The "Ecumenical" and "Cosmopolitan" Yoder: A Critical Engagement with *Nonviolence – A Brief History* and Its Editors

Mark Thiessen Nation

I

This review essay attempts to situate the lectures contained in *Nonviolence – A Brief History: The Warsaw Lectures* within John Howard Yoder's overall project. More specifically, it engages the provocative thesis put forward by one of the editors, Paul Martens. In an essay published a year earlier than the present book, Martens claimed that in Yoder's writings we see a "gradual evolution from articulating a strong Jesus-centered ethic towards an articulation of a less-than-particularly Christian social ethic rooted in a construal of universal history."[1] Though Martens's essay does not reference the lectures published in the volume under review, given that these lectures were presented in 1983 they serve as an example of the "gradual evolution" away from a particularly Christian social ethic that Martens is naming.[2] In fact, the editors signal this shift in some of their comments in the Introduction to the present volume. However, I question whether such a shift occurred in Yoder's writings during the last two decades of his life, and whether such a shift is evidenced in these present lectures.

In this essay I will first lay out the basic argument of Martens regarding the "gradual evolution" he sees in Yoder's theology by engaging with his 2009 essay, "Universal History and a Not-Particularly Christian Particularity." This argument, second, provides a fuller context for discussing the brief, suggestive, and parallel comments in the Introduction to the present volume. Then, third, I will relate this argument to the lectures by Yoder published there.

Martens sees Yoder's evolution from Christian particularity manifested in several shifts in Yoder's language and thus his theology.

(1) There is a shift from seeing a discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments. In earlier language Yoder spoke of a "new aeon" being inaugurated in Christ, with a new Jesus-centered ethic arising. Later he

placed more emphasis on the continuities between the testaments. In some writings the emphasis is especially on theologically significant sociological configurations. This is perhaps clearest in Yoder's 1995 lecture on Jeremiah, in which he asserted that "Jesus' impact in the first century added more and deeper authentically Jewish reasons, and reinforced and further validated the already expressed Jewish reasons for the already well established ethos of not being in charge and not considering any local state structure to be the primary bearer of the movement of history."[3]

(2) Yoder's earlier writings used the language of eschatology; later writings tend to use the language of doxology, with a significant shift in meaning. Thus, on the one hand, in the 1954 essay, "Peace Without Eschatology?," Yoder "argued for a view of reality that 'defines a present position in terms of the yet unseen goal which gives it meaning,' and for this reason, 'peace' was not something that described external results of one's behavior but the character and goal of one's action performed with confidence in divine sovereignty."[4] On the other hand, Yoder's 1988 lecture, "To Serve God and to Rule the World," illustrates the later shift. This lecture "moves toward addressing external results of behavior, and seeing that 'reality' now entails the demand that one is 'obligated to discern, down through the centuries, which historical developments can be welcomed as progress in the light of the Rule of the Lamb.'"[5]

(3) In early writings Yoder was clear about the centrality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the particularity of the Christian community. In later writings he has shifted to universal history and in the process elides particularity. At the end of his 1992 book, *Body Politics*, Yoder asks, for instance, the rhetorical question "'Why should it not be the case that God's purpose for the world would pursue an organic logic through history and across the agenda of the pilgrim people's social existence with such reliable rhythm as we have here observed?'"[6] Martens comments, "Notice what is said: organic logic through history, pilgrim people, reliable rhythm, what can be observed. Notice what is absent in this question: reference to Jesus? Christianity? the church? The key is a pilgrim people's social existence, the original gospel revolution, whether they be Christian or not."[7] Martens follows this with a quotation from a 1992 lecture in which Yoder suggests that the claim "'that the oppressed are the bearers of the meaning of history

is not poetry but serious social science.'"[8] Certainly by this last set of moves, so Martens argues, Yoder has come to embrace a "social gospel" not unlike that of Walter Rauschenbusch. In his later writings the emphasis is on social (progressive) processes being in service to humanity. That is, for the later Yoder Christian theological language is instrumentalist and thus Christian theological particularity is optional. For Martens, these shifts are not seen positively (as for others they would be).

To their credit, the editors did not provide a full-blown critical introduction to *Nonviolence – A Brief History* similar to what I've just summarized. However, to those who have read Martens's essays that are critical of Yoder, the brief comments on pages 8-12 of the Introduction can be seen as in the same vein.[9] There the editors claim that "by 1983," when the Warsaw lectures were written and presented, "Yoder is casting a vision that is both ecumenical and cosmopolitan."[10] Using these terms, they seem to suggest that by 1983 Yoder has re-framed his writing in light of theological shifts that happened precisely because of deeper or broader ecumenical engagement which perhaps led him to be "cosmopolitan" in ways he hadn't been earlier. The editors say this specifically means that Yoder "is no longer directly challenging his Mennonite mentors, he is no longer merely preoccupied with criticizing the Niebuhr brothers, and he is no longer involved solely in intra-free church discussions."[11]

If by "cosmopolitan" one means that Yoder was, by 1983, fully in touch with global politics, a variety of cultures, and many and varied peoples (with various theologies), then indeed he had been cosmopolitan a good while before 1983. In fact it would not be difficult to argue that by the 1950s or certainly the end of the 1960s – by which time Yoder was fluent in four languages and had travelled extensively – he was both cosmopolitan and ecumenical. However, if one means, as I think the editors do, that Yoder had abandoned some of his earlier theological commitments because of a newly acquired "cosmopolitanism," then their characterizations do not stand up to scrutiny.

"For many years prior to these lectures," say the editors, "Yoder had been concerned with interpreting Christianity as a communal disposition, a communal minority position vis-à-vis an established political and religious authority."[12] That is, earlier Yoder had been committed to particularistic

Christian convictions. In those days when he used what appeared to be distinct Christian theological language, we knew what he meant. Later, however, language that seems similar is functioning differently. Now what appears to be theological language is simply functional, instrumental language to call us to engage and change the world. For instance, in his 1982 essay, "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood," Yoder refers to worship as "the alternative construction of society and history."[13] This leads the editors to pose a rhetorical question: "[I]s *all* alternative construction of society and history worship? Or, perhaps to rephrase, what content might there be to worship other than the alternative construction of society and history?"[14] As one looks at the Warsaw lectures, it is easy to conclude, so the editors suggest, that Yoder (apparently) mutes the distinctions between Christianity and Hinduism, King and Gandhi, Jesus and Vishnu – because what ultimately matters is whether they measure up to the norm of nonviolence by which we re-shape society into a better place. "For Yoder," with his newly acquired cosmopolitanism, "the 'real world,' the 'larger pattern' of reality stands behind all of these, revealing itself to those who have eyes to see: 'the progress of history is carried by the common people who suffer.'"[15]

I am puzzled by such comments. The editors ignore counter evidence, some of which is close at hand. I pose the matter this way because, in addition to quoting from the text of Yoder's 1983 Warsaw lectures, they root the above criticisms in a quotation from "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood," an essay in Yoder's 1984 book, *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel*. This book includes essays that as clearly as any refute the editors' claims. In fact this is true even for the very essay from which they quote. But let me begin with the most obvious essay, the one following "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood."

The second essay in *The Priestly Kingdom* is "'But We Do See Jesus': The Particularity of Incarnation and the Universality of Truth."[16] This is one of Yoder's few philosophical essays. It is written in a certain postmodern vein, arguing against the supposed superiority of some "view from nowhere" that would claim to be cosmopolitan in a way that is not simply another particular standpoint. Yoder begins by listing nine critiques of supposed "parochial" understandings of knowledge. He devotes the rest of the essay to reflecting on the two parts of the subtitle, in effect responding

to the challenges to "parochial" ways of knowing. He argues that every approach to knowledge is particularistic. To imagine there is an alternative to particularity is a myth. By the end of the essay it is also clear that Yoder believes that, in the face of current modernist understandings of universal rationality as well as skeptical postmodern notions, there is no reason to be embarrassed by the (universal) truth claims entailed by the confession that the Word of God became flesh in (the human) Jesus of Nazareth.[17] There have been and will continue to be "challenges to a specifically Christian witness."[18] "The real issue," then and now, says Yoder, "is not whether Jesus can make sense in a world far from Galilee, but whether – when he meets us in our world, as he does in fact – we want to follow him."[19]

If one reads *The Priestly Kingdom* carefully, three things seem obvious. Actually these things are already obvious in the Introduction. First, this is a set of conceptual essays that is basically a companion to *The Politics of Jesus*. Yoder's reflections in the introduction indicate that in these essays he is articulating (for an ecumenical audience) significant elements of his own radical reformation views.

Second, central to these views are the following stated presuppositions: [T]he church precedes the world epistemologically. We know more fully from Jesus Christ and in the context of the confessed faith than we know in other ways. The meaning and validity and limits of concepts like "nature" or "science" are best seen not when looked at alone but in light of the confession of the lordship of Christ. The church precedes the world as well axiologically, in that the lordship of Christ is the center which must guide critical value choices, so that we may be called to subordinate or even to reject those values which contradict Jesus.[20]

Third, one way of characterizing most, if not all, the essays is that they try to situate Yoder's particularistic Anabaptist convictions in various larger conversations – to demonstrate how he is simultaneously Anabaptist, ecumenical (catholic and evangelical), and cosmopolitan. I have no idea what these essays mean, collected about the same time as the Warsaw lectures were written, if they are not affirming the same Christian – especially ecclesiological and Christological – particularity that Yoder had affirmed for decades.

Toward the end of his essay, "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood,"

Yoder speaks of "a missionary ethic of incarnation."[21] He warns against the temptation, in our work as Christians in the world, to try to "transcend the vulnerability of belief." We may imagine that we can "discover some 'neutral' or 'common' or 'higher' ground," so that we can avoid our differences with others, and work with a common language and a common vision toward a common cause. But our instinct here is wrong, says Yoder. Our missional work is generated and shaped by our peculiar identity. Thus, "Christians will never meet this challenge better by seeking to be less specifically Christian. They will meet it better if they take it on faith that Christ is Lord over the powers, that Creation is not independent of Redemption."[22] Then, when we work together with others, each with our own distinct identities, we discern and note conflicting as well as overlapping convictions and ethics as all of us with our "provincial visions" (sometimes) work toward common enterprises.

Earlier in the essay, picking up emphases of his friends Stanley Hauerwas and Jim McClendon, Yoder had affirmed the recent focus on narrative. But then he warned against the temptation (for Christians) to make the *notion* of narrative more important than the particular narratives "of Abraham and Samuel, Jeremiah and Jesus," imagining that the particulars of our faith are reducible to "a new kind of universals, namely narrative forms."[23]

It is not difficult to find Yoder saying similar or consistent things elsewhere, in writings either from around the same period or later. In 1986 he wrote a foreword for *The Mystery of Peace* by Arthur C. Cochrane. There Yoder challenges the way in which too much Western theology makes "God language" instrumentalist. "'God talk,'" he says, "is 'instrumental' in that what people say about God can be reduced to meaningful statements about men and women, institutions and historical movements. This means that the reference to 'God' is but a symbolic or 'mythical' superstructure, adding texture but not substance to what could be said on ordinary 'public' grounds." He commends Cochrane for renewing "the classical commitment to God as both the object and the subject of theological discourse. He talks and writes not of God the cipher or the symbol, but of God the Father of Jesus Christ. His God is the covenant initiator in creation and redemption, to whom, as the Reformation tradition at its best has been saying, we can only adequately

give witness if we stand by the Reformation watchword 'by Grace alone.'"[24] Given the focus of Cochrane's book, of course Yoder is specifically and most substantially referring to how Cochrane writes about peace theology. But what he decided to emphasize in his foreword is noteworthy.

We might also note a comment Yoder made on a subject that was a recurring theme in his writings from the 1950s to the 1990s, namely eschatology. In an essay on eschatology published in 1990 he offered a critical comment on a writing by biblical scholar John J. Collins on eschatology. "To say simply, as Collins does, that 'apocalypse is validated by the ethics it sustains' would be a wrongly reductionistic horizontalism. It would be self-defeating, since the vision will only support the ethos if the seer considers God and the revelation to be real."[25]

Perhaps more immediately related to the present book is Yoder's lecture, "The Lessons of Nonviolent Experience," taken from his course on Christian Attitudes to War, Peace and Revolution, informally published by him in the same year that he presented the Warsaw lectures.[26] In this lecture he reflects on various practitioners of nonviolence, especially Gandhi and King. But he also considers writings by William Miller and James Douglass on nonviolence. His comments on Douglass are particularly germane. He finds him too optimistic about the effectiveness of nonviolent strategies. Yoder believes that some of Douglass's language seems overly committed to effectiveness per se. As one reads through Yoder's critiques of Douglass it seems obvious that they are rooted in clear theological convictions regarding sin, evil, and human incapacity. As Yoder puts it at the outset of his articulation of a "third possibility," if Christ is Lord, "then we do not try to prove our hope. To attempt to prove our hope is logically and theologically illegitimate, because to prove it, we would have to subject it to – or locate it with reference to – some other more fundamental, visible, or sure standard. That, however, would mean giving our loyalty to another Lord."[27]

Before I discuss the Warsaw lectures themselves, let me comment directly on the editors' critical "social gospel" way of reading Yoder's provocative claim that "worship is the communal cultivation of an alternative construction of society and history." The caption under which this statement appears is "the unity of worship and morality," not the reduction of worship to morality. Given that Yoder argued against "instrumentalizing" theology,

against "reductionistic horizontalism," and against imagining we can be more effective in our efforts in the world by "seeking to be less specifically Christian," then perhaps there is another, more consistent, way to understand Yoder's claims. And in a sense it is obvious. After all, Yoder has been known as the proponent of *The Politics of Jesus*. What some social gospellers who imagine themselves standing on the shoulders of Yoder have missed is that for Yoder this always included seeing "the church as *polis*."[28] From the mid-1970s forward, he was attempting to name more fully what this claim means.

On the one hand, for Yoder, it meant a steadfast commitment to the particularity of the church and its narrative identity.[29] It meant, still in 1980, the "offensive" affirmation that "biblically the meaning of history is carried first of all, and on behalf of all others, by the believing community."[30] This is consistent with Yoder's longstanding belief – distinguishing him from social gospellers – that "the church's responsibility to and for the world is first and always to be the church." In fact, claimed Yoder, "the short-circuited means used to 'Christianize' 'responsibly' the world in some easier way than by the gospel [has] had the effect of dechristianizing the Occident and demonizing paganism."[31]

On the other hand, following the success of his 1972 book, *The Politics of Jesus*, Yoder felt compelled to address his "cultured despisers" who saw him as a sectarian. How is it that the body of Christ is used by God to accomplish his redemptive purposes in the world? How is it that the people of God have a social role that is relevant to the larger world? What does this look like? So, first, Yoder is attempting to name more fully what it means that the church is truly "a new social datum," a community that can be used to change the world.[32] He is simply amplifying one of his central claims, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ – including its social shape – cannot finally be separated from the church. This distinguishes his approach to these matters from that of the social gospel. Second, he attempts to frame this in ways that are compelling to (mostly Christian) cultured skeptics regarding such a claim. In saying that "worship is the communal cultivation of an alternative construction of society and history," he is using sociology of knowledge language.[33] More frequently in the last two decades of his life he drew upon Karl Barth for the same purposes.[34]

II

Referring to the lectures now published as *Nonviolence – A Brief History: The Warsaw Lectures,* Yoder said in a June 23, 1983 letter that they were "the product of very hasty preparation," and that if publication was anticipated he wanted to do some re-writing.[35] So far as I know, he never did such revision.[36] So, three things should be kept in mind as we read these lectures. First, they were put together quickly (in the midst of a very busy life), without fresh research but by someone who had taught on this subject matter for a number of years. Second, they were deliberately brief and relatively simple, because Yoder knew they were to be delivered to a general audience and he needed to leave time for translation into Polish. Third, he would have done some polishing, nuancing, and annotating if he had prepared them for publication. Critics should be aware of such matters as they engage the lectures brought together in this book.

Although, as the editors say, Yoder did not reference the specifics of the situation in Poland in 1983 in his lectures, he was certainly aware of the Solidarity Movement and the potential for resisting communism nonviolently. He was well aware of the contexts of Poland as he wrote. Thus, I imagine he saw it as his task to help the Christians who would hear him to see nonviolent ways of engaging in resistance as making sense and also as biblically mandated.[37]

He begins in the first three lectures by attempting to show in real-life struggles how Gandhi and King in two significantly different situations used nonviolent means to resist injustice. This is partly to make nonviolent ways of engaging difficult circumstances more thinkable. But of course his choice of Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King is not accidental. They mostly fit with his own (Mennonite) Christian theology. In the first lecture he shows how both Tolstoy and Gandhi have roots in the Gospel. He mentions that Tolstoy's reductionist way of naming the Gospel is "debatable" but that nonetheless his way of identifying the "key" to the Scriptural message at least in some fashion "restores the link between the work of Christ and human obedience which had been forgotten or destroyed through the centuries" (*Nonviolence – A Brief History*, 21). In brief discussions of Gandhi, Yoder shows that the latter's views have roots in a reading of the Gospels and Tolstoy's reading

of the same, while also reflecting critically on how Gandhi's views differ from Christian views. What Yoder seems most to want to point to is that "Gandhi has added to Tolstoy's spiritual diagnosis both philosophical clarity and organizational genius" (ibid., 25).

In the second lecture Yoder shows the connection between Gandhi and King but also shows how the Baptist, King, added Christian theological specifics to his witness to the power of nonviolent direct action. Which is not to say Yoder would offer no criticisms of King. In a more nuanced lecture of 1981, Yoder distinguishes his own approach from that of Gandhi and King. Having discussed Gandhi briefly, he says that "not all of the meaning of the cross in the Christian message is rendered adequately by stating it in terms that sound like those of Gandhi."[38] Later, in relation to King, he asks how Christians can continue to affirm the sovereignty of God when it looks as though they are losing – and may continue losing. Yoder says the answer to this question is Christological. He then suggests that this is not how King put it, at least in public discourse.[39] Similarly, one can see nuanced discussion and critique of Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King in Yoder's more detailed 1983 lecture, "The Political Meaning of Hope."[40]

In all these places and in varying ways Yoder is consistent with his commitment to particularity.[41] He chooses the exemplars carefully, thinking there is significant overlap with them and their commitments and with him and his (Mennonite) Christian commitments. The particular elements he chooses to name are not random; they serve his purposes for different contexts. He then cites similarities and differences between their particular views (leading to practices) and his – with the critiques almost always obviously related to his own theological commitments. The critiques are more substantial in the longer, more nuanced lectures (and thus less pronounced in the Warsaw lectures).

The next chapter in the book is on the Just War theory. Yoder knows that not everyone will accept the call to nonviolence. Thus he still wants those listeners to be informed that there is a tradition within Christianity of attempting to be disciplined, restrained, and carefully deliberative in discerning when, whether, and how to use violence. So, he presented this lecture.

Yoder was one of the first theologians to pay attention to "the science of conflict," the sub-discipline of social science that studies the dynamics of

conflict and methods of resolving or transforming it. Chapter 5 is devoted to that. He would make it clear in various writings around this time that it is Jesus Christ with all the theological ramifications entailed in a robust Christology by which he reflects critically on the subject matter in this chapter. More specifically, he would in various places echo the sentiments expressed in *Nevertheless* that his own position "includes the practical concern of the programmatic views . . . without placing its hope there."[42] The way Yoder opens the chapter with a paragraph of theological framing reflects his effort to be particularistic, in this case to name the overlap and intersections between Christian convictions and the social scientific study of conflict.

The next three chapters, 6 through 8, are, I am convinced, the core of this lecture series as Yoder saw it. These are the biblical lectures on the Old Testament, Jesus in the Gospels, and a Christian cosmology. The first of these lectures, "From the Wars of Joshua to Jewish Pacifism," opens in a way that sets up the vital importance of all three. Yoder begins by saying that too often Christians presume that "little is to be gained from the text of the Bible itself." Because of this belief, we "continue to see the Bible used as a mine for general slogans about the broad peacemaking purposes of God – which have their place in celebrations and sermons – but we no longer assume that serious and specific moral guidance could be found in the Scriptures" (*Nonviolence – A Brief History*, 73).[43] These three lectures seek to show why "[t]his assumption is mistaken." These lectures would be familiar to any serious Yoder students; there is nothing new here.

In this lecture Yoder – a Mennonite pacifist – once again tries to show the positive links between the Old Testament and the New. He acknowledges the temptation to reject much or all of the OT because of its violence, claiming that those who do so "relativize all of the Hebrew backgrounds of the Christian faith." This is the wrong move, for "[t]hen we will have a smaller Bible to guide us, and we shall be permanently embarrassed by the fact that the New Testament itself generally assumes rather than rejects the authority of the Old" (*Nonviolence – A Brief History*, 74). Thus in this brief lecture Yoder mostly draws positive connections between OT and NT themes and attempts to confirm his reading of the OT by showing streams of Jewish readings of the Hebrew Scriptures that have seen the same things in

them. But of course his reading of the OT is Christologically informed.[44]

Chapter 7, "Jesus and Nonviolent Liberation," is mostly a re-statement of the portions of *The Politics of Jesus* that are on the Gospels, including a discussion of reasons often given for setting Jesus aside in relation to social ethics. Thus Yoder underscores the centrality of Jesus while offering signals regarding the church as *polis*. Chapter 8, "Early Christian Cosmology and Nonviolence," restates Yoder's reflections on the principalities and powers within *The Politics of Jesus* as well as apocalyptic as a biblical category – again showing their relevance for thinking about social ethics and institutions.

Finally, Yoder knew when he accepted the assignment to speak in Poland that he was traveling to a mostly Catholic country. Thus within that context he elected to conclude with three lectures on Catholic Peace Theology: nonviolent spirituality, professors and pastors, and Latin American models. Everything he presented in these lectures is intended to show that what he is naming is also for Catholics. Indeed, he ends the third lecture with a remarkable three-page quotation from "a charter of nonviolence in Latin America," adopted in Bogotá, Colombia, in December 1977. This moving theological and practical statement comes close to summarizing what Yoder has said throughout the lectures. Or, put differently, since it comes close to his own theological views, it serves as a powerful way to end on an unmistakable theological note.

The Warsaw lectures, as do most of Yoder's writings, display his ecumenical and cosmopolitan sensibilities. They were intended to speak to a broad Christian audience. Over the years I have come to believe that Yoder should have heeded more fully the warnings about apologetics from his teacher, Karl Barth. For it appears to me that some of his (perhaps) infelicitous ways of putting things – several of which understandably led Paul Martens to wonder about the particularity of his Christian convictions – mostly arise out of his attempts to do apologetics for pacifism and "the politics of Jesus." However, mostly, I continue to marvel at Yoder's ability to do this sort of articulation while never really abandoning his own particularistic, radically reformed, Christologically and ecclesiologically centered ethics – which he saw as simply catholic and evangelical (perhaps as better substitutes for ecumenical and cosmopolitan).

Notes

[1] Paul Martens, "Universal History and a Not-Particularly Christian Particularity: Jeremiah and John Howard Yoder's Social Gospel," in *Power and Practices: Engaging the Work of John Howard Yoder*, ed. Jeremy M. Bergen and Anthony G. Siegrist (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2009), 131-46, here 131-32.

[2] One of the issues that needs clarification is chronology. Martens is not clear about when significant shifts began happening in Yoder's theology. However, he seems to suggest that by 1983 some of these shifts have been manifested. Because chronology is important in relation to Martens's argument, I often give dates connected to the various writings I mention by Yoder.

[3] Quoted in Martens, "Universal History," 140.

[4] Martens, "Universal History," 137.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Quoted in Martens, "Universal History," 142.

[7] Martens, "Universal History," 142.

[8] Quoted in Martens, "Universal History," 142. Martens does note immediately after this quotation that Yoder might have had in mind Barth's claim that "the calling of the people of God is thus no different from the calling of humanity."

[9] In addition to the essay already mentioned, see Paul Martens, "What Common Ground?: Re-examining John Howard Yoder's Indebtedness to Rabbi Steven Schwartzchild." Unpublished lecture, Society of Christian Ethics, January 2009; and Paul Martens, "The Problematic Development of the Sacraments in the Thought of John Howard Yoder," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 24.3 (Fall 2006): 65-77. For a critique of this latter essay see Branson Parlor, "Spinning the Liturgical Turn: Why John Howard Yoder Is Not an Ethicist," in *Radical Ecumenicity: Pursuing Unity and Continuity after John Howard Yoder*, ed. John C. Nugent (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian Univ. Press, 2010), 173-91.

[10] Paul Martens, Matthew Porter, and Myles Werntz, "Introduction" to *Nonviolence – A Brief History: The Warsaw Lectures* (Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2010), 8.

[11] Ibid., 8. These assertions are the sort of caricatures that suggest shifts across decades. Yoder was never "merely" preoccupied with the Niebuhr brothers, *and* Yoder's major critique of H. Richard Niebuhr was published in the 1990s. Yoder was never involved "solely" in "intra-free church discussions" *and* was actively involved in such discussions until the end of his life.

[12] Ibid., 9.

[13] Quoted in Martens et al., "Introduction," 10.

[14] Martens et al., "Introduction," 10.

[15] Ibid., 11-12.

[16] Yoder, "'But We Do See Jesus': The Particularity of Incarnation and the Universality of Truth," in *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame, IN: The Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 46-62.

[17] Also see Yoder, "On Not Being Ashamed of the Gospel: Particularity, Pluralism, and Validation," *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (July 1992): 285-300.

[18] Yoder, "'But We Do See Jesus,'" 46.

[19] Ibid., 62.
[20] Yoder, "Introduction," in *The Priestly Kingdom*, 11.
[21] Yoder, "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood," in *The Priestly Kingdom*, 44.
[22] Ibid., 44.
[23] Ibid., 36.
[24] Yoder, "Foreword," in Arthur C. Cochrane, *The Mystery of Peace* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1986), viii.
[25] Yoder, "Ethics and Eschatology," *Ex Auditu* 6 (1990): 119-28, here 126. I have offered further reflections on Yoder's emphases on eschatology and resurrection in Mark Thiessen Nation, "The Politics of Yoder Regarding *The Politics of Jesus*: Recovering the Implicit in Yoder's Holistic Theology for Pacifism," in *Radical Ecumenicity: Pursuing Unity and Continuity after John Howard Yoder,* 37-56, here 42-44.
[26] The title of this lecture is almost identical to chapter three in the book under discussion. However, the two lectures are very different.
[27] Yoder, "The Lessons of Nonviolent Experience," in *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, ed. Theodore J. Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 360. I have compared this edited version with the original 1983 version; there are no substantial differences.
[28] The earliest reference I have noticed to this is in Yoder, *The Christian Witness to the State* (North Newton, KS: Faith & Life Press, 1964; reprinted Herald Press, 2002), 17-18. It is interesting that in the 1994 reprint of his 1954 essay, "Peace Without Eschatology?" Yoder mentioned a shift in his way of speaking of *polis* in this regard. This is where we can document a shift in his language. See Yoder, "Peace Without Eschatology?," in *The Royal Priesthood*, ed. Michael G. Cartwright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994; reprinted Herald Press, 1998), 147, fn 3. In fact, as someone who was an advisor to Yoder in collecting these essays I would say it is important to note where he felt compelled to add editorial footnotes to older essays in 1994 and where he didn't.
[29] This is affirmed in Yoder's 1980 "Stone Lecture." See Yoder, "Why Ecclesiology Is Social Ethics: Gospel Ethics Versus the Wider Wisdom," in *The Royal Priesthood*, 110. On page 110 Yoder concedes that the particularity rooted in Jesus and the gospel in relation to social ethics may be seen as a scandal; he is nonetheless committed to it. Later in the same essay (page 116), he mentions spiritual resources – such as regeneration and the "guidance of the Holy Spirit" – that are also inherent in the particular identity of the church.
[30] Yoder, "Why Ecclesiology Is Social Ethics," 118.
[31] Yoder, "The Otherness of the Church," in *The Royal Priesthood*, 53-64, here 61. I acknowledge that this is a 1960 essay. But Yoder chose to include it in a 1994 collection. Moreover, as I am suggesting, the basic thrust of these quotations fits with his 1980 Stone Lecture.
[32] This is Yoder's way of putting it in 1971, and again in 1992 in describing his own position in Yoder, *Nevertheless* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), 136. The original 1971 edition says the same thing at this point.
[33] Yoder comments on this at some length in "The Believers Church and the Arms Race," in *For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997; reprint

Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock), 148-61, here 153-55.
[34] See: Mark Thiessen Nation, "The Politics of Yoder Regarding *The Politics of Jesus*," esp. 46-51 and accompanying footnotes. That he drew so frequently on Barth would, I suggest, affirm my reading that he continued wanting to emphasize specifically Christian theological social ethics.
[35] Letter to Dr. Witold Benedyktowicz, June 23, 1983. This concern was reiterated three years later in a letter of May 1, 1986, also to Benedyktowicz. Archives of the Mennonite Church, Hist. MSS 1-48, Box 142.
[36] The exception would be for the few lectures also included in the collection, *The War of the Lamb*, which Yoder was preparing for publication.
[37] Yoder often assumed that his audience or readers were self-described as Christians. This made a difference in how he shaped his arguments.
[38] Yoder, "The Power Equation, the Place of Jesus, and the Politics of King," in *For the Nations*, 125-47, here 127.
[39] Ibid., 133.
[40] Yoder, "The Political Meaning of Hope," in *The War of the Lamb: The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking*, ed. Glen Stassen, Mark Thiessen Nation, and Matt Hamsher (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 53-65.
[41] For a brief rationale for the following see Yoder, "The Hermeneutics of Peoplehood," 44.
[42] Yoder, *Nevertheless*, 137. See also Mark Thiessen Nation, *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006),169-88.
[43] Further references appear in parentheses in the text.
[44] For a brilliant interpretation of Yoder's use of the Old Testament, see John C. Nugent, *The Politics of Yahweh: John Howard Yoder and the Narrative Trajectory of the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, forthcoming).

Mark Thiessen Nation is Professor of Theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia.