Afterword

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The editors of the "Teaching Peace Studies" issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review* noted that contributors offered "limited consideration of Anabaptist/Mennonite religious beliefs" in their essays.[1] They offered several possibilities for this "near absence," including academic expectations or the "unquestioned alignment of the values in the field of peace studies with Anabaptist/Mennonite values." Interestingly, the essays on the teaching of ethics—a closely aligned discipline—in this present issue are full of biographical reflection and explicit attention not just to Anabaptist/Mennonite religious beliefs but to the appropriateness of working from Mennonite values towards the teaching of ethics.

A common thread running through these essays is the connection between the biography of the teacher and the material they teach. This perspective, that "how I live" must be consistent with "what I teach" and even "the life of Jesus," is one that Mennonites have owned and made popular in the field of ethics. Another thread concerns the kind of communities that can resist racism, support victims, encourage discipleship, and move towards seeing God's purposes realized. This expertise in discipleship and community is something Mennonites are known for in academic circles, and for which they enjoy a very positive reputation. There is no necessary correlation between "how I live" and a positive reputation, but it is not surprising that the one follows from the other.

The sources of this reputation include cookbooks, service, the martyr tradition, a history of anti-war pacifism and simple living, and a strong unity of worship, practice, and belief alongside the teaching and learning of ethics by Mennonites in denominational schools and beyond. Another source is the writing of John Howard Yoder and its very positive academic reception. Stanley Hauerwas and many of his students (mostly not Mennonite) magnified and amplified Yoder's influence and spread it across

[1] Reina Neufeldt and Neil Funk-Unrau, "Teaching Peace Studies: An Introduction," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 32, no. 2 (2014), 118-19.

other Christian denominations. Part of this story is told in Harry Huebner's essay in this volume.

However, Yoder was also credibly accused with sexual abuse. The institutional response to his abuse generally sought to protect reputations, curb his behavior, and avoid public attention. Secret and confidential processes were engaged at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) and elsewhere, but failed to bring him to account.[2] Yoder died in 1997. Recently, the careful, persistent work of people such as Rachel Halder and Stephanie Krehbiel has seen a tipping point reached on questions of sexual abuse and Mennonite institutions. The key example is a weekend at AMBS in March 2015 devoted to a solemn reconsideration of Yoder's legacy at that institution. Yvonne Zimmerman and Alex Sider address this new appreciation of the dynamics of power, sexual abuse, and surviving in their essays in these pages.

The 2017 meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics (SCE) also considered Yoder's legacy. Stephanie Krehbiel and Karen Guth presented papers, a service of lament addressed Yoder in light of his past presidency of the SCE, and a packed session featured Hauerwas, Sara Wenger Shenk, and Traci West. Hauerwas expressed contrition for his earlier defenses of Yoder and noted ways that Yoder's thinking was in error.[3] Wenger Shenk detailed her coming to learn of the secret and confidential files on Yoder, and her decision to open them and hold the weekend of lament. West called for a complete culture change in the SCE, naming Yoder's abuse as endemic in a culture of whiteness and privilege pervading society generally and Christian ethicists as well. James Logan picks up on similar themes in his essay here.

Yoder's articulate writing and reflection on Mennonite experience achieved a significant academic following only to be called into question decades after his death. The instability of secrecy and confidential processes allowed Yoder, AMBS, and the Mennonite Church to escape attention when it could have moved toward real reconciliation. Mennonites have confidence

[2] This history is detailed by Rachel Waltner Goossen in "'Defanging the Beast': Mennonite Responses to John Howard Yoder's Sexual Abuse," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 89 (2015): 7-80.

[3] Hauerwas's expression of contrition was heard with ambivalence by some, as it focused on academic questions rather than on accountability for the damage Yoder caused.

that they will treat each other well in the institutions they create and maintain, but the reality is that Mennonite institutions are no better than others. In fact, they may be more violent than others, given an unresolved history of martyrdom and an unwillingness to appropriately thematize power.[4]

Similar dynamics are now at work in the case of Luke Hartman, a former Vice President at Eastern Mennonite University, who resigned after being arrested for solicitation. In the wake of his resignation, a similarly secret and confidential process around an earlier abuse case at Lindale Mennonite Church became public. In reflecting on this case, Lisa Schirch outlines four Mennonite institutional patterns hindering prevention efforts: keeping secret files on credibly reported or admitted sexual offenders, using secret accountability processes, encouraging victims to keep quiet, and confusing sexual affairs with sexual violence.[5] Following Schirch, I want to suggest that the teaching of ethics must start paying more attention to institutional processes and policies, particularly when involving secrecy and confidentiality. Secrecy and confidentiality are unethical practices for institutions due to the way they protect the use and abuse of power.

Why do secrecy and confidentiality in Mennonite institutions remain undertheorized? Most generally, ethics as a formal discipline is underrepresented in these institutions despite our reputation in ethics. Currently, only AMBS titles faculty as teaching ethics; there Janna Hunter-Bowman and Malinda Berry are professors of ethics. Perhaps people have been hired as ethicists but then titled more generically, as I was at Bluffton University. Or Mennonite institutions may presume that competence to teach ethics comes with a commitment to Anabaptist Mennonite values.

Sometimes ethics courses dissolve into the curriculum with the expectation that every course becomes an ethics course or that training in ethics becomes a common learning objective. Alternately, ethics courses may

[4] This set of connections has probably been more thoroughly explored in Mennonite fiction and literary criticism than anywhere else. When seen as examples of unalloyed goodness, martyr stories may seem very promising as staples in an ethics course. But when the reception of these stories is used to reinforce a positive reputation, they may be deployed rhetorically in connection with institutional secrecy and confidentiality.

[5] Lisa Schirch, "An Advocate Responds to Concerns from Others at EMU," Our Stories Untold blog, January 13, 2017: www.ourstoriesuntold.com/advocate-responds-concerns-others-emu/.

be a part of disciplinary capstones, not necessarily connected to Mennonite values like peacemaking or community. These courses may need to spend significant time addressing disciplinary codes, as noted in Brenda Srof's essay on Goshen College's nursing ethics course. The contrast here is between ethics as compliance and ethics as character. In disciplines like Social Work with highly codified ethics requirements, compliance with the standards of care defines the ethical task. In the Business Ethics course at Bluffton,[6] we focused on the codes of ethics of our students' employers. It was interesting to watch students examine whether their employers were seeking to foster compliance or inculcating a particular character in employees. The Christian Ethics courses I taught focused on character, perhaps at the expense of attention to compliance. Finally, a systematic approach to ethics could be an underdeveloped aspect of the discipline, as suggested by Reina Neufeldt in her essay for this volume.

Another contributing factor could be the view that institutions are morally neutral, and that only the people working in them have moral agency. Change requires that leaders of these institutions voice new directions, that habits and policies are reviewed, and that the connections between institutional mission, policy, and agency are well understood. Sara Wenger Shenk's work recognizes that institutions are organisms with habits and histories. Her decision to move secret and confidential files into more accessible space, and to talk about that decision publicly, shows the beginnings of a change in the character of AMBS as an institution, not just a shift in leadership. And the graciousness with which she was received at SCE indicates that AMBS can again garner respect in the academic community without protecting Yoder's legacy.[7] It could be argued that AMBS has simply sought to safeguard its reputation at every turn and that it has a consistent character in seeking to establish and protect that reputation, but the departure from secrecy and confidentiality, especially if it now becomes supported by new policy, suggests a shift[8] in institutional culture.

[6] This course is now an example of ethics courses dissolving into the curriculum.

[7] The role of Yoder's reputation as one of the leading ethicists of the 20th century is important too. Would Yoder remain a significant target if he had published less, or if his work was being forgotten rather expanding in influence?

[8] It is not the wholesale transformation that West called for, but it is a shift in the direction of that transformation.

How deeply can we hold a commitment to truth-telling and transparency, institutionally? Academic institutions must follow—or challenge with consequences—the laws and codes of ethics of their regulating bodies. The rise of FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) in the US exemplifies how communication between stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, students' families) has changed. The contrast between compliance and character is regularly tested as FERPA is upheld or violated by those seeking to create the best learning environment. Files about a sexual abuser, a professor's performance review, a student's grades and plagiarism history, the annual budget, faculty salaries, the list of anonymous donors, the university's legal bills—which of these most requires transparency and truth-telling?

It is of course very difficult to find the right balance in our discourse that reveals the truth transparently without generating unnecessary ill will, eroding trust, or irresponsibly drawing attention to inadequacies. Decisions made over fifty years at AMBS show how hard this can be to do well. What balances to truth-telling and transparency are expected by an abuser's death, the limitations of time and social mores, compliance and legal expectations of privacy in human resources, the chilling effect of releasing formerly confidential records? Truth-telling institutions need constituencies and stakeholders willing to learn the complex nature of institutional life— and to extend trust and resources to sustain our institutions through possibly difficult times—as together we explore what it means to extend truth-telling and transparency across the parts of those institutions formerly guided by secrecy and confidentiality. This interaction between institutional speech and audience engagement parallels the relationship between professor and classroom. Taking the ethics of the institution seriously in the ethics classroom may in fact be a prerequisite for getting institutional ethics right.

Does the teacher of ethics then have a special obligation to seek institutional change? Institutions distinguish between their teaching and their operational practices. Nursing professors do not have a special duty to offer care in the dormitory, and accounting professors are not responsible for the institution's books. But does the strong connection between biography and ethics suggest something different for the ethics teacher? It indeed may, and this connection is more and more important for students, as suggested

by Paulus Widjaja in his essay in this volume. As well, we need a more robust relationship between the theory that all our disciplines bring to bear on institutional life and the operations of our institutions. The ethics teacher's responsibility to challenge and resource the institution should be matched by the institution administrators' responsibility to seek the expertise of those trained in ethics.

The classroom is one of the best environments for testing the strengths and limits of ideas. It was in the classroom where I first heard the more complete version of Yoder's story and told students of the difficulty of reading him in light of his life. However, this remained undertheorized from an institutional perspective and always had more the tone of a shared secret than of a moment of transparency. I hope that in future my efforts to teach ethics will benefit from recognizing the kind of life I must live in order to be a good teacher, the kind of community that I need to support me, and the shape of institutional policy and renewal that will allow me, and my students, to recognize the power and powers we exercise and against which we are aligned.

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