethical and around people with whom we can be ethical" (91). Becoming ethical and becoming happy involves being in community with those to whom we are accountable and from whom we can learn how to be good.

The author convincingly argues for the importance of storytelling and the Beatitudes for constructing ethics within a biblical worldview. Yet, some readers may be concerned with how a storytelling approach to ethics might engage contemporary issues such racism or sexism, which have become imbedded within our cultural and theological narratives. However, the author does challenge us to consider how we form relations of accountability and how we often refuse "to receive the gift of relationship" with others (94).

Some seasoned readers may find this succinct volume limited in the extent of its ethical and philosophical analysis. Nevertheless, it does cover a wide range of topics in the development of philosophical and Christian ethics, and this makes it suitable for new students, church members, and study groups. Many would find that Bechtel's text and intimate style offer an enjoyable, approachable, and accessible introduction to Christian ethics.

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Andrew P. Klager, ed. *From Suffering to Solidarity: The Historical Seeds of Mennonite Interreligious, Interethnic, and International Peacebuilding*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015.

According to editor Andrew Klager, *From Suffering to Solidarity* sets out to examine how Mennonite history and specifically "narratives, memories, and myths of suffering and nonviolence . . . in the midst of persecution" have shaped Mennonite solidarity with those who suffer (2). The volume is not intended, however, as a contribution to Mennonite self-understanding but as a case study of how one tradition draws on its past in its present peacebuilding efforts. Klager hopes this book will inspire peacebuilders to investigate their own traditions' histories as resources for peace and to be open to the contribution of religion to their work (5).

The first of three sections covers "the historical conditions of Anabaptist-Mennonite peacebuilding" in chapters on early 16th-century Anabaptism (John Derksen), Russian Mennonites during the Soviet era (Walter Sawatsky), North American Mennonites (Royden Loewen), Mennonite Central Committee (Esther Epp-Tiessen), and global and neo-Anabaptisms (John D. Roth). Although much of this material will be familiar to Mennonite readers, overlooked and emerging narratives also come to the surface in illuminating ways, particularly in the pieces by Sawatsky and Roth. This section could be helpful for teachers of Mennonite history looking for a concise and up-to-date (albeit selective) historical overview from origins

to global expansion.

In the second section, scholars and peacebuilding practitioners interact critically with various dimensions of the formative historical narratives. Janna Hunter-Bowman's essay demonstrates how several of John Paul Lederach's groundbreaking contributions to peacebuilding are rooted in his Mennonite "narrative community," including his "elicitive method" that prioritizes strategies emergent from dialogical encounter. This interdependence of experience and communal formation unsettles any tidy account of the relationship between history and present peacebuilding. (To my mind, the case studies in section three confirm her thesis.) Carl Stauffer similarly challenges naïve appropriations of central "myths" of Mennonite peacebuilding, including Dirk Willems, Russian Mennonite persecution, and the Elmira, Ontario restorative justice case. Stauffer demonstrates how both peace and exclusionary violence can follow from each of these myths.

Lowell Ewert contends that "contemporary Mennonite peace theology . . . cannot be reconciled with the contemporary global human rights regime," because of the anti-state bias of the former (162). Ewert goes on to outline how that regime is vital for peace today, and how Mennonite peacebuilding actually supports it in spite of itself. The author's lack of engagement with any critical theological or philosophical discussion of "human rights" means this essay is unlikely to persuade many Mennonite peace theologians.

In one of the most important pieces in this volume, Marlene Epp calls for a "gendering" of Mennonite peace studies. To that end, she reviews the positive contributions of North American Mennonite women to peace efforts during and after World War II. She further identifies how Mennonite peace theology and practice has overlooked violence against women, with disastrous results. An unfortunate case in point appears in a following essay by Ron Kraybill. Although Kraybill (and Virgil Wiebe, in his own essay) rightly argues for the spiritual formation of peacebuilders, he proposes humility theology and *Gelassenheit* as paradigmatic without attending to the ways they have negatively impacted women.

The third section contains several fascinating case studies of peacebuilding projects in which Mennonites have been centrally involved. Chapters cover Egypt (Klager), Colombia (Bonnie Klassen), Indonesia (Sumanto Al Qurtuby), Palestine-Israel (Alain Epp-Weaver), the Democratic

Republic of Congo (Fidele Ayu Lumeya), and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo (David Steele). That some of the case study authors are not Mennonites or Christians bolsters a sense that Mennonite peacebuilding is a relational, dialogical phenomenon. Peace is not Mennonite property.

What is certainly close to home for Mennonites are determinative theological convictions. These convictions do not come in for detailed examination here, but they are an important part of the history and present context that conditions Mennonite peacebuilding work. Moreover, just as there is no single Mennonite approach to peacebuilding, there is no single Mennonite peace theology. Compare, for instance, claims by Derksen, Sawatsky, and Epp-Tiessen about the centrality of faith in Jesus Christ for their subjects (30-34, 47, 89) with Kraybill's vision of "non-creedal" formation for peacebuilders (203). Any adaptation of Mennonite history by other traditions will need to do the hard work of wrestling with the complex imbrication of Mennonite peacebuilding and theology. Comparative history, in this case at least, requires comparative theology.

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Alan Kreider. *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.

What accounts for the growth of the Church in the three centuries between Jesus and Constantine? Alan Kreider seeks to answer this question in *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*. In Parts I and II, Kreider describes two factors in the growth of the early church that he claims have been underappreciated by previous scholars: "patience" as the church's peculiar virtue, and a distinctive and attractive "habitus," or set of embodied habits, inculcated by catechesis and worship. The author likens the growth of the Church in the first three centuries to fermentation—a slow, natural process of expansion powered by a living force within.

In Part III, Kreider takes a closer look at early Christian community life, worship, catechesis, and baptism, arguing that each demonstrates

dedication to the practices of "patient ferment." These practices, he contends, resulted in the slow, steady growth of the church, powered by attraction rather than an intentional missiology. In Part IV, he posits a break in the process of "patient ferment" during the fourth century, and suggests that Constantine and Augustine introduced 'impatient' missional strategies of force and coercion that betrayed the values of the early church.

Kreider convincingly shows that Christianity in the first three centuries grew primarily as a result of person-to-person interactions and not as the result of public preaching or organized missionary activity. His emphasis on the imperative of the reformation of catechumens' lifestyle in early Christianity is a valuable corrective to those who would understand conversion as a one-time decision rather than a process. However, his contention that a distinctively "patient" Christian lifestyle powered the spread of the early Church is problematic.

In Kreider's view, Christian "patience," which the author defines as "not controlling events, not anxious or in a hurry, and never using force to achieve [its] ends," was attractive precisely because of its stark contrast with dominant Roman values (2). He asserts that "when ancient Latin writers used the term *patientia*, they didn't have heroes in mind; they were thinking of subordinates and victims" (20). He supports this claim with a citation of an illuminating article by Robert Kaster which, to my mind, makes a very different point than Kreider intends. *Patientia*, Kaster says, "more than any other Latin word I know, can be used to express either high praise or grave condemnation . . . [*patientia*] correspond[s] to dispositions that, in English, might range from 'endurance' to 'patience' to 'forbearance' to 'passivity' to 'submissiveness.'"[1] It can be used by Latin writers to describe *both* a commendable virtue in heroes *and* an ignominious characteristic of the weak.

A close reading of Tertullian's *De Patientia* reveals that Christians and Romans alike considered *patientia* to be both vice and virtue. Kreider's assertion that "[Tertullian] writes to help the believers think Christianly about their lives so that they would differentiate themselves from their neighbors who did not grasp the power and profundity of a patient lifestyle, and even more from philosophers who were unwilling to recognize patience

[1] Robert Kaster, "The Taxonomy of Patience, or When is *Patientia* Not a Virtue?" *Classical Philology* 97, no. 2 (2002): 133-44, 135.

as a virtue," leaves me baffled, since Tertullian actually says the opposite (20). At the treatise's outset, the Roman writer claims that *patientia* is universally praised: "the good of [patience], even they who live outside it, honour with the name of highest virtue."[2] He goes on to affirm that the philosophers are uncharacteristically unified in their "praise and glory" for *patientia*. And yet he also admits that there are ignoble varieties of *patientia*, condemning, among others, men who "patiently" endure marriage to overbearing wives for the sake of keeping the dowry.[3]

If a distinctive, 'patient' *habitus* doesn't explain Christianity's early growth, what does? Unfortunately, Kreider does not evaluate other theories that might shed light on this question. Throughout his study, he is too eager to draw sharp lines between the *habitus* of Christians and "Romans," failing to appreciate that all Roman Christians, regardless of their re-socialization into a Christian way of life, remained Romans. In particular, his attribution of Constantine's malicious rhetoric about Jews and heretics to his unreformed "pagan" *habitus*, rather than to well-established Christian discourses of the first three centuries, strikes me as an attempt to disavow disagreeable ideas and practices whose roots in earliest Christianity run uncomfortably deep (269-71).

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Jean-Yves Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*. Translated by W. Chris Hackett. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014.

Jean-Yves Lacoste is a French philosopher who remains an under-appreciated contributor to the theological turn in the discourse of phenomenology, the philosophical movement associated with Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Of his half-dozen major works, two stand out for their importance and for their availability in English translation: *Experience and the Absolute: Disputed Questions on the Humanity of Man* (PUF, 1994; Stanford Univ. Press, 2004), and the edited volumes of the *Encyclopedia of*

[2] Tertullian, *De Patientia* 1.7
[3] Ibid., 16.2

*Christian Theology* (Routledge, 2005).

Like Jean-Luc Marion and Michel Henry, Lacoste works to connect the project of phenomenology with the concerns of theology (often from a Catholic point of view). It is appropriate that his newly translated Richard Lectures, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, deals with the relationship between philosophy and theology. The book is introduced by Jeffrey Bloechl, and proceeds through three chapters: "*Theoria, vita philosophica*, and Christian Experience," "Philosophy, Theology, and the Academy," and "Philosophy, Theology, and the Task of Thinking."

The first chapter begins with a reminder that the distinction between philosophy and theology is a historical one and not an essential one (1). Lacoste's definition of philosophy, following Heidegger, is "the attempt to give and account of being [*l'étant*] in its totality" (1). From this initial definition three additional defining features of philosophy can be gleaned from the dense brush of Lacoste's writing: philosophy is "a human affair," it aims beyond humanity, thereby exceeding its "Greek ambitions," and it involves a decision between work and life (6, 8, 9-10).

This last feature seems to permit a disconnect between the life and the work of a philosopher, a distinction that allows Lacoste to continually draw upon Heidegger's work without significant concern for his associations with National Socialism. The author's bracketing of Heidegger's biography seems out of place, given his condemnation of the moral lives of theologians like Karl Barth and Paul Tillich later in the chapter (23-24).

The initial chapter emphasizes that philosophy can be liberated from the desire to reduce itself to science, and instead can be grounded in a *logos* that predates our present understandings of both philosophy and theology (12-13). The rest of the book leaves the reader guessing about whether this hidden relation between philosophy and theology entails the victory or neutrality of either discipline in the contemporary academy (or church). In the second chapter Lacoste continues his historical reflection by examining Boethius's combination of philosophy and theology in *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

Throughout the first two chapters, Lacoste stresses the importance of prayer for the relationship between philosophy and theology, referencing Evagrius's statement that "One who is a theologian will pray truly" (24), and

noting Barth's argument that Anselm's great metaphysical texts were also prayers (41). Beyond the limited scope of this present book, Lacoste's work in the collections *The Experience of God: A Postmodern Response* (2005) and *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology* (2001) provide further depth to his prayer-centred, liturgical, sacramental, and philosophical theology.

The final chapter argues that philosophy and theology share a common ground in "thinking," further critiquing the rigidity of both disciplines in stating that we are "incapable of strictly demarcating philosophical thinking and theological thinking" (89). While acknowledging that some aspects of both disciplines remain untouched by the other, Lacoste shows how both are interconnected because of their shared concern for thinking and their inconsistent attitude towards tradition (90).

Whether the author fully succeeds in mobilizing phenomenology to serve the needs of theological thinking is beyond the scope of this review. What is more relevant to theologically oriented scholars and laypeople is where philosophy and theology stand in relation to one another today. Lacoste's book could serve to inspire Mennonite institutions of higher education to engage more intentionally with the ways in which theology and philosophy interact in their curricula. That said, this volume may not be useful to the many readers of this journal. It is often unclear whether Lacoste is making a descriptive historical claim or a prescriptive argument, and although the book contains several core themes, it is difficult to follow a coherent line of thinking that unifies it as a whole.

In summary, the book is edifying and invites further critique, both because of its troubling triumphant assertions of Christian supremacy over intellectual history, and its efforts to humble the pretensions of theologians who reject philosophy.

*Maxwell Kennel,* Ph.D. student, Religious Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## MENNONITES, SERVICE, AND THE HUMANITARIAN IMPULSE: MCC AT 100

**Winnipeg, Manitoba**
**October 23-24, 2020**

In 1920 Mennonites from different ethnic and church backgrounds formed Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to respond collaboratively to the famine ravaging Mennonite communities in the Soviet Union (Ukraine). Since then MCC has grown to embrace disaster relief, development, and peacebuilding in more than 60 countries. One of the most influential Mennonite organizations of the 20th and 21st centuries, MCC has facilitated cooperation among various Mennonite groups, constructing a broad inter-Mennonite, Anabaptist identity, and bringing Mennonites into global ecumenical and interfaith partnerships.

This centennial conference invites proposals for papers examining MCC's past, present, and future, and reflecting on Mennonite response to the biblical call to love one's neighbor through practical acts of service. Proposals are welcome from various academic perspectives, including but not limited to anthropology, conflict transformation and peacebuilding, cultural studies, development studies, economics, history, political science, sociology, and theology.

The conference will be hosted by the Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, in collaboration with Canadian Mennonite University.

Limited research grants are available to help defray costs related to research in MCC's archives in Akron, Pennsylvania or at other MCC sites. Queries, with a brief two-paragraph description of the proposed research, should be sent to Alain Epp Weaver: aew@mcc.org. Requests for research grants will be assessed on an ongoing, rolling basis.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 1, 2019**

Send proposals or questions to Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9, Canada. E-mail: r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY: METHODS AND PRACTICES

**Trinity Western University, Langley, BC**
**June 7-9, 2017**

The Humanitas Anabaptist-Mennonite Centre for Faith and Learning at Trinity Western University invites submissions of paper proposals for a conference that seeks to encourage scholarship and engaged conversation on theological method. Proposals are invited that address theological method in general and Anabaptist-Mennonite theological method in particular.

Preference will be given to papers taking up these questions and related themes:

- What makes a particular theology Anabaptist, Mennonite, or a combination of the two? Is a distinct method or set of methods, convictions, or practices necessary for doing Anabaptist-Mennonite theology?
- In what sense is theology an academic discipline, and as such how is it to be done?
- What is theology's subject? Are there clear ways of expressing from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective what theology is about?
- What is theology's task? Are there clear ways of expressing from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective what theology is for?
- Are there Anabaptist-Mennonite ways to appropriate scripture as a sacred text, reason (the best reflective learning across disciplines), tradition (Anabaptist-Mennonite traditions, the wider Christian tradition, possibly other faith traditions), as well as lived experience? Are there Anabaptist-Mennonite ways of relating these sources?
- How does Anabaptist-Mennonite theology connect to biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and philosophical theology?

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: JANUARY 15, 2017**
www.twu.ca/research/call-for-papers

Submit your proposal as a single document (Word or PDF attachment) that includes a 250-word max. abstract, with your name, current academic affiliation if applicable, and e-mail address to: humanitas2017@gmail.com.
Notice of acceptance will be sent by February 1, 2017.

Program committee: Jeremy Bergen (Conrad Grebel University College), Karl Koop (Canadian Mennonite University), Paul Martens (Baylor University), Myron A. Penner (Trinity Western University), and Laura Schmidt Roberts (Fresno Pacific University)

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## WHAT YOUNG HISTORIANS ARE THINKING

**Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, PA**
**June 5, 2017**

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS), the Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies at Messiah College, and the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College welcome paper proposals for their fourth annual symposium, What Young Historians Are Thinking.

This symposium seeks to encourage young historians in their research and to provide an avenue for sharing their findings, both orally and subsequently in print through publication in LMHS's Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage.

We welcome proposals from undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students, those who have just started careers in history, and those who are "young" in scholarly study of historical topics (no matter what age).

All must be engaged in original research chiefly using primary sources (written and/or oral). All should be part of a Historic Peace Church (Amish, Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, Religious Society of Friends/Quaker, etc.) or be conducting research related to one or more of these traditions.

Interested researchers should submit a 250-word proposal for a 20-minute symposium paper, plus a brief autobiographical sketch and full contact information. Three proposals will be chosen.

A limited number of travel scholarships are available. Please note your possible need in your proposal.

**PROPOSAL DEADLINE: APRIL 14, 2017**

Submit proposals via e-mail to younghistorians@lmhs.org
or via postal mail to Joel Nofziger, Lancaster Mennonite
Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602.

Symposium Planning Committee: Jeff Bach, Simone Horst, Devin Manzullo-Thomas, Joel Nofziger, and Anne Yoder

Co-sponsored by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society; the Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan Studies (Messiah College); and the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies (Elizabethtown College)

*The Conrad Grebel Review* (CGR) is a multi-disciplinary peer-reviewed journal of Christian inquiry devoted to advancing thoughtful, sustained discussions of theology, peace, society, and culture from broadly-based Anabaptist/Mennonite perspectives. It is published three times a year. We welcome submissions of articles, reflections, and responses. Accepted papers are subject to Chicago style and copy editing, and are submitted to authors for approval before publication.

**Articles**
Articles are original works of scholarship engaged with relevant disciplinary literature, written in a style appealing to the educated non-specialist, and properly referenced. Length limit: 7500 words, excluding notes. Manuscripts are typically sent in blind copy to two peer-reviewers for assessment.

**Reflections**
Reflections are thoughtful and/or provocative pieces drawing on personal expertise and experience, and may take the form of homilies, speeches, or essays. While held to the same critical standard as articles, they are generally free of scholarly apparatus. Length limit: 3000 words.

**Responses**
Responses are replies to articles either recently published in CGR or appearing in the same issue by arrangement. Length is negotiable.

**SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

Send your submission electronically as a WORD attachment to: **Stephen Jones, Managing Editor, cgredit@uwaterloo.ca.** Include your full name, brief biographical information, and institutional affiliation in the covering e-mail. CGR will acknowledge receipt immediately, and will keep you informed throughout the assessment process.

For CGR's Style Guide, Citation Format Guide, and other useful information, please consult the submissions page on our website.

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CGR is indexed in Religious & Theological Abstracts, EBSCOhost databases, and in the ATLA (American Theological Library Association) Religion Database. It is also included in the full-text ATLASerials (ATLAS) collection.

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