Baptismal Robes or Camel's Hair?
A Theological Response to the "Politics of Becoming"

Anthony G. Siegrist

An odd perception about Anabaptists – and Mennonites in particular – is that they have traditionally lacked both insight and interest in politics. Often pejoratively labeled "sectarian," Anabaptists themselves have regrettably failed to understand the political significance of their beliefs and practices. They have too easily bought into the notion that politics, or the structure of the relationships of institutions and communities, is the concern of the nation state, and they have allowed a false dichotomy between faith and modern society's notion of the "public square" to align itself with an equally problematic dichotomy that labels religion *spiritual* and politics *carnal*.

It is now becoming clear that this perception is at best a caricature. Anabaptist beliefs and practices have always had political implications and have always said something fairly profound about the world of politics. Most obviously this is seen in the practice of pacifism. But what is it that prevents the political impact of Anabaptism from reaching beyond the established horizon of pacifism in either its non-resistant or activist forms? While I in no way want to challenge the appropriateness of pacifism for Anabaptists, I hope to begin the exploration of how another central doctrine and practice of the Anabaptist community might help to develop a fuller theology of politics.[1]

The doctrine and practice that I will explore here is believer's baptism. The centrality of this doctrine to the Anabaptist tradition is obvious; basic etymology demonstrates this easily enough. To develop an engagement of this sort, the logical first step would be to define "believer's baptism." At the risk of frustrating the philosophers among us, I will put this step on hold and instead construct the definition as the essay progresses, for in this case it is certainly true that everything is won or lost in definition. Therefore, the initial question for me is not how we might understand baptism, but what sort of politics we might ask the practice of believer's baptism to engage.

I have no doubt that the doctrine of Christian baptism carries the potential to cut at the roots of the current populist American incarnation of

Constantinianism, but what I want to explore here is to what extent believer's baptism helps Anabaptists respond to a slightly more sophisticated form of thought, namely the self-proclaimed postmodern political thinking of William E. Connolly.

I will begin by outlining Connolly's "politics of becoming," an integral part of his larger political thought and the heart of his answer to the chief problem vexing many political philosophers today, namely exclusion. I focus on Connolly not because he is particularly well-known but because the portion of his thought related here represents a feasible left-of-center response to the political phenomena of secularism, pluralism, and exclusion. I believe that many of us have a take on politics and ethics similar either to Connolly's or to the type of modernist secularism that he rejects.

The second part of this article is a theological response to the political impulse represented by Connolly. To construct this initial response I will look to Karl Barth's description of believer's baptism from Volume IV/4 of his *Church Dogmatics.* Along the way I will also briefly interact with several contemporary voices congenial to Anabaptism.[2]

Connolly's Prophetic Agenda

William E. Connolly is an American political philosopher currently making his academic home at Johns Hopkins University. I will refer here mostly to his book *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (1999). The goal of his work is to refashion secularism by moving it beyond its current conceits.[3] Like all those concerned with social ethics or suffering, Connolly has a strong prophetic bent, and he all but dons the tangled beard, leather belt, and wild-eyed stare of the prophet when he prods his audience toward action.

Connolly proposes that a form of pluralism appropriate to our contemporary age of globalization will *not* likely come from a political philosophy that pretends to sit outside the parameters of metaphysically-bound perspectives. Instead, what needs to happen is for the doctrine of secularism to be rewritten "to pursue an ethos of engagement in public life among a plurality of controversial *metaphysical* perspectives, including, for starters, Christian and other monotheistic perspectives, secular thought, and asecular, nontheistic perspectives."[4] Connolly is interested in exploring a "nontheistic postsecular ethic" that "situates itself within the experience of

the constitutive *indispensibility and fragility of ethics*."[5] In other words, he wants to make ethics and political philosophy messy and complicated again – to take secularism's attempted end-run back to the drawing board.

Connolly reminds us that for all its attempts at pure logic and emotional detachment, politics often leans more heavily on visceral reactions than we would like to admit. He is in tune with the very human sense that our selves are too flimsy to remain whole in a world constantly reminding us that we are not doing enough – a world that overwhelms us with its never-ending pressure to raise our awareness of the suffering of both the other and ourselves.

It is extremely probable that all of us are unattuned today to some modes of suffering and exclusion that will become ethically important tomorrow as a political movement carries them across the threshold of cultural attentiveness and institutional redefinition. This is so because each effective movement of difference toward a new, legitimate cultural identity breaks a constituent in its previous composition that located it below the operational reach of personhood and justice by rendering it immoral, inferior, hysterical, sinful, incapacitated, unnatural, abnormal, irresponsible, monomaniacal, narcissistic, nihilistic, or sick.[6]

In the struggle to mitigate the powers of exclusion and to lessen the suffering of those whose identities render them marginalized, our society often places the burden of realizing the good upon the sometimes broad shoulders of justice. Connolly's statement above alerts us to the reality that justice in itself cannot move us beyond the reality that some modes of suffering simply go unnoticed, because their very nature disqualifies the sufferer from the basic sanctity of personhood.[7] Justice, then, is essentially an ambiguous practice, for it is only after a movement crosses the "threshold of cultural attentiveness" that the mode of suffering fits into the categories in which justice operates. "Failure by many secular theorists to acknowledge this fundamental ambiguity at the center of justice disables them from registering the importance of an ethos of responsiveness to justice itself."[8]

It is not surprising that Western society has been forced to supplement justice with a value such as tolerance. But tolerance, for Connolly, "implies benevolence toward others amid stability of ourselves. . . ."[9] It is the attachment to the stability of the self that Connolly suggests his readers

must move beyond. The modern attachment to the self and to the nation can in the end do nothing but limit others and make their suffering secondary to the preservation of our own selves. Instead of the static morality of justice under the umbrella of secularism, we must cultivate politics that recognizes things are mobile at bottom. Cultivating "the politics of becoming" means that we consider our own selves to be under (de)construction, and remember that the form of justice now taken as self-evident was once progressive and threatening, causing a type of suffering to those whose identities were deconstructed in the evolution of justice. When we have arrived, either as individuals or as a society, we unavoidably position ourselves as the weight holding in place the walls, ceilings, and fences that keep others from realizing their full personhood.

While uninterested in metaphysics, Connolly is concerned with newness, openness, responsiveness, and self-artistry – that is, one's ability to remake one's identity to accommodate the other. The politics of becoming is a "paradoxical politics by which new cultural identities are formed out of unexpected energies and institutionally congealed injuries."[10] Although such politics is attentive to exclusion and other varieties of suffering, it implicitly questions the possibility of getting beyond such realities.[11] Connolly's politics assumes that suffering, like pain itself, will never leave us. If "each positive identity is organized through the differences it demarcates . . . then the politics of becoming often imperils the comforts through which dominant constituencies are reassured."[12] In this light, the question is not whether we are for or against suffering but rather "which sort of suffering is most worthy of responsiveness at a particular historical moment, that which the politics of becoming imposes on the stability of being or that which established identities impose upon the movement of differences in order to protect their stability."[13] The best that politics such as Connolly's can do – its obvious prophetic nature notwithstanding – is to "reposition selected modes of suffering so that they move from an obscure subsistence or marked identity *below* the register of justice to a visible, unmarked place *on it*."[14]

A Theological Response

The political and ethical upshot of Connolly's proposal is that we must be careful to remain responsive to the other, and not – because the other

appears "immoral, inferior, hysterical, sinful, incapacitated, unnatural, abnormal, irresponsible, monomaniacal, narcissistic, nihilistic, or sick" – deprive them of the protection of personhood and justice.[15] The only way to do this is to allow our own identities to remain undefined, amorphous, open, and always changing – constantly becoming. This is, at the least, a little threatening. It reverberates in the wilderness of contemporary politics like a call to prepare the way for something yet to come, or perhaps for someone whose sandals we are not worthy to untie. But for Connolly there is nothing coming. The revelation that such a politics begs for cannot be detected even as a bump on the social horizon. This unpleasant jolt of reality aside, Connolly is helpful. He appropriately chastens the modern myth that secularization and secularism might save us from our religious bigotry.[16] He also moves us toward a politics of humble responsiveness in a way many theistic perspectives fail to do.

As stated earlier, I believe Anabaptism retains rich political resources within its traditional practices. In what follows I will examine believer's baptism as such a resource. My intention in doing so against the above backdrop is not to allow one person's take on the modern world to set the agenda for theology; instead, I hope to demonstrate the critical edge with which certain Anabaptist practices anchored firmly in the rich soil of Christian doctrine are capable of engaging our world.

Barth's Doctrine of Baptism as a Response to the Politics of Becoming

Karl Barth vexed many of his admirers when he declared himself in favor of believer's baptism. For Barth, baptism is a response to God's action in which Christians declare that their lives are lived for God. In the same way he says that "baptism, as the beginning of a life in living hope, is *per use* a definitive assignment of Christians to the service of [others] . . . ."[17] Baptism is neither the beginning nor the end of a human's relationship to God, but a transitional event marking the first step of a life lived in Christ and setting the trajectory for that life.[18]

The practice of baptism is not set loose in the midst of the church unconnected to God's freedom and goodness. Since Christian baptism is commanded by God, and since its goal is reconciliation in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, it is grounded in God's initiation; it is a response

to Divine action.[19] "Baptism responds to a mystery, the sacrament of the history of Jesus Christ, of His resurrection, of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit but is not itself, however, a mystery or sacrament."[20]

Barth's language contrasts with that of two important Anabaptist theologians. Both John Howard Yoder, whose pervasive influence over contemporary Anabaptist theology and ethics is undeniable, and Thomas N. Finger are comfortable using sacramental language to describe baptism.[21] While Yoder and Finger are both fairly nuanced on this point, I am less optimistic than either of them that the word "sacrament" can be retrieved from the abuses of the past. Therefore, it is appropriate to move, with Barth, away from the terminology of sacrament and not saddle ourselves with the baggage of other traditions that face the continual problem of differentiating their view of the sacraments from those that are simply magical or mechanistic ways of laying hold of God's grace. Barth's caution should advise even Anabaptists with roots in the Zwinglian tradition against overcompensating through a return to a theology of sacraments. Baptism, like the rest of the church's Jesus-ordained practices, is not the spiritual ingestion of so many "grace vitamins."

It is time for Anabaptists, with Yoder and Finger, to move beyond the memorialist view of baptism common in Baptist circles but, with Barth, to stop short of re-establishing baptism as a sacrament. This middle course avoids the pitfalls of both extremes, which fail to recognize God's action in the sociality of the church. With some good judgment, this can be done even as Anabaptists continue to re-engage the classic Christian tradition in new, exciting ways. Again, listening to Barth is fruitful here, for in his view baptism is human action embodying an acknowledgment of the work of God in Christ, who is the true sacrament, and it must "bear witness to it, to confess it, to respond to it, to honor, praise and magnify it."[22]

In this initial description of baptism we can already see how this practice sets itself up against Connolly's politics. Connolly respects reverence but does not, to put it flatly, believe that God exists. Part of the Anabaptist practice of baptism is a statement of finitude; it is an acknowledgment that God exists and acts, and that we do not speak of God merely by speaking about ourselves in a raised voice. Christian baptism then lends witness to the reality that neither ethics nor politics can be other than a response to God's

action. In baptism Christians confess that in Christ is the only power that can save us; our own actions – regardless of whether they involve military strength, modern conceptions of justice, or democratic decision making – are insufficient to save us from our own destructive impulses.[23] Baptism also frames the rest of the Christian's actions specifically as a response to God's action. This is in marked contrast to actions prompted, albeit with the best intentions, by various forms of suffering or exclusion.

The point of the argument at this juncture is that virtuous behavior, i.e., caring for the poor, speaking for the voiceless, or protesting violence, if *not* done as a response to the call of God, ultimately flounders directionless in the sea of awareness and activism. Yet the argument cuts both ways: just as with the debate over the sacramentality of baptism, traditional responses, those often found at each end of the spectrum, are in the end far too limited. They fail to provide the proper space for *becoming*, as they close off the self and hold the suffering other outside the reach of justice.

Barth asserts that if baptism is a human response to God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ it can be understood as a free act.[24] For baptism to retain meaning, it cannot be done under compulsion; rather, it must be an act chosen by both the one being baptized and the church community.[25] Since baptism is the beginning of a life of faithfulness to God, it cannot be cloaked in coercion, for that undercuts the act of obedience: "Obedience to God can only be free obedience."[26] The freedom of the act of baptism parallels the sanctifying and redeeming work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. While baptism is chosen by an individual, it must never be severed from the work of God. Barth is aware that as a human action baptism is inherently tenuous and possibly even presumptuous. Who can know what such a commitment may eventually demand? Who can presume the ability to be faithful? Barth is careful to affirm that God underwrites the event. It is God's faithfulness and God's goodness that assure the propriety of baptism. Yet human action is not overwhelmed by God's action; Barth insists that human partnership must be taken seriously.[27]

In this way baptism affirms Connolly's idea that human beings cannot on their own ever reach a frozen state of true being. The commingling of human and divine action in believer's baptism affirms the contingent nature of humans; it affirms that a static individual identity held apart from the

power of Christ, which holds the very world together, is at best perilous. Believer's baptism affirms the connection of grace and the human will. As a Christian practice, it demands that we look beyond the obvious elements of socialization to the importance of the human decision being made.

For Barth, baptism is a way of stepping into God's promise. The Holy Spirit is a foretaste of the coming full reign of Christ.[28] In placing their hope in what is beyond themselves, those who are baptized recognize they are no longer bound by their own human weakness. They look not just to the past, where the sacrament of Christ took place in history, but also into the future, which they can enter confidently.[29] Although such joy might rub off on a Nietzschean such as Connolly, true Christian hope in Christ is distinct from the optimism of modern or postmodern politics. Christian hope admits there is no salvation in the separation of church and state, the democratic process, western freedom, capitalism, or even human rights. But it does confess that there is a hope; as the Christian dies and is raised to new life in Christ, the reality enacted in baptism, she confesses that her identity now rests in something outside what is contingent and mobile.

Baptism is a paradigmatic practice signaling the individual's place in both the church and the world. "At its very beginning [in baptism] … the Christian life, without detriment to its individual particularity, is a participation in the life of the Christian community," says Barth. "Baptism involves both the one who baptizes and the one who is baptized."[30] It is an act of the church, and in it the individual and the community confess together that Christ has done what they could not do.[31] Baptism is a reminder and a re-commitment for the whole community; it is a means of conversion for all involved and thus is unavoidably political.[32] The church is an active participant in the practice, and in being baptized the individual makes a political statement in identifying himself with this community. In this statement he relativizes his commitment to other institutions and binds himself to the church, confessing at once the determinative nature of the community's norms and his intention to walk with the community in the practice of faithful discernment. In joining such a community the individual confesses that there is a higher good than that of openness, self-artistry, or self-determination, and that being bound and other-determined also has its place.

The commitment that the baptized individual makes to the Christian community is one of the major differences Barth sees between this baptism and that of John the Baptist. Christian baptism has a gathering and uniting character that John's lacked.[33] While John's baptism enacted repentance, Christian baptism also serves as a marker for the individual's entrance into the Christian community. It is thus no coincidence that Barth reminds readers that in the New Testament baptism is usually followed by table fellowship.[34] "Baptism, if well done, is done in serious responsibility to the question whether the community and the candidate are together on this narrow way on which obedience is freedom and freedom is obedience."[35]

Practical Outcomes of a Theology of Baptism

We can now fill in the picture sketched earlier of the practical outcomes of this description of baptism. Dan Rhodes, in his essay "All Sexed Up: Is There a Way Out of Chastity, Marriage, and the Christian Sex Cult?" shows what working out such a theology of baptism might look like. His essay is not about baptism, it is about sex – the current Christian obsession with sex, to be specific. He observes that the church in the West has for all practical purposes mirrored its surrounding culture's obsession with sexuality, and explores how this has come to pass. What is most interesting for our purposes is his conclusion. While Rhodes does offer helpful propositions for getting beyond both the current sexuality debates and the obsession lying behind them, he says more generally that the church should be formed more "by martyrdom than by virginity or family programs. That is, we need more people taking lines of action that correlate with the resurrection and working toward friendship, not securing themselves in marriage or continence. In doing so, […] we may initiate a revolution of Christianity away from the contemporary sex cult and toward configurations of sainthood born through the fires of martyrdom."[36]

Rhodes's essay should remind Anabaptists – all Christians, for that matter – that by finding their identity as members of the developing community of Christ-followers they will find a new horizon opening up of possible responses to issues previously demanding a choice between perceived justice and perceived holiness, or, in the terms of our engagement with Barth, a horizon where freedom and obedience meet.

Like John the Baptist, William Connolly calls his audience to repentance. In his own way, Connolly offers baptism into a new way of life, a way of openness and of self-surrender. However, the baptism of John is not Christian baptism. Barth reminds us that after Christ we no longer wear camel's hair or eat locusts.[37] Believer's baptism, then, while hearing the call of prophets like John and of political philosophers like Connolly, cannot rest in undefined anticipation, for it must realize the world-changing character of the Incarnation and of the church that is God's new creation. Christian baptism points to the kingdom of God, while a politics of becoming is hardly certain it should point anywhere.

Those who have confessed Christ in their baptism are bound together with their sisters and brothers as a witnessing community. Baptism must launch the individual and the community forward into witness or it is not Christian baptism.[38] It ushers the candidate not only into the benefits of the Christian faith but into the responsibility of the church, which always bears political content. This is at times a cross to be borne, but it need not be a totally dour task, for baptism is connected to the promise of God that makes Christian witness a proclamation of hope.[39] This proclamation must be not only for the world as such but for the church as it might be or ought to be. It is strange that one of the most overlooked marks of the Christian community's disunity is its lack of ethical acumen. The problem here is not simply that Christians stand on all sides of most ethical issues – killing each other in wars is the extreme case – but that they seem relatively unconcerned that ethical unity is no longer a priority. Christian divisions, including those over ethics, have now become accepted as normal, to the extent that talk of a Christian "Right" and "Left" no longer disturbs us.

For Anabaptists, rediscovering a witness of hope that moves beyond the traditional conservative/liberal division might mean trying something as radical as John D. Roth's suggestion that we abstain for a time from partisan politics.[40] While Roth's proposal sounds especially strange in a Canadian context, it does not appear that business as usual has healed any of the rifts between factions of the Anabaptist community in the United States, not to mention those within the Christian community at large. In my view, such an abstention lines up with the trajectory on which Barth is taking us when he asserts that the Christian community – the community of the baptized –

lives "not with reference to themselves and their own profit or salvation, but in this proleptic and prophetic ministry of making known to the world, to those who are still outside, that which is given to those inside in the form of knowledge which is provisional and yet which is genuine and certain.…"[41]

Adult baptism emphasizes the unity of the church, but it also points to the fact that both the converted and the unconverted are unified in their need for Divine grace.[42] Christ is the hope of both. Barth's theology of baptism reminds us that those in the church are not different from others in any qualitative or exclusive way. Indeed, humanity's ever-present need for God's grace prompts those who confess Christ to embrace those who, according to society's threshold of attentiveness, are not even fully human, for believers themselves are, but for Christ, not fully human. The politics of becoming has nothing to bear witness to, other than openness; it lacks a teleological trajectory – unless a visceral reaction to suffering is counted as such. Christian baptism implies that there is something – actually someone – to which it can witness with the confidence that this One will enable the realization of one's true self in Christ.

Conclusion

Believer's baptism, if it is Christian baptism, demonstrates a distinct politics from both modern secularism and Connolly's postmodern glorification of becoming. Although Connolly places himself on the left of the political spectrum, the same sort of exercise could have been done with a political philosopher on the right or in the center. But what, if anything, is new here? The parallels between the approach to baptism advocated in this article and the theology of John Howard Yoder expressed in his *Body Politics* are significant.[43] Indeed, the outlook presented here leans heavily on Yoder's work. It should be noted, though, that Mark Thiessen Nation in *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions* says that he would have liked to see Yoder read more political philosophy.[44] Nation's comment suggests that extending Yoder's project into the realm of political philosophy has been largely left to others. Might not an Anabaptist political witness have much to learn from some contemporary political philosophy?

In my view Yoder's *Body Politics,* though a wonderfully stimulating series of insights on baptism and other Christian practices, falls short of

putting these practices in dialogue with political philosophy. Indeed, that was not Yoder's intent. Considering new voices such as Connolly's has the potential to help us not only overcome the temptation to back the bankrupt ideology of secular liberalism but also gain a deeper appreciation for practices important to our own tradition, while discovering layers of meaning that have lain dormant for centuries.

The heart of the matter is not that believer's baptism tells us exactly how to vote, although in certain cases it might, but that it points to a different political economy – not completely different but different enough that we must be vigilant against the temptation to have our imaginations limited by the day-to-day politics of western society. Baptism teaches Christians that our identity lies in Christ and that our action alongside God's is meaningful. If the practice that initiates us into the church demands human agency, then might not the Christian life in general involve concrete acts of response to God's invitation? Baptism reminds us that our actions are to be a response to God's acts, not simply to an apparent human reality such as suffering.

I fear that many Anabaptists of my generation, particularly those with activist leanings, have cut their politics free from the anchoring doctrine of God's freedom and involvement in the world. The temptation is to act without praying or to pray without acting. Neither recognizes the faith statement implicit in the practice of believer's baptism. Baptism teaches that we live toward the good of the kingdom of God and that, bound to the community of believers, our becoming is determined not by the randomness of our own awareness but by the reality of God as revealed in Jesus. At the risk of perpetuating Anabaptist conceit about the early members of the tradition, I suggest that martyrdom is this lesson lived out at a most extreme point. If properly understood, martyrdom shows the openness to the other that is "becoming," yet it undeniably portrays a deeper meaning to life and a view of the good that reaches beyond individuals locating their identity, as it were, in something far stronger than the self. Baptism also teaches that Christians, like everyone else, are dependent upon God's grace, but in standing on this grace our progress as individuals and societies has direction. The role of the church community in the individual's political formation is crucial.

Finally, though, the burden of this article is to show that a political witness which is merely prophetic, lacking in itself a response to Christ, fails

to do justice to the Anabaptist doctrine and practice of baptism. It remains shouting in the desert with John, wearing cloaks of camel's hair and eating locusts, and it does not take on the robes of baptism or share in the Lord's Supper. It fails to account for the world-changing event that is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Notes

[1] My assumption throughout this paper is that *practice* and *doctrine* are not easily separated in an Anabaptist perspective. Therefore, I refer to baptism and pacifism as both doctrines and practices.
[2] Some readers may notice the conspicuous absence of early Anabaptist voices in this paper. This is an intentional methodological move away from a traditional way of doing Anabaptist theology that assumes the normative or exemplary nature of the movement's founders. It would take an entirely different article to parse this issue with any integrity, and therefore I will simply let it rest.
[3] By "secularism" I mean the modern political axiom that relegates religion to the private sphere, while attempting to limit the content of public debate to what is equally apprehensible to all regardless of religious conviction.
[4] William E. Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1999), 39.
[5] Ibid., 55, emphasis his. Connolly is prompted by Nietzsche to "suggest that you can cultivate an admirable ethical disposition without anchoring it in the commands of a god or reason, and that you are in an excellent position to address affirmatively the politics of becoming when such a disposition is attached to Zarathustra's conviction that there is an ineliminable element of mobility in things at bottom capable of upsetting the best-laid plans at unexpected junctures" (57).
[6] Ibid., 68-69.
[7] North Americans should be reminded of the difficult journey of American Indians, women, atheists, homosexuals, African Americans, and many others in our history.
[8] Ibid., 63.
[9] Ibid.,62.
[10] Ibid., 57.
[11] In this respect a dramatic difference exists between William Connolly and someone like Richard Rorty. See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 237.
[12] Connolly, 57.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 63.
[15] Ibid., 68-69.
[16] We could even go further and, following the work of William Cavanaugh, strengthen this

critique by indicting the modern nation state as a false soteriology. See William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002).

[17] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/4: The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), 201.

[18] It may seem surprising that I have chosen Karl Barth to describe believer's baptism. Surely there are traditional Anabaptist theologians capable of describing it with the necessary detail for my project. That is true to an extent; however, I have found few modern Anabaptist theologians writing in English, with the possible exception of James McClendon, who have written on believer's baptism with the necessary specificity and depth. Most Anabaptist-Mennonite treatments of baptism are pastoral and, while helpful, lack a certain theological depth. However, I may have overlooked some important sources. If so, I welcome correction. Barth's theology, given his difficult political context and the sheer depth of his analysis, carries a gravity and carefulness that I have found in few traditional Anabaptist theologians.

[19] Barth, 72.

[20] Ibid., 102.

[21] John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1992), 33, 44; Thomas N. Finger, *Christian Theology, Vol. II* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1989), 331-51; also see Finger's 2006 essay "Sacramentality," available at http://www.bridgefolk.net/mctc06v/finger.htm.

[22] Barth, 72.

[23] In a related point Barth clearly says that baptism into anything other than Christ is not Christian baptism. Barth wants to chasten those who would mislabel this rite of the church as baptism into freedom, liberty, equality, the beautiful, the good etc. (92).

[24] James L. Buckley describes Barth's view of the relationship of human and divine action in baptism as "differentiated unity." This phrase properly highlights the relationship of the active agents in baptism. See "Christian Community, Baptism, and Lord's Supper," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 204.

[25] Barth, 131-32.

[26] Ibid., 132.

[27] Ibid., 163.

[28] Ibid., 40.

[29] Ibid., 206ff.

[30] Ibid., 131.

[31] Ibid., 159.

[32] Ibid., 138.

[33] Ibid., 72, 82.

[34] Ibid. Here Barth references Acts 8:13; 10:48; 16:15,34; 9:19.

[35] Ibid., 154.

[36] Dan Rhodes, "All Sexed Up: Is There a Way Out of Chastity, Marriage, and the Christian Sex Cult?," *the other journal.com*, found at http://www.theotherjournal.com/article.php?id=226.

[37] Barth, 87.

[38] Ibid., 200.
[39] Ibid., 199.
[40] Roth's proposal and variations of it have been presented several places, perhaps most concisely in his address to the MC USA Delegate Assembly in 2005. A transcript of this address is available at http://www.mennoniteusa.org/NewItems/delegates/Speakinggovernment0705.pdf.
[41] Barth, 200.
[42] Ibid., 192.
[43] Beyond *Body Politics* see also Yoder's essay "'But We Do See Jesus': The Particularity of Incarnation and the Universality of Truth" in *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 46-62.
[44] *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 198.

Anthony G. Siegrist is a ThD Student at the Toronto School of Theology, Wycliffe College, and a lecturer in Theology at Prairie College in Three Hills, Alberta.