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Ernst Hamm

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Foreword

We are pleased to offer in this issue the 2010 Bechtel Lectures, the 2010 Eby Lecture, an article, and an array of book reviews. This issue is notable also for launching a modest redesign of the journal, the first since the 1990s. Most of the redesign can speak for itself, but we want to note especially that bibliographic information now appears at the beginning of each article. In the current digital context, articles are increasingly separable from the hard-copy bound issue in which they were originally published. As CGR articles are accessed through various databases (such as ATLASerials®), it is important that each article contains complete identifying information. In addition, starting with this volume, issues will again be paginated continuously, in line with common practice and with CGR's own practice in the past. Since volumes 16 to 29 (1998 to 2011) were not paginated continuously, we recommend that bibliographic references to past and future CGR articles include both the volume and the issue number.

Jeremy M. Bergen
Editor

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Managing Editor

2010 BECHTEL LECTURES

Science and Mennonites in the Dutch Enlightenment¹

LECTURE ONE

Mennonites, Natural Knowledge, and the Dutch Golden Age

Ernst Hamm

Dutch Mennonites

The Low Countries have a very prominent place in the history of Anabaptism, thanks in no small part to the leadership of Menno Simons during those remarkable years in the 16th-century Netherlands when his name became attached to the movement he joined. The early decades of this small, far from unified, religious movement in an often hostile environment continue to be a focal point for Mennonites today who seek to understand their past, as they are for historians of Anabaptism. By the late 16th century most Anabaptists had left the southern Netherlands, particularly Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, and their vicinities, and either had joined those Anabaptists already settled in the more tolerant provinces of the northern Netherlands, which by then had revolted against Spanish-Hapsburg rule and become one of the first modern European republics, or had moved to the no less tolerant Vistula Delta in what was then Royal Prussia under the Polish crown. Perhaps the Dutch experience was less compelling after the end of the time of very intense persecutions; in any case, there is little doubt that North American Mennonites have shown greater interest in the history of Mennonites from Switzerland and the Palatinate, and of the so-called Russian Mennonites (i.e., those who settled in the Russian empire starting in the late 18th century, coming from Prussia at the invitation of Catherine the Great).

People take an interest in their own history, and many of the Mennonites who first settled in North America in the 18th century were

¹ The research for these lectures was generously supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and York University. The printed version of these lectures has benefitted from helpful comments and questions from members of the audiences of these lectures, and from Michael Driedger's comments on a draft of both lectures.

of Swiss and South Germanic origin; those who emigrated to Canada in the latter part of the 19th century and through to the mid-20th century tended to come from the Russian Empire, later the Soviet Union, and had little connection with the Netherlands. Russian Mennonites typically saw themselves as German, though Germans of a peculiar Mennonite sort.² Swiss Mennonites who had not lived in Swiss regions for centuries, Russian Mennonites who were Germans (with Dutch connections) and, to complicate matters further, had settled in what is now Ukraine – the historical, cultural, and linguistic web of Mennonites can be confusing. In the Netherlands things were simpler: Mennonites there tended to be Dutch and in important respects were already integrated with the surrounding culture, or at least had linguistic and cultural ties that allowed for the possibility of integration with the surrounding culture, a possibility that had become a reality by the late 17th century.³

Mennonites were important actors in the culture, economy, and intellectual and social life of the Netherlands from the 17th-century “Golden Age” through the 18th-century Enlightenment. If the history of enlightened Dutch Mennonites does not loom large for North American Mennonites, then these lectures will concentrate on an aspect of their world that has received even less of our attention: the natural sciences. There is no simple or single explanation as to why many Dutch Mennonites became involved in the sorts of activities we would call science, but I will argue that their engagement with science was deeply tied to their integration in the social, economic, and cultural life of the Netherlands. “Die Stillen im Lande” scarcely applied

² On Polish toleration see Peter J. Klassen, *Mennonites in Early Modern Poland and Prussia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2009); on Mennonite identity see the work of two previous Bechtel Lecturers: James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood: Europe, Russia, Canada, 1525-1980* (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 2006) and Terry Martin, “The Russian Mennonite Encounter with the Soviet State, 1917-1955,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 20.1 (Winter 2002): 5-59.

³ I do not mean to diminish the distinctions between Mennonites in the southern and northern Netherlands, Flemish and Frisian etc., but such labels soon lost their association with national or local origins. As Piet Visser has remarked, “the question of an ethnic identity of the Dutch Anabaptists became altogether irrelevant.” See his “Introduction,” in *From Martyr to Muppy: A Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation Processes of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands: The Mennonites*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Sjouke Voolstra, and Piet Visser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 1994), vii-xi, at vii.

to Dutch Mennonites in the late 17th and 18th centuries, which suggests their history may hold much of interest and, to use a word historians employ only reluctantly, relevance to North American Mennonites in the early 21st century.⁴

The tolerance that Mennonite Anabaptists found in the Dutch Republic, as it was known after 1588 (or, more formally, the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, the Republic of the United Netherlands, or the Republic of the Seven United Provinces), did come at some price. The Anabaptists' refusal to take oaths of loyalty ruled out military service, hardly a burden for pacifists, and it excluded the possibility of holding public office. The most important and prestigious civic office, that of regent, was unattainable, so there were limits on how high Mennonites could move in Dutch society, though this seems not to have been a major irritant. Posts at universities were also reserved for those who belonged to the "official" Reformed Church (the Republic did not have a state religion *per se*). Notwithstanding the intolerance, official and unofficial, and, excepting the case of Friesland where open acts of hostility against Mennonite churches lasted longer than elsewhere, by the 17th century there was effectively no persecution in Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic was by the then prevailing European standards a very safe place for Mennonites.⁵ I want to emphasize that Mennonites, or *Doopsgezinden*, participated in a great many aspects of the commercial, cultural, and intellectual life of the Republic, and in doing so participated in the broader changes sweeping across early modern Europe.⁶

⁴ "Die Stillen im Lande" (the quiet ones in the land) is a phrase that resonates deeply with Mennonites, who associate it with a life of piety and humility, and a separation from the world, especially from civic and political life. The phrase did not originate with Mennonites, is often more closely associated with the 18th-century German Pietists Gottfried Arnold and Gerhard Tersteegen, has a Biblical source in Psalm 35:20, and continues to serve as a point of departure in current Mennonite theology. See, e.g., Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, "From 'die Stillen im Lande' to 'Getting in the Way': A Theology for Conscientious Objection and Engagement," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 25 (2007): 171-81.

⁵ Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 376 and 645.

⁶ In these lectures "Mennonite" will be used as a term that encompasses (and translates) *Doopsgezind*. For the distinction between a Mennonite confessionalism closer to the heritage of Menno Simons and the *Doopsgezind* reform tradition that has its origins in the Waterlander division in the mid-16th century, see Piet Visser, "Mennonites and Doopsgezinden in the

Dutch Mennonites knew that the favorable circumstances they enjoyed were not always shared by other Anabaptists. As early as the 17th century they sought to help Swiss Anabaptists, who were still enduring persecution, and by 1711 had succeeded in arranging the immigration of several hundred of them to Amsterdam. The two groups shared a faith, but if a contemporary poem written from the perspective of a Swiss immigrant is to be trusted, the gulf between them was large. The poet describes the culture shock experienced by the mountain folk when they met their lowland, urban cousins. The poem opens with a personification of persecuted Swiss simplicity contrasted with Dutch excess:

The prison was her dress, chains her lace,
Her pearls were tears, and her table dainties:
Reproach, persecution, pain and a cross.
In her house she trod no marble floors nor East Indian mats.
She had no iron chest full of gold or extorted money,
She served no fruit in painted porcelain,
Nor poured her wine in cut glass full to the brim,
In luxury and excess...

Dutch generosity is acknowledged, albeit briefly, but not without decrying the quarrels between the so-called Flemish and Waterlander Mennonites, who “preach non-resistance” while arming themselves with the ban. Amsterdam Mennonites are further described as masters in the art of flattery who display pride in their dress, vanity in their love of titles, and lewdness at every opportunity. The poem, with the ungainly title “Swiss Simplicity, Lamenting the Corrupted Manners of Many Dutch Mennonites or Nonresistant Christians,” is a satire published in 1713, its Swiss voice the device of Pieter Langendijk (1683-1756), a Dutch Mennonite who garnered considerable fame in his time as a playwright who wrote in the style of Molière. Piet Visser, the historian of Dutch Mennonite (*Doopsgezind*) culture, book culture, and literature, has identified Langendijk as the first Mennonite to employ poetry

Netherlands, 1535-1700,” in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 299-346. It is as yet unclear if Visser’s otherwise useful distinction helps us better understand Mennonite engagement with natural knowledge in the 17th and 18th centuries.

as a means of exposing Mennonite foibles.⁷ More could be said on this, and much more on the many ways Dutch Mennonites intervened to help their Swiss kin starting as early as the 1640s and reaching a peak between 1709 and 1715,⁸ but it is enough to say that the reality behind the satire is that some portion of Dutch Mennonites were indeed prominent actors in the commercial life of Amsterdam, Haarlem, and other Dutch cities.

A Mennonite Cabinet, and Early Modern and Enlightened Natural Knowledge

Had one of the Swiss immigrants gained admission to the “cabinet” of Levinus Vincent (1658-1727), a wealthy Mennonite cloth merchant, she would have found herself in the richest cabinet of the Netherlands, a display of nature’s marvels and human ingenuity. (The word “cabinet” could refer to either a collection of things, the piece or pieces of furniture that held a collection, or even the building in which a collection was located.) Cabinets of curiosities, rarities, or wonders – collections of natural and artificial objects – were not unusual in 17th- and early 18th-century Amsterdam, where many visitors sought out the Vincent cabinet. In 1705 Vincent moved to Haarlem, where his cabinet counted as one of that city’s most noteworthy sights. The mounted birds, insects, lizards, tortoises, shells, corals, starfish, dried herbs and flowers, animal specimens preserved in jars, minerals, drawings and watercolors of flowers, ethnographic material and much else were initially assembled by Anthonie van Breda, Vincent’s brother-in-law, then greatly expanded and organized by Vincent. The cabinet was a family matter, and Johanna van Breda, Levinus’s wife and Anthonie’s sister, devoted

⁷ The excerpt of “Swiss Simplicity” is from the translation by Irvin and Ava Horst, “Swiss Simplicity Laments Corrupted Manners,” *Mennonite Life*, July 1955, 129-31. Piet Visser, “Aspects of Social Criticism and Cultural Assimilation: The Mennonite Image in Literature and Self-Criticism of Literary Mennonites,” in *From Martyr to Muppy*, 67-82, at 79. For further biographical details see C.H. Ph. Meijer, “Langendijk, Pieter,” in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen and P.J. Blok, 10 vols. (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff’s Uitgevers-Maatschappij, 1911-1937) vol. 2, 764-68; F. H. Klockenbrink, “Langendijk, Pieter (1683-1756),” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* [1957] www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/langendijk_pieter_1683_1756, accessed 28 March 2011.

⁸ For a collection, transcription, and translation of the relevant documents, see Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, *Letters on Toleration: Dutch Aid to Persecuted Swiss and Palatine Mennonites 1615-1699* (Rockport: Picton Press, 2004).

her attention to the elegant display of parts of the collection, especially the shells, one of its highlights. The cabinet was unusual in having regular opening times, charging admission, and selling a catalog – in effect it was a private museum.⁹

Levinus Vincent's *Theatre of Nature's Marvels*, the most prominent of a number of books and catalogs describing his collection, leaves no doubt that the primary purpose of his cabinet was the glory of God through a consideration of His works. Vincent's wish was that his cabinet "awaken a special contentment in the heart" of the "devout and right-minded" and give the "unreasonable and ungodly" cause for "reverence" and "knowledge of the Creator and Sustainer who through his infinite power has made all that is visible and invisible."¹⁰ Even if an idealized depiction of the cabinet (Fig. 1) exaggerates its splendor (and it may not), that it was printed in at least two of his books suggests it was intended to leave some impression of what a visitor might expect. Among its most prominent visitors were the Russian Czar Peter the Great, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Prussian King Frederick I, who pronounced that no one could view the cabinet and fail to believe there is a God.¹¹ Visitors would have noticed that besides being a display of God's handiwork, the cabinet was also a testament to its owner's

⁹ On the Vincent cabinet see H. F. Wijnman, "Vincent, Levinus," in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. 10, 1104-06; E. C. Spary, "Scientific Symmetries," *History of Science* 42 (2004): 1-46, esp. 6-12; Bert van de Roemer, "Neat Nature: The Relation Between Nature and Art in a Dutch Cabinet of Curiosities from the Early Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 42 (2004): 47-84, esp. 58-59; Jaap van der Veen, "Dit klein Vertrek bevat een Weereld vol gewoel: Negentig Amsterdammers en hun kabinetten," in *De wereld binnen handbereik: Nederlandse kunst- en rareitenverzamelingen, 1585-1735*, ed. Ellinoor Bergvelt and Renée Kistemaker (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers and Amsterdam Historisch Museum, 1992), 232-58, 313-34. Drawing on the research of Van der Veen, Bert van de Roemer observes that of the 63 Amsterdam cabinets which held natural objects, 9 were owned by Mennonites; see "Neat Nature," 79-80, n14.

¹⁰ Levinus Vincent, *Wondertooneel der Nature*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: François Halma, 1706; Amsterdam: Gerard Valk, 1715) vol. 1, 23. Translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated. Similar remarks can be found in poems by various authors eulogizing Levinus Vincent and Johanna van Breda in the introductory pages of *Wondertooneel*, vols. 1 and 2.

¹¹ *Wondertooneel*, vol. 2, "Voorrede," unpaginated; Vincent confuses Frederick's titles by referring to him as "Frederick III, King of Prussia"; he was Elector Frederick III of Brandenburg, and after 1701 the (self-proclaimed) King Frederick I in Prussia.



Figure 1. Depiction of cabinet in Levinus Vincent, *Wondertooneel der Nature*, volume 1, 1706. Engraving by Andries van Buysen after a drawing by Romeyn de Hooghe. Université de Strasbourg, Service Commun de la Documentation.

opulence, taste, and status.¹²

The Vincent cabinet is illustrative of much that bears upon Dutch Mennonites and early modern science. Cabinets of natural and artificial objects played an important part in the making of early modern natural knowledge, and were assembled throughout Europe. Often associated with princely and royal courts, in the Netherlands cabinets were usually in private hands of members of the commercial class.¹³ The wealth of objects

¹² See Spary, "Scientific Symmetries," 6-12; Van de Roemer, "Neat Nature," 59 on "fictitious hall" and 76 on collections as battling atheism. On the religious significance of the Vincent cabinet see also Eric Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575-1715*, trans. Peter Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 337-41.

¹³ On Dutch cabinets see Bergvelt and Kistemaker, eds., *De wereld binnen handbereik*. The literature on cabinets and collecting in the history of science is large. In addition to works already cited, see Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon,

in Vincent's cabinet was intertwined with his life as a cloth merchant, which provided him with the means to collect and, thanks to the silk trade, gave him international contacts reaching far beyond Europe. During its Golden Age, which lasted through the much of the 17th century, the Netherlands dominated or even controlled world trade and developed what has been called the first global or modern economy. The Dutch trade with the Indies, what is now Indonesia and southeast Asia more generally – much of it via the East India Company (*Vereenigde Ostindische Compagnie*, or VOC), the first joint stock company, founded in 1602 – brought to Amsterdam a wealth of flora and fauna previously unknown to Europeans. Many objects in the Vincent cabinet could have come to Amsterdam only through the exchanges that were inseparable from Dutch empire and commerce.¹⁴

Such exchanges were by no means incidental to early modern science. Taking the longer view reaching back into the 16th century, historian of medicine and science Harold Cook has persuasively argued that exchanges with the Indies demanded a common or at least widely understood set of descriptions or standards for describing things. Such descriptions would not only serve merchants in the rich trade with the Indies, who were keenly aware of the need to distinguish different grades and kinds of peppers, varieties of orchids, cloves, and mace, plant-based dyes, and what-have-you, but they were also useful for apothecaries, physicians, gardeners, botanists, and natural historians of any sort. Many of the traded items were new to European eyes. Finding ways of describing such things was not an easy

1985); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone, 1998); Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*, trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

¹⁴ On Mennonites in the Dutch economy see Mary Sprunger, "Why the Rich Got Mennonite: Church Membership, Status and Wealth in Golden Age Amsterdam," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 27 (2009): 41-59, and idem., "Waterlanders in the Dutch Golden Age: A Case Study on Mennonite Involvement in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Trade and Industry as one of the Earliest Examples of Socio-Economic Assimilation," in *From Martyr to Muppy*, 133-48, which includes a discussion of Mennonite involvement (and non-involvement) in the VOC. On the Dutch economy see Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997).

task, but as Cook has shown it produced a knowledge heavily dependent on things like taste – literally, as in how things taste, but also in the related sense of connoisseurship, a matter of great importance for both the acquisition of items by Levinus Vincent and their display by Johanna Vincent. This was a matter of knowing the world not in terms of exact mathematical description but in terms of the experience of the five senses.¹⁵

Much about early modern science may seem very foreign to science as it is now practiced. We should expect this to be the case. Science is historical, it changes over time, and the practices of older science are often very different from those of current science. Thus far I have been using the word “science” as it is typically understood in English, as equivalent to “natural sciences.” Such usage is a peculiarity of English among the major European languages; the French *science* and the German *Wissenschaft*, for example, refer to any systematic body of knowledge and as such encompass zoology as well as art history, as does the Dutch *wetenschap*. As for the term “scientist,” which I have avoided, it is of 19th-century vintage, coined by Cambridge philosopher and mineralogist William Whewell, in response to poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s complaint that the term “natural philosopher” was no longer applicable to those who studied nature.¹⁶ What is more, the institutions we have come to associate with the natural sciences – research universities, large-scale laboratories in the service of centralized states or large industries, specialized journals – as well as the disciplinary structure of the sciences only become clearly recognizable as such in the 19th century. Historians of science sometimes refer to the changes in early 19th-century science as the Second Scientific Revolution, as distinct from the 16th- and 17th-century Scientific Revolution. Other historians have gone further and argued that “Modern Science” only began in the early 19th century.¹⁷

¹⁵ Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2007). On the idea of exchange as something transformative see Georg Simmel, “Exchange,” [1907] in *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), 43-69.

¹⁶ Trevor Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Early Nineteenth-Century Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 73.

¹⁷ The classic essay arguing this position is Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams, “De-Centring the ‘Big Picture’: The Origins of Modern Science and the Modern Origins of Science,” [1993] in *The Scientific Revolution: The Essential Readings*, ed. Marcus Hellyer

Early modern Europeans studied the natural world very differently than we now do, and we must take care not to assume that our categories and terms can be applied to earlier periods in a straightforward way. Consider universities, where the Netherlands was unusual in having one that was excellent, Leiden, and others that were at least competent. Much European science in the 17th century was done outside universities and not within the framework of the scientific disciplines as we now know them. In the absence of the modern or 19th-century disciplines, early moderns who studied nature could be natural historians who described things, natural philosophers who studied the causes of things, physicians who studied human health and disease, or astronomers who not infrequently also did astrology, a subject that was often a part of medical training.

For these reasons historians of science often prefer to speak of early modern *natural knowledge*, rather than *science*. This is not only a matter of a different ordering of knowledge, but of a very different social structure of knowledge making. There were early moderns who spent a great deal of time studying a particular subject, such as Copernicus studying ancient mathematical astronomy. But astronomer was not Copernicus's only and perhaps even not his primary identity, as he was also a canon in the Catholic Church, which sponsored his astronomical work. Some of the fortunate few, such as Galileo, Johannes Kepler, or the great Dutch mathematician, astronomer, and horologist Christiaan Huygens (1629-1695), found a patron who supported their studies. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz worked as a diplomat, mining engineer, and librarian, among other things. The distinguished Dutch professor of botany and medicine, Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738), did in fact have a career at a university (Leiden). The boundaries between different kinds of activities were more permeable than they are now, and this too was a matter of some importance for Mennonites such as Vincent, who could make his fortune as a merchant, contribute to early modern natural knowledge, and find some measure of renown through his cabinet.

Finally, the Vincent cabinet is illustrative of much that characterized the manifold linkages between natural knowledge and religion, specifically Christianity, in early modern Europe. The evangelical zeal of some 21st-century atheists who seek to found their positions on the natural sciences,

coupled with any number of claims about inherent conflicts between science and Christianity in particular and religion in general, should not be read back onto the past.¹⁸ To do so would be to reify “science” on the one hand and “religion” on the other into ahistorical, stable, and opposed realms, as though there is something about them that makes them *inherently* in need of reconciliation, rather than seeing the knowledge claims, practices, and institutions of both as varying over time and place.

Mennonites are keenly aware that their religious expression has varied greatly depending on time, place, and social location; the same holds for other faiths. Likewise science has been done very differently in different times and places. The theological purpose with which Levinus Vincent imbued his cabinet was widely shared by other Dutch collectors. One can go further and say that early modern natural knowledge writ large was not so much in conflict with, as deeply motivated by, Christianity and the Bible. The “book of nature,” the natural world, was understood as offering knowledge of God through His works and as fully complementary to learning about God through revelation, the Bible.¹⁹ This is not to deny there were particular conflicts, the most famous being Galileo’s conflict with the Catholic Church, a very real struggle about how scripture should be interpreted and about the status of certain kinds of physical arguments, and at times a conflict between clerics and Galileo’s Florentine patrons, the Medici. It was also a conflict taking place within the Catholic Church, at least insofar as Galileo saw himself as defending the proper interpretation of scripture, an interpretation fully consistent with the Catholicism he professed.²⁰

¹⁸ The conflict or “warfare” thesis of the relation between science and Christianity is of late 19th-century origin. The works that started the genre are John William Draper, *History of the Conflict Between Science and Religion* (New York: D. Appleton, 1874) and Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1896).

¹⁹ An excellent and concise introduction of the religious motivation and purposes of early modern natural knowledge is available in Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996); the standard work is John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991); see also David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *When Science and Christianity Meet* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003). On the Book of Nature see Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature*.

²⁰ For a subtle, insightful, and deeply informed discussion of Galileo see the recent – and definitive – biography by J. L. Heilbron, *Galileo* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 253–365

Presumably Levinus and Johanna Vincent likewise considered themselves faithful Mennonites. They were baptized together in 1693 in Amsterdam's "Lamist" Mennonite Church, *bij het Lam en de Toren*; he was in his thirties and she in her forties. Was there anything about the Vincent cabinet that reflected some sort of peculiarly Anabaptist-Mennonite values or identity? In the absence of direct textual evidence or reliable testimony, we can only infer on the basis of other evidence. There is little biographical material on Levinus, and even less on Johanna Vincent (I have found none on the latter). The features of the cabinet described thus far: its richness, the attention paid to the arrangement and display of specimens and the ways in which this reflected the owner's good taste and status, that its owner was of the merchant class, the links between Dutch commercial empire and the contents of the cabinet, its explicitly theological purpose – all these could apply to the cabinet of, say, a Calvinist collector. However, there is one feature of the cabinet that was peculiar and could even be called enlightened: its democratic admissions policy. Vincent kept a visitor's book that includes some 3,500 names of those who viewed the cabinet from 1705, after it had moved to Haarlem, until 1737, a full decade after his death (Johanna died in 1715). It includes the names of princes, diplomats, and other notables from across Europe, fellow collectors and scholars, typically with medical and botanical interests – all the sorts of visitors we might expect at other cabinets. Unusual, however, were the entries for tradesmen, women, and children; while they may not have liked having to pay to enter, such a policy was far less prohibitive than the more usual requirement of a letter of introduction.²¹ Knowledge of the natural world, to the glory of God and for the benefit of more than the select few, was an enlightened and perhaps peculiarly Mennonite feature of Vincent's cabinet.

Mennonites for Useful Knowledge

Early modern natural knowledge was very much concerned with being useful, especially in the Netherlands. Useful for explaining the world, for

and *passim*.

²¹ Roelof van Gelder, "Liefhebbers en geleerde luiden: Nederlandse kabinetten en hun bezoekers," in *De wereld binnen handbereik*, 259-92, 335-37, esp. 280-81, and Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature*, 339.

religion, for manipulating the world mechanically through wind or water power, for making things such as books and maps, for finding places through navigation and astronomy, for healing through medicine and a knowledge of plants, and for describing, ordering, and classifying things. This was the sort of knowledge that could appeal deeply to those who shared an ethos that focused on changing the world, including Mennonites.

It was precisely this linking of the otherworldly and the temporal that was described by the sociologist Robert Merton, who argued that the great progress of and enthusiasm for experimental science in 17th-century England was a consequence of the disproportionately large number of Protestant dissenters in the Royal Society. Merton claimed that the values of ascetic Protestantism, the urge to self-denial, and a theology that saw the possibility of building a bridge between human, temporal action and the transcendent world were the engine pushing science forward. More specifically, commercial expansion and international navigation served as a spur to the development of astronomy and time keeping. The most general claim of Merton's thesis is that the persistent development, or progress, of science occurs only in societies of a certain order, a thesis having close affinity with the Mertonian claim that science has a particular "ethos."²²

Merton's thesis continues to be a starting point even for the most recent work on science and dissenters in England, and has been discussed, debated, and misunderstood for decades. Merton's work took its cue from the historian of science Dorothy Stimson, who noticed a link between Puritans and early modern natural philosophy in England, and it built on Max Weber's analysis of Protestantism and the rise of capitalism, an argument that found resonances in the work of sociologist-theologian Ernst Troeltsch and of historian R.H. Tawney. There seems to be an almost irresistible urge when confronted with Merton's claim about *Puritanism* in early modern England to extend it (and to assume he did so himself) to a general claim about *Protestantism* and early modern natural knowledge in Europe. But there is no clear indication that

²² Robert K. Merton, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (Bruges: St. Catharine's Press, 1938). According to Merton, the ethos of science was characterized by universalism, communism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism, terms he defined in "The Ethos of Science," [1942] in *On Social Structure and Science*, ed. Piotr Sztompka (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), 267-76, and "Science and the Social Order" [1938] in *ibid.*, 277-85.

Protestants were more inclined to natural knowledge than Catholics. The Catholics who fled the Netherlands made important contributions in the places where they settled: Prague, Vienna, Cologne, Spain, and Italy; as did the Catholics already settled in those places.²³

One thing that does seem clear about the Netherlands is that the general attitude, shared by Calvinists, Mennonites, and Lutherans, and even those Catholics who stayed in the north, was that religious expression which focused on living a blameless life was regarded as perfectly harmonious with commercial pursuits and the making of new natural knowledge.²⁴ We can see this in the ethics and the ethos of Galenus Abrahamszoon de Haan (1622-1706), one of the most important leaders of the Lamist Mennonite Church in late 17th-century Amsterdam. Galenus, a preacher, medical doctor, alchemist, writer, and entrepreneur, was also the leading figure in the Collegiant movement in Amsterdam. Some measure of his attitudes can be found in the two concluding chapters of his posthumously published *Christian Ethics*: the penultimate chapter focuses on Christian diligence and its attendant virtues sobriety and wisdom; the final chapter on laziness and all the harm it causes.²⁵ These were values Galenus proposed as much for the radically anti-confessional Collegiants as he did for Mennonites, and there is no reason he would not have considered them valid for other Christians.

So let me return to useful knowledge. Early modern natural knowledge was not the kind of abstract knowledge René Descartes described himself contemplating sometime around 1619 in the famous “stove-heated room,” but the knowledge he acquired and experienced in the Netherlands, where he moved to in 1628 and where he stayed for over two decades. Not the Descartes of the *Discourse on Method*, but the Descartes who wrote (but

²³ For recent discussions of Merton see Paul Wood, “Stepping Out of Merton’s Shadow,” in *Science and Dissent in England, 1688-1945*, ed. Paul Wood (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 1-18; I. Bernard Cohen, ed., *Puritanism and the Rise of Modern Science: The Merton Thesis* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1990); Steven Shapin, “Understanding the Merton Thesis,” *Isis* 79 (1988): 594-605.

²⁴ See Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 82-132.

²⁵ Galenus Abrahamsz., *Een Christelyke Zede-Konst, of Korte Beschryvinge van de voornaamste Deugden en Gebreken*, part II of: *Eenige nagelaten Schriften van Dr. Galenus Abrahamsz* (Amsterdam: Pieter Arentz en Kornelis vander Sys, 1707), 174-79, see also 154-60. On Collegiantism see Andrew C. Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991).

feared to publish) *The World*. Descartes's Dutch experience, the proximity he had there to what was already a manufactured landscape, a world of complex machines, windmills, water power, and clockwork, and to the artisans who made and maintained such machines, turned his mind away from detached theory and closer to practice. Historian of philosophy Daniel Garber has commented that after Descartes moved to the Netherlands "method" became ever less important to him, at first in practice and eventually in theory as well.²⁶ The experience of Descartes embodies the explanation for the origin of "science" proposed by Edgar Zilsel, the sociologist of science, philosopher, and sometime member of the Vienna Circle, who in his most important work claimed that "Science was born when, with the progress of technology, the experimental method eventually overcame the prejudice against manual labour and was adopted by rationally trained scholars."²⁷

The interactions of workers and thinkers is exemplified by Dirk Rembrandtszoon van Nierop (1610-82), a Mennonite cobbler, mathematical wizard, and Copernican, who had an important connection with Descartes. Dirk, as he was known (Rembrandtszoon is a patronymic, typically abbreviated to Rembrandtsz., Nierop the town from which he came), was entirely self-taught and the author of numerous almanacs, books on navigation, calculation tables, and works in natural philosophy, many of which aimed at practically-minded people such as mariners and fishermen. He was a strong proponent, the "foremost" in North Holland, of Copernicanism or sun-centered astronomy – not a position he was driven to by the demands of navigation, as earth-centered astronomy is entirely adequate and often assumed, for the sake of convenience, in navigation. From 1643 to 1649 Descartes lived in Egmond, a town about 25 kilometers (16 miles) from Dirk in Nieuwe Niedorp.

Eventually Dirk managed to get past Descartes's servants, who assumed he was too lowly a person to consult with their master, and make the acquaintance of the philosopher, who marvelled at Dirk's qualities

²⁶ Daniel Garber, *Descartes Embodied: Reading Cartesian Philosophy Through Cartesian Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 51, and 85-110; see also Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 226-62.

²⁷ Edgar Zilsel, "The Sociological Roots of Science," [1942] in *The Social Origins of Modern Science*, ed. Diederick Raven, Wolfgang Krohn, and R.S. Cohen (Boston: Kluwer, 2000), 7-21 at 7. See also Nicholas Jardine, "Zilsel's Dilemma: Essay Review of E. Zilsel, *The Social Origins of Modern Science*," *Annals of Science* 60 (2003): 85-94.

and on the general level of intellectual life of the villages of North Holland. Descartes's vortex theory is very much a part of Dirk's most important work, his *Dutch Astronomy*, a textbook written in the vernacular (Fig. 2). The vortex theory proposed that the world, the solar system, and the entire universe consisted of very fine particles swirling about centers, and that the phenomena observed here and everywhere could be explained in those terms (see Fig. 3). Dirk even employed Cartesianism to explain the Biblical claim that the sun stood still. Proceeding much like Galileo in his letter to the Grand Duchess Christina (1615), he argued that Joshua 10:12-13 was entirely consistent with heliocentrism, for the sun could stand still only if the entire vortex of the solar system was made to stand still, thereby holding the earth and all the other planets stationary and extending the length of the day. Always prepared to engage in controversy for the sake of promoting the cause of Copernicanism, Dirk was "very much a man of the people," one whose activities show he was committed deeply to engaging everyday people with what might otherwise have been characterized as elite knowledge.²⁸



Figure 2. Frontispiece of Dirk Rembrandtsz. van Nierop, *Nederduytsche Astronomia*, 1658. University of Amsterdam Library. This book was formerly from the Library of the Amsterdam United Mennonite Church.

²⁸ The details on Dirk Rembrandtszoon van Nierop are from Rienk Vermij, *The Calvinist Copernicans: The Reception of the New Astronomy in the Dutch Republic, 1575-1750* (Amsterdam: Edita KNAW, 2002), 193-200 and 293; "foremost," 211; "of the people," 202. Bearing in mind Vermij's observation that Dirk's works are "a bibliographical mess" (193),

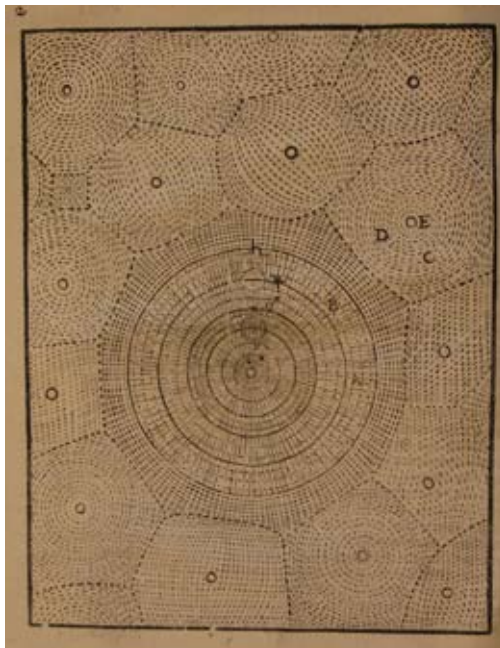


Figure 3. Depiction of Cartesian vortex that makes up the Earth's solar system and other vortices surrounding the solar system in Dirk Rembrandtsz. van Nierop, *Nederduytsche Astronomia*, 1658. University of Amsterdam Library. This book was formerly from the Library of the Amsterdam United Mennonite Church.

Dirk lived in the vicinity of Zaandam, not far northwest of Amsterdam in North Holland. Zaandam had many Mennonites active in shipping, windmill construction, milling, and all the associated industries, a place much dependent on cartographic and navigational knowledge.²⁹ The town of Egmond was not far from it, and Descartes is said to have occasionally attended local Mennonite churches to hear the preaching of peasants and artisans. The Zaandam was a region not unlike some of the incomparable landscapes of Jacob Isaakszoon van Ruysdael (1628-82) with their depictions of human artifacts – windmills, castles, bleaching fields – set against

and overshadowed by God's handiwork, the most dramatic element of which is typically the clouds. The mills were crucial for much of what we associate with learning, especially the

his navigation textbook is *Nieroper Schat-Kamer, War mee dat de Kunst der Stuerluyden, door seeckere Gront-regulen geleert en gebruikt kan worden* (Amsterdam: Abel van der Storck, 1676); his astronomy, *Nederduytsche Astronomia* (Amsterdam: Gerrit van Goedes bergen, 1658), second edition; the edition of his treatment of the earth's motion and sun's rest that I was able to consult is *Byvoeghsel op des Aertryks Beweging, of de Sonne Stilstant* (Amsterdam: Abel van der Storck, 1677), though his first book on the matter appeared in 1661.

²⁹ Nanne van der Zijpp, "Zaandam (Noord-Holland, Netherlands)," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* [1959], www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/Z11.html, accessed 8 June 2011.

making of paper for books. Books that were printed and sold by Mennonite book dealers, and consumed by Mennonites and others of various social strata. The various aspects of the book trade – writing, publishing, printing, buying, selling, and reading – were to become a key element of Enlightenment culture.

Golden Age Concerns

This was the Golden Age, but nothing lasts forever. From the perspective of some Mennonites, Dutch prosperity was a most insidious thing. Thieleman van Braght (1625-64) feared that worldliness was insinuating itself among Mennonites and that they were in deep danger of forgetting their roots. His clarion call of 1660, *The Bloody Theatre of Mennnonite and Defenseless Christians*, or as it has been known since its second edition in 1685, *The Martyrs' Mirror*, was meant to remind them of the suffering that put them in a direct line with early Christianity, the form of Christianity which he believed was the most untainted by corrupting influences. The days of persecution were over, but Van Braght believed Mennonites were surely being tested, and in his Preface he insisted that they were in greater danger in his day than in the time of the martyrs, for Satan was no longer among them as a roaring beast but “as an angel of light.” The corrosive effects of luxury were showing on Mennonites, who were abandoning “heavenly riches” and indulging themselves with country houses, clothes of “foreign materials” and fashions, lavish feasts, and more, all thanks to “that shameful and vast commerce which extends far beyond the sea into other parts of the world.”³⁰

³⁰ Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, trans. Joseph F. Sohm, 11th ed. (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1977), quotations from 8, 9, and 10; the original 1660 edition was entitled *Het Bloedigh Tooneel der Doops-Gesinde, en Wereeloose Christenen...*, the 1685 edition had the subtitle by which it has become known, *Het Bloedig Tooneel: of Martelaers Spiegel der Doops-Gesinde of Weereeloose...* For more detailed discussion of the interactions of the *Martyrs' Mirror* and natural knowledge, see Rina Knoeff, “Moral Lessons of Perfection: A Comparison of Mennonite and Calvinist Motives in the Anatomical Atlases of Bidloo and Albinus,” in *Medicine and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) and Ernst Hamm, “Mennonite Centres of Accumulation: Martyrs and Instruments,” in *Centres and Cycles of Accumulation In and Around the Netherlands During the Early Modern Period*, ed. Lissa Roberts (Berlin: LIT, 2011).

On the surface, these worries were not unlike those expressed more gently by Langendijk in his satirical poem, but Van Braght was no satirist and he had other concerns besides the rich trade with the Indies. The lengthy Introduction of *The Martyrs' Mirror* leaves no doubt that he was taking aim at moderate Mennonites such as Galenus, the preacher of the Church *bij het Lam en de Toren* (which placed far less emphasis on formal confessions of faith than Van Braght would have liked) and a prominent figure in Collegiantism (which had no confessional emphasis at all). Van Braght's rhetorical move was clear: Christians committed to formal confessions of faith stood in a direct line with the faith of the martyrs, who stood in a direct line with the earliest and, in his view, most genuine Christians. There is much that makes *The Martyrs' Mirror* a work of interest to Mennonites today, but it would be unfortunate if historians took Van Braght's categories as given and went looking for a single, untainted version of Mennonitism, or Anabaptism, or Christianity, from which all the others deviated to greater or lesser degrees. Such categorization too easily lends itself to the assumption that those Mennonites who had always lived in cities or towns, engaged in commercial activities, and actively pursued natural knowledge – the Mennonites under discussion in these lectures, for example – were exceptions or anomalies who had strayed from some ideal, often narrowly defined, of Anabaptism.³¹

This is not the place to recount the quarrels between Van Braght, Galenus, and other Mennonites, the quarrels known as the “War of the Lambs.” I wish only to point out that Van Braght's position was no less implicated in the ways of the early modern world than that of Galenus, the Church *bij het Lam en de Toren*, or the Collegiants. The Confession of Dordrecht of 1632, reprinted and endorsed by Van Braght, included one very marked change from the earlier confessions: Article XIII, Of the Office of the Secular Authority, shows a more moderate, accommodating attitude toward the state. There is an explicit call, absent in earlier confessions, to “pray to the Lord for [the secular authorities] and their welfare, and the prosperity of the country, that we may dwell under its protection, earn our livelihood, and

³¹ See the helpful approach of the anthropologist James Urry in his “Wealth and Poverty in the Mennonite Experience: Dilemmas and Challenges,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 27 (2009): 11-40, esp. his concluding remarks.

lead a quiet, peaceable life, with all godliness and honesty.”³² Such an attitude to the powers that be, to the state, resonates with some of the assumptions underlying the phrase “die Stillen im Lande”; it also amounted to a strong endorsement of Mennonite participation in the Dutch economy and, by extension, to the making of natural knowledge in a commercial context. Mennonites of whatever stripe were all “*in* the world,” even if some felt more strongly than others than they need not be “*of* the world.” It is unlikely that Mennonite-Anabaptist cartographers, printers, millwrights, navigators, physicians, apothecaries, connoisseurs, botanists, gardeners, and merchants saw themselves as contributing to an abstraction we call the State, but there is no reason to doubt that they believed new knowledge could and should be employed to change the world for the better. These ideals of improvement – fraught with tension for those who viewed Dutch prosperity as a mixed blessing – were characteristic not just of Mennonites, but of the Dutch Enlightenment and how it embraced natural knowledge.

³² Van Braght, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 42; on the War of the Lambs see Michael Driedger, *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg During the Confessional Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), esp. Chapter 3, “The Confessionalist Strategy of the Flemish Leaders.” See also the comments on the Dordrecht Confession in Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood*, 31-32.

2010 BECHTEL LECTURES

Science and Mennonites in the Dutch Enlightenment

LECTURE TWO

Improving Mennonites in an Age of Revolution

Ernst Hamm

Voltaire's Anabaptist

Anabaptism has a bit part in a memorable book by an author emblematic of the Enlightenment. In *Candide*, first published in 1759, Voltaire savages the stupidity, intolerance, vanity, and hypocrisy that everywhere confronts the novella's eponymous protagonist, who remains untainted by the sham and cruelty of the world. Early on in the novella, Candide, fleeing war, goes to Holland confident he will find charity in a place where everyone is described as "rich and a Christian." Instead, he finds bigotry and contempt – until he meets Jacques, a man "who had never been baptized," an Anabaptist. Jacques is characterized with unusual warmth, a person with a genuine concern for others without regard for their beliefs. He also shows good sense in telling the ever-optimistic Pangloss (he who thinks all that is, is for the best), that people are not born wolves but have "somehow corrupted Nature" to become them. A man the novella describes as good, honest, charitable, and virtuous is out of place in the world Candide inhabits: Jacques saves a man from drowning only to drown himself – Voltaire's allusion, it seems, to those early 16th-century authorities who considered drowning as the appropriate punishment for those who baptized adults.

Admired in life and pitied in death, Jacques is a worthy but not otherworldly figure. He lives by commerce and owns a "Persian-rug" factory (in which he offers Candide a job) – such rugs, the narrator remarks with characteristic wit, are widely manufactured in Holland.¹ Well-known for his deism, critical views of the Bible, and attacks on various kinds of organized

¹ Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism*, trans. Robert M. Adams, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1991), 5-9.

religion, the author of *Candide* is as unlikely a witness for Anabaptism as the work itself, but having already made use of Pieter Langendijk's Mennonite satire in Lecture I, it will not do to exclude *Candide*. There is little reason to doubt that Voltaire admired "the good Anabaptist" he created; he may well have met Mennonites on his travels to Holland, where he had publishers in The Hague and Amsterdam.

Voltaire's favorable depiction of an Anabaptist raises a most interesting question: what did Mennonites have to do with the Enlightenment? Until recently such a question has scarcely been asked, much less addressed, in Anabaptist and Mennonite studies. No one should be surprised that Mennonites, with their history of moving from one place to another in order to preserve their expressions of faith, are not known for their enthusiasm for something with a decidedly this-worldly character. If I can be forgiven a generalization that is not meant to be disparaging, for a long time many Mennonites, not just those in North America, considered the Enlightenment as something to be endured, resisted or, in the last resort, fled. As historian Michael Driedger has argued, Mennonites tended to see themselves as acted upon by the Enlightenment rather than as actors in it. Recent years have witnessed something of a sea change in Mennonite studies – the fictional Jacques, it turns out, was not so unlikely a figure. There were Mennonites active in the Enlightenment, particularly in the Netherlands.² I would further argue that nowhere was Mennonite participation in the Dutch Enlightenment more evident than in the making, teaching, and promoting of natural knowledge, and that this participation is revealing of the tensions associated with assimilation into the Dutch mainstream and of the aspirations and anxieties of enlightened Dutch Mennonites.

² Michael Driedger, "An Article Missing from the Mennonite Encyclopedia: 'The Enlightenment in the Netherlands,'" in *Commoners and Community: Essays in Honour of Werner O. Packull*, ed. C. Arnold Snyder (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2002), 101-20. See also Keith L. Sprunger, "Frans Houttuyn, Amsterdam Bookseller: Preaching, Publishing and the Mennonite Enlightenment," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78 (2004): 165-84; Piet Visser, "Enlightened Dutch Mennonitism: The Case of Cornelius van Engelen," in *Grenzen des Täuferstums/Boundaries of Anabaptism: Neue Forschungen*, ed. Anselm Schubert, Astrid von Schlachta, and Michael Driedger (Göttingen: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 369-91; and Jelle Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand: De invloed van de verlichting op de in het Nederlands uitgegeven preken van 1750 tot 1800* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1997).

Mennonites Get Enlightenment

Ever since Immanuel Kant declared that his was not an enlightened age, “but an age of Enlightenment,” the very idea of Enlightenment has been a much-contested concept, one that can be applied only retrospectively for most of the period in question.³ It has been treated as a unified philosophical movement reliant on a method of thinking derived from Isaac Newton’s rules of philosophizing; a movement of the *philosophes* (Voltaire and company) characterized by a style of thinking that drew upon classical antiquity and was directed against Christianity; a radical, materialist movement that began with Spinoza in the 17th-century Netherlands and eventually spread across Europe in the 18th century.⁴ There is also a long history of finding in the Enlightenment the origins of the political contours of the modern world, of attributing to it everything from 20th-century totalitarianism to liberal democracy and human rights. There has also been much work that treats the Enlightenment not as a unitary phenomenon but as a movement that expressed itself very differently in different places.⁵ In the case of the Netherlands, particularly the province of Holland, we can go further and say there were different versions of Enlightenment in the same place, with a distinctly radical strain that reached well back into the 17th century,

³ Immanuel Kant, “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?” *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, December 1784, 481-94, 491. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. I will, for the purposes of this lecture, take it as more or less unproblematic to apply the word “Enlightenment” to pre-Kantian historical actors.

⁴ See, respectively: Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, [1932] trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951); Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966-69); Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001).

⁵ See Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, [1944] trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002); and, in contrast, Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010). On kinds of Enlightenment see Roy Porter and Mikulás Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981). Recent years have seen much work to show that religion continued to play an important part in the Enlightenment; see Jonathan Sheehan, “Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of Secularization: A Review Essay,” *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1061-80, and Jeffrey R. Collins, “Redeeming the Enlightenment: New Histories of Religious Toleration,” *Journal of Modern History* 81 (2009): 607-36.

and a more predominant moderate Enlightenment that was urban, non-aristocratic, and commercially oriented, and that emphasized tolerance in matters of religion, pragmatism in politics, and utility in most things.⁶ It was in this moderate stream of the Dutch Enlightenment that Mennonites were most active, though there is also evidence of Mennonite involvement in radical Enlightenment.

What did Mennonite Enlightenment look like? In Lecture I we saw one prominent example with the cabinet of Levinus Vincent. Let us now consider another example, also from Amsterdam in the winter of 1717-18, by which time Vincent had moved to Haarlem and some five years after the publication of Langendijk's "Swiss Simplicity." It was in 1717-18 that the German-Polish-Dutch instrument maker and natural philosopher Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit (1686-1736) gave instruction in experimental philosophy (*proefkundige wijsbegeerte* or *proefkundige natuurkunde*) to a group of Mennonites. Fahrenheit, best known for his improvements to the thermometer and for the temperature scale named after him, had recently moved to Holland from Danzig (now Gdansk), the city of his birth. Experimental philosophy, a practice that began in Britain and soon spread to the Netherlands, aimed at demonstrating natural philosophical principles through the ingenious and sometimes spectacular use of mechanical instruments.⁷ Mennonite enthusiasm for experimental philosophy was at the

⁶ The discussion of radical and moderate Enlightenments has very much revolved around Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment* and his *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006). For an earlier treatment of Dutch radical Enlightenment, see Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981) and *idem*, "Radicalism in the Dutch Enlightenment," in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, ed. Margaret C. Jacob and Wijnand W. Mijnhardt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 224-40. On moderate Enlightenment see Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, "The Dutch Enlightenment: Humanism, Nationalism, and Decline," in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 197-223. For a brief overview and an insightful analysis of the contribution of the Dutch urban context to the Enlightenment, radical and otherwise, see *idem*, "Urbanization, Culture and the Dutch Origins of the European Enlightenment," *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 125, 2-3 (2010): 141-77.

⁷ On Fahrenheit see Ernst Cohen and W.A.T. Cohen de Meester, "Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit (geb. Danzig 24. Mai 1686; gest. im Haag 16. Sept. 1736)," *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afdeling Natuurkunde* (Eerste sectie), Deel xvi, no. 2 (1936), and Pieter van der Star, ed., *Fahrenheit's Letters to Leibniz and Boerhaave*

leading edge of an enthusiasm for the subject that cut across the social strata of the 18th-century Netherlands. By 1735 a Dutch observer could write:

Everywhere [in the Dutch Republic] societies are founded, in which people deliberate on physics and perform experiments. Several extraordinary persons take great pains in collecting many and costly apparatuses; they regale their friends less with appetizing spices and liquor, than with a series of physical observations. There is a kind of envy among the common people. Everyone seeks to be a connoisseur of natural philosophy. The merchant leaves his desk to work with the air pump, and does not hesitate to work himself up into a sweat on the composition of some apparatus. The artisan rests from his work to set himself to these things in which he takes far more pleasure. Yes, if one would believe it, even farmers whom one would take to be examples of stupidity, are practicing mathematics and are trying to become natural philosophers.⁸

This was Dutch Enlightenment (leaving aside the uncalled-for attack on farmers), and Mennonites were at its forefront.

The lectures given by Fahrenheit should not be construed as mere after-dinner amusement. They amounted to a serious course on experimental philosophy taught by a highly skilled instrument maker who had just spent a decade (1707-17) travelling to Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, Dresden, and Copenhagen in pursuit of his craft and its implications for natural philosophy. During his travels he worked with a number of outstanding instrument makers and scholars, including astronomer Olof Römer and natural philosopher Christian Wolf. He also corresponded with Leibniz, and earned the respect of the distinguished physician and natural philosopher

(Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), which includes letters to Boerhaave that mention the lectures to Mennonites, dated 18 [no month] 1720, 104, and a reference to “difficult lectures” he started in the winter of 1728-1729, dated 20 March 1729, 120. On experimental philosophy see Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), esp. 101-41.

⁸ Jan Wagenaar, cited in Huib Zuidervaat, “‘A Plague to the Learned World’: Pieter Gabry, F.R.S. (1715-1770) and His Use of Natural Philosophy to Gain Prestige and Social Status,” *History of Science* 45 (2007): 287-326, 290, and 317, n13.

Herman Boerhaave as well as that of experimental philosophers Willem 's Gravesande (1688-1742) and Pieter van Musschenbroek (1692-1761), professor of mathematics, astronomy, and natural philosophy at Utrecht and later Leiden.⁹

A complete set of lecture notes dated 1718 and preserved in the Leiden University Library show that in 1717-18 Fahrenheit taught optics, hydraulics, hydrostatics, and chemistry, all standard subjects in demonstration lectures for experimental philosophy. A further sense of what he taught can be gleaned from a prospectus he prepared in 1721 to advertise his lectures. It lays out a schedule of demonstration lectures that would start in December 1721 and run through to March 1722. They were divided into two separate series, both held on Wednesdays. The first series of 15 lectures was held in the late afternoon and dealt mainly with hydrostatics and the related topics of air and its properties, barometers, and thermometers; the second series of 16 lectures was held on the same day in the early evening and dealt with optics.¹⁰

The textbook Fahrenheit set for these sessions, 's Gravesande's *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy* (published originally in Latin in 1720-21), is a telling choice. The textbook's author had recently returned from a year-long sojourn in London, where he had immersed himself in natural philosophy. He attended sessions of the Royal Society and was elected to its membership, and he came to know its renowned demonstrator (the person who displayed experiments) John Theophilus Desaguliers and his patron Isaac Newton. There is no question that both men left a deep impression on 's Gravesande, who upon returning to the Netherlands took up a professorship in astronomy and mathematics at Leiden University, where he is said to have "formed a beach head on the Continent" for Newton's natural philosophy (as

⁹ See Cohen and Cohen de Meester, "Fahrenheit" and Van der Star, *Fahrenheit's Letters*.

¹⁰ Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit, "Natuurkundige Lessen over de Gezicht-Doorzicht-en Spiegelkunde; als mede over de Waterwieg-en Scheijkunde, in onderscheidene bijeenkomsten door hem afgehandeld," lecture notes taken in 1718 by Jacob Ploos van Amstel, Leiden University Special Collections, BPL 772. The Prospectus is reprinted in Cohen and Cohen de Meester, "Fahrenheit," 13-20. For standard subjects in demonstration lectures see G. I.E. Turner, "Eighteenth-Century Scientific Instruments and Their Makers," in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 4, *Eighteenth-Century Science*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 511-35, at 521.

we shall see, Newton was already a topic of discussion in the Netherlands some time before that).¹¹ In *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy*, 's Gravesande acknowledges that the challenge in learning mathematical demonstrations lies in their abstraction, which is why he prefers the method he learned in England, of using machines and "making the Experiments" that demonstrate natural philosophy "before one's Eyes." This was the very core of experimental philosophy: the use of machines and instruments to exemplify the otherwise obscure principles of Newtonian natural philosophy, and in a way that could appeal to an audience of what Fahrenheit called Mennonite "liefhebbers" (devotees or amateurs).¹²

Fahrenheit gave lectures in experimental philosophy at least until 1729, possibly to the end of his life in 1736. While there is no reason to assume that the lectures were exclusively aimed at Mennonites, it is true that Mennonites in Amsterdam were known to hold weekly lectures on some aspect of natural knowledge at least until 1759, and these lectures were described as having taken on an institutional character.¹³

Besides serving as an example of Mennonites doing experimental philosophy, Fahrenheit's lectures reveal a number of other things about Mennonites, natural knowledge, and the Dutch Enlightenment. First, in terms of the big picture, there was nothing unusual about Mennonites in Dutch cities and towns, especially those places with sea access, having the opportunity to come into regular contact with widely travelled people having connections to other cultures, as did Fahrenheit. The Dutch Republic was a migrant and immigrant society. Between 1650 and 1800 its population is estimated to have been fairly stable at nearly two million. By the best estimates 500,000 immigrants, mostly from neighboring countries or from those along the North Sea, settled in the Republic between 1600 and 1800. To this number we must add, over the same period, another roughly 500,000

¹¹ Albert van Helden, "Willem Jacob 's Gravesande, 1688-1742," in *A History of Science in the Netherlands: Survey, Themes and Reference*, ed. Klaas van Berkel et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 450-53 at 450.

¹² Willem Jacob 's Gravesande, *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy Confirmed by Experiments, or an Introduction to Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy*, trans. J. T. Desaguliers, (London, 1720), xvii-xviii. "Liefhebbers" in Van der Star, *Fahrenheit's Letters*, 104.

¹³ G.W. Kernkamp, "Bengt Ferrner's dagboek van zijne reis door Nederland in 1759," *Bijdragen en mededelingen van het historisch Genootschap* 31 (1910): 314-509, 335-36, 356-57, 386.

transmigrants, those from elsewhere who sojourned in the Republic while on their way to other places, usually the East or West Indies. In addition to this, after 1650 there were about 30,000 seasonal migrants, mostly German, who came to the Republic every year to work in the merchant marine, whaling, linen bleaching, and agriculture.¹⁴ The exchange of ideas, people, and things that was characteristic of the cosmopolitanism of the Golden Age carried on long after Dutch domination of world trade had come to an end; religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity were part and parcel of Dutch urban life, and of the Enlightenment.¹⁵

Fahrenheit's lectures are also a reminder that while there are surely distinctions to be drawn between the Golden Age and the Enlightenment in the Netherlands, they should not be overdrawn. The Vincent cabinet was as much a part of the early Enlightenment as were Fahrenheit's lectures; experimental philosophy and cabinets did for a time flourish alongside one another. Or even as a part of one another, for cabinets of instruments used in experimental philosophy could be a part of larger, more general cabinets such as Vincent's. For example, the cabinet assembled by Anthony Bierens (d. 1738), a Mennonite silk merchant in Amsterdam, had as its highlight a substantial collection of instruments.¹⁶ Vincent's cabinet reflected the kind of knowledge making connected with Dutch commercial empire reaching back into the 16th and 17th centuries. Experimental philosophy likewise built on longer traditions, and some of its roots were in craft and artisanal knowledge. The notes of Fahrenheit's lectures show that in 1718 he still included alchemy in his treatment of chemistry – as was standard practice in the early 18th century – a science deeply connected to crafts and practical arts. Fahrenheit's prospectus for his 1721-22 lectures no longer included any chemistry at all, and hence no alchemy.

That said, experimental philosophy as presented to Mennonites was

¹⁴ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), 72.

¹⁵ On religious diversity and the Dutch Enlightenment see Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and Wijnandt Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2010).

¹⁶ J. A. Bierens de Haan, "Het huis van een 18e eeuwse 'Mercator Sapiens,'" *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 49 (1957): 110-28.

characterized more by novelty than by tradition, built as it was on the very latest natural philosophy of Newton and 's Gravesande. What is more, its strong technological component, evident in how it employed instruments and machines, could appeal to merchants and others looking for ways to enhance commercial activity.¹⁷ And improvement was important, for by the early 18th century the salient feature of the Golden Age – Dutch control of world trade – was no more. The Dutch Republic in the Enlightenment was still a dynamic place, but its strength relative to the much larger nations of England and France had declined.

This decline was a long time coming and rooted in a series of costly wars, as Mennonites well knew. In 1672 the Republic suffered what has become known as its *rampjaar* or “year of disaster,” fighting the French under Louis XIV and his allies Münster and Cologne on land and the English at sea. The usual sources of money having dried up, Mennonites in Friesland offered the powers that be favorable financing – in exchange for full tolerance in Friesland – so that the Republic might survive. Ironically, it was the great victory of 1688, when a Dutch armada of 400 ships (more than twice the size of Spanish armada), including 53 warships and over 21,000 well-trained soldiers, invaded England, occupied London, and installed William III to reign jointly with his wife Mary II, that helped undo the Golden Age. The Dutch victory, described in the Anglo-Saxon world as the Glorious Revolution, left the Republic deeply indebted. Joint rule of England may have boosted Dutch pride, but Britannia alone ruled the 18th-century waves. Amsterdam continued to be the financial center of Europe until 1800, but the Dutch economy had reached a plateau by the early 18th century. That the Dutch economy was still a force to be reckoned with was in no small part due to its technological prowess. It takes only a very small step to see a connection between the enthusiasm that Mennonites showed for experimental philosophy and the larger challenges facing the Dutch economy in the Enlightenment.¹⁸

¹⁷ For the entrepreneurial relations of experimental philosophy see Margaret C. Jacob and Larry Stewart, *Practical Matter: Newton's Science in the Service of Industry and Empire, 1687-1851* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004) and Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science*.

¹⁸ On Mennonites in Friesland and the Dutch armada, see Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 645 and 849-52. On the economy see De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 681-83, who note

Moving from the big picture to the local context, it is clear that the Mennonites who attended Fahrenheit's lectures were undoubtedly of a middling or higher income, and would have included merchants, manufacturers, almost certainly some physicians and very probably some preachers (many Mennonite preachers made a living as physicians, others as merchants). There was little likelihood of attracting a significant number of laborers or even skilled tradesmen. The 22 stuivers (1.1 guilders) fee for each lecture was roughly equivalent to the daily wage of a journeyman mason or carpenter; the day's wage of a master of those trades would have barely covered the slightly higher 27.5 stuivers fee for each of the four lectures requiring more expensive demonstration materials. Even if a prosperous mason, say, could have found the money, attending the full set of hydrostatics lectures would have cut into his earning power, since they began at 3 PM, still part of the shorter winter workday. Fahrenheit did design the course so that anyone could attend as many or as few lectures as they wished, so perhaps tradespeople might have occasionally attended. We have already seen that some people of humble background could afford the two guilders "gratuity" required to view the Vincent cabinet. Attending the complete run of the lectures in hydrostatics and optics would have cost 35.2 guilders, not an exorbitant sum but a salient reminder that experimental philosophy, while not restricted to the wealthy, did require significant resources.¹⁹

The more pressing and most immediately local question is one that the lectures themselves, at least in the record we have of them, do not answer directly: why were Mennonites attending such lectures and why did they maintain a tradition in Amsterdam, if not elsewhere, of weekly lectures in some aspect of natural knowledge through much of the 18th century? Part of the answer must lie in the strong inclination to useful knowledge found

that the Dutch debt was made even worse by the War of Spanish Succession (1702-13); see also 118-19.

¹⁹ On lecture fees see Cohen and Cohen de Meester, "Fahrenheit," 13-20, esp. 20, and a miscalculation of the fees on 13 and another one on the part of Van der Star, *Fahrenheit's Letters*, 9-10. On wages see De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 610-11 and 615. Albrecht von Haller, then a medical student, complained that visitors to the Vincent cabinet had to pay a tip of at least 2 guilders: Albrecht von Haller, *Haller in Holland: Het dagboek van Albrecht van Haller van zijn verblijf in Holland* (1725-1727), ed. G. A. Lindeboom (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979), 90.

among Mennonites as diverse as Dirk Rembrandtsz. van Nierop and Levinus Vincent. In a place with a centuries-long tradition – and that was already true in the early 18th century – of drainage, land reclamation, and water management more generally, we would expect to see an interest in learning the principles underlying “suction and pressure pumps, spouts, siphons, artificial fountains [and] waterworks,” to name some of the areas covered in Fahrenheit’s lectures, especially among merchants and manufacturers keenly aware of the advantages that technology can afford.²⁰ I do not wish to suggest that these lectures, or experimental philosophy in general, amounted to a “how to” manual for technological invention, but they did intertwine a notion of natural philosophical principles with machinery in such a way that made the two more or less inseparable. As we have already seen, the close link between mechanical ways of thinking and doing was already becoming apparent to Descartes when he was living in the Zaandam, more than half a century earlier.

Experimental philosophy, even when largely free of explicit theological content as in the case of Fahrenheit, could, by virtue of explaining the regularities of nature and how they might be harnessed in the service of human industry, carry an implicit theological message about the providential arrangement of the world. It could also do more than that. Consider Adriaan Verwer (c.1655-1717), a merchant who came from a Mennonite family in Rotterdam and settled in Amsterdam in 1680, was baptized nine years later in the Church *bij het Lam en de Toren*, and was “among the first in the Republic to study the work of Newton.” Described as a “pivotal figure in the informal but lively intellectual life of the city,” Verwer wrote works on maritime law, the history of language, Christian theology, and philosophy, and was the center of a circle of figures who introduced Newtonian philosophy to Amsterdam.²¹

One of those citizens of the republic of letters at ease with academics and amateurs, Verwer can serve as an outstanding example of a Mennonite

²⁰ Fahrenheit, “Natuurkundige Lessen,” 99.

²¹ Verwer as “among the first ...” in Michiel Wielema, “Adriaan Verwer,” *Dictionary of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Philosophers*, 2 vols., ed. Wiep van Bunge et al. (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2003) II, 1026-28, 1026f; “pivotal figure ...” in Rienk Vermij, “The Formation of the Newtonian Philosophy: The Case of the Amsterdam Mathematical Amateurs,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 36 (2003): 183-200, 187.

Enlightener. Liberal in terms of religion, his circle included members of the Reformed Church and Mennonites; most notable among the former was the natural philosopher Bernard Nieuwentijt; outstanding among the latter was Lambert ten Kate (1674-1731). Baptized in 1706 in the same church as Verwer, ten Kate was of independent means (he came from a prosperous merchant family) and devoted himself to scholarship, above all his *Introduction to the Exalted Parts of the Dutch Language* (1723), a massive and important work in historical linguistics. In 1716 Ten Kate published a lengthy introduction to, and a Dutch translation of, a book by a Scottish physician and Newtonian, George Cheyne's *Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion*, giving it a title that delineated the theological importance of natural philosophy: *The Creator and His Government, Known in His Creatures, Following the Light of Reason and Mathematics: For Building Up Respectful Religion, and the Destruction of all Basis of Atheism . . .* Historian of science Rienk Vermij has shown that Verwer and his group saw their Newtonian philosophy as a bulwark against Spinozistic atheism. Given that Collegiants (among whom were many Mennonites) had many associations with Spinoza, Verwer and Ten Kate may have considered it a matter of some urgency to make Newtonian natural philosophy more widely known, especially to those of their own faith.²² Fahrenheit's arrival in Amsterdam in 1717 may have offered the opportunity to counter Spinozism with the visibly demonstrable principles of experimental philosophy. Whether or not it was Mennonites who sought out Fahrenheit or he them, the notion that natural knowledge – “the light of reason and mathematics” – could settle

²² J. Noordegraaf, “Lambert ten Kate,” *Dictionary of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Philosophers*, II, 553-56. On Verwer and Spinozism see Vermij, “The Formation of the Newtonian Philosophy,” 189-200. On Mennonite connections to Spinoza see: Leszek Kolakowski, “Dutch Seventeenth-Century Anticonfessional Ideas and Rational Religion: The Mennonite, Collegiant and Spinozan Connections,” [1963] trans. and intro. James Satterwhite, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 64 (1990): 259-97 and 385-416; Piet Visser, “‘Blasphemous and Pernicious’: The Role of Printers and Booksellers in the Spread of Dissident Religious and Philosophical Ideas in the Netherlands in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century,” *Quaerendo* 26 (1996): 303-26; Andrew Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991); Michael Driedger, “Response to Graeme Hunter: Spinoza and the Boundary Zones of Religious Interaction,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 25. 3 (Fall 2007): 21-28, part of an issue entitled *Spinoza as Religious Philosopher: Between Radical Protestantism and Jewishness*.

a theological matter shows how deeply some Mennonites were engaged in Enlightenment thinking, and helps us better understand why Mennonites attended lectures in experimental philosophy and related subjects through much of the 18th century.²³

Finally, we should not underestimate the social utility of natural knowledge for those Mennonites looking to move into the mainstream of Dutch bourgeois life. As we have already observed, the Vincent cabinet was as much a display of the glory of God's handiwork as of the taste and wealth of Levinus and Johanna Vincent. Conversely, it could only have helped the fortunes of Fahrenheit and his lectures to have wealthy and perhaps well-known Mennonites among his audience. The relationship between the lecturer and pupils was symbiotic; both benefited. In the 1739 edition of his textbook on natural philosophy, Pieter van Musschenbroek wrote that the subject was "blossoming" as never before in the United Netherlands. It had a following among amateurs, scholars, prominent merchants, and "people of all ranks and dignities," but he dedicated his book not to the numberless and nameless many but to the wealthy Mennonite silk merchant and manufacturer David van Mollem (1670-1746).²⁴

Van Mollem can be taken as a representative of enlightened, entrepreneurial Mennonitism that had become part of Dutch elite culture. His renown stemmed not from any contribution to experimental philosophy but from the spectacular gardens of his estate Zijdebalen on the Vecht River, a stretch of which was known as "Mennonite heaven" due to the Mennonite

²³ It may have been Fahrenheit who sought out his Mennonite audience. Raised in a prosperous merchant family in Danzig, he would have known about Mennonites since childhood and would likely have had many interactions with them after moving to Amsterdam, where he was sent at age 14 to learn the details of running a business by working in a trading firm. Cohen and Cohen de Meester suggest that the firm for which he worked was located on the Singel, the canal that was home to several prominent Mennonite congregations at that time, most notably the *bij het Lam en de Toren* and Zonist churches. Fahrenheit had little enthusiasm for business but much for natural knowledge, and his association with Mennonites of similar interests may have predated his 1707 departure from Amsterdam, when he began his decade-long apprenticeship in experimental philosophy and instrument making. Cohen and Cohen de Meester, "Fahrenheit," 4-6.

²⁴ Petrus van Musschenbroek, *Beginfels der Natuurkunde, beschreven ten dienste der Landgenoten*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1739), preface, translation, and citation from Zuidervaart, "Plague to the Learned World," 289 and 317, n11.

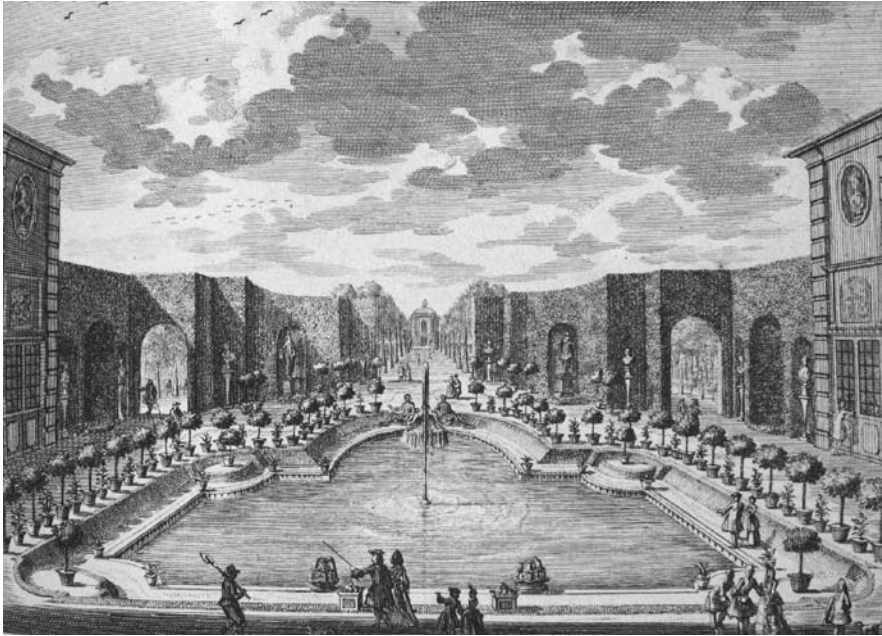


Figure 4. Zijdebalen, the estate of David van Mollem, looking out from the residence onto the garden. The wing of the residence visible on the far left housed the silk factory; the wing visible on the far right was the orangery. Engraving by Daniel Stoopendaal in *Zegepraalende Vecht*. (Amsterdam: Nicholaus Visscher, 1719). University of Amsterdam Library.

owned estates lining its banks. The elaborate waterworks of Zijdebalen (silk bales) drove the silk mill that generated wealth for Van Mollem, powered the many fountains of his estate, and provided the water for the innumerable plants of his large garden and orangery (Fig. 4). Van Mollem spent many years and likely a significant portion of his inherited income building his gardens, which were meant to inspire contemplation of the Creator and, not incidentally, reflect on the industriousness and virtue of Van Mollem himself.²⁵ The Mennonite enthusiasm for gardening has clear connections

²⁵ On Van Mollem see Erik de Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Gardens and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, trans. Ann Langenakens (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 98-121. On technology and Dutch landscape see Lissa Roberts, "An Arcadian Apparatus: The Introduction of the Steam Engine into the Dutch Landscape," *Technology and Culture* 45 (2004): 251-76.

with agriculture, but also with commerce, for Mennonites were deeply involved in the famed tulip speculation of the 1630s, as is evidenced by the dense web of family connections that tied together Mennonite tulip traders in Haarlem, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam.²⁶

Gardening was not only linked to agriculture and trade, it had close connections with natural knowledge, as in the case of Agneta Block (1629-1704), the owner of an estate on the Vecht and the designer of its gardens. Block kept up a learned botanical correspondence with the Bolognese professor Lelio Trionfetti, and exchanged specimens with Trionfetti, the Parisian professor Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, and Paulus Hermann, director of the Leiden botanical gardens. For her, as with Van Mollem later, gardening was a virtuous endeavor that drew attention to the providential arrangement of nature – in so doing it also offered a moral justification for estate ownership.²⁷ The ways in which knowledge could be useful for Enlightenment Mennonites extended very far beyond a simple economic utility and into the social and moral realms.

Books, a Seminary, and Societies

It will not do to leave the impression that Enlightenment and natural knowledge were the preserve of rich Mennonites. Many Mennonites were active as authors, publishers, printers, and booksellers, central activities in the Dutch Enlightenment, and natural knowledge was a significant part of their stock-in-trade. Enlightenment ideals were also evident in the Lamist Mennonite Seminary in Amsterdam, an 18th-century institution that included a very significant component of natural philosophy in its curriculum. While it never hurts to come from a moneyed family if one wants to make a living as author and publisher, or to enter a seminary and take up a life as a Mennonite minister, these were not careers noted for attracting the wealthy or those who wanted to become so. While Enlightenment natural knowledge could be allied with high or climbing social status, it was also linked to the

²⁶ On Mennonite family connections in the tulip trade see Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007), 149-53, esp. fig. 35. On wealth see Mary S. Sprunger, "Why the Rich Got Mennonite: Church Membership, Status and Wealth in the Dutch Golden Age," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 27 (2009): 41-60.

²⁷ For Block see De Jong, *Nature and Art*, 108-10.

improving zeal that many Mennonites shared with other Dutch citizens, a zeal that was in no small part fired by a concern with enhancing the fortunes of the Republic. How natural knowledge was enrolled to improve Dutch society is especially evident in the numerous private societies that Mennonites founded, fostered, and were active members of. But before considering these societies, I will first turn to books and then to the seminary.

For a glimpse into the role of Dutch Mennonites in the 18th-century book world, a good starting point is *The Name List of Mennonite Authors and Books from 1539 to 1745*, a bibliography compiled by the redoubtable Marten Schagen (1700-70), translator, author, editor, publisher, bookseller, Mennonite preacher, and enthusiastic promoter of the ideals of moderate Enlightenment, including natural knowledge. The index of *The Name List* tallies 303 authors, by my count at least 19 of whom wrote books dealing directly with some aspect of natural knowledge. Some authors, such as Dirk Rembrandtsz. van Nierop, wrote many books on scientific topics, others but one or two. The number of authors included in the bibliography who wrote books addressing some aspect of natural knowledge may be considerably higher, for in many instances I was guided by little more than a book's title. There are omissions, of course, for there is no such thing as a complete bibliography, but it is surprising to find that the name Levinus Vincent has no entry in this book. The brief Preface to the bibliography shows Schagen at once anxious to dispel the notion still prevalent in some quarters that Mennonites were "a lowly and unlettered heap" and very proud that Mennonites had made their mark in the learned world, earning "no small place in the propagation of Godly and human knowledge."²⁸ Schagen was very conscious of where Mennonites might stand in Dutch society, for he belonged to the not insignificant number of them who had to make their mark in the world, not with the benefit of formal higher education or inherited wealth but by vast quantities of hard work, firm convictions, and whatever natural abilities they were blessed with. He was eager to show that

²⁸ Quotation from the Preface of Marten Schagen, *Naamlyst der Doopsgezinde schryveren en schriften, beginnende met den jaare 1539, en eindigende met den jaare 1745* (Amsterdam: J. Hartig, 1745). The University of Amsterdam Library owns a copy with many handwritten additions (call number OK 65-1201), presumably made by Schagen himself. Vincent's name is absent in both the printed text and the additions.

Mennonite learning was deep, broad, and richly worthy of respect.

Schagen made up for his brief formal education, having had to drop out of Latin school when his father died, by choosing a tried and true path for those who loved learning but did not have the means to pursue it at university: he apprenticed in a bookstore. Having found a way to surround himself with books, he then took every opportunity to learn theology, languages, and history, among other subjects. Baptized in the “Old Frisian” Mennonite church in 1718, he moved in that same year to Amsterdam, where he continued in the book business, married, opened his own bookstore (called “In Erasmus”), and in 1727 became a preacher in the *Arke Noach* Church. He authored no less than 18 theological or historical books or tracts, and there were many more that he edited, published, and translated – from English, French, German, Latin, Greek, and Italian. His single most notable translation was the collected works of Flavius Josephus, based on a new Greek and Latin edition published in Leiden, a project he undertook with two other Mennonites, Adriaan Loosjes (1689-1767) and Jan Lijnsz Rogge (d. 1759). But his most important contribution to Enlightened Dutch publishing was the quarterly journal he edited and published: *Theological, Historical, Philosophical, Natural Philosophical, Medical, Geographical, Poetic and Juristic Diversions, or Superior Selections on all Various Subjects: The Latest and the Best of Foreign Writers, Brought to Light for the Common Good*.

Schagen “edited” this journal from 1732 to 1740, which meant he made the lion’s share of the selections and translations, including nearly 90 percent of those dealing with natural philosophy, medicine, and geography. The Old Frisians are often described as more theologically conservative than Lamist Mennonites, but Schagen’s journal, a sort of high-powered *Reader’s Digest*, show him to be fully representative of Enlightened Dutch Mennonitism. Indeed, he was a leader in introducing many foreign authors to a wider Dutch reading public that may have been considerable, given the importance of books in Amsterdam, a city peppered with bookstores. At far less than half the population of Paris, Amsterdam had almost as many bookstores. The overall Dutch literacy rate had been higher than in neighboring countries since at least the 16th century, and the literacy rate in the many cities of the Dutch Republic, a nation more urbanized even than England of the Industrial Revolution, tended to be slightly higher than in rural areas. To be sure, Schagen did not give up editing his journal because it lacked

a readership but because he became a full-time minister in 1738, first in Alkmaar and in 1741 in Utrecht.²⁹

The Frontispiece of the first number of the *Theological . . . Diversions* offers a rich representation of the ways reason could serve for a better understanding of the gospel (Fig. 5). At the center of the engraving, made by the noted Dutch engraver Jan Caspar Philips, a woman sits on a throne with a book entitled “Gospel” (*Evangelie*) open on her lap. To her right stands a



Figure 5. Frontispiece of *Godgeleerde, Historische, Philosophische, Natuur-Genees-en Aerdryks-kundige, Poëtische en Regtgeleerde Vermakelykheden . . .*, edited and published by Marten Schagen, 1732, Number 1, engraving by Jan Caspar Philips. University of Amsterdam Library.

²⁹ On Schagen's life, education, business and intellectual activities, including many details of his editorial work on *Godgeleerde, historische, philosophische, natuur-genees-en aerdrykskundige, poëtische en regtsgeleerde vermakelykheden*..., see Piet Visser, “Redelyke regtzinnigheid: Prolegomena over de betekenis van Marten Schagen (1700-1770) voor de Nederlandse Verlichting,” in *Balanceren op de smalle weg*, ed. Lies Brussee-van der Zee et al. (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2002), 216-84. On bookstores see Jeremy Popkin, “Print Culture in the Netherlands on the Eve of the Revolution,” in *Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 273-91 and 275. On urbanization, De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 57-71. As for literacy, in 1780 Amsterdam as many as 85 percent of bridegrooms and 60 percent of brides could sign their own names, a rate slightly higher than in rural areas: De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 314, 170, and Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 686-90. Cornelis van Engelen, Mennonite editor of the journal *De Denker*, gave a very optimistic estimate of his readership in 1774 as “several thousand”: cited in Sprunger, “Frans Houttuyn,” 177.

man in classical garb who hands her the book of philosophy (*Philosophia*), and close behind him is a personification of medical knowledge readily identifiable by his staff of Asclepius; to her left is an angelic scribe and two men, one of whom carries the book of nature (*Natura*) while peering through a handheld microscope. Before her stands a woman with her hand on a globe, and a protractor, a pair of calipers, compass, and other measuring instruments at her feet; before her on her right is a young woman and two putti with musical instruments and scores. Natural knowledge went hand in hand with the technical and musical arts, philosophy, and healing, all in service of the higher aims of Biblical religion.

The representation of the relationship between faith and reason portrayed in the frontispiece of *Theological ... Diversions* is expressed more prosaically by Schagen in his translation of Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui's *Principles of Natural Law*, a fundamental work of 18th-century political thought that went through many editions. Schagen prefaces his translation by announcing to his "countrymen" that a "knowledge of the foundations of natural law is of outstanding service to students of theology.... Our faith is reasonable." Knowledge of the natural order was thus in close proximity to understanding the political and legal order, for in both cases Schagen saw reason as a guide for enriching an understanding of revealed religion.³⁰

Theological ... Diversions was hardly the only journal published by a Mennonite publisher. Probably the most important of these for informing its Dutch readers about the changing state of natural knowledge was *Selected Treatises from the Latest Works of European Scientific Societies and From Other Learned Men*, published in ten volumes from 1757 to 1765 by Frans Houttuyn (c. 1719-65), also a member of *Arke Noach* Church, where he served as a lay preacher from 1750 until his death. *Selected Treatises* was published in an annual volume of 600+ pages of essays drawn from English, French, Russian, German, and Italian societies. Subject matter ran across the full range of natural knowledge: astronomical, medical, botanical, mathematical, and technological essays were all there, and the list of authors included Albrecht Haller, Erasmus Darwin, John Smeaton, and Benjamin Franklin, among many more. These were not essays in "popular science," a concept

³⁰ J.-J. Burlamaqui, *Beginsels van het natuurylk regt*, trans. Marten Schagen (Haarlem: Jan Bosch, 1750), Preface: 3 verso and 4.

that can only be applied with distortion to anything before the 19th century, but informed essays being made available in Dutch for the first time.³¹

Frans Houttuyn's bookshop and publishing business advertised his attitude to natural knowledge through its name, "The Isaac Newton," and his publisher's device (emblem) showed a portrait of Newton over a sketch of a lumberyard resembling a stockade (a play on the name Houttuyn) and the motto *Aedificando floret*, which translates as "Let edification flourish" (Fig. 6). Frans was not the

only Houttuyn preoccupied with natural knowledge. His brother Martinus Houttuyn (1720-98) was a physician who made a significant contribution to Dutch learning with his *Natural History* (1761-85), a 37-volume work describing animals, plants, minerals, and birds according to the Linnean system of classification (and published by the Houttuyn firm).³² Mennonite enthusiasm for Newton had long outlived Fahrenheit's lectures and had become a fixture of enlightened Mennonite culture and of the moderate Dutch Enlightenment.



Figure 6. Publisher's device of Martin Houttuyn, as it appears on the title page of Simeon Frederik Rues, *Tegenwoordige Staet der Doopsgezinden of Mennoniten in de Vereenigde Nederlanden; waeragter komt een berigt van de Rynsburgers or Collegianten*, trans. Marten Schagen, Amsterdam: F. Houttuyn, 1745. Milton Good Library, Conrad Grebel University College.

³¹ On the definition of popular science see Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007), 9-13.

³² On Frans Houttuyn see Sprunger, "Frans Houttuyn" and Anna E. C. Simoni, "Newton in the Timbryard: The Device of Frans Houttuyn, Amsterdam," *British Library Journal* 1 (1975): 84-89. Martinus Houttuyn, *Natuurlyke historie of uitvoerige beschryving van dieren, planten en mineralien, volgens het samenstel van den heer Linnaeus*, 37 vols. (Amsterdam: F. Houttuyn, 1761-85). For a discussion of Martinus Houttuyn's work see M. Boeseman and W. de Ligny, *Martinus Houttuyn (1720-1798) and His Contributions to the Natural Sciences, with Emphasis on Zoology* (Leiden: Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, 2004).

At this point questions might arise about whether natural knowledge had become important for large numbers of Dutch Mennonites or was restricted to a relatively small group of people. After all, we do not know how many Mennonites were reading the publications of Schagen and Houttuyn who, being publishers, were quite happy to sell their wares to whomever wished to buy them. In all likelihood most of their customers came from the Reformed Church. However, to allay any doubts about how deeply a concern with natural knowledge had permeated the world of Dutch Mennonites, we need only consider the Mennonite Seminary in Amsterdam. The Seminary itself was a response to important changes taking place among Dutch Mennonites, who must have been acutely aware of the particular decline in numbers they were experiencing. The high point of their population was about 75,000 in the mid-17th century; by 1809 it had fallen to 30,000, a decrease from 5 percent to less than 2 percent of the Dutch population.³³ Faced with diminishing numbers and a gradual move away from lay to paid ministers, and lacking an outside source from which to draw preachers and teachers (the Catholics, Jews, and Lutherans of the Republic could, when necessary, look to other European countries for their leaders), Mennonites needed an institution to teach their ministers. Officially founded in 1735, though working in some unofficial form for years before that, the Mennonite Seminary served Mennonite churches throughout the Republic. It was fully funded by the Church *bij het Lam en de Toren*.

What does any of this have to do with natural knowledge? Not much, until 1761 when the Seminary, having decided it needed to teach something else besides theology, created a second professorship (part-time), this one in experimental philosophy (*proefkundige wijsbegeerte*)! Bearing in mind

³³ Zijlstra estimates a population of 60-65,000 Mennonites at the end of the 17th century: Samme Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden: Geschiedenis van de dopersen in de Nederlanden 1531-1675* (Hilversum: Leeuwarden, 2000), 431-32. Jonathan Israel gives 75,000 for 1640s as the high point, or 5 percent of the Republic; and just under 31,000 for 1809, or between 1.4 and 1.8 percent of the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Israel, 398 and 1029. See also S. Groenvald, "Doopsgezinden in tal en last: Nieuwe historische methoden en de getalsvermindering der Doopsgezinden, ca. 1700-ca. 1850," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, new series 1 (1975): 81-110. On the geographical distribution of Mennonites see Hans Knippenberg, *De religieuze kaart van Nederland: omvang en geografische spreiding van de godsdienstige gezindten vanaf de Reformatie tot heden* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1992), 51-54.

that the sole purpose of the institution was to train youths for preaching and ministering in Mennonite churches, a purpose reaffirmed on a number of occasions in Seminary documents from the 18th until well into the 19th century, this decision was unusual. Highly unusual, insofar as it was accompanied by a decision to build up a very substantial physical cabinet – a collection of scientific instruments – thanks to the support of 18 members of the Church *bij het Lam en de Toren*, who collectively donated 8,100 guilders for the purchase of the instruments. This was experimental philosophy in the tradition of Fahrenheit, supported by a collection of air pumps, magnets, electrical generators, Leiden jars, telescopes, microscopes, and optical instruments, as well as lathes and various other mechanical devices, that was large enough to be at home in a Dutch university. For a time the professor in this subject was Jan van Swinden, an outstanding figure in Dutch metrology and natural philosophy, a Newtonian but not a Mennonite.³⁴

All this begs the obvious question: why did the Mennonite Seminary see the need for a collection? There is little evidence that physico-theology or natural theology per se had a prominent place in the Seminary. A study of the examinations written by seminarians in the 18th century shows only a handful of students took up physico-theological questions.³⁵ Catalogs of the Seminary

³⁴ On the history of the seminary see J. Brüsewitz, “‘Tot de ankweek van leeraren.’ De predikantsopleidingen van de Doopsgezinden, ca. 1680-1811,” *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, new series 11 (1985): 11-43, and S. Müller, “Geschiedenis van het Onderwijs in de Theologie bij de Nederlandse Doopsgezinden,” *Jaarboekje voor de Doopsgezinde Gemeenten in de Nederlanden, over de Jaren 1840-1850*, 67-197 (Amsterdam: M. Schooneveld en zoon, 1850). On the instrument collection, Huib Zuidervaat, “Meest alle van best mahoniehout vervaardigd’: Het natuurfilosofisch instrumentenkabinet van de doopsgezinde kweekschool te Amsterdam,” 1761-1828,” *Gewina* 29 (2006): 81-112, reprinted in *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, new series 34 (2008): 63-103, and Ernst Hamm, “Mennonite Centres of Accumulation: Martyrs and Instruments,” in *Centres and Cycles of Accumulation in and Around the Netherlands during the Early Modern Period*, ed. Lissa Roberts (Berlin: LIT, 2011). The best record of the instruments is in their auction catalog, *Catalogus van eene uitmuntende verzameling optische, phijsische, mathematische en andere Instrumenten ... Al het welk verkocht zal worden op Dingsdag den 23sten December 1828 ...* (no pl., no publ., 1828), available in Amsterdam Stadsarchief, Archief van de Verenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente van Amsterdam en haar voorgangers (ADA), inventaris 1376. On Swinden see Marijn van Hoorn, “Swinden, Jan Hendrik van (1746-1823),” *Dictionary of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Philosophers*, II, 968-72.

³⁵ H. J. De Wit, *Aantekeningen van het College tot de Aankweek van Leraren van de Doopsgezinde Gemeente bij het Lam en de Toren in Amsterdam, 1733-1811* (typescript, Eindhoven, 1997),

library show no entries for classics in 18th-century physico-theology such as J. F. Martinet's *Katechismus der Natuur*, but they abound with entries for the works of Newton, Leibniz, Buffon, 's Gravesande, Malebranche, Huyghens, Descartes, Hobbes, Mandeville, and Spinoza.³⁶ The Seminary's engagement with experimental philosophy is best understood along the same general lines as Mennonite participation in Fahrenheit's lectures on the subject. Teaching through instruments was an effective way of learning general principles about the workings of the world. Such principles were as useful for understanding the regularities God had inscribed in it – the theological element was there and did not need to be expressed directly – as they were for understanding how the world might be changed for the better. The same commitment to a moderate Enlightenment that drove Mennonite publisher-preachers such as Schagen and Houuttuyn to spread the word on the latest contributions to natural knowledge was behind the Seminary's embrace of experimental philosophy. That these ideas did eventually filter their way through to Mennonite churches is evidenced by Mennonite catechisms of the second half of the 18th century, which show that Enlightenment ideals found expression in theological commitments to virtue, civic duty, reasonableness, and a knowledge of God through nature.³⁷

As the century progressed, the need for changes in the Dutch economy became ever more pressing. When Fahrenheit started his lectures and the Vincents displayed their cabinet, the Netherlands “was still the world's technological showcase.” This was especially so in the town of Zaandam and the district surrounding the Zaan River of North Holland, a region where Mennonites made up 20 percent of the population and controlled most of the industry, which ranged from lumber, flour and paint mills to shipbuilding, whale oil, sail-making and rope-making – a region Jonathan Israel describes as “Europe's first real industrial zone.” In the 1720s, '30s and

202-03.

³⁶ I have consulted the handwritten catalogs of the library available in the ADA and *Catalogus van de Bibliotheek der Vereenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Frederik Muller, 1854).

³⁷ For catechisms see Alfred R. van Wijk, *Plicht tot leren & plichten leren: een onderzoek naar de ontwikkeling van de doperse geloofsopveiding in de Lage Landen (ca. 1540-1811), aan de hand van de in druk verschenen geloofspedagogische geschriften*, 2 vols. Doctoral dissertation, Free University of Amsterdam (Kampen: Kok, 2007), I, 410-14.

'40s Amsterdam's prosperity dipped; that of the Zaan region took a nosedive. These declines, together with the devastating bouts of cattle virus that hit the Netherlands in 1713-19, 1744-65 (primarily in Friesland) and 1768-86, must have been keenly felt by Mennonites.³⁸ The 1740s saw the rise of Dutch radicalism, culminating in the Orangist Revolution of 1747-51. Mennonites were among the radicals, including a Mennonite clergyman who led a meeting of 300 deputies of cities and county districts in Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland, demanding freer trade and the abolition of tax farming, among other things. Part of the radical demand was the application of the findings of "scientific academies" to the problems of industry.³⁹

Within the context of the Dutch Enlightenment, be it radical or moderate, economic improvement came as an integral part of the ultimate goal of moral improvement. Nowhere was this more evident than in the many independent societies founded by Dutch Mennonites. Some of these societies were concerned primarily with natural knowledge, such Haarlem's *Natuurkundig College* (1737-88), which was dominated by Mennonite merchants and was aimed specifically at natural and experimental philosophy.⁴⁰ Others, such The Patriotic Association for Shipping and Trade (*Vaderlandsche Maatschappij van Reederij en Koophandel*), founded in 1777 in the West Frisian town of Hoorn by Mennonite leader Cornelis Ris (1717-90), focused on improving Dutch trade. The most well-known society and the one leaving the largest impact was the Society for Public Welfare (*Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen*) founded in 1784 by the Utrecht Mennonite preacher Jan Nieuwenhuyzen and his physician son Martinus. "*Het Nut*," as it is sometimes called, was an 18th-century version of MCC that sought to improve literacy and educate the lower

³⁸ For "technological showcase" and "industrial zone" see Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 998 and 999, and the discussion on 998-1000; on Mennonites in Zaandam see Nanne van der Zijpp, "Zaandam (Noord-Holland, Netherlands)," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, [1959], <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/Z11.html>, accessed 8 June 2011; on cattle virus see Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1004.

³⁹ Jan A.F. de Jongste, "The Restoration of the Orangist Regime in 1747: The Modernity of a 'Glorious Revolution,'" in *Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 32-59, esp. 42-43 and 54-55.

⁴⁰ B. C. Sliggers shows that 12 of the 19 members of the college were Mennonites: "Honderd jaar natuurkundige amateurs te Haarlem," in *Een elektriserend geleerde, Martinus van Marum, 1750-1837*, ed. A. Wiechmann and L. C. Palm (Haarlem: Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, 1987), 67-102, esp. 97.

classes in virtue and Christian citizenship through founding public libraries and publishing school textbooks appropriate for that purpose. By the early 19th century the work of this society resulted in the revamping of the Dutch educational system.⁴¹

Mennonites in 18th-century Dutch societies could be the subject of a major study, but all I can do here is conclude by making a gesture to an outstanding institution founded by a Mennonite, Teyler's Museum in Haarlem, the oldest museum in the Netherlands, and the two societies associated with its founding, Teyler's First Society, concerned with theology, and Teyler's Second Society, aimed at the promotion of the sciences and arts, including fine arts. The museum and the societies were created through the bequest of Pieter Teyler van der Hulst (1702-78), an enormously wealthy Mennonite financier who died childless and left his entire estate to a foundation that funded the museum, the two societies, and a home for widows. The museum, which still exists though no longer as an independent institution, survived for over two centuries on Teyler's bequest. Its scientific activities were not insignificant. From 1910 to 1928 its scientific director was Hendrik Lorentz, one of the outstanding physicists of his generation. Teyler's Museum collected widely, and its collection of late 18th and early to mid-19th century scientific instruments is outstanding. Among its holdings are many instruments very similar to those once in the Mennonite Seminary, and a visitor to the museum today will see the famous "Oval Room" and its splendid instruments much as they were in about 1800 (see Fig. 7).

Concluding Enlightenment

In many ways Teyler's Museum reflected some of the fundamental changes that were taking place at the close of the 18th century in the Netherlands, in natural knowledge, and among Mennonites. The most consequential of these changes were the struggles in the 1780s and 1790s between the "Patriots" and William V, Prince of Orange, the last Stadtholder of the Dutch

⁴¹ K. Hovens Greve, "Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, [1957], <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/M28.html>, accessed 8 June 2011. On Societies in general see Wijnand W. Mijndhardt, "The Dutch Enlightenment: Humanism, Nationalism, and Decline," in *Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 197-223, esp. 216-23.

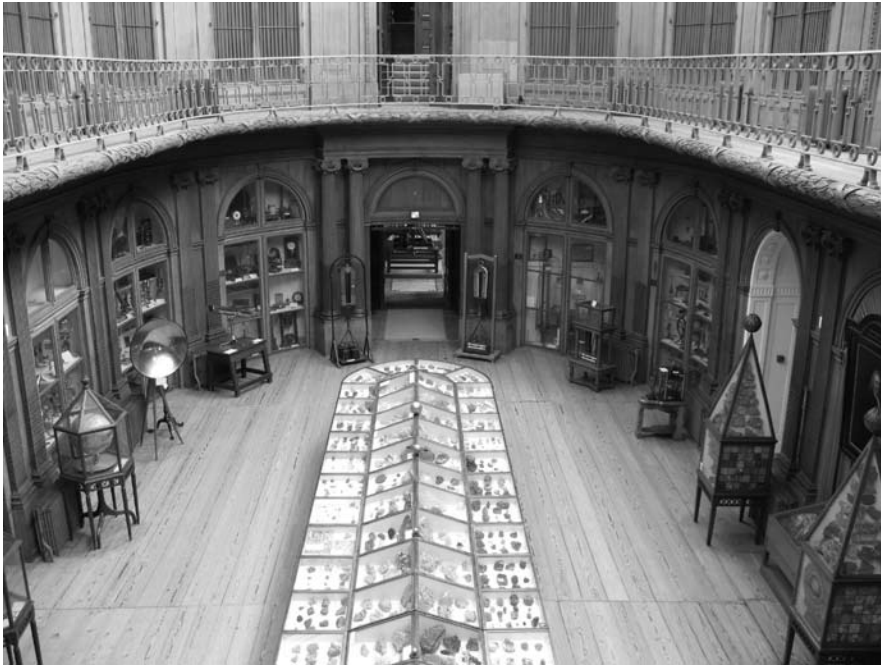


Figure 7. Oval room of Teyler's Museum, Haarlem. Photograph by the author, 2006.

Republic. Although William V, with the help of Prussian troops, did reassert his power temporarily over Patriot forces, his authority did not run deep with the Dutch populace. The extent to which French revolutionaries were inspired by the zeal of the Dutch Patriots may be a matter of debate, but there is little doubt that the French revolutionary army met with limited resistance and considerable Patriot enthusiasm when it invaded the Dutch Republic in 1795 and established in its place, with a new constitution, the Batavian Republic. The Napoleonic period brought further change, with Napoleon creating the Kingdom of Holland (ruled by his brother Louis Bonaparte) and making it part of the French empire.

Science was changing too, and in 1779 Martinus van Marum became director of Teyler's Second Society. Van Marum, who was not Mennonite, was very much a modern figure, part of that generation which was turning science into a profession and giving it the shape it would have in the 19th

century. Amateurs and hangers-on had no business in this new scientific world. The collections grew dramatically under Van Marum's direction and the institution made no bones about favoring experts with specialized knowledge. At the start of the 18th century the Vincent cabinet was a kind of private museum open to anyone who could pay admission; by century's end Teyler's institution was more recognizably a modern museum, especially in the arrangement and display of its collections, though its admissions policy was based on the traditional (and undemocratic) letter of reference. Van Marum and the Directors of Teyler's Foundation were building an elitist institution, one that was doing its part in the remaking of science in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.⁴²

As for Dutch Mennonites, many among them were growing dissatisfied with the character of their accommodation within the Republic. To have tolerance extended in exchange, literally, for favorable loans in support of the Dutch war effort, as had been the case in Friesland, was no longer acceptable – it was more like an insult. This dissatisfaction with the state of things was pithily expressed, albeit in another context, by Goethe: "Tolerance should really only be a transitional way of thinking; it must lead to acceptance. To tolerate is to offend."⁴³ The Mennonite promotion of natural knowledge throughout the Dutch Enlightenment was in various ways linked with the economic and moral business of the Republic, just as it was part of a larger picture that saw reason and faith as going hand in hand. The political corollary of such a view was that there was no reasoned foundation for an "official" church on the one hand and a group of tolerated religions on the other. As we have seen, Mennonites were important actors in Dutch life through much of the 17th and all of the 18th century, and the restrictions on their participation in civic life were minimal. But equality is not something

⁴² For his Museum and Societies see the chapters in *'Teyler', 1778-1978: Studies en bijdragen over Teylers Stichting naar aanleiding van het tweede eeuwfeest* (Haarlem and Antwerp: Schuyt & Co., 1978), in particular Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, "Viertig Jaar Cultuurbevordering: Teylers Stichting, 1778-1815," in *ibid.*, 58-111. On Teyler himself see the essays in Bert Sliggers et al., *De Idealen van Pieter Teyler: Een erfenis uit de Verlichting* (Haarlem: J.H. Gottmer and Teylers Museum, 2006), which includes a reprint of Teyler's will.

⁴³ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, ed. Erich Trunz, 14 vols. (Munich: DTV, 1988), XII, 285. This maxim likely dates from the 1810s or 1820s.

that will do in half measure, or in moderation, and many Mennonites wanted the full measure and so became active in the Patriot movement. Full equality did come by 1796, but for some Mennonites it was at the price of abandoning their pacifist principles. Dutch Mennonites had managed through much of the 18th century to embrace Enlightenment ideals, to avail themselves of the benefits of natural knowledge in the service of their faith and of their country. In the late days of the Enlightenment it became clear that the Netherlands was experiencing very dramatic changes that would last well into the 19th century. But to tell the story of how Mennonites participated in, and adapted to, the remaking of the 19th-century Dutch science, politics, and culture is a task for another day.

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THE BECHTEL LECTURES

The Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies were established at Conrad Grebel University College in 2000, through the generosity of Lester Bechtel, a devoted churchman with an active interest in Mennonite history. His dream was to make the academic world of research and study accessible to a broader constituency, and to build bridges of understanding between the academy and the church. The lecture series provides a forum through which the core meaning and values of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and heritage can be communicated to a diverse audience, and be kept relevant and connected to today's rapidly changing world. Held annually and open to the public, the Bechtel Lectures provide an opportunity for representatives of various disciplines and professions to explore topics reflecting the breadth and depth of Mennonite history, identity, faith and culture. Lecturers have included Terry Martin, Stanley Hauerwas, Rudy Wiebe, Nancy Heisey, Fernando Enns, James Urry, Sandra Birdsell, Alfred Neufeld, and Ched Myers and Elaine Enns.

2010 BENJAMIN EBY LECTURE

Peace Starts Now: Religious Contributions to Sustainable Peacemaking

Nathan C. Funk

The Parable of the Quarry

In Italian folklore, there is a tale about an individual who visited a marble quarry to learn how the stone workers understood their daily toils. Each laborer responded quite differently to a simple question: “What are you doing?” The first laborer answered in a direct, matter-of-fact way. “I’m earning a living. I rise early to come here every day. It’s a difficult job, but the sweat of my brow provides for my family’s needs and keeps a roof over my head.” Upon hearing this, the visitor was impressed. Here is a person, she thought, who is meeting a basic life challenge in an uncomplaining, mature, responsible manner. She proceeded on to another part of the quarry, and posed her question to a second laborer: “What are you doing?” This worker responded differently, with a spark of passion. “I’m dressing stones!” In contrast to the first laborer, he was totally absorbed in his work, present in the moment. With each blow of his pick, he aspired to greater proficiency with his equipment. He possessed obvious enthusiasm for the technology of quarry work, and was clearly dedicated to the task at hand and to refining his skills. Once again the visitor was impressed, but her curiosity persisted. She walked on to a third laborer in another dusty corner of the quarry, and offered her question in the same manner as before: “What are you doing?” The third laborer paused for a moment, put down his pick, and wiped the sweat from his brow with a handkerchief. Meeting his visitor’s inquisitive gaze with a pleasant look and unexpected inspiration, he stated, “I’m building cathedrals.”¹

¹ A version of this story can be found in Roger Fisher et al., *Beyond Machiavelli: Tools for Coping with Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994), 67.

* * *

This simple story conveys meaning at multiple levels, not all of which relate to spirituality or religious architecture. In relation to tonight's lecture, however, I find that it provides a compelling allegory – a parable, if you will – for religious contributions to peacemaking, while also conveying a valuable message about the potential for complementarity between religious approaches to peace and other approaches. Just as the third laborer's inspiration and sense of purpose have the potential to sustain efforts over time and lighten the load of co-workers, so too does religion have a remarkable capacity to motivate and enhance peacemaking action. At its best, religious vision can support and indeed improve peacemaking in a number of significant ways – for example, by enlarging our understanding of what peace means; by deepening peacebuilding processes, placing techniques and methods in a more profound existential context; and by broadening the processes of peace, providing expanded possibilities for individual and grassroots participation.

For various reasons, however, religion's potential contributions to peace are not always realized. Religious leadership in conflict situations is not invariably positive and socially engaged. Religious terms and symbols can be misused or understood in ways that preclude community among people who tread different paths. In many cases religion becomes an adversarial identity marker, a prop for the status quo, or even an instrument for pursuing extreme worldly ends. Sadly, religion can be either a barrier or a bridge, either tinder or water. And in our modern world, the religious impulse is not always granted sufficient scope to play a positive role in social life.

If we return to the parable, it seems that the three laborers in the peace quarry are not always in harmony. At times they may even be at odds with one another, preoccupied with fundamental disagreements about how to run their enterprise, what methods should be used, who should defer to whom, and so forth. Who is best qualified to be the foreman – the man with the vision, the man with a zest for technical skills, or the man with his feet on the ground and a penchant for personal finance? Is the cathedral builder an escapist daydreamer who should keep his ideas to himself, or a necessary and inspiring presence? And does it really matter who has the better technique or the superior vision, if demand for the quarry's product

is unstable and what the place really needs is a good advertising campaign orchestrated by the ever-practical first laborer to ensure everyone still has a job at the end of the year?

Such questions may seem to deviate from our parable's original intent, yet they help to bring key issues surrounding religious peacebuilding into focus, in ways that can help us situate this field of research, reflection, and practice in relation to the needs of the contemporary world. In this lecture, I propose that the academic study of religious peacebuilding is undergoing a renaissance, and that there is growing intellectual as well as practical interest in what used to be considered a niche activity of peace churches. Though not universally appreciated, the "cathedral builder's" craft is in demand, and those who are committed to such work now face exciting opportunities to share their passion with a larger audience and to tell new stories about it – stories which neither denigrate non-religious approaches to peace nor sell religious approaches short. Stories which heartily affirm the value of the third laborer's contributions without begrudging the particular virtues of the first two laborers. Stories that celebrate opportunities for fruitful secular-religious and indeed inter-religious collaboration, and that frame such collaborations as sources of new theoretical and applied insights into religion's role in peace work.

Religion and What?

As obvious as it may appear to adherents of peace church traditions, the notion that religion has something to contribute to peace – that there is a place for "cathedral builders" at the quarry – is far from uncontested in today's cultural and intellectual milieu. There is, indeed, a pervasive skepticism about religion's peace potential, and it is not difficult to grasp the reasons for it.

During the first session of my "Religion and Peacebuilding" class, I like to explore overarching student attitudes toward the subject. As you might expect, there is a wide range of perceptions and beliefs within the classroom, and different attitudes toward religion and its capacity to contribute to peace. Some students enter my class hoping to hear what they consider to be the truth about religion and peace: religion is the only reliable source of peace, therefore peace in the world must pre-eminently be sought through

religion. Other students are more attuned to the shadow side of religion and religious politics: self-righteous absolutism, social exclusivity, hostile mythologies about the “other,” apocalyptic inflation of mundane issues, and amplified conflict dynamics. They see many stumbling blocks to religious peacebuilding. Divergent views in the classroom mirror the larger society, revealing different positions and worldviews. I encourage students to reflect on their personal relationship to religion, and even to think how they might translate this relationship into the terms of a Facebook “relationship status” update: “in a relationship,” “married,” “divorced,” “seeking,” “it’s complicated,” and so on. This exercise is partially humorous in intent but it can provide genuine insight into the experiences behind different views in the classroom – and perhaps even encourage self-awareness and humility.

Intellectual views of religion’s role in conflict and peace are highly fragmented. Advocates of religion’s positive contributions to society and to peacemaking must often contend with the strong skepticism of those inclined to see religion more as a problem than as a resource for peace – a view that is quite conventional in the social sciences. Among public intellectuals, an influential genre of opinion – I call it “peace without religion” – identifies religion as a primary cause of contemporary conflict and violence, and enjoys a high rate of success on the bestseller lists. This perspective has various formulations, but the general argument is that public religion constitutes a threat to peace. Religion is seen as divisive and predisposed to intolerance or even violence unless safely confined to the private sphere. This perspective points to historical abuses of religion as a tool of power – a means of exclusion and oppression – and calls for the inculcation of secular ethical principles that do not discriminate between “us” and “them” and that enjoin individuals to care for this world rather than to strive for access to another one.

These views have not come out of nowhere. They owe much to the European Renaissance and Enlightenment as well as to the French Revolution and Marxist thought, and have profoundly shaped views on peacemaking since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Peace of Westphalia ended the sectarian and geopolitical turmoil of the Thirty Years War in Northern Europe by reframing religion as a matter of internal state politics. In addition, it began the shift toward a more explicitly secular model for international politics,

within which unvarnished national interest was increasingly regarded as a safer, more appropriate guide to state policy than religious conviction, with its presumed conduciveness to ideological crusading. This legacy has left a profound mark on thinking in the field of international relations, and parallels comparable trends in society and popular culture – trends that eventually produced these memorable lyrics from John Lennon:

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace²*

These lyrics from “Imagine” convey an idea that would have been (and still is) quite counterintuitive in most of the world’s traditional cultures but is not out of place in a modern context: less religion means more peace.

As easy as it might be to dismiss pop-culture formulations of “peace without religion” as simplistic or fanciful, the messenger has things to say that deserve a fair hearing. By challenging abuses of religion and exclusive reliance on religious epistemology, spokespersons for “peace without religion” have mounted critiques of many genuinely problematic practices through which religious institutions, interpretations, and identities become entangled in conflict. While we would be unwise to interpret the works of poets and songwriters literally, we can benefit from words such as Lennon’s if we hear in them a call for reflection on religion’s historical entanglements with (and co-optation by) political power, ideological extremism, and various forms of in-group favoritism.

Much has been written on the subject of religion and violence in recent years, and some of the key findings can be summarized in a paradoxical insight: religion, understood holistically as an embodied social experience as well as a guiding doctrinal framework, is both a source of peace and a source of conflict. Religious institutions, for example, are

² “John Lennon – Imagine Lyrics,” Lyrics007, accessed at <http://www.lyrics007.com/John%20Lennon%20Lyrics/Imagine%20Lyrics.html> on June 13, 2011. “Imagine” is the title track of John Lennon’s *Imagine* album (Apple, EMI: 1971).

undeniably necessary for preserving religious tradition and community over time, but the actual performance of these institutions often mirrors that of non-religious institutions, with comparable imperfections. Religious doctrines point to the transcendent and define the particularity of distinctive religious communities, but interpretations and ideological formulations of these doctrines can significantly raise the stakes of conflict, giving added importance to seemingly more mundane rivalries and disputes, while providing overzealous or unscrupulous political leaders with an enriched rhetorical basis for dehumanizing adversaries and justifying imperial ventures. Religious identities make communal experience of the sacred possible, yet in many instances of protracted conflict religion serves as just one more boundary marker between communities struggling for material gain, position, and security. While protagonists of “peace without religion” are often guilty of over-generalizations and rhetorical posturing, they have unmasked real tensions and contradictions in religious behavior.

The “peace without religion” perspective nonetheless has a number of profound limitations. First, many of its advocates tend to scapegoat religion as the primary cause of social and political conflicts³ – a posture resulting in simplistic, often erroneous understandings of complex conflict dynamics and unwarranted stereotyping of religious teachings, institutions, and individuals. Second, in scapegoating religion, advocates frequently overlook ways in which secular identities and ideologies can also take on fanatical and destructive forms. Just as fundamentalist⁴ interpretations of religion may lead to divisiveness and conflict, any ideological system – including secularism – can be used as a basis for asserting hegemony over others or mobilizing a population against resented “outsiders.” Indeed, while a remarkable range of autocratic governments in virtually every world region have sought to

³ A range of “new atheist” literature perhaps best exemplifies this attitude. See, for example, Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004) and Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007).

⁴ R. Scott Appleby explains fundamentalism as “a religious response to the marginalization of religion and an accompanying pattern of religious activism with certain specifiable characteristics.” He differentiates this mode of assertive religion from ethnoreligious extremism and religious nationalism. See Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 101, 107-108.

use religion as a justifying ideology, some of the most destructive regimes in history – such as Stalin’s USSR and Nazi Germany – were at their cores profoundly irreligious, even anti-religious.

This tendency to overlook the potential violence of secular belief systems has problematic consequences in the present world historical context. As William Cavanaugh argues, much scholarly treatment of religious violence overlooks the potential for crusading in the name of a secular or modernist belief system, and underscores the otherness of non-Western peoples whose cultures have a strong religious component.⁵ The result is a tendency to view their violence as inherently irrational, while allowing Western thinkers to frame violence emanating from their own countries’ policies as a civilizing force, as a force for peace. For Cavanaugh, this harmful double standard contributes to a sanitized view of contemporary Western political systems (which attempt to regulate the role of religion in state affairs while operating on the basis of alternative ideologies) and their interactions with the larger world.

Beyond this blind spot for secular ideology, one of the greatest flaws of the “peace without religion” perspective is that by focusing exclusively on the conflict potential of religion, it does an injustice to religion’s peace potential and to the many ways religion can and does serve as a powerful resource for peacemaking. Religions have both strengths and weaknesses with respect to peace and conflict, but these strengths and weaknesses are not unique and are shared by many other communal, institutional, and ideological forms of association. One-sided antagonism toward religion throws the baby out with the bathwater, while substituting new absolutes for old ones. Further, despite the tendency among many past scholars to predict a global decline in religiosity, religion is decidedly here to stay. What is needed, then, is a more nuanced approach to studying religion and its relationship to peace and conflict, one that better accounts for the complexities of an era characterized not just by globalization, democratization, and human rights discourse, but by religious revivals and the emergence of multiple modernities (Western and otherwise).

⁵ William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009).

Bringing Religion Back In, For Peace

Although in many respects support for “peace without religion” has increased in recent years, new ways of thinking about religion’s role in conflict and peace have also been gaining strength, constituting a soft-spoken yet promising counterpoint to hyperbolic secularism and religious extremism alike. These new ways are at the core of the emerging literature on religious peacebuilding that is taking shape at the interface of peace and conflict studies, religious studies, and several other disciplines. This approach, which I call “peace with religion,” acknowledges religion’s potential contributions to conflict while also affirming and encouraging religion’s contributions to peace. It accounts for the paradox that religion both unites and divides: religion evokes universally resonant ideals such as peace even as it underscores the importance of particularly and irreducibly distinctive meanings, truth claims, and symbols. Religion can provide virtually unrivalled motivation for peacemaking activity, but it can also be interpreted in ways highly problematic for those aspiring toward a more cohesive world community.

One need not be religious to recognize that religions have great potential for peace. At their best, the world’s religions have much to say on the subject and much to offer. Multiple religious traditions have provided exemplars of peacebuilding who transcend sectarian boundaries and inspire respect for their moral courage and uncommon humanity. These committed religious peacebuilders have often helped to foster public spirituality – spreading inspiration far beyond the circle of coreligionists – and have often been at the forefront of efforts to address pressing social concerns. In a broader sense, religious visions and vocabularies have contributed greatly to the theory and practice of reconciliation, and socially engaged religious intellectuals are often among the most perceptive challengers of new orthodoxies and subtle idolatries, from the often ambiguous “national interest” of power politics to the “invisible hand” of economics. At an institutional level, religious decisions to devote resources and leadership capacity to peace and justice advocacy are highly consequential and have the potential to catalyze broad-based mobilizations as well as sustained grassroots efforts. In these and many other ways, religion can and does provide a vital source of inspiration and support for peace. To get the best out of religion, however, we need new ways of thinking about what “peace

with religion” might look like.

“Peace with religion” is premised on open acknowledgment of religion’s ambivalent relationship to conflict and peace, tempered by a strong affirmation of the spiritual and practical resources that religion brings to peacemaking. This approach therefore embraces positive contributions of religion to peace – and indeed welcomes religious efforts to define precisely what peace means – while appreciating the need for balance between secular claims to inclusive public space and the religious need to express particularity. Thus, scholars and practitioners taking this approach remain mindful of religion’s conflict potential while proactively eliciting and fostering its peace potential. To this end, they investigate how beliefs, values, rituals, and practices from a wide range of traditions have contributed to peacebuilding, and seek to clarify the constructive roles that religious individuals and institutions can play in transforming conflict.

The New Story of Religious Peacebuilding

The emergence of the “peace with religion” approach has been facilitated by post-Cold War developments, including the growing interest among peacebuilding practitioners, peace researchers, and some international relations specialists in creative responses to “identity conflict” – that is, responses to “new” dynamics of intergroup confrontation that politicize and polarize ethnic and religio-cultural forms of belonging.⁶ Increasingly, scholars and even some policymakers affirm the need for religious leadership and activism in order to break down “us vs. them” polarization and nurture rapprochement.⁷ At times this has boiled down to a hope that “good” religion

⁶ Cynthia Sampson, “Religion and Peacebuilding,” in *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, ed. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 273-316; Gerrie ter Haar, “Religion: Source of Conflict or Resource for Peace?,” in *Bridge or Barrier: Religion, Violence and Visions for Peace*, ed. Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttill (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 3-34; Scott Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Robert A. Seiple and Dennis R. Hoover, eds., *Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

⁷ Chadwick Alger, “Religion as a Peace Tool,” *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1.4 (June 2002): 94-109; Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Mixed Blessings: US Government Engagement with Religion in Conflict-Prone Settings* (Washington: 2007).

might drive out the bad, grant “in-group” legitimacy to peace processes, or help effect a divorce between religious faith and pernicious forces of ethno-nationalist extremism such as those witnessed in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Nonetheless, the interest has sometimes gone deeper, to include genuine receptivity to religious conceptions of peace and their challenges to secular orthodoxies, including those promising perpetual peace or an “end of history” if only we will trust the magic of the marketplace and the triumphant march of technological progress.⁸

The study of religious peacebuilding is now a serious research program pursued by scholars in many countries, and marks a refreshing shift in focus from the more common preoccupation with religiously sanctioned violence. Though especially well supported at Peace Church schools and religiously identified institutions – Eastern Mennonite University, Notre Dame, the Irish School of Ecumenics, and the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium come to mind – scholars conducting research on religious peacemaking are also found at secular institutions. While attentive to unique dynamics within particular religious traditions, these scholars also explore comparative and generic questions in their research, sometimes with support or encouragement from organizations like the United States Institute of Peace, the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, or the International Peace Research Association.

The growing interest in religious peacebuilding has prompted many scholars to begin looking at the history of peacemaking through new lenses, devoting attention to the religious and spiritual motivations of peacemakers and “discovering” the intensive peacework of organizations like the Mennonite Central Committee, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the Community of Sant’Egidio. The potential of the religious impulse for peace has been duly noted by the likes of Douglas Johnston, an American security studies expert who abandoned a high-profile, high-status, and high-access executive position at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on K Street in Washington in exchange for a much leaner, more spiritually rewarding job at the head of a small NGO called the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy.⁹

⁸ Richard Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁹ For more information on the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, see www.icrd.org.

Writers in this field have identified a number of strengths and resources available to religious peacebuilders. Johnston, for example, notes that religious individuals and institutions can make a difference for peace because (1) they are deeply rooted in communities and at the center of day-to-day life; (2) they are viewed as value-driven, not politicized, actors; (3) they have “unique leverage for reconciling [conflicted] parties, including a capacity to rehumanize relationships” and break cycles of violence; and (4) they have a “capacity to mobilize community, national, and international support for a peace process.”¹⁰ Other authors point to similar sources of influence and effectiveness, while noting that religious peacebuilders can “fulfill tasks for which traditional diplomacy is not equipped.”¹¹

Research on religious peacebuilding is offering fresh support for the premise that religion can be a force for peace, revealing that in many cases protagonists of change find it hard to imagine peace without a spiritual dimension. Religion played an important role in the Moral Re-Armament movement, which helped bridge the divide between French and German societies after World War II.¹² It provided a bond between black and white South Africans, and gave life to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.¹³ It has provided invaluable motivation and much-needed endurance to peacebuilders in Liberia, Uganda, the Congo, Sudan, Nicaragua, India, and the Philippines, to name but a few examples.¹⁴ A study by the Oxford Research Group observes that “again and again, the factor named by participants as

icrd.org/.

¹⁰ Douglas Johnston and Brian Cox, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 14.

¹¹ Luc Reyhler, “Religion and Conflict: Introduction: Towards a Religion of World Politics,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 2.1 (1997): 35-36.

¹² Edward Luttwak, “Franco-German Reconciliation,” in *Religion, the Missing Dimension in Statecraft*, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 37-57.

¹³ Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009); Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

¹⁴ For examples pertaining to these and other cases, see David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007); Douglas Johnston, ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy*; Johnston and Sampson, eds., *Religion, the Missing Dimension in Statecraft*.

being central to their effectiveness is a sense of direction inspired by some connection with a source of strength greater than their own ego.”¹⁵

Engaging religious actors and communities undoubtedly serves to widen opportunities for engagement in peacebuilding work, to link otherwise disconnected parties, and to recognize different kinds of endeavors and roles. Not only do religious communities have both grassroots support and (in some settings) political clout, but religious institutions are often well positioned to mediate between adversaries in divided communities as well as between grassroots communities and elite political processes.¹⁶ Scholars have identified a remarkably diverse range of roles that religious actors and institutions play in conflict situations, ranging from mediators, educators, and reconcilers to direct participants in political negotiations or monitors of sensitive human rights situations.¹⁷ Unlike many external third parties and international NGOs, faith-based actors tend to have a well-rooted presence in conflict settings and are often advantageously situated to seek international support for local work.

As a relatively new sub-field within Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) and its partner disciplines, the study of religion and peacebuilding holds great promise. It presents rich opportunities not just to enhance understanding of how peace can be made, but to support more balanced and constructive public discourse and to contribute to ongoing applied efforts on the part of organizations and individuals.¹⁸ There are many areas for creatively multi-

¹⁵ Dylan Matthews, *War Prevention Works: 50 Stories of People Resolving Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford Research Group, 2001), 111.

¹⁶ See John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 75-86.

¹⁷ Cynthia Sampson, “Religion and Peacebuilding.”

¹⁸ To take advantage of these opportunities, Conrad Grebel University College recently launched the Centre for the Study of Religion and Peace (CSRP), which aspires to advance scholarly knowledge and public awareness of religious contributions to peacemaking. Through research, dialogue, and broader educational activities, the Centre seeks to enhance understanding of the peace potential inherent in religious commitment, and actively explores ways this potential can be tapped to constructively and creatively manage differences in a complex, diverse, and interdependent world community. The CSRP aims to serve as a resource centre for religious peacemaking efforts, while creating a forum for dialogue and relationship-building among people of diverse faiths, cultures, and nationalities. It will also attempt to increase the College’s capacity to equip students with the tools they need to bridge

disciplinary research on religion and peace, encompassing interrelated matters of theology, culture, politics, and social practice.

Religious Conceptions of Peace

What do religious experiences, scriptures, and theological systems have to teach us about the nature of peace and how it is to be sought? A starting point for many scholars is to identify religious teachings, values, beliefs, and practices that may contribute to building and sustaining peace. This is a vast area of knowledge to which much has been contributed, yet, despite the rich peace resources in religious traditions, the scholarship has not always been organized to make these resources accessible. There is much room for further contributions and for meaningful dialogue within and across traditions.

While peace concepts are found in every world religion, each religion has its own particular understanding of what peace means in spiritual, theological, conceptual, ritual, practical, and relational terms. Comprehending how peace is construed within different traditions can provide a meaningful bridge to interreligious understanding while clarifying the sources of inspiration available for building peace in different political and cultural contexts.

Significantly, definitions of peace within a given tradition can offer insight into keynote themes that often resonate with major accents of other traditions while maintaining their unique character, “overtones,” and correlations with sets of positive values (e.g., inwardness, justice, wholeness, harmony, community).¹⁹ The three principal Abrahamic faiths, for instance, all stress justice and mercy, and relate these concepts to the advancement of peace. For Muslims, the theme of peace evokes not just a deep sense of safety and well-being but the need for constant striving towards social justice and right relationship with others.²⁰ For Christians, the teachings of the Bible

cultural and religious divides.

¹⁹ For an overview of the peace resources in various world religions, see David Whitten Smith and Elizabeth Geraldine Burr, *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace* (Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007). See also Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, ed., *Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions* (Cambridge: The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, 1998).

²⁰ For discussion of peace and peace resources in Islam, see Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said, *Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009),

emphasize justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation as well as nonviolent sacrifice and a search for transformative solutions to conflict.²¹ Eastern religious traditions, too, offer rich teachings on peace and how to realize it: *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *kshama* (forgiveness), and *shanti* (peace) are recurrent themes in sacred Hindu texts;²² Buddhism's core teaching of interdependence gives strong impetus to both social compassion and spiritual empathy, and in recent years a new movement of "engaged" Buddhism seeks to connect the pursuit of inner peace through meditation and mindfulness to social justice concerns.²³ While it is important not to understate variation among religious peace concepts, it is noteworthy that in a remarkably broad range of cultural and religious milieus, true peace, whether in this world or the next, is best sought in conjunction with moving towards transcendence or greater holism that embraces unseen dimensions of reality.²⁴

Recognition of recurrent themes in the peace wisdom of most premodern societies can deepen peace and conflict studies scholarship and practice. First, premodern peace concepts tend to view peace holistically, characterizing a peaceful state as much more than a simple absence of war or violence. In numerous cultural and religious traditions, peace evokes motifs associated with wholeness, harmony, or completion, and movement in the

47-69 [see review in this issue – Ed.]; Huda, Qamar-ul, *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010); Frederick M. Denny, "Islam and Peacebuilding: Continuities and Transitions," in *Religion and Peacebuilding*, ed. Harold Coward and Gordon Smith, (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 2004), 129-46.

²¹ William M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Andrea Bartoli, "Christianity and Peacebuilding," in *Religion and Peacebuilding*, ed. Coward and Smith, 147-66.

²² Rajmohan Gandhi, "Hinduism and Peacebuilding," in Coward and Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding*, 45-68.

²³ Christopher S. Queen, "The Peace Wheel: Nonviolent Activism in the Buddhist Tradition," in *Subverting Hatred*, ed. Smith-Christopher, 25-47.

²⁴ While definitions of religion are highly contested within the field of religious studies, Leonard Swidler's definition is useful as a basis for PACS-related forms of analysis. According to Swidler, a religion is "an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly, based on some notion of the Transcendent, with the four C's: Creed, Code of Ethics, Cult of Worship, Community-Structure." See James L. Heft, ed., *Beyond Violence: Religious Sources of Social Transformation in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2004), ix.

direction of peace requires much more than changes in legislation or reform of the status quo.²⁵ Second, traditional wisdom frames the absence of peace in human societies existentially, not merely in relation to social structures and institutional constructs. In most religious systems, a “peace deficit” is understood as a recurrent feature of the human condition: on a day-to-day basis, typical human beings are not fully at peace with themselves or with others. While vocabulary and specific meanings vary in non-trivial ways, there is nonetheless a measure of consistency in religious characterizations of a human predicament in which something fundamental is lacking, leading to brokenness, suffering, duality, or fragmentation. Third, peacemaking requires transformation, healing, and acceptance of moral guidance and direction – deep changes within individuals and societies, not merely a shift in social policies or an improvement in negotiation skills. Most traditional religious worldviews conceive of peacemaking as a sacred activity based on inspired teachings; this approach calls for community and fellowship, and envisions not only an end to fighting but deep changes in feeling, relationships, and character.

Religious Peace Positions

Even as we analyze the distinctive characteristics and keynote themes of different religious peace concepts, we also must understand the wide range of potential peace positions within most established religious systems. While keynote themes do indeed differ, there are rich internal debates within every major tradition. Most believers tend to follow what we might call “central tendencies” or “mainstream positions” (which may themselves vary across time and space), with creative and sometimes disruptive minorities highlighting other possible interpretations. Usually the religious mainstream avoids absolute peace positions and makes an accommodation with “political reality,” while nonetheless embracing peace as a positive value and making serious statements about the need to restrain violence.

In the Christian tradition, for example, theological discussions of peace typically resound with a keynote theme of forgiveness that includes a not always practiced but still strong affirmation of pre-emptive (not

²⁵ Raimon Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament: The Way to Peace* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

merely conditional) forgiveness as a bridge to reconciliation. Despite the consistency of this theme, historical experience has yielded a wide variety of Christian peace positions and a rich debate about war. We can imagine a spectrum with Crusaders on one end and practitioners of nonresistance at the other, with a majority of Christian churches distributed throughout an intermediate space between Constantine I's religiously righteous state and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's conditional pacifism. Although there is an exciting contemporary "just peacemaking" movement within which pacifists and just war thinkers engage each other to see what each side is willing to proactively do to prevent war and not just react to violence,²⁶ Christian ethicists continue to debate the relative merits of absolute pacifism, relative pacifism, just war pacifism, just war, righteous war, and so forth.²⁷

In Islam, the keynote theme of peace through justice does not remove pre-emptive forgiveness from the list of options but it does produce a stronger emphasis on conditionality: forgiveness becomes a more realistic and laudable peacemaking option when there is evidence of willingness to repair relations or move in the direction of reform. In religious discussions of war and peace, authorities tend to cluster around a mainstream "just war" position that resonates with many Christian *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* themes, within a larger context that includes righteous struggle and zealous freelancing as well as just war pacifist and actively nonviolent options.²⁸

Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism each sound different keynote themes within their peace discourse while producing spectrums of peace positions that significantly overlap with Christian and Islamic spectrums. In Buddhism inner serenity and mindfulness remain constant themes, and in Hinduism spiritual realization is a priority for manifesting peace in the

²⁶ Glen Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1998).

²⁷ See, for example, David L. Clough and Brian Stiltner, *Faith and Force: A Christian Debate about War* (Washington: Georgetown Univ. Press, 2007).

²⁸ John Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007); Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight Theses on Muslim Nonviolent Action," in *Arab Nonviolent Political Struggle in the Middle East*, ed. Ralph E. Crow, Philip Grant, and Saad E. Ibrahim (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990), 25-41; S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, *Standing on an Isthmus: Islamic Narratives on Peace and War in Palestinian Territories* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007).

world. Judaism takes a more extroverted approach, with social justice and vigorous disagreement receiving equal affirmation. Nonetheless, peace debates within all three traditions can be complex and vigorous, with central tendencies that seek to regulate or constrain violence by the state without fully eliminating war as an option. Contestation rather than consensus emerges in actual discussions of how to make peace within a situation of escalated conflict.²⁹

Religious Contributions to Peacemaking Practice

Drawing on existing peace and conflict studies frameworks, scholars have begun developing detailed arguments as to when and how religious institutions and individuals can be involved in peace processes while also attending to specific, potentially transformative dynamics inherent in religious activism. While some of this work has advocated harnessing the energy of religious activism by using pre-existing strategic peacebuilding templates, much of the new attention is conceptually innovative, leading to new ways of thinking about peacebuilding.

Given the depth and breadth of peace teachings in different religious traditions, we need not look far to find examples of how religious teachings and applied spiritual practices have inspired individuals and communities to work for peace as well as for social and even environmental justice. The best-known examples enjoy almost iconic status – for example, Gandhi’s nonviolent *satyagraha* struggle against colonial rule in India, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s application of New Testament teachings on *agape* in the US civil rights movement, and Desmond Tutu’s advocacy of truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation in South Africa. Lesser known examples, however, can have similar instructive power: Abdul Ghaffar Khan modeled the mobilizing power of religious commitment by founding a 100,000-strong nonviolent Muslim peace force in colonial India, in the predominantly Pashtun borderlands adjacent to Afghanistan³⁰; Maha Ghosananda organized large-scale, symbolically powerful peace marches through landmine-laden

²⁹ Coward and Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding*; Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*.

³⁰ Robert C. Johansen, “Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns,” *Journal of Peace Research* 34.1 (February 1997): 53-71.

war zones in Cambodia.³¹ More recently, Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa of Nigeria have demonstrated the potential of religion as a healing force amidst profound intercommunal conflict, even in the presence of militia violence.³²

While it can be noted that in many cases religious peacebuilders draw upon both religious and non-religious sources of inspiration (for example, protagonists of the US civil rights movement invoked both Biblical and constitutional principles), ignoring the role of religion in motivating individuals around the globe to work for peace would be a grave oversight. In recent decades, faith-based NGOs have provided an increasingly salient conduit for religious responses to conflict and its root causes. In the case of organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee,³³ this work is often low-profile, long-term, and different in many respects from the work of organizations operating out of a non-religious mandate.

While some scholars approach religion primarily as a means of countering religious extremism and supporting government-led peace processes, others have begun to highlight ways specifically religious teachings and practices can expand our understanding of what building peace entails. Not only do religious peace teachings add moral, ethical, and spiritual significance to the work of individuals and communities – sustaining people through difficult situations and resonating with individuals more deeply than strictly “secular” approaches – engaging religious traditions and making space for religious peacebuilding also helps expand the peacebuilding “toolbox.”³⁴ In many respects, religious teachings, practices, and actors have led to innovations in how scholars and practitioners conceive of both the content and processes of peacebuilding. Table 1 (see below) provides an overview of diverse practices and methods that religion can add to peacemaking processes.

³¹ See Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 123-37.

³² James Wuye and Muhammad Ashafa, “The Pastor and the Imam: The Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum in Nigeria,” in *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*, ed. Paul van Tongeren et al. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005), 226-32.

³³ Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach, eds., *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000).

³⁴ Chadwick Alger, “Religion as a Peace Tool,” in *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, ed. David Smock (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002).

Table 1 : Some Practices of Religious Peacebuilding

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayer for peace• Preaching peace• Personal spiritual development/ transformation• Interfaith dialogue (theological)• Interfaith dialogue (community based)• Joint study of scripture• Visits to another community's places of worship, "sharing the sacred"• Peace pilgrimage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faith-based social service and advocacy (peace, social justice, restorative justice, poverty alleviation)• Multifaith projects• Vigils, demonstrations• Direct nonviolent intervention/ witness• Public repentance/apology• Symbolic gestures of atonement, reconciliation, or commemoration• Spiritually informed conflict resolution practice/training
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Religious Contributions to PACS

The entire field of peace and conflict studies would be greatly impoverished without the contributions of religiously or spiritually motivated scholars. Gently scratch a peace scholar, and just below the surface you will frequently find a religious pacifist or a person who readily acknowledges spiritual interests and influences. A survey of some pioneers of peace studies illustrates this point. Among “first generation” peace researchers, Kenneth Boulding and Elise Boulding – an eclectic economist and a sociologist, respectively – were both Quakers, as was Adam Curle, a leading British peace scholar and founder of the peace studies program at Bradford University. Johan Galtung, perhaps the most prolific and well-traveled of peace researchers, was an iconoclastic Norwegian trained in mathematics and sociology. Though not conventionally religious – humanistic values and medical metaphors characterize his discourse – he repeatedly invokes Gandhi and manifests an interest in Buddhist psychology. John Paul Lederach, a highly influential innovator in cross-cultural peacebuilding practice, readily points to his Mennonite roots and overseas service experiences as sources of insight into

conflict and its peaceful transformation. Many more scholars credit religious worldviews as sources of vitality in their peace theorizing and conflict resolution practices.

Spirituality and Peace Leadership

Another provocative area for inquiry is spirituality and peace leadership. It would be fascinating to conduct large-scale studies on the various reasons individuals in different parts of the world become involved in grassroots peacebuilding activities. My hunch is that spiritual motivations would come up again and again, even where secularization has had a profound impact. Religious understandings of peace, it seems, can be profoundly healing in ways that other conceptions of peace are not. In one of my classes, I ask students to “draw peace” – to tap their internal vocabulary of images, and then see what comes up and reflect on where it came from. I suggest that, while many of our peace images are contemporary secular or commonsense constructs, others have religious roots and spiritual resonances. They have resonance because they connect with human needs in a profound way.

If we think of qualities that make for peace and peace leadership, we find additional spiritual resonances:

- Vision, creative imagination
- Discipline, transcendence of self
- Staying power, long-term motivation
- Wholeness
- Transformation
- Empathy
- Concern for the weakest and the poorest.³⁵

Discussions of how these qualities relate to one another and can infuse peace practice are arguably essential for peace education programs. Insofar as they resonate with the spirituality of various world religions, religion would appear highly relevant to explorations of peace as a vocation – and to conversations about how students can foster their own personal peace processes.

³⁵ For reflections on spiritual qualities and their relationship to peacefulness as a personal discipline, see Monika Helwig, *A Case for Peace in Reason and Faith* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 77-89.

Religion, Local Culture, and Peacebuilding Capacity Development

An additional area for study pertains to the growing recognition that peace needs roots in the values and traditions of a given locale if it is to be viable and sustainable. Attending to the role of lived religion “on the ground” and in people’s lives can be vital if peacemaking efforts are to be genuinely empowering. Within highly religious cultural contexts, “peace with religion” provides far more adaptive and culturally appropriate responses than a purely secular approach to peacebuilding.

Significantly, religion never jumps straight from the pages of a holy text and into people’s lives, as there is always at least some mediation by culture and tradition. The same religion can be inflected in different ways in different places, adding to the richness and variety of potential peacebuilding models. A detailed template for barnraising, for example, cannot be found in the Bible, and most North American Christians have never practiced it. Nonetheless, barnraising provides a powerful metaphor for the values of some Christian (and especially Anabaptist) communities, underscoring community, mutual aid, and brotherly love, among other principles. In the Middle East, traditional rituals of reconciliation similarly reflect scriptural principles of justice and forgiveness, while also expressing local cultural traditions.³⁶ In both cases, unique articulations of religion and culture provide reference points and resonant metaphors for tapping the wisdom of communities.

Community in Multi-Religious Societies

Multi-religious societies are by no means an historical novelty, yet current processes of globalization, mass migration, and digital communication are foregrounding issues of coexistence in new and challenging ways. World cultures are mixing at an unprecedented rate, and not always harmoniously. Insofar as violent clashes ultimately undermine the most sacred values of all communities and a homogeneous mass culture is generally regarded as undesirable, practical questions are increasing in salience: How can we

³⁶ George E. Irani and Nathan C. Funk, “Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 20.2 (Fall 1998): 53-73; Elias Jabbour, *Sulha: Palestinian Traditional Peacemaking Process* (Montreat: House of Hope, 1996).

manage our differences with creativity and integrity, in a shrinking and increasingly “mixed-up” world? What sort of processes – within as well as between particular religious communities – are most conducive to coexistence within the same public spaces, schools, and neighborhoods? What different positions have specific religious communities taken on issues of pluralism and the expression of respect for “the other”? Where can we find positive models as we move forward into a highly consequential century for humanity as a whole? Can we identify sets of values that, while not representing any one religious community’s complete moral vocabulary, nonetheless express meaningful principles that can be shared?

Religion and Global Ethics

When transposed to the global level, questions about diversity and community suggest a final topic, religion and global ethics. A number of years ago the theologian Hans Küng called for a global ethic.³⁷ Many religious leaders embraced his call; others did not.

Though some people focus the conversation about a global ethic on outcomes and master documents, there is a good case for stressing research and practical initiatives that emphasize process and sustained engagement with specific issues. Major forums such as the Parliament of the World’s Religions have a role to play, but there are definite limits to what can be accomplished at vast, heterogeneous gatherings. There are, however, virtually unlimited opportunities for particular communities to convene specific dialogues – to keep vital issues on the table, positive religious voices involved in public debates, and lines of communication open. Perhaps there is a modest role for the Centre for the Study of Religion and Peace, newly set up at Conrad Grebel University College, in convening such dialogues – within the Mennonite constituency as well as within the larger Christian ecumenical and interreligious contexts – on some of the great issues of our time:

³⁷ Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel, eds., *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions* (London: SCM, 1993).

- Climate change and environmental degradation
- Global poverty
- Civil and international wars
- Ethno-religious and intercultural conflict
- Human security and human rights.

Conclusion: An Agenda for Research and Dialogue

The advent of religion as a significant topic in the peace and conflict studies field opens tremendous new opportunities not only to make the field more relevant to the world in which we all live but to make religious perspectives on peace more accessible to scholars, students, and peacebuilding practitioners. Given the longstanding public debates and anxieties surrounding religion, politics, and peace, developing the field further will require a delicate balancing act. Nonetheless, an inviting horizon for peace research has opened, with commensurate prospects for extending the range of peacebuilding practice.

Religious peacebuilding is not new – it is older than quarry work – but there are new ways of studying it and talking about it in the contemporary academy and in public forums. There is a distinct opportunity to move beyond stale dualities – hard religion versus hard secularism, for example – and to appreciate more profoundly how religious peace resources can transform lives, rendering peace not as a distant goal dependent on the decisions of statesmen and stateswomen but as a vitalizing, renewing, and sustainable dynamic that starts now, with personal and communal peace processes. Religious peacebuilding may not be the only game in town or the only story, but it is an important game and it is a crucial story, accessible to all who approach their work with the eyes and attitude of a cathedral builder.

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THE BENJAMIN EBY LECTURESHIP

Established at Conrad Grebel University College in the 1980s, the Benjamin Eby Lectureship offers faculty members an opportunity to share research and reflections with the broader College and University community. Benjamin Eby (1785-1853) was a leading shaper of Mennonite culture in Upper Canada from the 1830s on. He and his wife Mary arrived from Pennsylvania in 1807. By 1812 he was an ordained bishop, and by 1813 the first Mennonite meetinghouse in the Waterloo area had been erected. About 1815 Eby saw to the building of the first schoolhouse. He continued his outstanding leadership in the church and in education throughout his life, all while supporting himself as a farmer. A lover of books, Eby wrote two primers for public school children, compiled the *Gemeinschaftliche Liedersammlung*, a new hymnal for Mennonites in Ontario, and edited a volume of articles by Anabaptist and early Mennonite authors. The latter is noteworthy especially because it preserves in a ministers' manual the traditional worship practices of the (Old) Mennonite Church. The Lectureship honors Eby's belief that the motivation to learn is a response to the Christian gospel.

Just Peacemaking and Ethical Formation in Classical Rabbinic Literature¹

Daniel H. Weiss

Upon examining the texts of classical rabbinic Judaism, we find that two key elements frequently stand out with regard to questions of violence. On the one hand, in interpreting Scripture, these texts do accord a conceptual place for the notions of justified violence and killing. On the other hand, they make the practical enactment of such violence very difficult, if not functionally impossible. However, these two elements can easily seem contradictory: if such actions are to be made functionally impossible to implement, why should they be reasoned about conceptually? That is, why not reject such actions in principle as well as in practice? Conversely, if such actions are to be reasoned about conceptually, why should they be made impossible in practice? In fact, as this paper will demonstrate, it is precisely and importantly the “contradictory” nature of the rabbinic approach that enables a directing of intention and evaluation into a just peacemaking ethic.

In this study, I explore the rabbinic approach through close readings of two textual passages, the first from tractate Sanhedrin in the Babylonian Talmud, and the second from tractate Makkot in the Mishnah. By tracing out the details of the reasoning displayed in these passages, with close attention to literary and rhetorical structure, I seek to demonstrate that such rabbinic texts present an alternative to the “just war vs. pacifism” dichotomy. In addition to highlighting ways in which the engaged study of rabbinic texts can potentially function as a formational *practice* of just peacemaking, I will also indicate aspects of the texts that can provide a basis for constructing a *logic* of just peacemaking. As such, these texts can serve as a historical precursor to the development of just peacemaking while also providing rich, relevant resources for deepening such efforts in the present day. To be sure, two textual examples do not in themselves constitute proof of a wider

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2010 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, GA. I extend particular thanks to Emily Filler and Beth Phillips for their helpful suggestions and feedback on previous drafts of this essay.

trend. While a comprehensive exposition of such a trend in classical rabbinic literature lies beyond the scope of this essay, I will, in my penultimate section, point briefly to some indications that this pattern of reasoning may be broadly representative of this textual corpus as a whole.²

Just Peacemaking and Rabbinic Analysis

Just peacemaking (as formulated by Glenn Stassen *et al.* in *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War*), without explicitly rejecting or affirming the theoretical moral validity of warfare, instead seeks to cultivate practices that respond to injustice by combining “realism” with nonviolent initiatives.³ It thereby aims to differentiate itself from the two dominant paradigms for the ethics of peace and war, namely pacifism and just war theory. While not identical in all ways to Christian formulations of just peacemaking, the rabbinic approach also differs from pacifism and just war theory, and parallels important elements of this third paradigm. Both pacifism and just war theory can be viewed as presenting a “consistent” stance: pacifism rejects the legitimacy of warfare in principle and in practice, while just war theory allows for the legitimacy of warfare in principle and in practice.

In speaking of a *principled* stance with regard to pacifism, I do not imply that pacifism need always be based on a formalistic deduction from abstract principles or external rules. As Lisa Sowle Cahill emphasizes, many instances of pacifism can stem from a personal experience of conversion or a conception of discipleship as an embodied way of life.⁴ Instead, I use the term to emphasize the element of consistency, wherein a person grants no scope to violence as a legitimate means for establishing justice; in this sense, I seek to highlight the principle of the pacifist stance itself, whether

² Here, my focus is limited specifically to *classical* rabbinic literature, that is, the foundational body of texts ranging chronologically from the Mishnah (c. 200 C.E.) to the Babylonian Talmud (c. 550 C.E.). While the patterns of reasoning that I highlight may very well extend beyond this time period, they may also have undergone changes or alterations, and so I make no claims here one way or another in this regard.

³ See Glenn H. Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008).

⁴ See Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 13, 228-29, 233-35.

this stance originates from an abstract rule or from a discipleship-oriented way of life.

By the same token, in speaking of pacifism as a consistent stance, I may be guilty of an oversimplification. John Howard Yoder stresses the diversity of positions that can all potentially be grouped under the heading of “pacifism.” Indeed, he even describes “just-war pacifism” (which employs just war theory to object to military violence) as a form of “selective pacifism” in contrast to “consistent pacifism.”⁵ If both the selective and the consistent varieties can be forms of pacifism, then my description here is necessarily inadequate. Further, while I distinguish the rabbinic approach from both the just war and pacifist stances, Yoder’s more variegated description could easily accommodate the rabbinic approach under the broader category of “pacifism” – as Yoder himself does in describing “The Pacifism of Rabbinic Monotheism.”⁶

However, for the purposes of this study, I employ the simplified distinction between just war theory and pacifism in order to highlight the two basic responses to the question “Is violence sometimes a legitimate means for establishing justice?” If the answer is yes, I group this response under the just war stance; if the answer is no, I group this response under the pacifist stance. The former assigns some scope to justified violence, while the latter assigns it no scope. The rabbinic examples that I examine seem to fall in a paradoxical space between some and none: to say “sometimes” is assigning too wide a scope to justified violence, but to say “never” is assigning too narrow a scope.⁷

Unlike pacifism, the “inconsistent” rabbinic stance does not explicitly reject the moral legitimacy of warfare and violence on a principled basis; however, unlike just war theory, it functionally undermines the practical use of violence and warfare as tools of just action. Accordingly, the rabbinic

⁵ See John Howard Yoder, *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1992), 26-27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 122-25.

⁷ In addition, the simplified division between just war and pacifism is the one presented by Stassen et al. See, e.g., *Just Peacemaking*, 9. Since my study seeks to draw parallels between the rabbinic approach and that of just peacemaking, I follow their example of emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of a third way by contrasting it to a (perhaps oversimplified) portrayal of the two other competing approaches.

approach can avoid certain dangers and temptations to which pacifism and just war theory are often subject. (Note that, as temptations, they represent *potential* problems or tendencies rather than necessary outcomes or inherent failings.) Because pacifism is based on a principled, a priori rejection of violent warfare, there is the danger that it can “degenerate into withdrawal.”⁸ Since one “already knows ahead of time” that violence is never justified, this can sometimes lead to a weakening of one’s initiative to examine the concrete, nitty-gritty details of justice in the conflict situation at hand.

Conversely, because just war theory holds that violence is sometimes justified but sometimes not, it contains an internal motivation to probe the particular details of each particular situation to see whether it would fit the criteria for a just war. However, because just war theory starts out with the assumption that violent warfare constitutes an appropriate practical response to certain situations, its deliberations can sometimes tend towards a “tunnel vision” that privileges military action over nonviolent preventative approaches to injustice.⁹ Pacifism, by contrast, is not subject to the danger of a distorting focus on military action. As such, a temptation of pacifism is to lose sight of the justice component, while a temptation of just war theory is to lose sight of the peacemaking component.

The rabbinic approach stresses a critical assessment of justice and injustice: What situation would constitute a just act of violence? What situation would constitute an unjust act of violence? What if such-and-such were the case? What if factor A were present but not factor B? How would the addition of factor C affect the situation? This approach avoids the temptation of withdrawal, and instead demands that one both cultivate detailed conceptions of the differences between justice and injustice (avoiding vague abstractions) and learn to apply those conceptions in evaluating the concrete situation at hand. This mode of habit-formation helps to shape a mindset in which the observation or consideration of a conflict situation should generate “moral energy” that actively seeks to *judge and evaluate* competing claims of justice while also prompting the evaluator actively to initiate means of *correcting for* injustice and *restoring* justice. In itself, however, the presence of this moral energy could easily lead to violent means of addressing

⁸ Stassen, *Just Peacemaking*, 2.

⁹ Ibid.

perceived injustices. In order to ward off such possibilities, the rabbinic texts put in place restrictions that redirect this energy away from such violent means, yet without taking away from the pressing conceptual awareness and acknowledgment of injustice. The generated moral energy will accordingly remain undiminished while simultaneously being redirected into alternative nonviolent modes of peacemaking and reconciliation.

The Stubborn and Rebellious Son

A prime example of this mode of reasoning is found in tractate Sanhedrin of the Babylonian Talmud, in an extended passage discussing the “stubborn and rebellious son.”

This concept takes its starting point from Deuteronomy 21, verses 18 through 21, which declare:

¹⁸ If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not hearken to the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and though they chasten him, will not hearken unto them; ¹⁹ then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; ²⁰ and they shall say unto the elders of his city: “This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he does not hearken to our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.” ²¹ And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

In its biblical context, this passage seems clearly to express a concern for maintaining the stability of the social order. Such a rebellious individual, who spurns the obligation of respect for his parents, may eventually end up spurning the laws of society altogether.¹⁰ As such, he generates a situation of conflict and disruption that must be addressed by the forces of justice in order to restore social harmony. Now, while we might acknowledge that such a situation represents a real problem, we might feel that the proposed solution leaves something to be desired. Is stoning to death really the proper way to deal with social conflict? One natural response to such apparent brutality could be to say: such violence is profoundly unethical; therefore,

¹⁰ See BT Sanhedrin 72a.

we hereby reject violence as a means of addressing social conflict.

While such a principled response has much to commend it, it can also risk failing to address the real threat to others posed by the rogue, inebriated rebel. In contrast, a second response could point out that the willingness to address the situation with violence at least acknowledges the severity of the initial problem. Further, the weightiness of the prescribed punishment can reinforce the need for a serious investigation: one will be sure to examine all the details of a potential case in order to determine whether an accused individual has indeed crossed the line and become a stubborn and rebellious son. The possibility of justified corrective violence corresponds to an active weighing of the concrete factors of justice.

These two responses roughly correspond, respectively, to the orientations of pacifism and of just war theory. However, the Talmud's response sets out in a third direction that incorporates elements of both yet cannot be assimilated to either. While its discussion is too lengthy to reproduce in full, I will highlight the key elements in its chain of reasoning.¹¹ I should emphasize that the passage's extended length and its back-and-forth engagement are prime factors in reinforcing the practical orientation to which it ultimately points; as we shall see, the ethical concepts in question cannot be contained in any single statement or static principle. My analysis draws upon literary methods of talmudic analysis similar to those used by David Kraemer in *Reading the Rabbis: The Talmud as Literature*. These methods seek to assess a given talmudic passage as a literary whole: though it may be constructed from various historical source-texts, it can be read as combining and rhetorically reworking these sources in new ways to produce a "composite message."¹² Accordingly, I will focus on the ordering and arrangement of the discussion and the particular wording and phrasing of various statements along the way, with a view toward the broader ethical picture that emerges diachronically as the reader gradually progresses through the passage.¹³

¹¹ The discussion itself can be found in BT Sanhedrin 68b-71a. A summary of rabbinic texts relating to the law of the rebellious son can also be found in *Encyclopedia Talmudica*, ed. Shlomo Josef Zevin (Jerusalem: Yad Harav Herzog, 1992), vol. 4, 379-87.

¹² See David Kraemer, *Reading the Rabbis: The Talmud as Literature* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 9-11.

¹³ In addition to Mishnah Sanhedrin 8:1-5, upon which the Talmud directly comments here, a number of the source-pieces comprising this passage are also found in other earlier rabbinic

The talmudic discussion begins by apparently granting full legitimacy to the biblical law in question and to its prescribed penalty. It gives no outward indication that stoning a rebellious son would be ethically repugnant. Instead, its concern is simply to determine what sort of person and what sort of actions do and do not fall under the category of a “stubborn and rebellious son.” For those cases that do fall within this category, the justness of stoning is taken as a given. Thus, the Talmud first notes that since Scripture describes a rebellious *son*, and not a rebellious *man* – *ben*, *v’lo ish* – it is only an adolescent and not a full-grown adult who can fall under this category. Further, the Talmud states that since minors, those under the age of thirteen, are not yet held responsible for the commandments, then they also cannot fall under this category. Thus, only those who are older than thirteen yet have not reached the status of full adulthood – marked by sexual maturity – can potentially be stubborn and rebellious sons.

Through this act of restriction, two distinct processes are simultaneously being enacted. On one hand, the scope of legitimate violence is being restricted: if the suspected individual is outside this narrow age range, then stoning is *not* the proper response. On the other, the *idea* of stoning the rebellious son gains a reinforced legitimacy: by emphasizing that certain individuals fall outside this category and are not to be stoned, the passage refrains from calling the category itself into question and thus implies that those who do fall within it should rightly be stoned, as the law requires. Yet it is precisely the continued possibility of violence that serves, by contrast, to highlight the fact that violence is *illegitimate* outside of the narrowly defined scope. In such situations, therefore, an other-than-violent response is required, so that we now have a strange phenomenon that might

collections (e.g., Tosefta Sanhedrin 11:2 and Sifre Deuteronomy 218-19.) However, the distinctiveness of the Talmudic passage lies in its deliberate rhetorical *ordering* of its material so as to convey a specific account of the proper scope of justified violence. My analysis thus differs from that of Moshe Halbertal, who also examines the ethical implications of rabbinic interpretations of the biblical law of the rebellious son. His mode of analysis tends to break down the talmudic text in order to compare differences in the interpretive moves in the passage. Without disputing his analysis of the different pieces unto themselves, I maintain the talmudic text can and ought to be read as a literary whole in which the various parts have been consciously re-employed to serve an overarching, unified ethical communication. See Halbertal, *Interpretive Revolutions in the Making: Values as Interpretive Considerations in Midreshei Halakhah* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 42-68, esp. 63-64.

be termed “nonviolent peacemaking through the conceptual reinforcement of violence.”

Now, merely from this initial age restriction, we might not be aware of a broader trend or pattern in the Talmud’s reasoning. Since all laws need some form of specification in order to be applied, we might think that this is simply a natural, sensible delimitation of a normal, unobjectionable legal statute. However, as the passage continues, the scope of the “stubborn and rebellious son” grows progressively more and more narrow. Thus, after a series of additional age restrictions that further reduce the duration of sonhood, we subsequently learn that an individual becomes classified as a “stubborn and rebellious son” only as a result of eating a specific amount of meat and drinking a certain amount of wine. No other behavior can bring him under this category. This certainly eliminates most of what we might initially think of as stubborn and rebellious behavior. The text next informs us that, in addition, the son is liable only if he buys the wine and meat *cheaply*. Then, as a further restriction, we are told that he is liable only if he eats *undercooked* meat and *undiluted* wine. We now appear to be narrowing the scope down to an absurdly miniscule scale. Yet, the passage still upholds the legitimacy of the law and, moreover, each successive delimitation places further emphasis on investigating concrete particulars.

Toward the end of the passage, we find still more restrictions, this time involving the parents of the individual. It is first noted that *both* parents must make the accusation against their son. Then – drawing upon the fact that verse 20 of the scriptural passage says “he will not listen to our voice” (*einenu shome’a be-kolenu*), with “voice” in the singular, rather than “to our voices” in the plural – the Talmud states that the mother and the father must be physically alike in voice, appearance, and height! With this, we must really have reached the peak of absurdity. How feasible would it be to find an actual instance of such identical parents? The scope of the law now seems as narrow as could possibly be conceived – its breadth is essentially infinitesimal! Yet, since it is not absolutely impossible that such parents could be found, the law and its justified violence remain in place, and so it could still be possible to find, judge, and stone a rebellious son. In actual practice, however, all the cases we come across happen for some reason not to fall into this category, and so we are compelled to address these cases through other-than-violent means.

After reaching this point, the story is not quite over. The Talmud, seeming to drop its mask, then asserts: “There never has been a stubborn and rebellious son, and there never will be. Why then was the law written? That you may engage in study of the issue and receive reward (*d’rosh v’kabel s’char*).” Even here, there is no principled rejection of the statute and its violence. If you do come across such an individual, you are obligated to stone him. The Talmud simply says you are *not going to* come across such a person. Importantly, the passage stresses reward devolving from the act of studying and reasoning through the issue: only by gradually moving through the progress of the discussion can one maintain the necessary attention to the particulars and to the attitude of justice. Had the law simply been rejected out of hand, there would have been no place for examining and evaluating these particulars. Here, in contrast, even when the violence is suspended in terms of practical enactment, the pedagogical training conveyed by the various components of the extended passage depends on the continuous assumption that justified violence is indeed a live option.

To reinforce my claim that the rabbinic conception is dependent on avoiding *both* rejection *and* practical enactment of justified violence, I observe that “there never was one and never will be” does *not* represent the final word in the matter. Many if not most contemporary descriptions of the passage do simply end there, implying that the Talmud’s ultimate point is to render the law of the rebellious son “purely theoretical.”¹⁴ In this case, though, the double-sided nature of the conception would be lost, and it would fall consistently on the side of rejecting violence, thus abandoning its character as a paradoxical suspension. However, when we look at the text itself, we find that the discussion actually concludes with the following terse and somber pronouncement: “Rabbi Jonathan said: I saw him and sat on his

¹⁴ Naftali Brawer analyzes the talmudic treatment of the rebellious son as an instance of “restricted interpretation,” in a manner largely similar to the one presented here. However, by stopping after “never was and never will be,” he posits a dichotomy between “the world of ideas and the world of action” and between “the world of theory and the world of practice.” See Brawer, “Judaism and the Challenge of Sacred Text,” in *Faith-based Radicalism: Christianity, Islam and Judaism between Constructive Activism and Destructive Fanaticism*, ed. Christian Timmerman et al. (Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2007), 96. In contrast, I argue that the logic of the rabbinic text maintains the connection between these worlds, but in a way that still ends up preventing the actual enactment of the prescribed violence.

grave.” In other words, there was indeed a rebellious son who was stoned for his actions, and Rabbi Jonathan saw him with his own eyes and even confirmed his experience physically by sitting on his grave.

It is certainly possible to see this statement as a counter-opinion, standing apart from and rejecting the progression of thought preceding it. However, Rabbi Jonathan’s statement can be appropriately viewed as a crucial component of the construction of the passage as a whole. Rather than negating the other statements, the tension produced by his statement helps preserve the “suspended” nature of the ethical-legal concepts in question. We can view the overall tendency of the passage as maintaining the full weight of the law while simultaneously making its scope as narrow as conceivably possible. In this regard, saying “there never was and never will be” can seem to reduce the scope to *zero* and thus undermine the law. Hence, the present statement insists: no, its scope is greater than zero! Yet, at the same time, it simply asserts a single empirical occurrence and does not provide any grounds or principles for widening the scope by any finite amount; it does not reject any of the restricting criteria previously put forth. Thus, the overall effect is that the scope of the law corresponds to a true infinitesimal: it is smaller than any finite scope you could possibly name – yet it is nevertheless greater than zero. This paradoxical notion cannot be contained within any single statement, and thus the underlying intended logic of the passage is to be found in simultaneously holding Rabbi Jonathan’s statement *together with* the statement that there never was and never will be a rebellious son. If any possibility of practical enactment remains, the scope is still too wide, but if no such possibility remains, then the scope is too narrow: both of these principled options are unacceptable.

Importantly, the extended dynamic movement of the passage as a whole does present a specific conception of the proper approach to violence, despite the impossibility of describing this third paradigm in consistent theoretical terms. The dialectical form of the passage is therefore no mere literary device; rather, it is crucial for the proper communication of its subject matter. My account thus differs from a reading often given to this and similar rabbinic texts, namely, that the rabbis really did want to get rid of the violence of the law but felt constrained by their pious commitment to the text of scripture. That is, they could not permit themselves a *de jure*

rejection of God's explicit commandment, which would have the effect of "imputing to the Lawmaker a defective moral awareness."¹⁵ Therefore, they instead employed an interpretive workaround to achieve a *de facto* rejection. Without gainsaying such a reading, I maintain that, in addition, the justified violence contained in the law is a crucial part of the ethical conception of justice and injustice that the rabbis seek to convey. To remove that violence would not simply violate their religious scruples; it would one-sidedly flatten the concept of justice and remove the moral energy behind their pedagogical deliberations.

The Death Penalty and the Murderous Court

Thus far, my analysis has focused on a single extended passage from the Babylonian Talmud, a document falling at the later historical end of the classical period of rabbinic Judaism. Because the Talmud is known for exhibiting a much greater degree of rhetorical and dialectical complexity than earlier rabbinic documents, we could easily suppose, from this one example, that this conceptually paradoxical approach to violence may be unique to this later strata of rabbinic literature. I therefore want to turn to a passage from the Mishnah, a document that constitutes the earliest representative of the collections that now make up the rabbinic canon. The Mishnah, moreover, is less known for dynamic narrative and dialectics, and its literary form is quite different from that of the Talmud. As such, discerning a similar pattern of reasoning within the Mishnah lends weight to the possibility that this logic represents a feature common to the conceptual framework of the broad historical span of classical rabbinic literature.

The opening chapter of Mishnah Makkot presents a detailed discussion of various scripturally-based situations in which a person may be put to death. From looking only at these passages, which never question the legitimacy of the death penalty itself, we might think that what we have here is a tradition that sees killing and violence as an acceptable response to perceived transgressions. After all, if they thought that imposition of the death penalty was morally problematic, they wouldn't spend all this time

¹⁵ David Weiss Halivni, "Can a Religious Law be Immoral?" in *Perspectives on Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of Wolfe Kelman*, ed. Arthur A. Chiel (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1978), 167.

discussing it as though it were normal and legitimate. But then we reach the following passage, at the very end of chapter one of tractate Makkot:

A Sanhedrin that puts to death one person in seven years is called murderous. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah says: one person in seventy years. Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon say: If we had been in the Sanhedrin, no one would ever have been put to death. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says: So they would multiply shedders of blood in Israel.¹⁶

This passage, as Beth Berkowitz has documented in her recent study *Execution and Invention*, has been cited over the past century and a half by numerous writers who have seen it as a principled rabbinic opposition to the death penalty, and one of the earliest historical instances of such a principled opposition at that. However, as Berkowitz notes, almost all these apologetic attempts cite only the penultimate statement from Rabbis Akiva and Tarfon, and omit Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel's final statement, which seems to inconvenience the claim of a straightforward opposition to the death penalty.¹⁷ By looking at the passage in its entirety, Berkowitz seeks to emphasize that the rabbinic attitude toward the death penalty was by no means unanimous and that conflicting opinions were held by Tannaitic (early rabbinic) authorities. This approach accords with a view of the Mishnah that sees it primarily as an anthologizing collection of various halakhic positions, preserving mutually incompatible stances for the sake of historical completeness without adjudicating between them with any permanent finality. Without denying the grounds for such an approach to the Mishnah, my analysis here will follow the approach of scholars such as Elizabeth Alexander, who highlights the marks of careful literary composition within the text of the Mishnah.¹⁸

¹⁶ Mishnah Makkot 1:10. "Rabban" is an honorific title meaning "our teacher"; it signifies a level of respect even higher than "Rabbi," which means "my teacher."

¹⁷ Beth Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 31.

¹⁸ See Elizabeth Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006). Alexander argues that the Mishnah is most properly seen as a pedagogical handbook with a strong emphasis on training its readers in particular modes of reasoning and analysis (119-23). Thus, she highlights how successive lines in a given mishnaic passage are frequently arranged as an ordered series, with the aim of progressively "refin[ing] the reader's understanding of the principle at hand" (148). The Mishnah often presents borderline cases in which "the legal reasoning behind the two (or more positions) remains unarticulated. The

Thus, with regard to Makkot 1:10, I read the passage not as a mere anthology of independent statements but as a unified literary construction with a progression that is deliberately arranged and ordered.¹⁹ First, it claims that one execution every seven years qualifies as murderous. The implication, though, is that a court that executed one person every *eight* years would be fully legitimate and just. So, while it restricts the scope of legitimate violence, it also reinforces the legitimacy of the practice itself. But then we encounter the second statement: once every seventy years is also murderous. Now the restriction is starting to become a bit ridiculous. Is it plausible to think that there could be a court system that possessed the option of the death penalty and yet enacted it only once every seventy years? Isn't that basically equivalent to not at all? Yet, importantly, the statement does not reject the death penalty in principle: it comes about as close as one could get to "not at all" yet stops short of asserting it outright. Then, however, we arrive at Rabbis Akiva and Tarfon's pronouncement: if they had been on the Sanhedrin, there would have been no executions at all. Thus, the space for legitimate violence by the court has evaporated. At the same time, they do *not* say – as we might have expected, given the preceding statements – "A court that *ever* puts someone to death is called murderous." Rather, they shift the focus to themselves personally: had they been there, no executions would have taken place.²⁰ They do not say, "Courts should never put someone to death" or "The

task of teasing out the legal reasoning is left for the students, readers, or listeners" (166). As a whole, her analysis focuses on the "performative effect" of mishnaic passages, an approach that "tries to imagine what would *result* from performing the materials" (169). These elements correspond nicely to the type of reading I give here to Makkot 1:10.

¹⁹ Yair Lorberbaum also points to the deliberate arrangement of the "ascending order" in this mishnah. He reads the first three statements not as disagreeing with one another but as a single rhetorical unit, whose purpose is to express "a fundamental opposition to capital punishment." However, he reads the fourth statement as separate from and dissenting from this rhetorical unit. In contrast, I take all four statements as part of a unified arrangement. In this case, though, the passage as a whole conveys not a simple opposition to capital punishment but a construction in which the death penalty is given a functionally infinitesimal scope. See Lorberbaum, "Blood and the Image of God: On the Sanctity of Life in Early Rabbinic Law, Myth, and Ritual," in *The Concept of Human Dignity in Human Rights Discourse*, eds. David Kretzmer and Eckart Klein (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002), 78-80. See also Lorberbaum, *Tselem Elohim: Halachah v'Aggadah* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Shoken, 2004), 345-46, 349.

²⁰ David Weiss Halivni also points to this 'personal' formulation. See Halivni, "Can a Religious

death penalty is inherently illegitimate”; this would turn the matter into a comprehensive principle, which they specifically refrain from asserting.

Note, finally, the concluding statement from Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel. In case the penultimate statement sounds too much like a principled removal of the death penalty, he emphasizes that it is *not* good to get rid of executions entirely. Notably, however, this statement does not explicitly *reject* the previous statements about a murderous Sanhedrin.²¹ We can view it, within the flow of the passage as a whole, as taking one minute step backwards so as to maintain the legitimacy of the principle, without contradicting the need to sharply restrict its practical enactment. We can reformulate the progression of the reasoning as follows: One execution every seven years is murderous. Fine. Once every seventy years is murderous. Fine. Once every seven hundred years is murderous. Fine. Once every seven thousand years is murderous. Fine. *Any* execution makes the court murderous. No, no, that’s going too far!

In other words, we can see the passage as restricting the legitimacy of execution to a scope smaller than any given finite frequency of occurrence – but without restricting it away entirely; it is not turned into an abstract principle. The final statement in the passage serves not to undermine the sentiment of the preceding lines but rather to *reinforce* it on a practical level while simultaneously ensuring that it remains grounded in the realm of concrete judgment. To enact the death penalty would be ethically illegitimate and would itself constitute a form of murder, but to negate the death penalty *as a principle* would also have ethically detrimental effects by detracting from the obligation to view bloodshed as an act of grave injustice that demands one’s serious engagement and response. Instead of coming down consistently on one side or the other, the passage upholds the two contradictory concerns simultaneously.

The two examples discussed above – the enactment of the death penalty and the problem of the stubborn and rebellious son – thus display

Law be Immoral?,” 167.

²¹ While historically speaking this statement may well have originated out of an opposing source, I analyze the mishnaic passage not in terms of the potentially diverse origins of its sources but in terms of its construction as a literary whole. In this regard, note that Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel does not say that the others are wrong, nor does he put forth a competing norm for proper implementation of the death penalty.

a specific logic in which violence is *not* rejected on an abstract, principled level and yet, precisely by means of retaining violence in theory, it is all the more rejected as a normal and legitimate mode of response to injustice. We are therefore left with a strong awareness of and desire for concrete justice; yet, at the same time, this desire is forced to express itself through nonviolent means of peacemaking. In practical terms, the built-up moral energy will mean that, in order to have a legitimate outlet, we must find ways of addressing instances of social discord *before* they cross over into situations that seem to call for violence.

Broader Tendencies in Classical Rabbinic Literature

While I've discussed only two instances here, I want to gesture towards ways in which the logic they display can be found more broadly throughout classical rabbinic literature; these brief sketches may serve as a starting point for future studies. We can first take note of David Weiss Halivni's claim that the same basic pattern of consciously narrowing down the scope of a law to nearly nothing, while deliberately retaining the validity of the law itself, represents a general trend with a wide variety of instantiations in classical rabbinic texts.²² Thus, the two examples discussed above are by no means exceptional. However, there are multiple cases in rabbinic literature wherein a biblical law demanding killing is *not* restricted away but is apparently allowed to stand with an active practical scope. Nevertheless, these cases can also be brought under the general framework that I have described when we consider that classical rabbinic texts place an "impossibly" high standard on requirements for *convicting* a person of such crimes. For instance, the rabbis emphasize the importance of *hatra'ah* (warning), whereby a person can be convicted of a capital crime only if, immediately preceding the crime, the would-be criminal had been explicitly warned of the penalty attached to such a transgression and had also verbally acknowledged acceptance of that warning.

²² See Halivni, "Can a Religious Law be Immoral?", 166-67. In addition to the examples of the rebellious son and the murderous court, he also points to instances of this pattern in BT Nazir 51b and BT Kiddushin 18a. Notably, these latter examples relate, respectively, to cases of corpse defilement and thievery – legal situations that do not involve the death penalty. Thus, while I have focused on instances of justified killing, the pattern of reasoning seems also to extend in rabbinic legal thought beyond this specific sphere.

Likewise, an extreme burden is placed on eyewitnesses: for example, if they witness someone being stabbed to death by a sword, they must be able to testify that the victim did not die from a previously extant internal wound in the exact same place! Discussing these excessive requirements, Devora Steinmetz argues that they were deliberately imposed “as a way to make capital punishment impossible to implement.”²³ This is the now-familiar mode of affirming laws that call for killing (with their concomitant concern for justice) while simultaneously working to prevent their actual enactment.²⁴ Importantly, in these cases, too, fulfillment of the witness requirements still remains *theoretically* possible – it simply is infinitely unlikely to occur in *practice*.²⁵ In this sweeping move, each and every one of the biblical capital crimes is both preserved and also suspended, further reinforcing the just peacemaking ethic described above.²⁶

²³ Devora Steinmetz, *Punishment and Freedom: The Rabbinic Construction of Criminal Law* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 15. See also Steinmetz, 1-2, 15-17, and 124fn3 for further details concerning these laws.

²⁴ Chaya T. Halberstam argues that the rabbinic texts (as illustrated by Mishnah Makkot 1:10 in particular) are characterized by a tension between “a commitment to doing justice” and “an ultimate uncertainty about the world around them” that makes them skeptical about their ability to make reliable judgments in death penalty cases. See Halberstam, *Law and Truth in Biblical and Rabbinic Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2010), 102. While I agree with her highlighting of a tension in the texts, I maintain it may be not only a matter of justice vs. uncertainty; it may also stem from a concern to combine a commitment to justice with an awareness of the infinite value of individual life. In this latter vein, Yair Lorberbaum argues that the classical rabbis held that “capital punishment is a form of murder and therefore it is prohibited, irrespective of the guilt of the suspect” (“Blood and the Image of God,” 79).

²⁵ David Weiss Halivni’s formulation, with its careful insertion of “nigh,” captures this sensibility well: “[T]he Rabbis retained capital punishment in principle but hedged around the carrying out of capital punishment with so many prerequisites that for all practical purposes it became nigh impossible to execute anyone.” Halivni, “Can a Religious Law be Immoral?,” 167.

²⁶ Rabbinic law does make room for certain types of justified killing outside the context of capital crimes. For instance, if one individual is pursuing another with the intent to kill, a third person (or the pursued person himself or herself) is obligated to prevent the pursuer, even at the cost of the latter’s life. However, even here a close analysis of the relevant talmudic passage indicates a logic similar to the “infinitesimal scope” that we have seen above. Thus, if the third person could have prevented the pursuer through other means but killed him anyway, the killing is unjustified: the third person is now guilty of murder and is subject to the death penalty. While the law of justified killing remains in full effect, the weighty burden of “other means” limits its direct applicability. See BT Sanhedrin 73a-74b.

We can also note a similar pattern with regard to rabbinic messianic-eschatological conceptions. The biblical text contains a number of institutions that seem inextricably bound up with the exercise of violence as a means of “solving problems.” There are kings, representing the centralized executive power of the state, who use violence to maintain their control over society. There are standing armies whose primary purpose is to use violence and killing to achieve the aims of those who command them. There are the penal system and its courts which, particularly in capital cases, seek to maintain their concept of order by exerting power over life and death.

Instead of rejecting or endorsing these violent social institutions by means of a timeless ethical principle, classical rabbinic literature relates to them through a specifically temporalized approach. When it examines the biblical context, it does not say that the kings, wars, armies, and high courts were inherently wrong. Nor does it rule out the idea of such institutions being restored in the messianic future. However, during the present intervening period of exile, after the destruction of the Temple but prior to the coming of the Messiah, those institutions are suspended.²⁷ Thus, in *practical* terms, the classical rabbinic sources rule out the legitimacy of Jewish collective violence – and yet they continue to *study* the concrete details of those same suspended institutions!²⁸

In an important sense, it is precisely by retaining the conceptual

²⁷ This approach enables the rabbis simultaneously to embrace two apparently contradictory streams within the biblical text. Alongside the pro-kinship, pro-centralization attitudes described above, there are also streams that voice direct opposition to such institutions and would seek to reject them. The rabbis find a way of heeding both: like the pro-kinship and pro-centralization voices, they affirm the legitimacy of such institutions in principle, but with regard to normative stipulations for the present period, their practice mirrors the ethic of the anti-kinship, anti-centralization voices.

²⁸ Cf. BT Sanhedrin 51b, where the same phrase – “study and receive reward (*d’rosh v’kabel s’char*)” – used with regard to the rebellious son is also applied to the question of institutions to be restored only in the messianic future. For more on the exilic suspension of Jewish collective violence as a broad theme within classical rabbinic literature, see, e.g., Michael S. Berger, “Taming the Beast: Rabbinic Pacification of Second-Century Jewish Nationalism,” in *Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition*, ed. James K. Wellman, Jr. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Jacob Neusner, *Vanquished Nation, Broken Spirit: The Virtues of the Heart in Formative Judaism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987).

validity of those systems that the rabbis can avoid the violence and killing that they entail while simultaneously retaining attention to and concern with the particular details of justice. Their temporal approach contrasts with an atemporal ethical system that must *either* reject violence in theory as well as practice – and could thus lose sight of justice – *or* allow for the practical enactment of “justified violence” in our own time.²⁹ The temporal suspension of violence in rabbinic thought also finds parallels in the passages discussed above, where the approach to violence is not stated ahead of time or in abstract propositions but is displayed through the temporal progression of the discussion.

Notably, these temporal features of the classical rabbinic approach can also enable an interesting reconsideration of John Howard Yoder’s account of rabbinic Judaism.³⁰ Some critiques of Yoder have argued that he misrepresented rabbinic Judaism by projecting his own pacifist/exilic values onto it, whereas examination of the rabbinic texts themselves reveals elements of both violence *and* nonviolence, of both exile *and* return.³¹ While these criticisms of Yoder may have validity, his account of rabbinic Judaism may be more accurate in important ways than his critics tend to acknowledge. That is, while classical rabbinic Judaism does take a both-and approach to violence and nonviolence, it does so in a *very specific* way, such that, as I have shown, its mode of reasoning restricts justified violence (especially in collective/institutional terms) to an infinitesimal scope that also corresponds to a temporally-specific conception. While Yoder may have misjudged

²⁹ Though it avoids an atemporal rejection, the rabbinic suspension of collective violence until the coming of the messiah might seem to lose sight of justice by pushing it off to a far-away, distant future. Note that the rabbis also held, theologically, that the messiah could come at any moment – even the very next moment (see, e.g., BT Sanhedrin 98a). Such a notion can function to keep the idea of justice alive and present, and the conceptual tension between now and not-now parallels the ethical tension generated by the infinitesimal reduction of the scope of justified violence.

³⁰ See especially his *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*, ed. Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

³¹ See, e.g., Peter Ochs’s commentary in *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*, 120; Daniel Boyarin, “Judaism as a Free Church: Footnotes to John Howard Yoder’s *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*,” *Crosscurrents* 56.4 (Winter 2007): 15-17. See also Ochs’s more recent reconsideration of Yoder’s thought in *The Free Church and Israel’s Covenant* (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2010), 16-23.

significant conceptual features of rabbinic thought, he may nevertheless have been on-target with regard to key practical rabbinic commitments.³²

Concluding Reflections

In its attempt to stake out a third paradigm alongside pacifism and just war theory, just peacemaking theory has tended to stress *practices* of just peacemaking. In part, this focus stems from a recognition that while pacifists and just war theorists may be unable to come to agreement on the theoretical question of whether war is ever justified, they *can* agree on practices that can foster peaceful relations, preventatively address injustice, and reduce the likelihood of war.³³ In this regard, in light of the above analysis, we can view the engaged study of rabbinic texts as a parallel practice that can help shape and train one's faculties of ethical judgment, forming moral habits wherein situations of injustice call forth responses that are both proactive and nonviolent.³⁴ While as a practice it may be on a smaller scale than many of the practices emphasized by just peacemaking theory, its role in daily habit-formation may nevertheless function as foundation for facilitating one's drive and ability to participate in other forms of peacemaking. That is, it could serve as a meta-practice enabling more active engagement in those other, larger-scale, practices. While the active study of classical rabbinic texts is obviously likely to be most appealing to adherents of rabbinic Judaism, these observations could encourage members of other religious traditions to uncover or seek out similar meta-practices in their own traditions as well.

Furthermore, while the classical rabbinic texts do put forth a distinct and specific form of ethical reasoning, its logic cannot be subsumed under either pacifist or just war modes of thought. Thus, in addition to

³² The notion of practical convergence, despite theoretical divergence, in Rabbinic and Anabaptist theopolitics is intriguing, and I hope to explore this question in further depth in future work.

³³ See Stassen, *Just Peacemaking*, 9.

³⁴ My exploration of the peacemaking potential of rabbinic logic does not mean that the study of these texts will always or automatically instill this type of reaction. Further research is necessary to determine more precisely when, why, and how such practices of text-engagement can translate or have translated into practical habits of moral judgment and response. A more detailed look at this issue is found in Peter Ochs, "Morning Prayer as Redemptive Thinking," in *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover and C. C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 50–87.

complementing the pragmatic emphasis of just peacemaking, I suggest that it could also provide a starting point for developing an ethical paradigm that could contribute theoretical, in addition to practical, resources for breaking the stalemate between just war and pacifism.³⁵ Perhaps a more general argument could be made for the importance of maintaining justified violence “in theory” *precisely in order* to functionally eliminate it in practice and to direct one’s actions towards nonviolent deeds. While this counterintuitive approach may lack a certain type of consistency with regard to conceptual principles, its “principled resistance to principles” could enable a unique combination of orientation towards both justice and nonviolence. In contrast, it may be that the “principled consistency” (on a logical level) of both just war theory and pacifism is precisely that which generates the temptations which, as described above, can undermine our ability to engage in just peacemaking. Thus, while much work in this area remains to be done, contemporary attempts to formulate a theory of just peacemaking can both illuminate and be illuminated by the rabbinic efforts to grapple with the question of violence in the context of late antiquity.

³⁵ Stassen *et al.* emphasize “practices, not principles” (*Just Peacemaking*, 34) and might be quite wary of claims to address the theoretical side of this stalemate, as it may destabilize the practical consensus they have succeeded in achieving. However, this problem cannot be sidestepped indefinitely, and the desire to put forth just peacemaking as a robust third paradigm for the ethics of war and peace will also eventually require conceptual theorizing.

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Tobin Miller Shearer. *Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

The Civil Rights Movement encompassed more than organized marches, sit-ins, boycotts, and freedom rides led by organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). It also included protests by members of mostly white religious denominations who never joined demonstrators and marchers or wound up in jail. The latter displayed the same degree of courage and commitment, and contributed just as much to the struggle as participants in SCLC and SNCC. They did so by conducting “quiet demonstrations” in their homes, sanctuaries, and other “intimate settings” against racial prejudice. That is the message of this book, which recounts how that movement unfolded within mainly the Old Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite denominations. Tobin Miller Shearer believes his book is groundbreaking because it brings to light a major part of the civil rights movement, the pervasiveness and characteristics of which scholars have heretofore failed to recognize. It is, he says, “a new civil rights story” (231).

Shearer’s conclusions are based on evidence from cases that occurred mostly between 1935 and 1971, and that involved (1) protests by African-American Mennonite women and their white sisters; (2) Fresh Air programs; (3) the response to Vincent Harding’s effort to obtain Mennonites’ support for organized nonviolent protests; (4) interracial marriage; (5) conflict over integrated congregational worship; and (6) the influence of James Forman’s Black Manifesto.

Shearer maintains that his study supports at least two other important findings. First, because Mennonites behaved toward, and thought about, African-Americans no differently than did white non-Mennonite churchgoers, “[r]acial intolerance and overt oppression need to be framed as common practice rather than as exceptions,” among white Mennonites (235). Second, “These richly complex narratives also challenge Mennonite histories of the twentieth century by bringing African-American Mennonites from the margins to the center of historical inquiry” (xiii).

Four of the six cases – recounted in chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6 – appear to support Shearer’s thesis. However, his findings regarding the Black Manifesto and Fresh Air children, who “challenged racism in white homes during the 1950s and ’60s” and “brought the movement to communities untouched by adult organizers” (228), are both unconvincing. Shearer argues that these minors slew all the numerous white racist dragons they encountered, unaided by any direct assistance or advocacy from parents and guardians. But that claim strains one’s sense of logic in light of what our experiences teach us about the nature of such children.

As for the Manifesto, it is difficult to understand why that document was so necessary and critical in initiating and fostering “conversations” between African-American and white Mennonite leaders about economic justice and power sharing as Shearer suggests (219), given that the Mennonite church had a strong tradition of daily demonstrations led by Mennonites (including some he identifies in his narrative) who knew, or should have known, how to adequately address such issues without needing inspiration from Forman. In these two areas his conclusions appear, at least to me, to be buoyed by conviction rather than supported by adequate data.

Finally, the book is less an account of a *new* civil rights story than it is a 20th-century version of a much older one. Ever since whites established the system of slavery and racial tyranny in the United States, black people and their allies have protested against them. That protest included both direct confrontations such as those led by abolitionists, and quieter, subtler forms of protest by slaves, such as the deliberate destruction of work tools. The 20th-century civil rights protests such as demonstrations and marches are reminiscent of the former, while the actions of Lark and Swartzentruber, as described by the author, are suggestive of the latter. Though the historical record shows that the legalized systems of slavery and segregation were far more vulnerable to the first form of protest than the second, the latter nevertheless had and continues to have importance in the struggle against oppression. Shearer’s account is a strong and welcome confirmation of that fact.

Daily Demonstrators has considerable merit, despite the limitations noted above. It shows that the accomplishments of the civil rights movement cannot reasonably be attributed to a few charismatic individuals or a few

mass-based nationwide organizations. And by using the stories of African-American Mennonites to convey that message, the author has helped bring that group from the margins to the center of historical inquiry. The book deserves a place in elementary, high school, college, and university libraries.

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Eric Metaxas. *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy: A Righteous Gentile vs. The Third Reich*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has become something of a contemporary saint – claimed by individuals of liberal and conservative persuasions. He is lauded as an exemplar of grace in the face of suffering and of dedicated friendship, and as a martyr for the Christian faith. His life is well documented, but he has been little discussed of late. Eric Metaxas's *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* promises to improve our understanding of Bonhoeffer as good man and as anti-Nazi conspirator.

There is little documentation of the first few years or last few months of Bonhoeffer's life. However, we know much about his adult life from his own writings and those of friends and family. Metaxas brings these different sources together to tell the story. Bonhoeffer was born into a German aristocratic family in Breslau. His father was a well-known academic, and other members of his family played prominent roles in German society. He was raised in a home that trained him academically and culturally. Emphasis on spirituality was limited but he soon made up for that deficit himself.

Bonhoeffer excelled in school and in 1927 at age 21 graduated from Berlin University with a doctorate. He was an accomplished academic but chose to put his energies into the pastorate, excelling in work as diverse as youth ministry and seminary teaching. Wanting to broaden his horizons and connect ecumenically, he accepted positions in Spain, the United States, and Britain. These connections influenced his involvement in the conspiracy to kill Hitler. International connections would also have allowed him to escape

the war, but after a brief visit to the US he determined that his calling was to Germany.

Bonhoeffer was outspoken about problems with the Nazi government but had little success convincing the larger church to respond to the encroaching evil. Thus, he put his efforts into mentoring others and serving as a sort of itinerant pastor/spy under the protection of a government agency run by his uncle. He had a much different vantage point from that of the average German for considering how one should respond to social evil.

Bonhoeffer's concern for ethics manifested itself early, in his dissertation and in his subsequent volume entitled *Ethics*. While he found a theological justification for the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, his ethics, according to Metaxas, were rooted in an understanding of the radical call of Christian discipleship. The plot failed, and records that ultimately implicated Bonhoeffer made their way into Nazi hands. He was hanged just three weeks short of the end of World War II.

At 542 pages, this is a long book, with a level of detail that weakens it. Much of the extra detail is interesting but not clearly related to the core narrative (e.g., the near drowning of a nanny, details of Nazi atrocities). Letters and sermons are quoted in long passages that do not add to the summary Metaxas provides.

A more serious problem is that the book gives us less of a sense of Bonhoeffer the man than it could have. He is depicted, for instance, as being born with upstanding morals, as seeing the dangers of evil before others, as having a consistent and clear theological vision, and as keeping his composure in all situations. I am not calling for debunking the "myth" of Bonhoeffer but for taking his struggles more seriously. Not to attend to his weaknesses and complexities makes him into an unattainable example, a figure who somehow sees the world more clearly than the rest of us. This often makes the actions of others in the narrative hard to understand. Indeed, the book provides little clue as to why the evils of the Nazi regime, so obvious to Bonhoeffer, were initially not noticed by many of those around him and never noticed by some in the church.

Nonetheless, Metaxas works hard both to draw out the evangelical side of the theological motivations that drove Bonhoeffer and to connect Bonhoeffer's experience and theology with his actions. He also provides a

strong impression of Bonhoeffer as a man of character. This text, with its valuable index, will be a helpful supplementary introduction to Bonhoeffer for both general readers and introductory classes on his life and theology.

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J. Kirk Boyd. *2048: Humanity's Agreement to Live Together*. San Francisco: Berrett Koehler, 2010.

J. Kirk Boyd has a vision, namely to see an International Bill of Human Rights drafted by 2048, the 100th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "The goal is to have a written agreement that is enforceable in the courts of all countries by the year 2048" (6). His vision is more than a dream. Boyd's book documents and expands upon the 2048 Project, a movement animated by the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. The law school has developed an internet website allowing anyone around the world to comment on, contribute to, and critique the draft of the future Bill of Human Rights. Participants in the movement aim to draft a bill with such high levels of international public support that each country's leadership will have no choice but to adopt it. The forty-year timeline reflects the understanding that this is no simple endeavor.

This book describes where the 2048 Project is coming from, what it is, and where it is going. Part One gives the history of the writing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and then explores hurdles to the present project's success. The first hurdle to overcome is ego. The new Bill is to be a people's document, so each contribution will be reviewed and critiqued without regard to the contributor's identity. The second hurdle is to achieve the "1% solution," that is, one percent of the world's population participating in the project and one percent of the world's GNP going to fund implementation.

Part Two explores the fundamentals underlying the International Bill of Human Rights, namely the Five Freedoms: Franklin Roosevelt's four

freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear – plus “freedom for the environment.” Each freedom is explored in its own short chapter.

Part Three charts the steps towards the project’s goal. It begins with a regional example of what might be made global: the European Convention of Human Rights, a legal document enforceable in every European Union member country. Boyd addresses the “cultural myth” that human rights is a Western concept, arguing that the basic values underlying human rights are common throughout the world. The remainder of this section explains how everyone can participate in the project. The process will be inclusive, and the document will not be created only by lawyers. Every occupation, generation, nationality, and culture should be involved. Boyd invokes the beauty of art that transcends national, religious and cultural boundaries: “Our task is to focus, think, write, and decide together to create the most beautiful Bill of Rights that has ever been written” (120).

2048 is an easy read, aimed at a wide audience. Many of the author’s personal stories give it a homey feeling. It is very optimistic, advocating for every reader’s participation in the process. But as such it is light in analysis and downplays the challenges, making it easy to criticize, as seen in the following two examples. (1) On the surface, the European Convention on Human Rights appears to be a wonderful instance of what the 2048 project hopes to achieve globally. However, this is overly optimistic, considering that the Convention is part of a much larger European Union apparatus. The EU is first and foremost an economic union, and membership in it requires adopting the Convention. Can the proposed International Bill of Human Rights take hold without leveraging a similar economic union? Could it stand alone against the onslaught of World Trade Organization regulation? Perhaps the new Bill needs to be integrated into the WTO. (2) Boyd asserts the “1% solution” – one percent of global GNP – will not require a new tax but can be a re-allocation of a portion of the current global defense budgets. Not only is this a massive economic dislocation for workers, but opposition from well-funded lobbies of the military industry would make it a most daunting task.

And yet.... The idea that human rights might become legally enforceable anywhere in the world is a heady notion. It is a project that we

should support, even just by learning about it through reading Boyd's book. The real challenge is to go beyond easy criticisms and begin thinking about solutions. The 2048 project website is a venue to air suggestions. Together, we might indeed be able to create the International Bill of Human Rights.

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Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said. *Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2009.

This is an important book for anyone who cares about the Middle East. The first Part gives the context for why religions can be a source of peacemaking and why the typical "us versus them" narrative between the West and the Middle East needs to be re-written. The authors reject the notion of a "clash of civilizations," and they take on stereotypes of "mutual ignorance" and how "imprisonment in hostile narratives" makes peacemaking so difficult (8). They offer a perceptive analysis of how western foreign policies presume that the Islamic world does not have indigenous resources to solve its own problems, and how western involvement in the Middle East has inhibited the latter's ability to carve out its own solutions.

Given the genuinely Middle-Eastern-grown nonviolent resistance, dubbed in 2011 the "April Spring," in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, the book is not only prophetic but becoming more relevant. The authors demonstrate how "policy choices are mediated and constrained by interpretations of history, and by preconceptions about the 'other's' character and behavioral repertoire" (231). They reveal how little the West has engaged with Muslim conceptions of peace, justice, political participation, cultural diversity, economic development, and ecological sustainability (9, 11). Funk and Said adeptly show that it is a misperception to see "the Islamic-Western conflict" as inevitable and unalterable because of "incompatible doctrines and values" (231).

Part Two makes explicit the types of resources Islam can contribute

to peacemaking. The authors categorize these in five ways that provide a thick description of Islamic spirituality, theology, and ethics as related to violence, peace, and justice. Here the reader encounters a diversity of Islamic approaches to peace. The authors hope that “knowledge of this diversity can provide a powerful basis for intercultural bridge building and for innovative policy frameworks” based on shared values, transforming Western and Middle Eastern engagement away from the singular “war on terror” security threat framework and the pervasive view of Islamic culture as “seemingly exotic” (10, 232). This section provides a wealth of information to enrich dialogues between the two groups, and should be required reading both for Muslims in the Middle East as well as the Diaspora and for all westerners engaged with the Muslim Middle East, whether as archaeologists, military/security personnel, academics, diplomats, policy makers, religious workers, development aid workers, or members of other NGOs.

Constructive ideas on how the West and the Middle Eastern Islamic world could cooperate on peacemaking are the subject of Part Three. Here the authors discuss specific recommendations for where constructive actions can be empowered. Aiming primarily at a western policy making/shaping audience, they acknowledge that these proposals are relevant to both stakeholders. Recommendations include creating a “new relationship” in the public discourse of political figures, media analysts and others (252, 253).

Another recommendation is addressing root causes of concerns, fears, and grievances on both sides, instead of manipulating fear-predicated narratives with religious rhetoric, so that opposing points of view are presented in a context acknowledging “shared humanity, interdependent futures, and the pursuit of solutions that respect the basic needs and interest of all concerned parties” (254). Funk and Said discuss strategies for transforming conflict instead of escalating it. They urge strengthening cross-cultural diplomacy through a deeper knowledge of one another’s language, history, and culture, including “religious literacy,” and the inherent complexities (257). They describe what a “multilateral, human security framework” could look like and how it would go beyond simply staking out positions (259). Negotiated, dialogue-based solutions are one way that “Western policies might also include efforts to enhance regional conflict resolution capacity” (260).

Recognizing the strong links to the Diaspora Muslim communities of North America and Europe, and attending to immigrant experiences can also send positive messages. Taking more steps to “ensure inclusion of Muslims in Western societies” will shape Muslim perceptions globally. The degree to which immigrants have a positive experience with education and economic opportunities, freedom of religious expression, respectful coexistence, and a fair rule of law will help diplomatic efforts between different societies (261). “By contributing to the radicalization of young Muslim men, overmilitarization of the ‘war on terror’ has done more to destabilize the Muslim Middle East than to cultivate a basis for sustainable peace” (261). Western approaches abroad need to be consistent with those at home, lest hypocrisy damage the viable democratic projects taking place in the Middle East region (262).

Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East will benefit all who read it not only for its historical information and its insights into Islam as a religious, political, and cultural resource for Middle East peacemaking, but for a better understanding of the nuances of peacemaking where communities face deep-rooted misperceptions, power imbalances, and ongoing trauma. It provides points of contact for doing comparative theologies with Christians, Jews, and others in peace theology and peacebuilding, as well as avenues for dialogue between the Muslim community and the West.

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John G. Stackhouse, Jr. *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Canadian evangelical theologian John Stackhouse has written a “big, academic book” that articulates a “comprehensive” understanding of culture and the Christian life in light of the reality of God (ix, 4). As the title suggests, the argument of *Making the Best of It* is that discipleship is rightly negotiated in the midst of present-day cultural and political activities. Disciples

maximize faithfulness to God from situation to situation, prioritizing neither consistency nor purity but rather adequate response to God in this morally ambiguous post-lapsarian world. Stackhouse presents this argument as an updated evangelical Christian Realism that embraces the contingencies and tragedies of modern life without labeling this embrace as a compromise.

The author presents his evangelical Realist pantheon in the first two parts of the book. In the first part he “reappropriates” H. Richard Niebuhr’s Christ and Culture typology. He defends the validity of this typology so long as each type is taken as a legitimate strategy for different Christians at different times and places. The second part of the book lifts themes from the life and works of C.S. Lewis, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. These luminaries offer resources for a comprehensive realism that surveys culture in light of God’s action. In the third part, Stackhouse presents his version of Realism. He starts by defining his method: Christian ethics is a dynamic “conversation” between scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, under the power of the Holy Spirit and oriented towards Jesus. The pneumatological aspect of this method is especially important, as it allows Stackhouse to subordinate methodical ethical investigation to what God might ask of us in any given situation (179). Yet we have to understand each situation with reference to its place in the grand “Christian Story” of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.

From that story we learn that discipleship is about both the individual and society, the spiritual and the material, unity and diversity, the world to come and this world, and God’s interests and human interests (202-205). Although Christians have a special calling, it is “nested” within God’s larger demand that humans seek peaceful cultural flourishing or *shalom* (220). Because we live between fall and eschaton, *shalom* cannot be fully attained. Vocational discernment is necessary for individuals and congregations, and there will be a great diversity of faithful, *shalom*-seeking responses. God may have a “normal” will for culture, but that will is constantly adjusted to bring the most *shalom* out of each fallen situation. Faithfulness to such a God means integrity and effectiveness cannot be divorced (293). It means making the best of every area of culture.

Like other Christian Realists, Stackhouse sees his primary opponents to be Christians who think discipleship requires separation from some

areas of cultural activity, and specifically from violence (195-98, 279-88). This strategy is represented throughout the volume by John Howard Yoder and the Anabaptist tradition, although Stackhouse recognizes that not all Anabaptists follow this line (24). Actually, he says he is writing to surpass both withdrawal and “take-over” options (5-6), but defeating the latter is not integral to his argument. Yoder is the major target because his is “the most attractive and provocative alternative” to the author’s own model (310). For readers of this journal, the engagement with Yoder is probably the book’s most interesting feature. It is an exemplar of the parasitic dependence on a distorted reading of Yoder that too often characterizes Christian Realism.

Stackhouse seems to have read very little of Yoder’s work, and most of his comments are restricted to isolated quotations from *The Priestly Kingdom*. From this scant textual basis Yoder is accused of reducing scripture to the gospels (192, n16); holding an immanent eschatology (276); failing to discuss the possibility of Christians wielding political power (276, n9); advocating cultural “withdrawal” (278-79); “abandoning” the world (281, n19); and refusing to give examples of successful nonviolent action (286). For anyone familiar with the scope of Yoder’s writings, this portrayal is libelous. But without it Stackhouse lacks a *raison d’être* for his denial of the radical imitation of Christ. By equating radical discipleship with irresponsible withdrawal, he can present his option as responsible engagement. If pacifism can be responsible and engaged, then his argument founders. The new Realism is the same as the old. Long live Realism.

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Miroslav Volf. *Captive to the Word of God: Engaging the Scriptures for Contemporary Theological Reflection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

In this collection of essays on theological interpretation of Scripture, Miroslav Volf expresses his conviction that it is the Bible that ultimately serves as the wellspring of theology, its source of life and vigor. As a biblical scholar by training, I do not always find it easy to understand what theologians do with

the Bible. Indeed, although ostensibly governed by interpretation of the selfsame text, our two disciplines approach that text with quite different sets of assumptions. Volf recognizes this, and begins with an attempt to explain his own practice of “theological readings of biblical texts.”

Theological readings, Volf explains, differ from the exegeses of (historical-critical) biblical scholars in insisting on the Bible’s contemporary relevance as the primary site of God’s self-revelation. This does not mean, he is quick to add, that those who undertake such readings neglect historical considerations; rather, they insist that, as Scripture, this text is not *merely* historical. It speaks also to us.

The final four chapters of this volume, all of which were published or presented on previous occasions, are case studies, a series of efforts by Volf to exemplify such theological engagement with Scripture. Chapter 3, which treats 1 Peter, will likely be of particular interest to those in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. For Volf, 1 Peter attests not to a Troeltschian sect that defines itself over against dominant society but to a community characterized by “soft difference” from its contemporaries – a community of aliens and sojourners, to be sure, but one that respects, engages, and invites its neighbors rather than vilifying them.

Chapter 4 addresses the relationship of the church to “the world,” now in dialogue with the Gospel of John. Volf takes issue with the common reading according to which John is a starkly dualistic text characterized by rigid oppositions between darkness and light, etc. In fact, John cannot be considered dualistic, the author asserts, since the “oppositional dualities” the text establishes are ultimately overcome by God’s love of “the world” and the Word’s becoming flesh. For Volf, the “peculiar kind of exclusivism” (113) attested by the Fourth Gospel is at once more credible and, given its “utterly loving attitude toward the world” (121), more authentically respectful of difference than the facile pluralism championed in much modern thought.

In chapter 5, Volf seeks to articulate the meaning of the Christian conviction that “God is love” in the context of Muslim-Christian dialogue. In contrast to the previous two chapters, this is not so much a theological reading of 1 John as a theological reflection sponsored by certain of the epistle’s themes. Similarly, the final chapter provides a reflection on modern economic life that engages the ruminations of Ecclesiastes on human

insatiability and the futility of economic “progress.”

These are thoughtful pieces, and Volf arrives at some compelling theological conclusions. I am not convinced, however, that these conclusions derive from his reading of the texts with which he interacts. It may be a time-honored theological tradition to find the Trinity in the assertion that “God is love” (“If love is an essential attribute of God independent of the existence of everything that is not God, how could God be love if God were not . . . somehow also differentiated in God’s own being?” [138]), but I wonder why this particular instance of theological reasoning with the text is deemed legitimate while others are excluded. (Why, for example, can one not infer, as Volf’s Muslim interlocutors are wont to do [134], that Jesus is the “offspring” of the Father from the common biblical assertion that he is the Son of God?)

What we have here and throughout the book, I think, is a rule of faith operating as an undisclosed hermeneutical principle. Thus, when Volf foreshortens his initial methodological discussion by stating that theological reading of Scripture is an art, not a science (4), a cynical reader might suggest that his art consists of finding ways to align Scripture with orthodoxy.

Given that only the first chapter was newly written for this collection, it is not surprising that the book is somewhat disjointed. (Chapter 2, reprising Volf’s conception of the relationship between practices and beliefs, feels particularly out of place.) Thus, the work as a whole lacks both the coherence and the depth of methodological reflection that would make it a significant contribution to the hermeneutical discussion to which its subtitle alludes.

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Jon M. Isaak, *New Testament Theology: Extending the Table*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011.

Jon Isaak has written an engaging, comprehensive theology of the New Testament. He understands “biblical theology” to have two dimensions: “descriptive” and “constructive” (17). More than half of his volume is given to the “descriptive” task, treating matters of authorship, context, and distinctive content and perspective, much like an Introduction. He begins with the Pauline corpus, then treats each of the Gospels, including Luke/Acts as one work, and Revelation, and concludes with the Catholic Epistles. Isaak is excellent at helping the reader appreciate the distinctive character, voice, and theological perspective of each author. He is fully conversant with, and judicious in, his use of critical methods of biblical scholarship, not shying away from stating his own critical judgments, even where those might run up against cherished traditions. His treatments of the contents of the NT will give the reader a solid introduction to where contemporary scholarship finds itself.

In the second part (after the “intermission”) Isaak takes up the theologically “constructive” task of addressing topics such as christology, revelation, theology, anthropology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. He wishes to respect the multi-valence of the biblical witness. Even so, some of the distinctiveness of the various voices gives way, perhaps inevitably, to the harmony of the choir (xviii, 229). While scholarship often keeps them separate, Isaak wisely insists on keeping them together, believing that the theology of the church must be deeply rooted in an informed reading of, and listening to, the NT. He effectively employs G. B. Caird’s metaphor of a conference table (xviii, 19, *passim*) to which are invited not only the various NT writers but also interpreters, past and present, including readers of Isaak’s own effort to moderate the discussion and elicit clarification from the participants. Sitting close to Isaak at the conference table are Luke Timothy Johnson, G. B. Caird, Norman Kraus, and his former teachers and colleagues at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, most prominently John E. Toews.

Since the table is extended to include readers of Isaak’s book, let me “grab the mic” and offer my own comments. I appreciate the author’s

respectful attentiveness to NT participants in the conference. Each of them is invited to state central concerns clearly and succinctly. He is respectful too of the diversity of interpreters. I find myself largely in agreement with his take on Paul (he seems largely to embrace the “New Perspective”), even if it remains a challenge to let Paul speak as a Jew at the conference table, rather than as a “Christian.”

It may be the special vulnerability of any biblical theology restricting itself to the NT, but I would like to see another session on revelation at this conference in which the role of the Scriptures that the NT writers themselves knew is given greater attention. The role of Wisdom, especially of personified Wisdom in relation to christology, receives scant attention, even though it appears to have played a determinative role in the development of how Jesus was understood (e.g., Matt. 11, John 1, 1 Cor. 1, Phil. 2, Col. 1). I would love to listen in on the exchange between Paul, Matthew, John, and James.

The influence on Isaak of René Girard is felt whenever the themes of judgment and atonement appear, with the result that juridical views of atonement, for example, are less explored than sidelined. In my opinion “discernment” and cause and effect do not do justice to divine agency in judgment as understood by NT writers. Lastly, a distinct focus on soteriology would have allowed the author to explicate more fully his provocative notion of salvation as “God’s creative and transformative activity to complete creation – God’s *shalom* project” (317, à la Bernhard Ott, 21), and the missional role of the church as joining in that creation “project,” and to place it in conversation with other takes on soteriology in the NT.

Isaak writes with great clarity and energy. Each chapter concludes with creative and instructive exercises, making this an excellent classroom textbook or a resource for an adult education setting in which participants are eager for an intellectual and spiritual challenge. His metaphor of the table is wonderfully hospitable, and will ensure that readers will see themselves “at the table” as fully engaged participants. Isaak has moderated an excellent session at this conference-without-end.

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