The Mennonite Challenge of Particularism and Universalism: A Liberation Perspective

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The various and changing historical circumstances of the spectrum of persons who have carried the name "Mennonite" in the second half of the twentieth century has resulted in much attention being directed to Mennonite identity. This is a complicated issue as the manifold manifestations of this historical movement attempt to identify themselves within their societies as well as in relationship to one another. This paper evaluates the results of some of the research, primarily from sociology, to examine questions of Mennonite identity. Since this analysis frequently debates the perception of Mennonites as a 'minority,'[1] I will examine the experiences of the two other 'minority' peoples in North America, particularly with regard to problems their experiences pose for some directions in which Mennonites have sought answers to persistent questions about their identity on this continent. I then examine some possibilities that emerge when issues of identity are examined from the vantage point of perspectives on globalization as a context for understanding Mennonite particularism and universalism.

The experiential basis underlying this paper and for attempting to understand some implications of both the 'minority' and 'global' status of Mennonites derives from a substantial number of years spent in both Jewish and African American contexts. Hence, this evaluation has been developed primarily in a North American setting and is thus limited, both with respect to issues arising from international contexts and to the experiences of certain other peoples in North America. Hispanic, Asian, and Native peoples are apparent examples of omissions. While this analysis may be helpful in providing a framework for discussing challenges raised by some of these other traditions, its value for that purpose is not mine to determine.

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Mennonite Identity in Sociological Perspective

Mennonite identity has received a good deal of attention by sociologists in the past quarter century, in part spurred by data provided by the Kauffman-Harder study of 1975.[1] This study itself was precipitated by a perception that Mennonites were in the midst of an identity crisis.[2] The perception has been that Mennonite identity is threatened in the process of adapting to the social changes of North American society. These studies have focused upon the issues of urbanization, assimilation, individualism, and secularization. Permit me to cite a few examples.

Donald Kraybill has applied the sociology of knowledge to address the question of Mennonite modernity and identity.[3] He argues that "the abundant sociological evidence makes it virtually impossible to argue that the Mennonite phenomenon is merely a religious one devoid of ethnic expressions."[4] This claim permits him to compare the experiences of Mennonites with that of other ethnic groups that migrated from Europe to North America. For him, "Mennonite identity consists of socially constructed images which Mennonites hold of themselves. . . . (It) is a dynamic composite of group self-images transformed and reconstructed over time and social space."[5] He constructs a model explaining the changes in Mennonite identity from the standpoint of modernization theory and the three-generation hypothesis in ethnic studies. The three-generation hypothesis is based on observations of the experiences of European immigrants in urban environments in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where the nature of the ethnic identity seemed to change with each generation. The first generation could be labelled the "Retainers"; they expressed their identity in forms such as speech, food, and dress while maintaining a specific, intrinsic sense of how things were to be done. The next generation, the "Forgetters," had to compete in urban society and saw the trademarks of their ethnic identity as a liability, preferring to learn "proper" English and to adopt "typical" American interests and customs. The third generation, the "Retrievers," became bored with a blasé melting pot culture, but their "reconstructed ethnicity is abstract, historical, and symbolic – an ethnicity reserved for special occasions, holidays, tours, and family gatherings."[6]

Having created an eclectic model for the study of modernization, Kraybill argues that the traditional Mennonite ethnicity in North America was formed

on the basis of martyrdom, codified in the *Martyrs Mirror*, and then gradually replaced by humility as an organizing idea for Mennonite and Amish self-perception.[7] This stance was effective until the multi-faceted challenges of industrialization threatened it at the end of the nineteenth century. A vigorous program of cultural revitalization based upon the codification of ethnic attire, the formalization of theological doctrine, and the institutionalization of church structures and programs permitted it to delay the effects of the onset of modernity. From the standpoint of the three-generation hypothesis, the "retainers" of the first generation stretched their traditional but quite elastic ethnicity to the middle of the twentieth century. A modernized ethnicity emerged in the wake of the influence of H. S. Bender and his colleagues at Goshen College with the publication of *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* and the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*.[8]

Steve Nolt has provided a historical context for these Mennonite 'ethnicities'.[9] He documents how the connection of Pennsylvania Mennonites with a broader coalescing Pennsylvania German culture permitted them to develop what felt like a distinctively Mennonite place in the American cultural landscape. The identification of Mennonites from Russia with "high" German culture permitted a similar possibility in the American plains states. Of course, Mennonites in Paraguay, Mexico, and Canada illustrate the same point, perhaps even more dramatically. Nolt then points to the modernized ethnicity of ideology and institution which characterizes a good deal of Mennonite life in the midwestern United States, the movement which is identified by Kraybill with H. S. Bender but which already begins with people such as John F. Funk.[10] Nolt could have pointed out how this parallels the institutional development for other groups in North American society, both for ethnic groups and for the rise of the voluntary association which, it has been argued, is a unique development originating in the U.S. experience.[11] These institutional developments should be understood from the perspective of ethnic identity.

A convenient summary of the variety of approaches to the question of assimiliation is provided by Leo Driedger in the conclusion of *Anabaptist-Mennonite Identities in Ferment*.[12] He articulates the task: "In contrast to forces of modernization, secularization, and assimilation, what are the countervailing forces of identity which Anabaptist Mennonites and Brethren in Christ wish to promote?"[13] Surveying the literature concerning minority

identity, Driedger concludes that Mennonites are in the midst of a transformation from the territorial and cultural identification of a rural way to life to an ideological, historical, and institutional identification. Leadership and identification also receive mention.

Joseph Smucker's study of the impact of urbanization on Mennonite identity in a small congregation in an urban setting provides an interesting case study on the nature of the transformation.[14] Smucker notes how revised definitions of "community" and "service" were key to the conceptual adaptations made by a sample of Mennonites living in a metropolitan area as they attempted to resolve the tensions between the newly affirmed values of individualism and the ability to maintain their Mennonite identity. While Smucker argues that the emergence of the significance of the self is a somewhat new and foreign element in traditional Mennonite beliefs, it is sustained by a variety of sharing and support groups. Mennonite affiliation becomes "a sort of pit-stop for emotional refueling and identity reinforcement, required because participation in the larger urban environment offers no assured support."[15] He notes that the dominance of this new language of psychological support and assurance can permit avoiding direct confrontation with definitions of being Mennonite. The religious content of what it means to be Mennonite can be replaced by the "therapy language" of the church community.

In all of these studies the conceptual framework is derived from studies of ethnicity and assimilation based on theoretical frameworks developed almost exclusively on the basis of European immigration to North America. The quaintness of this analysis could lead us to overlook other factors that impinge on issues of identity at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It overlooks the fact that the Mennonites of North America who are mainly of European origin are both Caucasian and Christian, and hence share these two aspects of their identity with the majority of the population. We are discussing and basing our work on theories about the assimilation of foreigners and their ethnicity in a context where the rest of the world does not even recognize these strangers as foreign. Significant changes occurring in North American society within the context of global movements suggest that such studies may be inadequate.[16] In order to proceed to an examination of the impact of globalization on questions of identity, we must recognize certain challenges to how those of European background have formulated their identity.

Historical experience in the twentieth century has created an awareness of the problematic nature of certain portions of the Christian tradition. Most of the crucial basic Christian claims have also been a major factor in the communal development of Mennonite identity, even frequently providing the foundation for justifying stances considered distinctive. For example, the Mennonite tradition has based its teachings on nonconformity and nonviolence upon biblical grounds, frequently citing the example of Jesus as justification. Theologically, the centrality of the trinity has been affirmed with an emphasis on christology. A corresponding awareness of the limitations of this approach is now fundamental for analyzing the appropriation of the Christian and biblical elements that have been considered a major avenue for articulating Mennonite identity. This analysis is particularly important here because the assertion of some common identity based in the Bible has been a perceived manner of moving Mennonites beyond perceived ethnic limitations. These issues may be most profound for those of European ancestry. The first challenge I wish to discuss came to broader awareness in the wake of attempts to understand the significance of the holocaust.

Mennonite Identity and the Implications of the Holocaust

Anti-semitism poses a particular problem for some of the ways Mennonites have described their own identity. It is interesting that Mennonite denominations have never undertaken an examination of the theological implications of the Holocaust for Anabaptist-Mennonite theology. It is in that context that most of the work in Christian theology concerning anti-semitism has originated. Some research concerning Mennonites in Germany during the Hitler era has become available: the most comprehensive study is *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich: Dokumentation und Deutung* by Diether Götz Lichdi. Here Mennonites are portrayed as giving quite broad support to the Nazi regime because it brought order, economic support, and self-respect to the German nation.[17] The attraction of the Nazi movement for diaspora Germans also is an important and significant topic among Mennonites.[18] An analysis of the Canadian scene is not reassuring.[19] I recall that the *vorsänger* ("song leader") in the small Western Canadian church in which I was raised, where the worship service was entirely in German, drove a Mercedes-Benz from the earliest times I can remember –

quite a statement in a rural community filled with veterans immediately after WW II.

Here we are dealing with the fact that the Christian tradition, through its long history of teaching and theology concerning Jews and Judaism, provided the groundwork for the support of this systematic attempt to obliterate the Jewish people. Mennonites share in that history. Repentance in this case is not simply a call to the task of mending fences with another group who were the victims of massive atrocities in a cultural system that Mennonites freely participated in and supported. Rather, it calls for a re-examination of how Mennonites have adopted as their own what Rosemary Ruether has dubbed "Christian triumphalism" or created their own particular elitist version of it. Let me cite one example of this phenomenon, the Believers Church paradigm.

This is a concept that has been embraced rather vigorously by most Mennonites in an effort to create a broader theoretical framework by which to engage in shared work and study. This admirable effort has produced some of the most significant work in Mennonite thought in the past five decades. There is, however, a danger in such a construction because it tends to become an idealized concept that removes adherents from an analysis of historical responsibility. Let me cite an example from the present discussion. An admirable comprehensive attempt to describe this entity is the work of Donald Durnbaugh, *The Believers Church*.[20] Durnbaugh devotes a number of pages to the Confessing Church in Germany as an example of the Believers Church.[21] The role of this group is very important in its opposition to the policies of the Third Reich.[22] But we should understand what using the Confessing Church as a model means for our perceptions of the Mennonite theological stance towards the Holocaust.[23] Such a stance saves Mennonites from examining themselves and their own history with regard to it.[24] There is a tendency to place the blame for Christian complicity on the state churches and the major denominations, without examining how Mennonites were involved in this travesty or share a theology that provided real or tacit support for it.

One area where the presence of the Jewish people challenges Christians is in their identity as a biblical people. Substantial work has been done on the relationship between Christian sacred texts and anti-semitism.[25] The most obvious questions center on texts such as the diatribes against the Pharisees in Matthew 23; the crucifixion account in Matt. 27:24-26, in which Pilate washes

his hands in a declaration of innocence while the Jewish people "as a whole" cry out that "His blood be on us and on our children!"; and John 8:31-47, in which "the Jews" are said to have their origin in the devil. The first response is to notice the very different meanings ascribed to these texts by Jews and Christians. Concerning Matt. 23, we might suggest that this text has more to say about hypocrisy within religious communities, including Christian and Mennonite, than about the Pharisees. But Jews see in it a denigration of the particular group of persons who laid the foundation for Rabbinic Judaism, hence the formative social movement for modern Judaism, perhaps equivalent to the Anabaptist movement for modern Mennonite identity.[26] Ample historical evidence suggests these texts have been used to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian faith to Judaism, the foundation for Christian triumphalism, and the theological justification of the inquisition and the Crusades. In the modern world they have provided a framework for evangelistic efforts which targeted the Jewish people. Can Mennonites develop a biblical hermeneutic that challenges this kind of Christian triumphalism, thereby permitting them to approach other religious traditions as well as Judaism in a different manner, or develop other criteria to help them make intelligent judgments about other religious traditions? This is an important task for a Christian group that claims to be "biblical" and that speaks of its own identity in part through the use of that adjective.

Mennonite Identity and the African American Experience

The other significant challenge to a biblical identity which I will address arises from the African American experience. Here Mennonites share a common Christian religious identity with African Americans.[27] But the history and cultural experience is very different for African American Christians from that of Caucasian Mennonites in North America. The obvious point is that Africans had no choice whatsoever about coming to America. For this reason they do not fit many of the paradigms developed to describe subsequent ethnic experience in America. Furthermore, they have developed their identity within a context constructed to keep them subservient.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, after emancipation and the well-known failure of the promise of the Reconstruction era, W. E. B. Dubois writing in 1903 recognized that "the problem of the twentieth century is the

problem of the color line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."[28] Life behind the veil becomes the dominant motif of Dubois's book, probably the most important work on this subject ever written.[29] When he refers to the veil, he is not pointing simply to the difficulties immigrant groups know about from moving into a culture or country where the customs were different from theirs or where they did not know the language. That kind of veil is penetrable, because they gradually learned to understand something of the customs as well as the language or at least enough to get by. Dubois was referring to a separation not based on culture; it had its origin in legal mandates reinforced by the economic and political system which benefited from this enforced bondage as well as the social and religious forces which sanctioned it, and which continued and continue to perpetuate it long after the original legal mandates are no longer considered valid. The issue of this century has been the color line, and we don't seem to be much further along at the end of the century than at the beginning. In his book, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, Derrick Bell argues that racism is a permanent feature of American life that can be resisted and defied but never defeated.[30]

This problem again cuts to the heart of the biblical roots of Christianity, and it raises questions about both Mennonite theology and the Mennonite way of life. With regard to the use of the Bible, it is possible to speak of the European coup, how Europeans co-opted the sacred book, made it their own, and convinced the rest of the world that this version was true. Many are appalled by a heretical Black Jesus, while not recognizing the heresy of the Germanic figure that dots the walls of most homes and churches. A re-examination of the texts and the presuppositions with regard to those sacred traditions is in order for uncovering other viewpoints.

A surface reading of the biblical account suggests that Africa is much more important than customarily thought. Most readers are only remotely aware of the Ethiopian kingdom which took over Egypt in 760 B.C.E. when Kashta, the Ethiopian ruler, began the twenty-fifth dynasty by assuming the title of Pharaoh. This lasts until 664 B.C.E. with the ascendancy of Assyria. Just as notable is the consolidation of a dynasty in the area of Ethiopia, later called Nubia, that halts the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires at its northern borders, remains an unhellenized kingdom, and establishes a continuous African

kingdom that lasts a thousand years. Under the influence of the European coup, western scholars tended to disconnect Egypt from the rest of Africa. Part of the "oriental" interest of nineteenth-century European scholars led to a great deal of research on Egypt, including archaeological work that still appears in major tours of North American galleries. The analytical perspective of this work included the Fertile Crescent and its relationship to Mesopotamia. It has led African American scholars to note how European scholars appeared unable to imagine that black Africans were able to develop the civilization being uncovered in Egypt.[31] This view has generated considerable debate concerning the African nature of Egypt and Egyptians.[32] How different this esoteric debate looks to an African American scholar reading Egyptian history!

Lest we be inclined to view the debate over these issues as insignificant, witness the furor caused by the work of Martin Bernal, the author of *Black Athena*.[33] This scholar of Chinese history, who has dared to venture into a re-evaluation of the African and Asian contributions during the formative stages of Greek civilization, has evoked an ongoing debate. His major argument is that many of the substantive elements that went into the formation of classical Greek civilization were adapted from Africa and Asia. While his reappraisal is frequently less radical than that of other significant African American scholars, the controversy has been extensive simply because of how it undercuts the perceptions a Caucasian civilization has of itself and where it came from.[34] Also worthy of note are two significant interpretive traditions in the African American community, the study of which is still in its infancy. Extensive research has begun on the particular usage of the biblical tradition that has sustained the African American community.[35] African American scholars also have been instrumental in the development of a second area, the ideological criticism of biblical texts. This is a particular method, related to the field of cultural criticism, rooted in the concerns of the black community, which evaluates texts as to whether and how they contribute to its liberation struggle.[36] This method raises profound questions for how those in communities of European background appropriate and use biblical texts.

While people of European descent share minority status with African Americans, the circumstances are so vastly different that respective fates within this system are difficult to compare. Members of the Caucasian race benefit from the system; their identities are formed and informed by it. Not only are

they the majority race, they are also the group in power and derive benefits, including the maintenance of their lifestyle, from that position. This fact challenges most profoundly the Mennonite perception of their existence as "the quiet in the land," a servant people. In contrast to comparisons with the Jewish community, Mennonites here share aspects of a religious tradition, but neither race nor lack of power. Hence Mennonite identity is challenged in a different way. These challenges may point to greater problems in developing strategies for dealing with identity issues in a globalized world.

Globalization and Identity

In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman, foreign affairs columnist for the New York Times, describes the impact and inevitability of the global economic forces profoundly reshaping the world.[37] In what many would see as a rather optimistic view of a global future – Friedman refers to himself as a "globalist"[38] – he describes its emergence as possible only after the end of the cold war, dating to the fall of the Berlin wall:

> The globalization system . . . is not static, but a dynamic ongoing process . . . [which] involves the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before – in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before. . . . In previous eras this sort of cultural homogenization happened on a regional scale – the Hellenization of the Near East and the Mediterranean world under the Greeks, the Turkification of Central Asia, North Africa, Europe and the Middle East by the Ottomans, or the Russification of Eastern and Central Europe and parts of Eurasia under the Soviets.[39]

He goes on to note the demographic shifts, "a rapid acceleration of the movement of people from rural areas and agricultural lifestyles to urban areas and urban lifestyles more intimately linked with global fashion, food, markets and entertainment trends."[40]

The journalistic license of Friedman's depiction can be recognized and the positive interpretation of its effects can be contested, but the tone of inevitability pervading it is true of other recent volumes. It does capture the

feeling of peoples around the globe, particularly certain elites, who are attempting to find a coherent and meaningful way of life in the midst of these powerful forces.

In the midst of his optimistic and inevitable scenario Friedman sees "a powerful backlash from those brutalized or left behind by this new system."[41] He notes the inability of people to compete in this powerfully driven system as well as the shifts in power. The loss of power by the middle and lower classes is a worldwide phenomenon,[42] and we have ample evidence of the political destabilization resulting from this backlash.[43] While the inevitability of his analysis carries a certain conviction, its optimism could be misleading.

The opposing case has been argued by Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith.[44] The first two sentences of their volume explain its purpose:

> The first goal of this book is to help clarify the form of what is being called the *global economy* and to show how the rush toward globalization is likely to affect our lives. The second goal is to suggest that the process must be brought to a halt as soon as possible, and reversed.[45]

They then propose that society follow the opposite path: "we should instead seek to create a diversity of loosely linked, community-based economies managed by much smaller companies and catering above all . . . to regional markets. It is not economic globalization that we should aim for but the reverse: *economic localization*."[46] How far this response is actually helpful to "poor countries and the poor in rich countries" could be debated. It is not clear that either the optimistic predictions of Friedman or the resistance strategies of Mander and Goldsmith form an adequate analytical basis for constructing a response to our changing world.

In *Jihad Versus McWorld*, Benjamin Barber attempts to account for the apparent contrast between these competing portraits of the changes in our world.[47] He notes that the global marketplace abhors parochialism, fractiousness, and war. International peace and stability are essential for a functional world economy and for the well-being of the multi-national corporations which thrive in that environment. War interrupts the efficient operation of this system, regional wars close markets. International law helps assure an operative system of global markets which provides the framework of trust necessary for its

functioning. The information-technology imperative makes science and globalization allies; the pursuit of science and technology demands open societies. These pursuits do not respond well to borders or other boundaries. These global imperatives are transnational, transideological and transcultural. At one level they suggest the realization of the Enlightenment dream of a universal rational society. McWorld seems to be the natural culmination of the modernization process. These impulses are, however, in competition with forces of global breakdown and national dissolution.[48]

Regional wars polarize peoples and fragment nations with violent results and excessive bloodshed. Religious fundamentalism is portrayed as a reactionary phenomenon on a global scale and becomes villain or scapegoat for many progressive policy advocates. Many would see these elements as simply reactionary forces, a throwback to a pre-modern world. They "appear to be directly adversarial to the forces of McWorld."[49] But this may not be an adequate description of the relationship between these two phenomena:

> Jihad stands not so much in stark opposition as in subtle counterpoint to McWorld and is itself a dialectical response to modernity whose features both reflect and reinforce the modern world's virtues and vices – Jihad *via* McWorld rather than Jihad *versus* McWorld. The forces of Jihad are not only remembered and retrieved by the enemies of McWorld but imagined and contrived by its friends and proponents.[50]

The forces of both globalization and localization are locked in "a kind of Freudian moment of the ongoing cultural struggle, neither willing to coexist with the other, neither complete without the other."[51] While these forces wishing to combat the globalist impulses employ tools such as ethnicity, fundamentalist religion, nationalism, and culture, they are themselves frequently in large part the creation of the modern mind, especially in the particular formulations they have at present.[52]

Included among those attempting to find their way in the midst of these powerful competing forces are the Mennonites. The globalization of the worldwide Mennonite church could be seen as evidence of the phenomenon described by Friedman. It is apparent in the emerging structures such as the Mennonite World Conference (MWC), and it has been noted in denominational

periodicals and other venues for the past number of years.[53] The president of MWC is from Indonesia, the vice-president from Ethiopia. The African membership of 405,000 for the Mennonite churches in 2000 does not lag very far behind that of the combined total of 444,000 in North America.[54] The total membership of the North American churches constitutes slightly less than 40 percent of the world-wide church. These figures do not account for the variety of ethnic backgrounds which comprise the Mennonite churches of North America. Mennonites need to come to terms with the question of identity in a global context, a question just as important, or even more so, for Mennonites of European background as for the majority of the church body.

From the analytical perspective of Barber and others,[55] questions of Mennonite identity can also be understood in the context of the dialectical tension between global and tribal forces. The forces of modernization and urbanization constitute part of this global phenomenon of which all are a part. In *Undoing Culture*, Mike Featherstone states the argument like this: "[I]n contrast to those arguments which assume that the logic of modernity is to produce an increasingly narrow individualism, a narcissistic preoccupation with individual identity which was common in the 1970s, today we find arguments which emphasize the search for a strong collective identity, some new form of community within modern societies."[56] While some issues remain the same, the locus of attention has shifted. Globalization theory provides a basis for examining a collective identity in the midst of the conflicting powerful forces at work in a global world.

Mennonites and Tribalism

In the literature describing globalization, "tribalism" often appears as its antithesis.[57] Having observed this phenomenon Joel Kotkin researched five "global tribes" to determine the factors making them able to compete and survive in the modern world: "Global tribes combine a strong sense of a common origin and shared values, quintessential tribal characteristics, with two critical factors for success in the modern world: geographic distribution and a belief in scientific progress."[58] He proposes that these global tribes will

become more important as nation-states continue to decline in significance. They share three critical characteristics:

> 1. A strong ethnic identity and sense of mutual dependence that helps the group adjust to changes in the global economic and political order without losing its essential unity.
>
> 2. A global network based on mutual trust that allows the tribe to function collectively beyond the confines of national or regional borders.
>
> 3. A passion for technical and other knowledge from all possible sources, combined with an essential open-mindedness that fosters rapid cultural and scientific development critical for success in the late-twentieth century world economy.[59]

As these present and future tribes play an increasingly important role in the world economy, "Their success – based on the foundation of cosmopolitanism, knowledge, ethics, religion and ethnic identity – suggests a shift in future debates about effectiveness in the modern world away from conventional obsessions with the technology, the 'scientific' and the systematic."[60] Kotkin asserts that "it is their enduring sense of group identification and global linkages, far more than their dispersion, or the extensiveness of the business empires, that most clearly distinguishes global tribes from other migrating populations." He uses the "vocation of uniqueness," attributed to Martin Buber, to describe this sense, also referring to it as a shared sense of mission.[61]

Such an option finds theoretical support from Michel Maffesoli, who sets the "tribal paradigm" off against an "individualist logic" to bring an "essentially relationist perspective" to the analysis of the function of micro-groups in contemporary society.[62] He finds there is a certain "social dynamism" related "to the ability of micro-groups to create themselves."[63] In other words the "tribes" exhibit a certain kind of creative energy which is expressed in the new forms that emerge in relationship. They are based on network rather than ideology.

The tribal option provides a different viewpoint on global Mennonite identity. It opens up the possibility for Mennonites to think of themselves as one of these "global tribes, dispersed groups held together by a common culture,"[64] a sense of a shared mission, culture, and peoplehood. The priority

of the *Martyrs Mirror* as a foundational document of the Anabaptist-Mennonite experience around which a mythology of origin is constructed can be, and certainly has been, argued.[65] It has served as a source of identity for many generations of Mennonites, even after the emphasis on suffering was spiritualized into pietism.[66] It also seems that the significance of this foundation myth can be understood through the themes of struggle and survival.[67] The story gets retold to legitimate the present struggle over faithfulness to the tradition, and to authenticate the fact (or miracle) of survival. Kotkin sees struggle as a the foundational element of the vocation of uniqueness shared by global tribes.[68] The significance of the suffering theme for Mennonite identity is adequately documented.[69] The theme of survival is very apparent in the Russian Mennonite experience of the twentieth century, so much so that Frank Epp made the subtitle of his history of the Mennonites in Canada covering the 1920s and 30s, *A People's Struggle for Survival.*[70] The themes of struggle and survival then link to experiences common to a number of peoples throughout the world. There is an unanticipated way in which this legacy has prepared Mennonites for survival in a global world.

The Mennonite story is also one of wandering. Sometimes due to religious persecution or mistreatment for other reasons, sometimes to take advantage of opportunities for religious tolerance or for economic and political reasons, the Mennonites of European origin have been a wandering people. It could be argued that Mennonite approaches to church and state relations have made it easier for them to be a wandering people. The theological emphases in the Mennonite experience that have provided ideological support for substantive international and cross-cultural Mennonite missions and service experiences have also contributed to making Mennonites a nomadic people. Kotkin argues that one strength of successful global tribes is their worldwide diasporas, sometimes connected with homelands, with a connection that ties them together and empowers them to be historical protagonists on the global stage.[71] This provides them with experience in negotiating the particular blend of cohesiveness and openness which makes them important actors on that stage.[72]

The theme of survival is the most central issue to emerge from the Jewish experience with the Holocaust. Experiences of the survivors are a central topic in the continuing drama of interaction with that event. The question of survival in this case derives from a significant context, modernity.[73] This

event challenged the possibility that there was hope in world progress; that the modern world was a place where varieties of individuals and peoples would be nurtured and permitted to prosper. Precisely out of that challenge the emergent theme for Jews became "survival" in the modern world, whether against the threat of extermination or assimilation.

The struggle for survival has characterized African American life since the first Africans stepped ashore on this continent. As we have seen, this question is as urgent now as it was in 1840. Delores Williams explains the meaning of "faith seeking understanding" as "exploring faith so that I provide theological resources to issues confronting African-American women and the black community trying to survive in today's world."[74] She develops what she calls the "*survival/quality-of-life tradition of African-American biblical appropriation.*"[75] She finds a powerful statement of this kind of survival in the promise to Hagar in Gen. 16:10-12.[76] In deriving a basic principle for African American biblical interpretation Vincent Wimbush suggests a similar direction: "the function of the texts is not to convey timeless ethical and moral propositions, but to present a picture of individuals and communities struggling to discover what it means to strive – and very often fail – to be human in the highest key."[77] This hermeneutical approach, Wimbush argues, will permit the African American community to utilize the biblical materials in its struggle for survival. In a recent address Riggins Earl argued that the "ethical beauty" of earlier generations of African Americans is that they "chose to survive." The significance of their ethical stance is that they chose life over death.[78]

The argument of this paper is that the themes of struggle and survival and the attendant stories of those experiences provide the basis for a shared identity in the global Mennonite church movement. "Shared" does not mean it needs to be unique to that body or group. What it means is that the common experiences related to the shared mythology of origin provide the basis for a common culture that is recognizable even though it may find many particular forms of expression in various geographical locations or language sets. Good evidence suggests that the sixteenth-century Anabaptists provide one important source for that mythology of origin. An important advance in the self-understanding of that mythology was based on Walter Klaassen's *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic Nor Protestant.*[79] The globalization perspective extends that positioning within the European intellectual and religious traditions into broader

areas. The biblical account also furnishes another source for a shared mythology of origin.

The hermeneutical task with regard to the biblical materials for developing and nurturing this global Mennonite identity is formed around the interaction of the biblical text and these stories of struggle and survival. Engagement in this hermeneutical task is of a different manner than has been true heretofore. The biblical text is engaged as an ally in these experiences of struggle and survival. Here the interaction with Jewish and African American experiences can be helpful. The history of Christian anti-semitism provides ample evidence of how the biblical story can be used to support a triumphalism that oppresses and destroys. This provides an important point of caution for all those utilizing it as basic formative material. Given the pervasive way anti-semitism has been woven into Christian theology, the disentangling of that element from Mennonite use of this material that has relied so heavily on basic Christian formulations for the justification of its own positions points to the difficulties in using the materials for the formation of identity. The biblical record as an account of struggle and survival need not support Christian triumphalism. But a good deal of critical evaluation and creativity is required for it to function in support of the liberation efforts of people engaged in struggle and survival. A critical disengagement from triumphalist theologies coupled with a heightened appreciation for peoples' stories of struggle and survival are necessary. A greater understanding of the stories and hermeneutical techniques that have permitted the Jewish community to construct a basis for life and community from those same texts could be helpful. The African American experience also can be instructive.

African American history challenges any claim by groups of European origin to a comparable minority status in the United States. The history of Christians of African descent is a story of such tragic proportions that comparisons pale in the telling. Precisely for this reason this history is very important for a discussion of using the Bible as a foundational document for the identity of a people. Significant benefit can be derived from a critical appraisal of how the biblical materials were appropriated to support a system of subjugation and oppression. Continuing analysis of these materials is important to free them for use in forming an identity that supports persons around the world in their struggles for survival.[80] Also instructive is a greater understanding

of the use of the Bible in the African American community. How did the Bible, forced on to that community for the purposes of social control, become adopted by it as a source for liberation? What was important in that foundation myth that permitted it to function this way? Continued research and a heightened awareness of how this document has continued to function as a source of support for the African American community could be instructive in helping a global Mennonite community evaluate and develop the use of this foundation myth as a support for its own struggles and survival.

This hermeneutical task employs a biblical text chastened by a history of Christian triumphalism and empowered by struggles for recognition, dignity, and liberation. Such a biblical text can provide a foundation myth for a global tribe whose identity is rooted in struggle and which interprets its survival in terms of a shared mutual support for communities around the world engaged in similar kinds of struggles. Such a global tribe, then, links its own survival to the ongoing struggles of peoples around the world for survival and liberation.

Notes

[1] Leo Driedger, *Mennonite Identity in Conflict*, (Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen, 1988).
[2] J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1975).
[3] Paul Peachey, "Identity Crisis Among American Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 42 (1968): 243-59; Calvin W. Redekop, "The Mennonite Identity Crisis," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 2 (1984): 87-103; Calvin W. Redekop, "The Sociology of Mennonite Identity: A Second Opinion," in *Mennonite Identity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Calvin W. Redekop and Samuel J. Steiner (Lanham: University Press of America/ Waterloo: Institute for Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, 1988), 173-92, see 188. But note the comment of Donald B. Kraybill, "Modernity and Identity: The Transformation of Mennonite Ethnicity," in *Mennonite Identity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, 153-72, see 172.
[4] Kraybill, "Modernity and Identity."
[5] *Ibid.*, 158. This claim is vigorously rejected by Calvin Redekop in his response in the same volume, "The Sociology of Mennonite Identity: A Second Opinion" (173-92). He rejects the ethnic category as an inadequate sociological category for describing the Mennonite experience. He argues that the "Anabaptist-Mennonite phenomenon is and was a religiously motivated utopian movement... and as a religious movement, on the basis of its utopian goals and social oppositions, was constantly faced with 'ethnicizing' tendencies, but never accepted, or capitulated to, becoming a sociological ethnic group because of the religious ideology which was at the heart of its origins" (173). While this appears to be an attractive option, it may be that such an idealization neither

accurately describes the historical Mennonite experience nor provides an adequate theoretical foundation for constructing a response to the original question which sparked this paper.

[6] Kraybill, "Modernity and Identity," 158-59.

[7] *Ibid.*,159-60. (This section is based on the article by Marcus Lee Hansen, "The Third Generation in America," *Commentary* 14 (1952): 492-500.)

[8] *Ibid.*, 161-63.

[9] *Ibid.*, 163-65.

[10] Steve Nolt, "A 'Two-Kingdom' People in a World of Multiple Identities: Religion, Ethnicity and American Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73 (1999): 485-502.

[11] *Ibid.*, 497. In contrast to Kraybill he sees this process already in the efforts of persons such as John F. Funk. I assume that, for Kraybill, Funk is still part of this earlier revitalization process.

[12] James Luther Adams, *Voluntary Associations: Socio-cultural Analyses and Theological Interpretation*, ed. J. Ronald Engel (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1986); D. B. Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies* (Richmond: John Knox, 1966).

[12] Leo Driedger, "Identity and Assimilation," in *Anabaptist-Mennonite Identities in Ferment*, eds. Leo Driedger and Leland Harder. Occasional Papers, no. 14. (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1990): 159-75.

[14] *Ibid.*, 164.

[15] Joseph Smucker, "Religious Community and Individualism: Conceptual Adaptations by One Group of Mennonites," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 (1986): 273-91.

[16] *Ibid.*, 284.

[17] Rodney Sawatsky, "Response," *Anabaptist-Mennonite Identities in Ferment*, 182-86; Nolt, "'Two-Kingdom' People," 502. A globalization perspective would also have implications for the analysis of the factors of modernization found in the study of J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger, *The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization* (Scottdale/Kitchener, 1991).

[18] Diether Götz Lichdi, *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich: Dokumentation und Deutung* (Weierhof/ Pfalz: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1977), reviewed by Walter Klaassen in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 53 (1979): 87-89. See also Hanz-Jürgen Goertz, "Nationale Erhebung und religiöser Niedergang: Missglückte Aneigung des taüferischen Leitbildes im Dritten Reich," in *Umstrittenes Täufertum 1525-1975: Neue Forschungen*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 259-89.

[19] Relevant material with regard to the Ukraine is found in Meir Buchsweiler in Hebrew, *Ethnic Germans in the Ukraine towards the Second World War: A case of double loyalty?* (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute/The Society for Jewish Historical Research, 1980), now available in German, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges: Ein Fall doppelter Loyalität* (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1984). Noteworthy is the Mennonite experience in Latin America: Peter P. Klassen, *Die deutsch-völkische Zeit in der Kolonie Fernheim, Chaco, Paraguay, 1933-1945: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der auslandsdeutschen Mennoniten während des Dritten Reiches* (Bolanden-Weierhof, Germany: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1990); John D. Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi?: Attitudes Among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Kitchener: Pandora Press/ Scottdale,Waterloo: Herald Press, 1999).

[20] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites*

Since the Communist Revolution (Altona: Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962); "An Analysis of Germanism and National Socialism in the Immigrant Newspapers of a Canadian Minority Group, the Mennonites, in the 1930's," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1965; Jonathan F. Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1981); Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940: A People's Struggle for Survival* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982).

[21] Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

[22] *Ibid.*, 176-91.

[23] Historical analyses of the role of the Confessing Church have not always been as kind as Durnbaugh. For a sympathetic but critical view, see John S. Conway, "The German Church Struggle and Its Aftermath," *Jews and Christians After the Holocaust*, ed. Abraham J. Peck (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 39-52.

[24] I am not criticizing Durnbaugh for including the Confessing Church as an example of the Believers Church. I am more concerned with how those who had members of their churches in Germany during the time prior to and during the Third Reich might use the information collected by Durnbaugh.

[25] Note the experiences of the German writer Hans Harder, who left the Mennonite church prior to World War II because of the presence of many avowed Nazis. He was active in the confessing church from 1933 to end of World War II. His experiences are recorded in various places, e.g., the introduction to the translation of his novel, *No Strangers in Exile*, trans. and ed. Al Reimer (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1979).

[26] A few important works include: Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Peter Richardson with David Granskou eds., *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity; Volume 1: Paul and the Gospels* (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986); Stephen G. Wilson, ed., *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity; Volume 2: Separation and Polemic* (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986); Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987). The most recent work covering anti-semitism in antiquity is Peter Schäfer's, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[27] The question of the historical role of the Pharisees in the establishment of Rabbinic Judaism has no simple answer, and I do not investigate that topic in this paper.

[28] This analysis simplifies the African American experience, which is influenced by both non-Christian African traditions and various streams originating in Islam. However, the integral connection of African American history with Christianity in North America, as well as the present critical analyses of these issues undertaken by African American scholars justifies such an exploration of this question and its implications.

[29] W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1961 [orig. 1903]), 23.

[30] *Ibid.*, 16.

[31] Derrick Bell is the attorney dismissed by the Harvard Law School because of his protest of their refusal to hire Black faculty members. He sets forth the following proposition: Black people will never gain full equality in the U.S.. Even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary "peaks of progress," short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it, not as a sign of submission, but as an act of ultimate defiance. See Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic, 1992), 12. On the origins of American racism in its Puritan past and the legacy of that tradition, see Paul R. Griffin, *Seeds of Racism in the Soul of America* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1999).

[32] Note the essays of Charles Copher in *Black Biblical Studies: An Anthology of Charles Copher; Biblical and Theological Issues on the Black Presence in the Bible* (Chicago: Black Light Fellowship, 1993). Note also Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class and Family* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989), 5-48 and the essays he has collected in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 127-84.

[33] Note the works cited in the previous note. See also Frank Yurco, "Were the Ancient Egyptians Black or White?" *Biblical Archeology Review* 15 5 (September/October 1989): 24-30.

[34] Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization.* 2 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987/1991).

[35] A thorough analysis of the conflict with a citation of the relevant literature has been provided by Jacques Berlinerblau, *Heresy in the University: The Black Athena Controversy and the Responsibilities of American Intellectuals* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1999).

[36] The results of the largest project of this nature ever undertaken can be found in *African Americans and the Bible: Sacred Texts and Social Textures*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush (New York: Continuum, 2000).

[37] Vincent L. Wimbush, "Biblical-Historical Study as Liberation: Toward an Afro-Christian Hermeneutic," *Journal of Religious Thought* 42 2 (Fall/Winter. 1985-86): 9-21; Renita J. Weems, "Reading *Her* Way Through the Struggle," in *Stony the Road*, 57-77; Itumeleng J. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," in *The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology from South Africa*, ed. Itumeleng J. Mosala and Buti Tlhagale (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986), 175-99.

[38] Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999).

[39] *Ibid.*, 18.

[40] *Ibid.*, 7-8.

[41] *Ibid.*, 11.

[42] *Ibid.*, 8.

[43] *Ibid*, 270-74.

[44] *Ibid.*, 280.

[45] Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith, eds., *The Case Against the Global Economy: And For a Turn Toward the Local* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996); Jerry Mander, "The Dark Side of Globalization: What the Media Are Missing," *The Nation* 263 (July 15-22, 1996): 9-10, 12-14.

[46] Mander and Goldsmith, *Case Against the Global Economy*, 3.
[47] Edward Goldsmith, "The Last Word: Family, Community, Democracy" in *Case Against the Global Economy*, 501-14, see 502.
[48] Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine, 1996; orig. Times Books, 1995). An earlier essay was "Jihad vs. McWorld," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1992): 53-65.
[49] One could question the wisdom of using the term *jihad* to characterize the one side of the spectrum in this dialectical struggle. Barber uses the term to represent the "dogmatic and violent particularism of a kind known to Christians no less than Muslims, to Germans and Hindis as well as to Arabs" (*Jihad vs. McWorld*, 9). In the "Afterword" to the paperback edition he does grant that "the great majority of devout Muslims who harbor no more sympathy for Islamic Jihad than devout Christians feel for the Ku Klux Klan or for the Montana Militia might feel unfairly burdened by my title. I owe them an apology, and hope they will find their way past the book's cover to the substantive reasoning that makes clear how little my argument has to do with Islam as a religion or with resistance to McWorld as a singular property of radical Muslims" (299).
[50] *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 157.
[51] *Ibid.*, 157.
[52] *Ibid.*, 157.
[53] Susanne H. Rudolph and Loyed I. Rudolph, "Modern Hate: How Ancient Animosities Get Invented," *The New Republic* (March 22, 1993), 25.
[54] Note now the Global Mennonite History Project, established by Mennonite World Conference and coordinated by John A. Lapp. See "Toward a Global Mennonite/Brethern in Christ Historiography," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 15 (Winter-Spring 1997): 3-133; John A. Lapp, "The Global Mennonite/Brethren in Christ History Project: The Task, the Problem and the Imperative," *CGR* 15 (Fall 1997): 283-90.
[55] *Mennonite and Brethren in Christ World Directory 2000*, ed. Elizabeth Baechler (Scottdale/ Waterloo: Herald Press, Newton/Winnipeg: Faith & Life, 1999), 2, 18.
[56] See also Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage, 1995).
[57] *Ibid.*, 120.
[58] Note that this term constitutes the sub-title for Barber's book. See also Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*, 120.
[59] Joel Kotkin, *Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy* (New York: Random House, 1993), 4.
[60] *Ibid.*, 4-5.
[61] *Ibid.*, 262.
[62] *Ibid.*, 29-30.
[63] Michael Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. Don Smith (London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage, 1996), 97. Note especially pp. 72-100 on tribalism.
[64] *Ibid.*, 96.
[65] Kotkin, *Tribes*, 16. Donald Kraybill "takes for granted the fact that the Mennonite experience is an ethnic experience – one that has distinct cultural expressions beyond mere religious ones. .

. . A common history, a collective biography, a transgenerational cultural legacy and a shared fate constitute the ethnic glue which fuses Mennonites together above and beyond religious experience" (Kraybill, "Modernity and Identity," 157). He follows Parsons in saying that an ethnic group has a "distinctive identity which is rooted in some kind of a distinctive sense of its history." For Steven Nolt "ethnicity is, most basically, a shared sense of peoplehood" (Nolt, "A 'Two-Kingdom' People," 486). In *Mennonite Identity in Conflict*, Leo Driedger sets forth as the purpose of the volume "to add the Mennonites to this middleman list" of "minorities who survive as middlemen, working between the seams of the elite and the masses, the well-to-do and the poor, political radicals and conservatives and religious performers and conservationists." Jews, Armenians, East Indians, Copts, Greeks, and the Chinese are cited as examples. This appears to be Driedger's attempt to describe a similar phenomenon to that discussed here.

[66] See Kotkin (*Tribes*, 30) for the importance of an elaborate mythology of origin as the basis for a "vocation of uniqueness." Note Kraybill above. See the comments by Rudy Wiebe, "Flowers for Approaching the Fire: A Meditation on The Bloody Theater, or Martyrs Mirror," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 16 2 (Winter 1998): 110-24.

[67] Rodney J. Sawatsky, "History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition Through History," PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1977, 22-56; Kraybill, "Modernity and Identity," 161-62.

[68] The relationship of these themes may help explain how Mennonites could deal with the contradiction of martyrdom posed by Nick Lindsay, whom Jeff Gundy quotes as suggesting "The only good Mennonite is a dead Mennonite."

[69] Kotkin, *Tribes*, 29.

[70] Sawatsky, "History and Ideology," 86; Kraybill, "Modernity and Identity," 167.

[71] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940*. One can also see this in novels such as that of Rudy Wiebe, *The Blue Mountains of China* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

[72] Kotkin, *Tribes*, 16-20.

[73] Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*, 126-57, evaluates the role of travel and migration in a global, postmodern world.

[74] E.g., Irving Greenberg, "Religious Values After the Holocaust: A Jewish View," in *Jews and Christians After The Holocaust*, ed. Abraham J. Peck (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 63-86.

[75] Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), xi-xii.

[76] *Ibid.*, 6.

[77] *Ibid.*, 20-22, then developed in 23-59 and 108-39.

[78] Vincent A. Wimbush, "Biblical Historical Study as Liberation: Toward an Afro-Christian Hermeneutic," *JRT* 42 2 (Fall-Winter 1985-86): 9-21, see 17.

[79] Riggins R. Earl, Jr. in his keynote address to the 11th National Conference on the Future Shape of Black Religion, sponsored by Wright State University and held at Omega Baptist Church, March 16, 2001. He is the author of *Dark Symbols, Obscure Signs: God, self and community in the slave mind* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993).

[80] Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic Nor Protestant* (Waterloo: Conrad Press, 1973; rev. ed. 1981). See also Driedger, *Mennonite Identity in Conflict*, 7.

[81] Examples of this type of analysis from a variety of cultural perspectives include: Daniel Smith-

Christopher ed., *Text & Experience: Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert eds., *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998); Vincent L. Wimbush ed., *The Bible and the American Myth: A Symposium on the Bible and Constructions of Meaning* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999).