ON THE ROAD

Newsletter
of the
Anabaptist Association of
Australia and New Zealand Inc.
No.19 MARCH 2003

"Life Is A Tapestry: Holistic Thinking"

Many Two-Thirds World cultures tend to be more holistic in their view of life. They see life not so much as a timeline but as a tapestry where one sees threads and colours touching, overlapping and reinforcing each other, forming a whole that has its own beauty and integrity...They prefer the metaphor of an onion that gets peeled, layer upon layer. Life is unfolding; each layer is connected to the former and must be understood in relation to the whole and indeed, part of the whole.

...The war in Afghanistan provides a ...recent example. President George W. Bush said that the United States was attacking only Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network, not Muslims or Arabs in general. Westerners understand this because we easily differentiate "me" from "you." But much of the world thinks more holistically – as "us," as solidarity, as one. So it should not be surprising to see protests against the United States or other symbols that show support of Osama bin Laden. News reports tell of Muslims having studied in the United States speaking of Osama bin Laden as their hero and of most of the babies born in Muslim Northern Nigeria during this war being given the name Osama.

A Middle-Eastern proverb contributes to our understanding of how Muslims think.

Me against my brother;
My brother and I against our cousin;
My brother, my cousin and I against the boy from the next village.

In other words, anyone outside the Muslim world who attacks a Muslim, for whatever reason, could become the enemy of the Muslim world. Of course, economics and politics always factor into these situations. But the proverb expresses the spirit of holism: we stand as one if we have a common enemy.

- Duane Elmer, ***Cross-Cultural Connections***, InterVarsity Press, 2002, 144.

DUE TO THE EDITORS BEING OVERSEAS NO JUNE ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED

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On The Road

The AAANZ quarterly newsletter publishes news, articles, book reviews, and resource information. It is published online with a paper edition available for those without computer facilities. (Paper edition A$20 per year) To be added to the mailing list write :

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COVER SYMBOL: The lamb in the midst of briars is a traditional Anabaptist symbol. It illustrates the suffering Lamb of God, who calls the faithful to obedient service and discipleship on the road. This particular rendition is from ***Hymnal A Worship Book*** Copyright 1992. Reprinted with permission of Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, PA, USA.

THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS FOUR

Mark and Mary Hurst

...to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service

We often speak in churches about how Jesus acted from a "passion" that moved him. We encourage people to be passionate about the kingdom of God and the way of Jesus. After one such talk, a man in the congregation said to us, "I know what I am passionately against, but it is harder to figure out what I am passionate about." It is sometimes easier to point out what we do not like and harder to articulate what we favour.

We get to visit a number of church worship services and usually come home frustrated with what we see. When we tell our friends about our experience they often ask, "What is it you want in a church?" Sitting in one of those services recently, we jotted down some of the differences between what we call "generic evangelical" churches and Anabaptist congregations. What follows is not a fully thought out and researched treatise on the differences between Evangelicalism and Anabaptism, (books like that already exist like C. Norman Kraus's volume entitled ***Evangelicalism And Anabaptism***, Herald Press1979) but what came to us on that Sunday.

Generic Evangelicalism **Anabaptism**

Indiviualism..... Community

From the songs that are sung to the way communion is taken, church worship services are usually focussed on *me,* the individual, and *my* relationship with God. There is not a sense that we come to God as a people. Yes, we become Christians individually but once we are Christian we are part of a body of believers who worship and live corporately.

Future Kingdom..... Present Kingdom

God's kingdom is talked about as some future hope rather than a present reality. It becomes "pie in the sky when you die" religion rather then a faith that affects every area of our life now. We heard one pastor make the comparison to rugby league. The preliminary game represents life on earth now and the main game is "eternal" life in heaven. This goes against what Jesus said about coming to give life and giving it "abundantly" (John 10:10). It is a here and now reality.

Jesus Came To Die ..... Jesus Came To Live

The whole purpose, for many churches, in Jesus' time on earth was to "save" us. His earthly life is irrelevant beyond his saving work on the cross. One song says he came from "heaven to earth, from earth to the cross" – straight from Christmas to Easter. Anabaptism takes seriously the life and teaching of Jesus. He came to teach us how to live, not just how to die.

Hearts ..... Lives

"Heart" language is used. Jesus is interested in saving "hearts" and "souls". Gone is the concern for the whole human being. The concern for the poor, blind, hungry, naked, imprisoned, and oppressed gets lost in the narrow spiritualising language used.

Majesty ..... Servanthood

Kingship language is used in talking about Jesus even though he rejected this imagery in his earthly ministry. Language that includes suffering and servanthood is missing.

Worship as "Fill Up" ..... Worship that Transforms

Getting your weekly spiritual fix or fill up is the reason for worship in many congregations. Missing is the idea that we come together to be shaped by our worship into a transformed people. Worship, in Marva Dawn's terms, is meant to transform us into a community that is *parallel* to the rest of society yet *alternative*. Worship should energize us to be agents of transformation in our world.

Belief ..... Discipleship

John's gospel is often favoured with its language of "belief" over the synoptic gospels with their call to cross bearing discipleship. Intellectual assent is called for rather than radical life changing choices. The sermon on the mount/plain calls us to live out the kingdom here and now rather than just believe it will come someday.

Hunger for Personal Salvation ..... Hunger for Justice

"Give me more!" seems to be a cry in many churches. More blessings, more spiritual highs, more souls for heaven. Missing is the hunger and thirst for righteousness/justice that Jesus talks about. Rather than just a faith for me, true biblical faith involves us in the needs of others.

Individual Peace ..... Shalom

Personal peace and security is prayed for Sunday after Sunday. We hear prayers thanking God "that we live in a country where we can worship in peace". Missing is the gospel emphasis on Shalom – a holistic peace than includes much more than just "me".

We do not mean to say by these comparisons that Anabaptists have it all together and all other Christians are wrong. What we are saying though is that as Anabaptists we have something to offer our brothers and sisters. Our emphasis on worship and community where we hear and experience God collectively, peacemaking and justice that moves us beyond individualism and discipleship that transforms every area of our lives is something we want to share with others. We can be salt and light in church as well as society.

Our lead article in this issue, "The Spirituality of the Radical Reformation" by Rev. Dr. Peter Matheson, explores the roots of Anabaptist spirituality and worship. Dr. Matheson provides the historical background for this modern Anabaptist vision for the church.

> God's people are a society parallel to the world surrounding us. When we gather for worship and education, we tell the narratives of the faith, sing our hymns, and say our prayers until we know the truth so well that we and our children can go out to our neighbours and offer alternatives to the lies of the principalities and powers that dominate ... society. As royal priests,...we offer to the world around us the gifts of the One who is the Truth, the Way, and the Life...
> - Marva Dawn, ***Morning By Morning***, 40

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Doug Hynd

Over the two years that I have been president of the Association, I have tended to use this opportunity at least as much for theological reflection around the Anabaptist tradition as for reporting on organisational issues.

On this occasion as I move toward the point of stepping aside from the President's role I feel that it is probably appropriate to focus my reflections more on the organisational issues and give some form of accounting for my stewardship. While I am intending to remain on the Committee to represent the Canberra region, and to try and focus on building up a stronger presence in this region, I feel the need to step aside from the President's role. After nearly two and a half years in the position, I am tired.

The last two years have been challenging. Opportunities for ministry with Christian and community organizations have been plentiful. The ongoing tension that faces the executive committee is between the desire to take up the immediate opportunities for ministry and the need to build up the Association so that it can sustain a long term ministry and witness faithful to the Anabaptist tradition.

In encouraging you to participate more actively in building up the AAANZ as a servant of the Christian community in Australia and New Zealand, let me share what it is that I have gained out of my involvement in the Association – friendship and support on the journey of discipleship. I have been supported, nurtured, and challenged by a network of Christians on the committee engaged in a diverse range of ministries. I have found hope, love and a passion for the living out of the Gospel in a manner that witness to God's peacemaking, reconciling activity. In a time of darkness, that is no small gift to have received and I give heartfelt thanks for it.

As I write this letter to you, my successor has not been chosen. Please pray for wisdom for the committee, and courage and vision for whoever steps forward. Please keep in mind our need for a new treasurer.

The Association only exists as a vehicle, but it is a vehicle in which we have sought to embody to the extent that it has been possible the character of the Anabaptist tradition. To support the work of that vehicle please send in your response to my letter on future support for Mark and Mary.

THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT AND CHRISTIAN DIFFERENCE

Doug Hynd

My participation in some recent anti-war rallies in Canberra raises questions about precisely what this sudden explosion of political concern portends and what Christians might want to say about the theological issues that have emerged in public debate.

To start with, I was stunned at the numbers of people who turned out to these events, though assured by my activist son ahead of time that it was going to be "huge".

Is this outburst of public anger and angst nothing more than froth on the wave that will disperse as popular attention moves on to the next issue? Is it simply political opposition to the current government by the usual suspects riding a temporarily popular issue?

Or is it an as yet inarticulate expression by the community of an emerging broader cultural and moral critique of business as usual in a consumerist society? The recent account of the rise of Green politics in Australia by Amanda Lohrey provides some support for this last reading of the situation. Certainly, the last time that public participation on this scale was seen was in the marches for reconciliation with the indigenous communities.

From the rhetoric of the speakers and my observations of the composition of the crowds, all three elements are involved though in what relative proportions I cannot even begin to guess. Moral critiques of the evil of war generally and the unilateral reaching for military solutions have been advocated cheek by jowl with a rhetorical anti-imperialism that has its roots in a Marxist critique of the economic interests of the United States.

The tension between the varying elements of what I judge to be a potentially unstable coalition of groups opposed to war in Iraq will need to be managed carefully if the movement is to not only maintain but also build on current levels of support in the wider community.

What might help in this situation? I have a couple of suggestions:

- An explicit and generous acknowledgment by the organisers of the diverse views and differing commitments that are represented in the movement would be a good starting point. Not everyone who gets up to speak at these rallies speaks for me and I get annoyed if their rhetoric suggests that they do. Part of building peace has to do with the accepting of difference and the creation of space for conversation about what those differences are and what they mean.
- A confession of the dangers of self righteousness and the tendency to demonise those who oppose us would also be helpful. The point, as both Ghandi and Martin Luther King emphasised, is to morally challenge those who oppose us, to create the opportunity for transformation of the enemy as well as the self.

Much of the argument advanced at these rallies involves an implicit appeal to some of the just war criteria, particularly the issue of due authority and an appeal to the consequences of such a war. The popularity of just war rhetoric and calculation has not been confined to these rallies. Editorial writers, reporters, politicians and contributors to the letters to the editor columns, whether pro or con, have attempted to assess the looming war with Iraq against the criteria of the just war.

Given its quite wide use in public debate what can we say about the just war tradition? Has it passed its use by date? After all, the tradition arose in the Christendom period when church and political power were intensely inter-woven and it was an attempt by the church to place limits on the use of force in making political adjustments. That form of entanglement is over, though a new entanglement in which being a Christian has become identical with American nationalism has developed in the United States under cover of the formal separation of church and state.

The other relevant change, to an assessment of the feasibility of using the just war criteria, is that war has taken on an all-embracing reach. Ever since Sherman's march through Georgia to the sea during the American Civil War, it is not an exaggeration to speak of war becoming total.

Should Christians continue to buy into the just war criteria as the basis for determining their stance on this or any other war?

The record in recent times is not good. Almost without exception, the use of the criteria has provided justification for Christians to support whatever stance their government has taken on a given conflict. In practice, national identity seems to trump Christian commitment every time. Being an Australian citizen seems to be more fundamental than our membership in the body of Christ when it comes to issue of taking life at the command of the state.

The Ekklesia Project Declaration (1999) to which I have subscribed, offers several sharp theological challenges to this stance. The Declaration observes that:

Instead of living as the body of Christ, Christians too often conform their lives to partisan ideologies and identities, or to the routines of a consumer culture. We are often asked to put other allegiances before what we owe to God and the community of faith; and all too often, our churches seem willing to subordinate the Gospel to the imperatives of economic and political power holders and institutions. (Declaration)

In the light of this critique, they offer a number of principles that provide the basis for a Christian response to war, of which two are particularly relevant:

We believe that the claims of Christ have priority over those of the state, the market, race, class, gender, and other functional idolatries. "You shall have no other Gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). (Principle 1)

We do not accept the ultimacy of divisions imposed on the Body of Christ — whether they be national borders, denominational divides, cultural and social stereotypes, or class divisions. (Principle 4)

If there is a difference that Christians involved in anti-war protest can bring through their participation in the movement it will be rooted in their assent to these claims.

GOING PUBLIC

Doug Hynd

AAANZ had a stall with some literature at the peace demonstration on the lawns of Parliament house on the afternoon of Sunday 23 March. It was a first effort by Jillian and myself to do anything like this. We were supported by Harold and Grace Koch who turned up for the demonstration and found the banner with the slogan "Pray for Peace Act for Peace" that we borrowed from Mark and Mary for the occasion.

I want to encourage other members of AAANZ to do something similar if the opportunity offers. We did not have a large number of visitors but a number of people called by and took some literature. A few asked if there was any ongoing group in Canberra. I am hoping that there may be some follow up with the Sojo circle group that I have started and which meets on a monthly basis to explore issues of faith, peacemaking, and politics.

Some Practical tips:

1. You can order banners from the following site: http://peace.mennolink.org/resources/prayflag.html

If someone from the Association in a regional centre wants to take responsibility, they should contact Mary about ordering banners and have AAANZ make the initial payment. Donations to meet the cost will obviously be welcome.

2. There is a lot of good material on web sites such as the Mennonite Peace and Justice Network (http://peace.mennolink.org/). Sojourners is also a good site (http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm/action/home.html). I downloaded material and then photocopied the material I thought most useful. My advice is to have a small range of items. It is confusing to have too much material. One of the most popular items was an edited copy of a speech by Martin Luther King in 1967 on the war in Vietnam.

3. Have some copies of the AAANZ brochure - probably it would be helpful to add a local contact phone number. (Download from www.anabaptist.asn.au).

LETTERS

I continue to be appalled at your total biased stand against 'western powers' whilst avoiding hardly ANY mention of the violence done by those like Yassah Arafat, Hamas, Bin Laden, Hussain, and other terrorists.

Your talk of 'peace' is very one sided and thus comes across to myself as not genuine nor sincere. If you really were sincere, you would stand against suicide bombers and other terrorist activities with the same passion you stand against Israel etc.

My hope is that one day I will see an article that takes such a stand.

Yours in Christ, A.C.

I write concerning the emails that I receive from you on a regular basis. There is no doubt that much of the material is useful and insightful, however I would like to suggest that a little more balance is needed. For instance, while I don't condone armed conflict with Iraq and oppose both the US and Aust's plans for invasion, could you inform us of Iraq's contribution to global instability, its suppression of human rights etc.

Furthermore, the Israel/Palestinian matter is not so one-sided as you would suggest. No doubt the Israeli armed forces and government should be criticised for some policies and actions, but the other side is not simply a helpless victim. As we know from the NT, even the most severe provocation by enemies is no grounds for violence, for love of enemy is the distinctive social posture of the Christian. Therefore neither side can relapse into excuses for violence.

Please can we have a little more even handedness as you address both of these matters in the future.

Yours sincerely, D.G.

I find the repeated, blinkered, biased attacks upon Israel in these emails totally objectionable. I do not think that peace will be achieved through such thinking. Would Israel be responding in that way if it were not continually under severe threat from its neighbours and beyond? It is particularly distressing to see Christians swallowing with such gusto the copious Palestinian propaganda. It seems that Christians will not be happy until the last Jew has been massacred. Israel is guilty of resorting to violence but how about a little fairness and subjecting the enemies of Israel to the same self-righteous, moralising standards that are used to condemn Israel?

Please unsubscribe me from this list. B.T.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE RADICAL REFORMATION

Rev. Dr. Peter Matheson

The following text was graciously provided by Rev. Dr Peter Matheson and is his lecture delivered at the Catholic Theological College, Melbourne on 6 September 2001.

Rowan Williams has suggested that one of the marks of an integrated theology, a theology that 'gets it together', is that it keeps in dialogue with the history of Christian sanctity down the ages. That is what we are trying to do in a course such as this, to listen in to very different models of the Christian life not out of mere antiquarian interest, but in the hope that they can be generative for us, alerting us to new possibilities for our own walk in the faith. Not that we can ever imitate them in a copy cat way, for our own times and challenges are so profoundly different, but to nudge us to expand our horizons and surprise ourselves into quite new thoughts, perspectives, actions.

Tonight we turn the clock back some five centuries, to the early years of the sixteenth century. To reach our grandparents' generation we have to climb down two rungs of the ladder into the mine pit of the past, but to reach the period of Reformation, we have to keep on going down the ladder, another 25 rungs :-

- to a time when the largest city counted about 50,000 people
- when potatoes and of course tea and coffee were unknown
- when going to the dentist meant allowing a pliers wielding quack to wrench our your rotten tooth at the market, to the great entertainment of everyone else
- when 85% of the population lived on the land, and only one in twenty people could read a book.
- Few mobile phones around, and not many computers, but cheap pamphlets beginning to be available for the price of a hen. A communications revolution in train as a result of that new invention - printing.

1520. You live in a village. If you are a woman, you will feel worn out by forty. Unless you are a nun, you will be answerable to the men in your life, your father, then your husband. If you get beaten up when he is drunk, and there is a lot of domestic violence around you, you will hate it, but know that this is the way of the world. You will have borne a dozen children, though half will have died before they were four. Your dwelling will be a single room, with earthen floor and a hole in the roof for the smoke. Draughty in winter and stifling in summer. So you will live outdoors as much as you can, joining the other women in the communal washing of clothes, or spinning or just chatting. Your life may be simple, but you will love your children. You will know many songs and stories by heart, and look forward to the great feasts such as those at Candlemas with its' processions round the fields or St John the Baptist's day in midsummer when the bonfires flare up on the hills. You will have the same yearnings and worries as we have today.

If you lived in the towns your life would be much the same, because despite the walls around them, towns, often only 3000 people, leaked into the countryside. Many town-dwellers worked outside the town, in the surrounding fields or vineyards. If you were a man - until you were married and could inherit the farm or maybe workshop you too would be dependent on your father, and of course accountable to the village headman and the priest. Your diet is monotonous, mainly grain with some peas or beans. Few greens. Little fruit. Meat on the great feast days only.

But although people's lives were simple, memories were long and dangerous, especially where traditional rights to fish, use the forest, pasture cows or pigs were concerned. People remembered past wrongs and ancient victories. Where close studies have been made (e.g. in south-west Germany), we know that there was a strong tradition of communes running their own affairs. They did not like to be interfered with.

The word in German for community, **Gemeinde**, is the same as that for congregation. Everyone living in the village or the town was also in the church parish. Although only the men with some property of their own were in the full, legal sense members of the community, everyone was a member of the church. Here is a huge difference from today. **Society and church were coterminous**. Except for the very occasional Jew, every one was baptised at birth. So entry into secular community and the sacred community were one and the same thing. Godparents at baptism wove this social network tighter. Their role was to cement relationships, to hold society together. Marriage was arranged by your family.

And you belonged not only to the community of the living but to the communion of the saints, the living dead. You prayed for their souls in purgatory, as you trusted your own children would pray for yours when you died. Your piety, your spirituality had its rhythms, like the rhythm of the seasons, it wheeled round and round. It was part of you, and you were part of it. The church and the church yard were the centre of life, with the mill and the pub and the market-place.

The mainline Reformation of Luther and Zwingli, allied with the reform movements within Catholicism itself, represented a huge radical break with this world. These movements survived because they gained the support of prince and magistrate. Their move away from Latin to the vernacular, from a primarily sacramental piety to an evangelical one based on the Word, from a hierarchical understanding of the church to the priesthood of all believers was a devastating interruption of centuries of tradition. In a rigorous, some would say extreme way, the reformers focused on the centrality of Scripture, the centrality of personal faith, the centrality of Christ. We are still trying to understand why it caught fire and spread so rapidly, but two key factors were the prevalence of **anticlericalism**, which is more about the abuse of power than immorality, and to the fierce energies of **apocalyptic visions**.

Today, however, we are focusing on a much smaller movement which broke away from this Reformation, now

> Pilgram Marpeck was committed to nonviolence...he thought of the church more as an outpost of God's love whose mission was to actively radiate that love out into the world...In Marpeck's understanding, the followers of Jesus would not isolate themselves from the world as if trying to defend a citadel of purity. Rather, they would open the windows and the doors, show forth God's love to the world, and invite unbelievers to come in.
> - C. A. Snyder, ***From Anabaptist Seed***, 46.

Heinrich Bullinger, successor to Zwingli, wrote a book on the rise of the Anabaptist movement. In its appendix he quotes several Anabaptists on why they would not attend the state church. They answer that the church is a reconciled fellowship in which the participants share together the insights of the Spirit. The Anabaptists do not want to attend as spectators who just listen to a lecture and receive the sacraments. They cite 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, especially 14:23-26, where Paul expects various church members to take leading parts in worship services.

- The Robe of God, Myron Augsburger, 122

generally called the **Radical Reformation**. For centuries, Catholic and Protestant historians alike categorised these radicals as wild extremists, anarchists, unworthy of serious theological or historical attention. Over the last two generations this has changed. Some historians now describe them as left-wing, or counter-cultural, defying so many of the accepted norms of society that they almost invited persecution. Marxists have seen some aspects of their vision as genial anticipations of communism. Some American historians saw the radicals as foreshadowing long before their time the pluralist and tolerant understanding of faith and church which emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is some truth in all this. But there was no one radical reformation, no one spirituality. It varied enormously between groups. We used to think of it as a radicalisation of the thought, the theology of the Reformers. These days, however, what impresses us more is its' radicalisation of their **actions**. It was its **social** programme which provoked the ferocious hostility and repression by the secular powers, both Catholic and Protestant, supported by their respective churches. Hundreds if not thousands of largely gentle, innocent people were threatened, interrogated, tortured, flogged, including the women, exiled, drowned and burnt alive.

By focusing tonight on their **spirituality**, their worship, life-style, piety, we can perhaps link their theology and their social concerns. This may help us to see them as they really were, and not what our own theological or social presuppositions incline us to think. Particularly for those in the Catholic tradition, however, this is terra incognita, very strange territory. How does one get close to people who on the whole reject such basic pillars of Catholic faith as infant baptism or the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist? It is another world we are entering.

Let us begin with the very first German translation of the Mass which was by Thomas Muntzer, who has come to be known as the most theologically interesting of the radicals. His liturgical and pastoral interests at once alert us to the danger of dismissing him as a bloodthirsty extremist, as was done for centuries.

As a pastor in the little Saxon town of Allstedt in 1523 - 1524 he was concerned to provide his people with worship which they could understand, in German, not a magical mumbo jumbo, which was biblical, which could **train** them in the Christian way. "**Christ our saviour ordered the gospel to be preached to every creature**". There is a profound concern for the transparency of language.

Secondly, worship was to be real, yoked to **daily life**. Jeremiah's denunciation of the Temple as a den of robbers, if its' worship is accompanied by oppression and immorality is fundamental. The whole of life is under God. So worship, as for Erasmus, was a training ground, not a passive affair, every one, not just the intellectual or social elite, was to be educated in the way of holiness.

Thirdly, Muntzer like many of the radicals, was quite suspicious of professionalism in the church, of academics. **Je gelehrter, je verkehrter** was a popular proverb. We could translate it: the more intellectual, the less effectual. Rough, unsophisticated peasants, like Jesus' own disciples, were more likely to respond to Christ's call on them than the sophisticated with their clever rationalisations. We might talk of a very egalitarian understanding of worship. Werner Packull points out that the Anabaptists in Southern Germany constituted a '**hermeneutical community**'; with their vernacular translations of the New Testament. Thus ordinary members, often artisans, had the tools to interpret Scripture themselves, in ongoing discussions with others; they did not need a professional to mediate Scripture to them. Little lay Bible schools studied the Gospels together, or Paul's letters, and deduced from them what should be done about taking interest, or using weapons, or baptising children, or drinking in the pub. The Bible as a rule for life.

The exciting aspect of this vision of worship was that all God's saints, all the elect, would learn, at a visceral level, to plumb the depths of desolation and joy one found in the psalmist, the prophets, the evangelists. Parroting Scripture is not enough. This becomes a common note of radical spirituality. There are no superior or inferior Christians. Everyone, prince or peasant, man or woman, is called by baptism to an intensely **personal** faith.

Baptism, too, is seen in this very personal way, it is not:

- a rite of passage;
- sprinkling of water at the beginning of one's Christian life;
- or an objective communication of divine grace.

Its' death and resurrection quality signal rebirth, the death of the old life, a rising with Christ. It is in the desert of our souls that John the Baptist cries out, not in ancient Palestine. Radical spirituality is about the **Spirit** of Christ moving within one. Muntzer and Karlstadt and many others like him, draw on medieval mysticism and develop a fascinating experiment in **popular mysticism** here. Like a fish we have to risk diving down from the surface of our lives into the murky, dangerous depths. We have to plunge down, all God's people, not just the mystical few, into the very depths of despair and doubt, so that Christ can be born in the abyss of our souls.

There is an impatience with pious words. It is not enough for us to quote Scripture. We must live Scripture. Christ is not some painted puppet to be adored, a reference to the use of images of Christ or Mary or the saints in worship, but lives within us by the Spirit. He is not the sweet Christ of Luther who glibly forgives us, but also the bitter Christ, whose way of the Cross we have to follow. This emphasis on **discipleship**, costly, suffering discipleship, is another hallmark of the radicals. **If you**

You can no more win a war
than you can win an earthquake.
- Jeanette Rankin, first woman in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1917-1919, 1940-1942, (R-Montana)

will not taste the bitter Christ, you will eat yourself sick of honey (Thomas Muntzer). No cheap grace, we would say today.

This then is a deeply **interior** spirituality. Faith must be immediately experienced by every believer. Second hand faith, mediated by priest or pastor, or even by Scripture, is inauthentic, like a counterfeit coin. Each of us, has to work our way through to our own faith, guided by an earnest preacher, by personal engagement with Scripture, under the leading of the Spirit, perhaps through dreams. There are no short-cuts. There are similarities here to the rigorism, but also the ecstatic quality of Tertullian and the North African Church's understanding of a **Christianity of the Spirit** here.

However, this does not mean it is an individualistic, subjective spirituality. Quite the opposite. It is not tied to the institutions of the university and the princely court and a clergy-led church, but in many ways it picks up the strong communal traditions of the medieval period and combines them with the biblical theme of the **covenant**. The church, for Muntzer and the radicals, is not an institution. It is God's **covenant** people. Note the centrality of the Hebrew Bible. There is a profound sense of brotherhood and sisterhood, of belonging together. Just as the bread of the Eucharist consists of many grains, so we unite together into a Christian community. Sometimes they actually signed a covenant to stand by their faith and one another. Sometimes, as in the Hutterite tradition, they saw the need to share all their possessions in common. In the later Mennonite version, which became so influential in the Netherlands, and later in America, community discipline was all important. The whole Radical Reformation is an extraordinarily brave and imaginative series of experiments in **Christian community**.

So the Radical Reformation has very close links with what we have come to call in recent years the **communal reformation**. As early as 1495 there was pressure in south Tyrol, for example, for chaplains to read the Gospel in the vernacular (Packall 168). Throughout Switzerland and Southern Germany peasants and artisans believed they had the right to run their own affairs, to allot their own fields, to control the use of rivers and forests, and they wanted to appoint a preacher, not some absentee cleric in a distant town, but one of their own, living among them, preaching and modelling the gospel. They resented the new Roman Law, and the burden of tithes, one tenth of all their products, which had to be paid to lords or monasteries, which as far as they could see did little for them. They were often quite **anticlerical**. Jorg Zauring described parish priests as the most godless people under the sun, 'given to ... drunkeness, gluttony, whoring, and blasphemy.' (Packull 169). Initially many were attracted to reformers such as Luther and Zwingli because their message resonated with these traditional understandings of community and justice. When they heard the reformers talk of Christian freedom, they related this to their own deep concerns for **divine justice**, but were disappointed when they lined up with the powers that be.

The early radicals in Switzerland, where the movement had strong **revivalist** forms, sweeping through the villages, originally hoped that the whole community would be won over. A seal of their new understanding of a committed faith was adult baptism, which they did not regard as rebaptism. The term Anabaptist is a misnomer. Their reading of the New Testament convinced them that only believers should be baptised. But they did not want to set themselves apart from others, to separate themselves off. Indeed one of the most vibrant aspects of radical spirituality was its' **missionary** zeal, often at the cost of their lives, reaching out to others. Lofty as their vision of true Christian morality and piety was, they believed it was the calling of all Christians, not just a small minority. It was only later, after they met with furious persecution and rejection, that they came to see themselves as a minority, separated-off group. However, the very persecution spread the movement as they fled eastwards towards Austria, Moravia, the Tyrol.

They believed so fervently in community because they saw Christ as Lord over the whole of life, not just over one's inner spiritual being. Hence worship and the sacraments are not a cultic window into a transcendental world, they flow directly into daily life. You cannot share the bread and wine with your fellow-worshippers unless you share it in daily life. They used ordinary bread, not wafers, to emphasise that '**we are ... truly one loaf and body and true brethren to one another**.' Worship is the basis of their Christian communism. Holiness is wholeness. The Lord's Supper is an anticipatory pledge and symbol of what the whole of life can be. Breaking the bread, symbol of Christ's suffering, means a readiness for one's own body to be broken, to face persecution and even martyrdom. (Packull 206)

The **eschatological** note is strong. While the celebration of the Last Supper is an intensive heart-felt memorial of the last hours of Jesus, it is also **presentist**. Christ's coming is not a pious hope set in the far-distant future, It is already breaking into this world, and as in the Book of Acts, where the first disciples launched themselves into new patterns of sharing their possessions, sharing their beliefs with others, confronting persecution, so today.

To sum up, Baptism and the Lord's Supper for the radicals were not so much channels of divine grace in a stubbornly sinful world, as symbols of one's commitment to Christ's emergent kingdom. This is why they rejected the baptism of infants, or doctrines of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. These were false ways of objectifying Christ's redemptive power. The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are consecrated by the prayer of the whole congregation. It is as we respond in faith and life to Christ, the head of the Body, that we become conformed to him and as his members, and so body out the way of the Kingdom. "**It was the living Christ in his members which constituted the real presence**." (Packull 297)

When the Anabaptists spoke about salvation, they never talked about being "justified by faith." For them salvation was a life process that called for perseverance to the end. Walking the Christian way required self-sacrifice, active choosing the narrow way, and human effort. The phrase the Anabaptists used constantly was the "obedience of faith." Believing in the forgiveness of sins through Christ meant that one had gone through a process of repentance and conversion, and had set out to be a disciple, a follower of Christ in this life, in word and deed. And, the measure of the disciple and member of the Body of Christ was always Jesus Christ, the head.
- C. A. Snyder, ***From Anabaptist Seed***, 19.

> Concerns for self-fulfillment have blunted the concern for disicipleship. Today, feelings are important. The key question seems to be "How do you feel?" There is nothing wrong with an emotional experience of Christianity. Thank God for emotions. But Jesus did not call persons to self-centred spirituality! He calls to self-denial, to love for God, and to love for neighbour.
> - Paul M. Lederach, ***A Third Way***,106

For those in the Catholic tradition it may be helpful to see the radicals as similar to the Beguines, or in modern times Liberation Theology. It is as if the community ideals of monasticism were to be lived out in the everyday life of parents, artisans, farm-workers. Everyone was to renounce selfishness, violence, ambition, greed, status-seeking. Theologians often talk about the church as an **eschatological community**, but the radicals put this into practice, or tried to. If we remember our starting point, a stratified, integrated, hierarchical society, almost seamlessly interwoven with the church, this was an extraordinary utopian enterprise.

The Radical Reformation took two broad directions, as the opposition of church and society became implacable. One was the '**drop-out**' solution. One repudiated the world. Anabaptists would not take civic oaths, would not use weapons, would not attend conventional worship, with its apparent formal and undemanding Christianity. They began to worship on their own, to write their own hymns, to meet in one another's homes, or in fields or forests, where they would not be observed. This is the passivistic option. They were often biblical literalists. We might call them sectarians. In a society in which a common faith was the cement that held things together, even they looked like dangerous anarchists.

The other option was the **revolutionary** one, to make strategic alliances, to read the signs of the times. In 1524 - 1525 this flared up into the Peasants War, the biggest social upheaval in Western Europe before the French Revolution. Outraged at the crushing demands of wealthy rulers and clerics, city workers and peasants set out their demands for a truly Christian society. Serfdom, being a semi-slave, bound to one's master's land, was to be abolished, because Christ had spilt his blood for the freedom of the poor. Tithes, one tenth of one's good flowing into monasteries or churches or feudal lords, should go too. People should have the right to appoint their own preacher. Scripture alone, Old Testament as well as New Testament, was the law to be followed.

Here is a vision of the New Jerusalem, but not in the comfortably distant future. Radicals such as Thomas Muntzer offered theological leadership to the rebels. But though the hoped for revolution failed, the terrible defeat of the Peasants War did not lead to total capitulation. Many former rebels embraced a form of Anabaptism which combined the biblicism of the Swiss radicals with the apocalyptic visions of Thomas Muntzer and his disciples. There is a growing consensus that Anabaptism began within the radical currents of the early Reformation and the Peasants War (Laube). We can no longer separate out 'pure', peace loving Anabaptists from other radicals.

Many of the asylum seekers from persecution eventually ended up in the East, in Moravia. One of the fascinating aspects of these little groups, was that despite all the pain of exile, and endless quarrels among themselves they never lost their vision, they struggled to get back to **apostolic** Christianity, championing the community of goods as the real mark of true Christianity. Their interrogators noted that "**they hold all things in common ... heavenly or earthly goods, and one possesses as much as the other**." Hutterite communities, something like the modern Israeli kibbutz, developed. Some 20,000 lived in Moravia by the end of the century. They became rather legalistic and hierarchical. In the Netherlands in its moderate, even respectable Mennonite form, Anabaptism gradually won grudging acceptance numbering some 100,000 members by the seventeenth century.

What is the significance and challenge to us today of this Radical spirituality? I suspect some of you will respond more to some aspects than others. Some I find quite unappealing: the tendency to moralising and anti-intellectualism, the endless quarrels, a rather merciless militancy in some, a rather narrow otherworldliness in others.

But there is that quiet sincerity, ready to take the Jesus of the Gospels seriously. whatever the cost. The way they danced towards martyrdom. There is the simplicity of worship, flowing into a simplicity of life: wholeness and holiness; the base community ethos, reading their Scriptures contextually, then moving to action. The sense that the freedom of the Christian is not just some ethereal Platonic one, but has consequences for social and economic life.

When we recollect how circumscribed ordinary people's lives were - and most radicals were of very limited means - it is encouraging to see:-

- the grassroots **leadership** they threw up
- the wonderful hymns and liturgies they composed
- their stubborn visions of a better society, a just world.
  "There is no greater abomination on earth than the fact that no one is prepared to take up the cause of the needy" (Thomas Muntzer).
- encouraging, in our brassy society today to see their modest vision of the church as the community of the poor and the joyful.

> Rather than becoming enculturated and entrapped by the world's values of materialistic consumerism, of narcissistic self-aggrandizement, of solitary superficiality, and of ephemeral satisfaction, members of Christ's Body choose his simple lifestyle of sharing, his willingness to suffer for the sake of others, his communal vulnerability, and his eternal purposes. By continual hearing and study of God's Word we and our children are equipped with new visions of God's heart for our mission and ministry of communicating the Christian story, of enfolding our neighbours in God's love, of deliberately choosing and living out the alternative values of the kingdom of God...
> - Marva Dawn, ***Morning By Morning***, 40

- Their willingness to ask the difficult questions about baptism or ordination or the meaning of the Eucharist.
- To challenge absolutist authority of any kind, educational, clerical, political or scriptural.
- Their popular mysticism, one for ordinary folk in their ordinary lives. Their Christianity of the Spirit.

These little groups of exiles, folk with such minimal resources, give us extraordinary hope. They did not throw in the towel, as I for one feel inclined to do in the wake of the Tampa debacle. With their mysticism they push at the frontiers of what it is to be human, coram Deo. With their apocalypticism they push at the frontiers of what it is to be caringly political, coram Deo. Some of them, with their pacifism, their arguments for religious tolerance, their experiments in sharing goods and power, overcame the world in one way. Others, with their apocalyptic dreams, their struggles for social and political liberation, even in such distorted forms as the 1535 Munster experiment, overcame the world in another.

We are not sure, I think, as we walk up the rungs of the ladder again to our own day, that we would have been as courageous and visionary and generous. But it is rather nice to be one with them in the communion of saints.

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Rome creates a desert and calls it peace.
Tacitus

THE IMAGINATIVE WORLD OF THE REFORMATION

Peter Matheson,
Fortress Press, 2001

Matheson in his book *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* proposes that Reformation studies are seen as relevant only to those in the Church or in the academic world who have an interest in that area of study. To the rest of the modern world, the period of the Reformation is considered irrelevant at best, at worst the foundation for Christian religious intolerance. Nevertheless, Matheson insists that the Reformation can be seen as relevant by a much wider audience if the previously pursued approaches of doctrinal and social reduction investigation are discarded, and the approach of looking at the Reformation through the lens of imagination is adopted. Not only does he hope to demonstrate relevance, but also he claims that by pursuing the imaginative world of the Reformation the meaning of the Reformation can be recovered.

His introductory chapter "The Stirring of Imagination" looks at some previous interpretations of the Reformation, the doctrinal, social, institutional interpretations, acknowledging that any interpretation of the meaning of the Reformation must recognise their contribution. Yet Matheson is not convinced these interpretations provide an adequate or complete perspective. What is required to better understand the Reformation is to explore the question of how the worldview of people was moved from the late Medieval 'enchanted' world, to the Reformer's view of the world, especially their view of deference to authority, understanding of honour, and the place of people in the world.

It is Matheson's contention that the Reformers altered the worldview of the people of Western Europe by undermining and destroying the metaphors that underpinned the late Medieval worldview, and replaced them with alternative metaphors and allegories that better explained people's experience of reality. This struggle to reinterpret the world in which people lived was fought out not only in the written treatises of the academic theologians and preachers, but also in the art, the music, the pamphlets, the plays and the poetry of the common people. In this regard, Matheson builds on the work of Robert Scribner and others who have used these neglected sources of the Reformation and sought to understand the Reformation of the common people.

Matheson identifies two broad concepts as the seedbed for the radical new metaphors of the Reformers, apocalypticism and anticlericalism. Apocalypticism echoes and reinforces existing anxieties in a population, that the world is on the edge of a cosmic shift. The images Matheson presents are of a cosmic battle between good and evil, and of divine judgement. On the one piece of art are depicted the rival worlds either side of a dividing line. Anticlericalism was portrayed in the artwork of the period critiquing the accepted place of the clergy in society, particularly their status and roles. Frequently representatives of the peasants, the true poor of the land, are the ones who confront the 'idle, rich, fat' mendicant friars and monks. The clergy are being asked to justify their position in society, something unthinkable in the later-Medieval world. As Matheson rightly argues the older justifications for the superior status of the clergy no longer satisfied people. Priests had provided the sacramental link between the people and God, especially through the Mass, where they offered afresh the sacred victim and delivered grace to the people. However, the experience of church in the early sixteenth century was one of corruption where the clergy put grace on sale, fleecing the flock and making them the victims. This social critique was coupled with a new historical approach that facilitated a comparison of the present church with the primitive church of the New Testament, and the comparison challenged the symbolic power of the priest. For Matheson, 'Salvation and liberation were at stake'.

In the remaining chapters of the book, Matheson works out this theme, investigating the various images and metaphors that dominated the Reformation in art, literature, and music, demonstrating how the Reformers redefined both salvation and liberation.

In chapter 2 "A New Song or The Stripping of the Altars?" Matheson contends that the Reformation was "more a song or a symphony than a system, more lyric than lecture, more a leap of the imagination than one of those social restructurings we are so heartily sick of today." He maintains that the humanists provided the groundwork for the shift from dialectic to rhetoric, where the priority for "dialogue, satire, narrative history" led to an emphasis on story telling. It was in the telling of the story that the imagination develops the new metaphors that provided the interpretive foundations for the Reformation

> No one who remembers the scenes of Poland's shipyards as *Solidarnosc* took off, or around the Berlin Wall in 1989, will underestimate the importance of ordinary people finding their voice.
> -Peter Matheson,
> ***The Imaginative World of the Reformation***, p.9

worldview. The printer became the purveyor of the story as much as the artist, musician, and poet. The academic who wrote in a popular style using the images of the street was more able to connect with the people of the street. In the Reformation, there were many such writers. The images of light, of song, of pure streams of water, freedom, what constituted a 'holy space', the wall, and the image of Christ are seen as the dominant images used by the Reformers to reshape people's worldview. Behind these images was Scripture, a seemingly inexhaustible source of personalities, images and metaphors that were presented to people as being clear and self-explanatory, the chief personality being the Christ.

When speaking of the importance of Christ in the renewal of the worldview of people in the Reformation, Matheson notes a difference in the way the academic theologians approached the task and lay people. For the lay person he claims: "The process [of interpreting Scripture] is less a strictly logical one than an associative one that sets up a chain of images." The reader's context provides much of the content they attribute to the image of Christ. For a nobleman Christ is the supreme emperor, for the peasant it is the human Jesus who shares their poverty.

Utopias are the images explored in the third chapter, rural and urban utopias. There were many different utopian visions propounded during the Reformation, yet they had much in common. Matheson writes, "They offered exciting alternative visions for church and state, classical and biblical blueprints which focused the yearning for a new ordering of things, a recovery of the divine *ordo rerum*. A mark of the age is its concern for law and order, not in a reactionary, but in an anticipatory and transformative sense, the quest for a 'Christian order and brotherly unity.'" Images such as the "Babylonian captivity," covenant and its latent egalitarianism, creation and the image of God common to all people with its inherent egalitarians, the "sacred community" with its emphasis on service, accountability and responsibility rather than privilege, are explored. Matheson identifies both clerical and lay utopian visions, and recognises the multiplicity of lay versions of these utopias, the princely, artisan, peasant, professional, and patrician. He concludes that these utopian visions functioned more as partners than competitors, often with compromise the outcome. While this may have been the case in the early stages of the Reformation, by 1525 many of the lay utopian visions had been removed from the discussion and compromise with their ideals were no longer possible. The clerical, princely and patrician utopia visions had coalesced, the peasant and artisan visions would have to bide their time before they would be aired again.

The "dark-side" of the imagination of the Reformation is explored in chapter four under the title "Nightmare." What of the "divisiveness and destructive polemic" that accompanied the Reformation? If the Reformation is to connect again with this generation, then, Matheson insists, there must be honest engagement with the consequences of the Reformation, the witch-hunts, religious intolerance, fierce doctrinal disputes, religious massacres, and religious wars. According to Matheson, the imaginative world of the Reformation fed these destructive streams. The Word of God was the sword, the hammer, the fire, and the Reformers used it in their preaching against all who remained on the other side of the canvas, the old world order that must be changed if salvation was to be secured. However, the extravagance of the claims made by the new utopian visions was not delivered in the real world. People saw the failure to deliver as the result of opposition from those who did not share their vision. Accordingly, blame was apportioned to the opponents, and the boundaries around the vision strengthened. The vision becomes the Truth, and it cannot be challenged without attacking the essence of faith and salvation.

"The Contours of Daily Life" occupy Matheson's fifth chapter, where he explores how the Reformation provided new metaphors for the relationship of husband and wife, relationships between parents and children and in the extended family. Issues of marriage, family, education, illness, and death are explored by looking at specific families. These are not the families of the Reformers, but of "common" people, at least people educated enough to leave a written record that has survived. Argula von Grumbach and her family and her wider relationships provide much of the focus of this section. Matheson summaries Argula's achievements:

> She fought her way back from despair. She overcame personal tragedy and the collapse of many of her social and ecclesiastical dreams. There was an impressive concentration on the achievable. She won respect for herself as a woman, a lay exegete of Scripture, a mother, and a neighbour. She created space for family, friends, and clients to explore a better future. She left behind her little Lutheran enclaves and the memory of a life of quite exceptional courage, both of which were to survive the centuries, and she explored in an imaginative way new contours of personal life.

Argula's life provides Matheson with evidence of how people worked with the religious imagination and effectively redefined their life so that there was reduced dissonance between the utopian ideals and the lived reality.

In his final chapter, Matheson explores "The Spirituality of the Reformation," by which he means "the areas of worship, personal piety and life-style." Luther is cited as effectively influencing spirituality through his book of prayers for lay people. In it, Luther brushes aside the calculating piety "which weighed sins against merits" and replaced it with the axiom that all worship is bound up in honour of God. The negatives are inverted to become positives, do not slander becomes think the best of others. Luther shifts the focus from the external images to the internal contemplation of the heart, the kindly heart of the Father.

> One term often used by participants to describe the revolutionary events of 1524-5 was'dance', 'joining the dance'. Reformation was less a shopping-list of demands than the choreography for a new dance.
> -Peter Matheson,
> ***The Imaginative World of the Reformation***, p.9

This Anabaptist vision of church...is a vision whose time has come. As Mordecai said of Esther, "Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" (Esther 4:14b). I have begun to feel that God has preserved this vision for just such a time.

Wally Fahrer, ***Building On The Rock***, 16.

An image that dominated the Reformers New World, was the Word of God, the book itself took on the characteristics of symbol. Yet within this book, there was the possibility of many other metaphors. While patriarchy proved a dominant metaphor for the magisterial reformers, the metaphor of brotherhood and sisterhood dominated the Anabaptist groups. Distinctive spiritualities developed from the different metaphors.

The spirituality of the Reformation was deeply tied to the use of the vernacular, the language of the common people. It allowed the spirituality of the reformers to be grounded in the language and idiom of the common people they sought to influence. Such grounding in language facilitated the connection between the theologian and the people. There was also an aspect of lay communal spirituality, in the magisterial and radical reformations that may have contributed to the reshaping of spirituality. Matheson suggests that small group gatherings for bible study, neighbours visiting to encourage one another and such communal interactions have not been explored for their influence on the shaping of Reformation spirituality. The communal aspects of spirituality are more readily traced in the followers of the Radical Reformation, such as the Swiss Brethren, whose liturgy of the Lord's Supper makes explicit the covenant of mutual care for those who participate in the Supper. With some evident passion, Matheson comments on the suppression of the "communal reformation." "What was lost … was this egalitarianism in worship and the critique of a bookish faith; also lost was something of this sense of the continuum between worship and life, the sacred and the secular. For women, what was lost was a recognition that Baptism swept aside all the gender constructs of the threatened male mind. It is interesting to remember who kept the memory of Reformation women leaders alive – not the liberals, the modernists, or the super-orthodox, but the often derided Pietists!"

Images of God were modified. While still a God of judgement, justice, and power, he was also a kindly patriarch. Christ came closer to humanity. Children were encouraged to think of him as their friend. For the peasant Christ was represented as their Captain, who would lead them in their battle for a just society. Christ is sole mediator, and the clutter of saints, and demons, is removed, leaving a more pragmatic world where people are to "get on with it." The church became community more than hierarchy, yet the role of university trained pastors to whom the people deferred in matters theological came to dominate. Did the church become more male? While Matheson indicates that the jury is still out, the early evidence would suggest that it did.

Matheson concludes that people of the present may risk "the menace of real hope" evident in the imaginative world of the Reformation, and by implication not falter as the magisterial reformers who were worn down by "intransigent resistance and cruel circumstances." In Matheson's work, there is wistful recalling of the utopian dreams of the Reformation, for a less hierarchical society, for justice, for freedom, for equality, for caring community. Though not a call to establish such a utopia, he nevertheless encourages his readers to critique our world in the light of the imaginative world of the Reformation so that we might both appreciate the understanding of humanity that we presently have and seek the "grace at the heart of the universe."

It is a challenge we would do well to take up.

Reviewed by Graeme Chatfield

CHRISTIAN PACIFISM AND SEPTEMBER 11

by Duane K. Friesen

The following article is an edited version of a reprint from ***Mennonite Life***, September 2002. It is a revision of a presentation made by Duane Friesen in "Collegium: Conversations on Public Policy," sponsored by the Wilberforce Project of the Center for Christian Studies of Gordon College (and a number of other evangelical organizations) in May 2002. One of the sessions was entitled, "Three Views on War: Just War, Pacifism, Just Peacemaking." The assignment was, first, to set out an outline of a Christian pacifist position (which Friesen does below in the form of ten theses), and second, to reflect on how that position responds to the events of September 11. We print below the first part of Friesen's presentation. For the full version go to: http://www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/2002sept/2002sept_toc.html.

Theses on Christian Pacifism

1. Before Christians can begin reflecting on September 11, we must be clear about the meaning of Christian identity. The most important question is what "story" or narrative describes the lives we ought to live. Many "American" Christians uncritically combine their Christian identity and "American" identity. Their political position can be described with the sentence: "America was unjustifiably attacked, and we need to respond with violent force." The identity of the "we" is ambiguous. It is an "American" "we" that lacks clarity about what difference it makes for "Christians" to do moral reflection on politics. "American" Christians need a richer biblical narrative to define their identity, one which makes central to their identity the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Cross" and "flag" represent symbols of competing loyalties. Many Christians have confused these two identities since Constantine. This is not to say that there are not also overlapping values between these symbols. It is just that since September 11 it is evident that many American Christians lack the tools to discriminate how these symbols also compete with each other. This is due, I think, to an inadequate Christology, which moves me to my second thesis.[1]

2. Christians need an orienting centre for their lives and a guide for practice that is grounded in a rich, thick description of Jesus Christ: his life, teaching, example, death and resurrection. Jesus Christ is God's anointed one (Messiah), commissioned to bring God's kingdom or rule into the world. The kingdom of

We must be the change
we wish to see in the world.

- Mahatma Gandhi, ***Saint Benedict On the Freeway***, 115

> The modern West...believing that central heating, hamburgers and sitcoms are enough to anchor existence, was caught asleep on duty by the revolutionary new phenomenon of a worldwide terrorist network. ...What did the nightmarish violence of September 11 reveal about the nature of contemporary Western society?...for it to have drawn such brutality shows just how far we have abused our place on earth. As honoured guests at this bountiful feast, we have gorged the food, got drunk on the wine and fouled the white linen.
> - Peter Rogers, "Words and War", ***The Weekend Australian***, Sept. 7-8, 2002 , Review, 8-9.

God represents the wholeness God intends for the entire cosmos. Jesus taught his disciples to pray that the kingdom of God might come on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10). The kingdom entails liberation from bondage to powers that are destructive of life. One vivid story of this transformation is Zacchaeus's encounter with Jesus. His repentance turned his life in a different direction that led to the redistribution of his wealth. He is liberated to become a person who practices justice by a redistribution of his resources to those in need. This brings salvation to his house today, not some distant future. Jesus identifies with or stands in solidarity with the marginalized. Those treated as outcasts in the social context of Jesus' time were the very ones for whom Jesus had compassion (poor, widows, sick, Samaritans, women, those labelled "sinners.") Jesus' call to "seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) "means the restoring of just relations among us personally and societally, and with God. It points to God's gracious initiative in delivering us from sin, guilt, and oppression into a new community of justice, peace and freedom and our obedient participation in God's way of deliverance."[2] Jesus offers a model, both in his own life and in his teachings, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount, of how to confront evil non-violently. Instead of legitimating the dominant culture's view that pathological evil must finally be confronted with violence, Jesus offers a creative third way, an alternative to the use of violent force and passive resignation to evil. A follower of Jesus is committed to a pilgrimage of seeking concrete initiatives within the culture where we live that can creatively transform conditions of injustice and violence into occasions of justice and peace.[3]

3. Christians need a Christology that integrally links Christ to politics. Many Christologies define Christ in ways that make Him irrelevant to politics.[4] We need a Christology that can provide a vivid picture of a Christ who is not disembodied from cultural formation, but who is concrete enough to provide leverage for assessing how we should engage the particularities of culture. The Christology of many Christians conveniently relegates Jesus to a "separate" sphere of life (the spiritual) or to the afterlife as an answer to their special concern about eternal life. Jesus is disconnected from culture, from living life responsibly before God in the world. When Christ is relegated to the "spiritual" or salvation deferred beyond the grave, Christians tend uncritically to legitimate the dominant political and economic system, since Jesus is defined as "acultural" and therefore irrelevant to culture. As a consequence, Christians derive their norms for the engagement of political issues from norms borrowed from the general culture. The creative contribution Christians can make to the larger culture "to seek the peace of the city where they dwell" is lost because Christians are absorbed into the assumptions of the prevailing culture that assumes the use of violent force is the only way to establish a secure and peaceful world.[5]

4. The church is called by God to be a people among the nations. The centre of history is not empire (Babylon, Rome, Germany, the United States), but a people God has chosen from among the nations to be a light to all the peoples of the world. The church should have a cosmopolitan vision, not a provincial view of life linked to Western or American interest. There is a fundamental continuity in the central story of the Bible beginning with God's call to Abraham to leave country and kindred to be a "blessing to the nations" and the call of God's anointed, Jesus, to be a light to the world. The good news of God's love cannot be seen or heard by Muslims when the church's mission in the world is linked with the imperial power of the United States, when God's blessing is linked with the terror of American military power in Afghanistan, the support of Israeli military occupation, or a plan to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein. The church in the West is called to be a non-violent "Christian" presence in the world, to work in behalf of the poor and oppressed in concert with the churches in the Middle East in countries like Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt. Like the crusades, the church's support for the U.S. military effort is a setback to Christian mission, a contradiction to the heart of the Christian Gospel that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." (John 3:16f)

5. A biblically and theologically grounded pacifism regards seeking justice as central and integral to a non-violent philosophy of life. The last fifty years have seen a radical transformation in the understanding of the integral relationship of justice and non-violence in a biblically and theologically based pacifism. The reigning paradigm of fifty years ago of traditional Mennonite nonresistance and Reinhold Niebuhr's view of non-resistance as passive withdrawal from politics has been completely reassessed. The old view that to follow Jesus entails an apolitical quietistic withdrawal from society has been transformed by active non-violent peacemaking grounded in a political Jesus who engages the principalities and powers. It is not possible here to trace the process of this transformation except to say that it has been mutually shaped and reinforced from two sides: by the practice of non-violent peacemaking and social transformation (Gandhi, King, churches engaged in social action), and by biblical and theological reflection.[6] The vision of justice I endorse is holistic and social. It should be distinguished from the narrative tradition of justice rooted primarily in Lockean and Enlightenment views that emphasize individual autonomy and freedom, the protection of private property, and the right to exploit the environment, and narrow views of human rights as primarily the protection of individual liberties like freedom of speech and association. It is this view of justice that Stanley Hauerwas often critiques as if this were the only view of justice. The biblical tradition of covenant justice with its emphasis upon social solidarity and its holistic vision of salvation is carried on more adequately in Catholic traditions of social responsibility, in early free-church Puritan traditions of religious liberty and covenant responsibility, in some secular versions of democratic socialism, and in comprehensive visions of human rights that include political, economic, cultural, and environmental considerations.[7]

6. The use of violent force as a "last resort" to secure justice creates conditions that inhibit the achievement of justice. Too often we work under the false assumption that, if we cannot find a non-violent solution to a conflict, the use of violent force will take care of the problem. The following statement is typical of the reasoning of most Christians. "War may be necessary under certain circumstances to protect the innocent and limit even great evils." The problem is that this "exception" tends to become the rule for three reasons.

A. Because we must be prepared for the exception, enormous intellectual and economic resources are committed to preparing for that possibility. With regard to the church, once it has granted the "exception," it has morally compromised itself so much that it lacks the moral leverage to resist the preparation for war. Implicitly the church has accepted the assumption that war is inevitable, and since it is inevitable, we must support the preparation for that possibility.

B. "Last resort" thinking cuts short imaginative thinking and creative action to find alternative ways to make peace. It is easy to become lazy in our thinking, simply to mouth the platitudes of policy makers "that there was nothing else we could do" — that we either had to engage in the use of violent force or let things continue as they are (do nothing).

C. "Last resort" use of force continues rather than breaks the cycle of violence. It reinforces the concentrations of power in the hands of those who have the money and resources to secure these weapons, and undermines the very democratic structures of civil society that are one of the key factors in the prevention of war.[8]

7. Though both pacifist and just war advocates seek justice, both traditions cannot guarantee that justice can be accomplished. Both traditions should make more modest claims about their ability to guarantee success. Both traditions involve faith visions about how to "secure" a future in which justice is more likely to be achieved. The pacifist commitment to non-violence is ultimately grounded in an eschatology of trust in the victory over evil of the non-violent God revealed in Jesus' life and teachings, death and resurrection. Both the claims of just war theorists to secure justice through the "last resort" of armed force and the pacifist claim to secure justice through non-violence must guard against the arrogance of exaggerated claims. Both positions ultimately rely on an "eschatology" of some vision about the future and how we get there. Neither position can guarantee success. In fact, some conflicts may yield to no available human solution that we can figure out in the short run. When societies have been addicted to hatred and violence for so long, we may not be able to avoid tragic violence and suffering.

> It is useless to try to adjudicate a long-standing animosity by asking who started it or who is the most wrong. The only sufficient answer is to give up the animosity and try forgiveness, to try to love our enemies and to talk to them and (if we pray) to pray for them. If we can't do any of that, then we must begin again by trying to imagine our enemies' children who, like our children, are in mortal danger because of enmity that they did not cause.
>
> - Wendell Berry, "A Citizen's Response to the National Security Strategy of the United States of America", ***Orion***, March/April 2003

As with persons who get lung cancer from smoking all their lives, no immediate solution can save them from death. God does not prevent the tragedy or the judgment that humans suffer as a consequence of sinful choices. Christians, however, are not fatalistic. They rather live by an alternative hope grounded in the conviction that the Lamb who was Slain is ultimately the One who is Lord of History. It is a vision of the non-violent cross as the way God chooses to overcome evil.[9]

8. In a book I wrote in 1986, I defined the brand of Christian pacifism I am describing here as "realist" pacifism.[10] By that I mean a pacifism in a twofold sense:

A. pacifism that is political and culturally engaged; and

B. a pacifism that takes seriously the nature of human sinfulness.

I want to distinguish the biblical pacifism I am setting out here from liberal pacifism earlier in the past century which often lacked realism because it was based on naive and optimistic assumptions about human nature and human institutions. We need to "name" the principalities and powers. We need to be realistic about egoistic self-interest, pride and self-aggrandizement, the masking of evil behind high and mighty sounding moral categories which divides the world between the good (our side), and the evil (their side). We need to "unmask" the flaws in our own behaviour and institutions, and acknowledge our need for repentance. I want to say emphatically that no amount of "sin" of our own nation can justify the attacks of September 11. Yet we must also say that America cannot wash its hands of what happened to us: our callous indifference to Afghanistan when we abandoned their war torn country after they had served our self-interest in our struggle (with help from Osama bin Laden) with the Soviet Union; the narrow self-interest which led to the support of Saddam Hussein against Iran in a war that killed a half million persons on each side, arms we supplied which then were turned against Kuwait; our calculating self-interest in the Gulf War to protect our "thirst" for oil, and the ensuing hostility among many Saudi Arabians for placing American troops on their soil. One cannot begin to name all the issues surrounding our unbalanced policy with regard to Israel/Palestine. America is the most powerful military force in world history, which (since the demise of the Soviet Union) is unchecked by any other power in the world. We live in an extremely dangerous time, not just because of the threat of terrorism, but because of the dangers of unchecked American power in the world, and because of our own pride, arrogance, and indifference to the interests and needs of the rest of the world.

9. In the light of the above considerations, Christians are called to be culturally engaged in non-violent processes that move in the direction of just peacemaking. The "just peacemaking" model which Glen Stassen will outline on our panel is fully consistent with my understanding of Christian pacifism. It is an extension of the Christian pacifist commitment to "make peace" non-violently in ways that are politically relevant and practical. I will not spell out these practices here, except to say that they fall into three general categories:

A. Concrete initiatives that introduce into the political process practices that break the cycles of violence and move parties in conflict toward the peaceful resolution of conflict;

B. Practices that address injustice, foster communities that support human rights in a broad sense (economic, political, cultural), and further just and sustainable development that is

> The gospel gives us only one scenario in which violence is redemptive, and that's one in which the good guy is tortured to death with nails and thorns and the bad guys get on with their lives.
> -Kathryn Kingsbury, ***The Mennonite***, 7 January 2003, 17.

compatible with regard for the larger earth community that sustains life on planet earth;11 and

C. Practices that enhance cooperative forces in the international system, strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations and international courts, and build grass roots peacemaking groups in civil society that link people across cultural and national boundaries (INGO's and NGO's).12

10. Christians are called to "witness" to the powers that be, in the light of the framework I have outlined above. This witness needs to take into account the function of governmental authorities to protect the good and restrain evil (Romans 13). The sword symbolizes the judicial authority of government. The "sword" function of government does not necessarily mean the approval of particular applications of the use of force such as war or capital punishment. Paul's claim in Romans is that nothing in the world, including the "sword," falls outside of God's providential ordering. Even the freely chosen wrath of people can work to serve God's purposes in the universe, even though God does not approve of wrathful behaviour. For instance, by crucifying Jesus, Pilate unwittingly served God's cause of human salvation. In our contemporary world the use of violent force to solve problems is paradoxical. While it may provide some limited kind of order or accomplish limited short-range goals, the resort to armed force, even in defence of just causes and for the sake of order, perpetuates the cycle of violence. A Christian witness to governmental authority, then, will be founded on two principles:

A. a vision or model of the good society that grows out of a vision of the Kingdom of God and its embodiment in the church (non-violence and justice); and

B. a commitment to a process of analogical thinking that draws norms from that vision for how institutions (government) beyond the church (where the "sword" is operative and assumed) might work and be structured.13

It is within the framework of this second point that I find just war categories to be useful as a set of guidelines for governments who do not start with the presuppositions of Christian pacifism. As a Christian pacifist I use the categories of just war reasoning to critically reflect on U.S. policy. Is there a just cause, is the use of violent force a last resort, are the aims of the war clearly stated to one's opponent and does the opponent know what to do to prevent war, is there a likelihood of success, is the war conducted under the auspices of a legitimate authority, does the overall good outweigh the evil that is likely to result from war, and are the principles of non-combatant immunity being protected? In the case of the response to September 11, I have come to the conclusion that only two (at the most) of the categories of just war can be met.14 What I observe is a wide disparity of viewpoints among Christians who use just war categories. I think the differences here are determined by complex factors (e.g. how one interprets the "facts"), and by the narrative framework within which just war categories are used. If just war categories are utilized within the framework of "American" identity and U.S. self-interest, then it is much easier to justify the use of violent force. If, however, just war is viewed within the context of central themes in the Christian narrative that I set out above, then there is a much more stringent "burden of proof" that is applied by Christians and there is much more agonizing struggle with whether this war against terrorism can be justified.

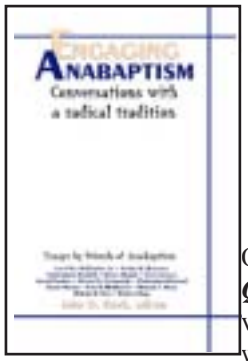
Notes

1. Much of the language of this first thesis appears in "September 11 and Just War Theory," a chapter authored by Duane Friesen in a book edited by E. Morris Sider and Luke\ Keefer, Jr., A Peace Reader (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Publishing House, 2002).
2. Glen Stassen, Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace\ (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), p. 41.
3. Walter Wink, Engaging the Powers, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992). See especially\ chapter nine, "Jesus' Third Way: Nonviolent Engagement," pp. 175-194.
4. For the best argument of how a view of Jesus based on a careful biblical analysis\ supports a "political" Jesus and is directly relevant to social issues, see John Howard Yoder's classic statement in The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).
5. For a "bodied" Christology which views Christ as establishing an alternative cultural vision within culture rather than "against" culture, as H. R. Niebuhr would have put it, see Duane K. Friesen, Artists, Citizens, Philosophers: Seeking the Peace of the City (Scottdale, PA:\ Herald Press, 2000).
6. Language in thesis five comes from my article, "The Moral Imperative to Do Justice Within Christian Pacifism: Tensions and Limits," Mennonite Quarterly Review 76 (January\ 2002), pp. 63-71.
7. See the introductory chapter by Duane K. Friesen, Glen Stassen, and John Langan in\ Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1998), p. 13.
8. Much of the language of this thesis comes from my article, "The Moral Imperative to Do Justice and Christian Pacifism: Tensions and Limits," in The Mennonite Quarterly Review (January 2002). On the connections of democracy and tendency of nations not to go to war see Bruce Russett's argument in Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
9. Much of the language of this thesis comes from my article in The Mennonite Quarterly Review, op. cit.
10. Duane K. Friesen, Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict: A Realist Pacifist Perspective (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986).
11. One of the best analyses of these issues, and theological argument about how to address the threat to the earth is Larry Rasmussen's Earth Community, Earth Ethics (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).
12. Stassen, ed. Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices, op. cit.
13. Duane K. Friesen, chapter seven, "The Dynamics of Dual Citizenship," of Artists, Citizens, Philosophers: Seeking the Peace of the City, op.cit., pp, 224f.
14. See "September 11 and Just War Theory," a chapter authored by Duane Friesen in Keefer, A Peace Reader, op. cit. In this article I argue that "just cause" and "legitimate authority" are the only two criteria that are met. The principle of noncombatant immunity has been severely compromised. As of December 2001, estimates are that at least as many civilians had died in Afghanistan as a result of U.S. military action as had died in the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11.

> Naturally the common people don't want war, neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are going to be attacked and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.
> - Reich Marshall Herman Goering at the Nuremberg trials

RESOURCES / REVIEWS

ENGAGING ANABAPTISM: Conversations with a Radical Tradition



EDITED BY JOHN D. ROTH, HERALD PRESS 2001

This book had its origin in the October 2000 edition of the ***Mennonite Quarterly Review***. Sixteen scholars from a variety of denominational perspectives were invited to reflect on how their theological or ethical perspectives have been shaped by an engagement with the Anabaptist tradition.

The result is a rich engaging read. The result is a not dense academic tome but an engaging read which had me saying yes this is where I am, this with all its limitation is my home. The list of contributors includes a range of scholars from Reformed, Anglican and Baptist backgrounds whose work has enriched and encouraged me over a long period of time

While length and style of the articles varies greatly, there are some interesting stories and "testimonies" of spiritual and intellectual journeys that provide an occasion for some serious theological reflection. A particularly good example of this is provided in the final chapter by Michael Cartwright in his reflections on "Sharing the House of God: Learning to Read (Scripture) with the Anabaptists".

The contributors include a couple of people likely to be known personally to some readers of this newsletter. An edited version of Chris Marshall's contribution was published a couple of years back in this newsletter while Stuart Murray-Williams has provided much encouragement to the network of Anabaptists down-under in his recent visits.

There are some wonderful theologians represented here: Stanley Hauerwas, the late Jim McLendon Jr, Christopher Rowland and Richard Hayes to mention just a few.

What stands out from this collection? One observation and a question.

- The wide ranging impact of the work of John Howard Yoder over the past decades working and fermenting like a yeast below the level of visibility to work a theological revolution across denominational and confessional boundaries. Yoder did not provide the answers for anyone – his impact was in changing the questions people were asking.
- The future for Anabaptist influence lies in its impact outside its traditional home. The question is can its practice of discipleship in community survive this translation?

REVIEWED BY DOUG HYND

PROPHECY AND PASSION: Essays in Honour of Athol Gill

EDITED BY DAVID NEVILLE

AUSTRALIAN THEOLOGICAL FORUM ADELAIDE, 2002

It is perhaps a testimony to the pervasive influence and impact of Athol Gill that it was a shock to check the date of his death and realise that a decade has passed. Still ten years seems an appropriate anniversary on which to not only celebrate his life and witness but to provide an opportunity for those who were influenced by him to share the results of that influence particularly in terms of the results of their scholarly work.

This volume falls into a number of distinct sections, each one of which will have its own distinct appeal and audience. Not everyone I suspect will want or be able to read the entire volume through from cover to cover. The material ranges widely from sermons reflecting on Athol's life and witness to technical New Testament scholarship to some material on questions of mission and witness.

I am not a New Testament scholar and cannot comment with any authority on the scholarship that is reflected in this volume. That said, my view as a layperson is that the technical New Testament essays included in this volume are substantial in argument, provocative in their conclusions and significant for the life and witness of the Christian community.

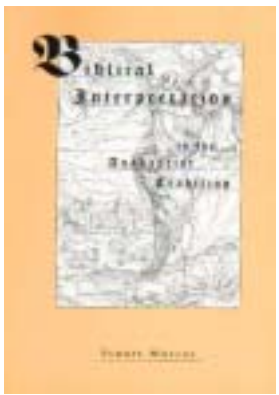
The personal tributes to Athol are powerful in their rendering of his character and leadership. Even those who had little or no direct contact with him will I think be intrigued and moved by the accounts that are included in this volume.

Beyond the tributes to his life and witness I found myself engaged by the piece by Thorwald Lorenzen "The Crucified Christ as the Lord of the Church: theological Reflections on 1 Corinthians 11-14." A wide ranging debate within the Australian churches is badly needed on the issues raised in this piece and the articles on mission and evangelism by Ched Myers, John Hirt and Ross Langmead. I will try and return to the issues raised in these articles in a future issue.

The editor David Neville has done a great job in getting this anthology together. It is a major contribution to Australian theological scholarship. All bar two of the contributors are Australians, writing on themes related to Christology, the social meaning of the Gospels and missiology.

REVIEWED BY DOUG HYND

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE ANABAPTIST TRADITION



STUART MURRAY

PANDORA PRESS 2000

The late twentieth century has seen the unexpected emergence of scholars drawing on the Anabaptist tradition as insistent interlocutors in the theological conversation in the English speaking world, not so much providing new answers as challenging the way the questions are asked. After five centuries of being written off into the margins of history, of discipleship lived in faithful peaceable witness and willingness to suffer, it may just be that their time has come.

The influence of the Anabaptist tradition on the wider Christian community has certainly become increasingly visible over the last thirty years. This influence can be seen, not only in the work of Christian theologians associated with the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations, of whom the most outstanding and influential is John Howard Yoder, but also in the publication of ethicists and New Testament scholars from a wide

range of denominational affiliations. Figures such as Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Hayes, Chris Rowland and Richard Mouw come to mind. Less well known but emerging scholars such as Chris Marshall, David Toole, Michael Baxter and Michael Cartwright suggest a second wave of impact.

The book under review by Stuart Murray is a further witness to the interest in, and the influence of, the radical reformation. The author embarked on the study that underlies this book with questions raised over years of engagement with urban mission in inner city London and influenced by personal involvement in both the charismatic movement and with the Anabaptist tradition embodied in the witness of contemporary Mennonites. This personal engagement and pastoral concern by the author is signalled in his introductory chapter.

Anabaptist approaches to biblical interpretation hammered out in the socio-political, ecclesiological and hermeneutical turbulence of the early sixteenth century, offer insights to those at the threshold of the twenty-first century who are facing similar turbulence and similar issues. (p.12)

Murray describes the scope of his work as follows: "*This study examines how Scripture was used and interpreted in the formative years of the Anabaptist movement (roughly 1525-1560). We will listen to the hermeneutical debates that took place within the movement and between Anabaptists and their contemporaries and try to distil the principles comprising Anabaptist hermeneutics."* (pp.12-13)

The study proceeds by setting out the argument that despite their diversity, the Anabaptists had a coherent and distinctive hermeneutic. The balance of the study then explores six important facets or principles of the Anabaptist hermeneutic:

- The self-interpreting character of the Bible
- A Christocentric focusing on Jesus, not on a doctrine about Jesus
- The relationship between the Old and New Testaments
- The relationship between Spirit and Word
- The role of the congregation as a hermeneutic community
- The role of obedience and application in hermeneutics

The study concludes with a chapter on "Anabaptism as a Conversation Partner". Murray develops this chapter around the conviction that:

Anabaptism can make its chief contribution to contemporary hermeneutics as a conversation partner offering fresh historical perspectives on issues that were debated in the sixteenth century but remain unresolved centuries later and suggesting surprisingly relevant approaches to issues emerging in recent decades.(p.220)

Specifically Murray suggests that:

While various movements might find interaction with Anabaptist hermeneutics helpful, we will examine only two here: Latin American Liberation theology and the charismatic movement. Several contemporary hermeneutical issues could also benefit from an Anabaptist contribution, but we will explore just one issue, the designation of the hermeneutic community as the locus of interpretation. (P.220)

I came to this book and the issues it explores with the benefit of some understanding of the history of the emergence of the Anabaptist movement in the early sixteenth century and some familiarity with its major figures. Anyone without this background may have some difficulty as Murray takes a basic level of knowledge about the movement for granted and deals with the sources and the key figures contributions solely as they relate to his project.

It is relevant in this context to note that many of the figures whose contribution is brought to view in this study died early, at the instigation of, if not directly at the hands of their fellow believers. To suggest the possibility of a conversation which brings together the spiritual descendants of both sides of those historical controversies from the side of those who were the victims of violence and oppression is surely to extend an offer, however indirectly, of forgiveness.

Given that reservation about the need for a reasonable level of historical knowledge of the radical reformation, this is a relatively accessible work which makes a fresh and useful contribution to hermeneutical theory and practice. Murray is particularly helpful in opening up to view the close connection between our practice of ecclesiology, the call to discipleship, and our interpretation of Scripture.

REVIEWED BY DOUG HYND

PANDORA PRESS U.S. MARKS FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND BECOMES CASCADIA PUBLISHING HOUSE

Pandora Press U.S., founded in 1997 by former Herald Press book editor Michael A. King, is celebrating its five-year anniversary and marking it with a name change to Cascadia Publishing House, whose Internet based of operations is http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com.

RUTH, JONAH, ESTHER

Believers Church Bible Commentary Series

EUGENE F. ROOP, HERALD PRESS, 2002

"Eugene F. Roop's work on Ruth, Jonah, and Esther is outstanding. Combining the best of recent scholarship with a high regard for the authority of Scripture, Roop makes us all grateful that these three short books have been preserved in the canon for our inspiration and edification." -Daniel I. Block, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Eugene F. Roop focuses on three of the Bible's most compelling short stories, Ruth, Jonah, and Esther. He draws attention to distinctive narrative characteristics of these three magnificent dramas. Such scrutiny opens new vistas of interpretation that can undergird the faith, life, and neighbourly relations of the church. Each narrative features intense interaction among the characters and, in the case of Jonah, with God. As we enter the world of these struggles and events, Roop hopes we will experience in the narratives something of their sorrow and laughter, hope and faithful loyalty, and grasp of God's mercy and grace.

The Author . . .Eugene F. Roop is president of Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Indiana, and Wieand Professor of Biblical Studies there. He has served as a pastor in the Church of the Brethren and is author of several books, including ***Genesis*** in the BCBC series.

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DreamSeeker MAGAZINE

Welcome to the seventh issue of *DreamSeeker Magazine*, Winter 2003, volume 3, number 1, founded to link readers interested in attending to "voices from the soul" with Anabaptist-related writers committed to exploring from the heart, with passion, depth, and flair, their own visions and the issues of the day. DSM MAIN PAGE: http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/dsm/

JESUS IN BACK ALLEYS:
THE STORY AND REFLECTIONS OF A CONTEMPORARY PROPHET

Hubert Schwartzentruber

Cascadia Publishing House

John Stoner says, "This is a dangerous book. If you are comfortable in your prejudices and unshakable in your dogmas, you might be well advised to avoid reading it. It could change you . . . and then what?"

Hubert Schwartzentruber's life has spanned dramatic extremes: farming near Lake Huron; ministry in the St. Louis, Missouri Pruitt-Igoe towers; denominational service; pastoring in diverse congregations; welcoming the tears of a young girl homesick at camp who said, "They won't let me cry." But one thing has remained constant: his love for the church and his prophetic desire that it bring justice among both the broken and those who break them.

"This gentle pastor who loves John Deere tractors, polishes pieces of colourful stone as gifts, listens long and hard, writes love poems to his wife Mary—this man offers few pat answers. He simply invites us to join the walk, in the company of Jesus and of the wounded ones in this world." —Mary Lou Cummings, in the Foreword

"While he exhibits a heart filled with love and care for the church and those he believes are the downtrodden, Hubert also addresses controversial issues with the forthrightness of an Old Testament prophet. Should be required reading for seminary students before entering ministry. " —Ron Sawatsky, Souderton, Pennsylvania, was Moderator of Mennonite Church Canada 1996-2002

"The author's life is a message of Christian growth, from the faith of an Amish country boy to a prophet taking on urban streets. His life exemplifies how we are to walk with the poor and the oppressed of the city; how we are to hold together the preaching of the gospel with incarnating it in everyday living; how to speak for justice for the poor, for women in church and society, for homosexuals and against racism of every kind. Schwartzentruber manifests a prophetic understanding of the weaknesses of the church and its glorious possibilities. I stongly endorse this publication." —David Schroeder, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is a retired pastor and scholar who has preached and taught extensively within the Conference of Mennonites and Canada as well as the larger church.

* Explore this book and see options at:
http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/jib/jib.htm

WEBSITES

- http://www.jesusradicals.com/dread/blog/

Jesus Radicals News Blog – news stories from a radical Christian perspective.

- http://www.zmag.org/cartoons/postcards/main.htm

ZNet Postcards is a collection of cartoons taken from the 'ZNet Toons' archive for FREE download and print.

- http://members.optusnet.com.au/~dbelling/Read.html

Sharing the Stories - Here is a selection of stories created in Australia over the years with different age groups for you to read and retell from Daryll Bellingham, Storyteller, P.O. Box 5300, West End, Q4101, Brisbane, Australia

- http://www.ecapc.org/mainframe.asp

This website is intended to provide a platform for discussion, to encourage the dissemination of ideas and concepts, and to become a powerful communications tool for the Every Church A Peace Church concept.

- http://www.ekklesiaproject.org/webzine.html

The Ekklesia Project Online webzine is the literary product not of an editorial staff, nor a solitary commentator, but of a school of disciples. It combines the speed and variety of a web magazine with the focus and coherence of the Ekklesia Project.

INTERFACE
A Forum for Theology in the World

Australian Theological Forum
PO Box 504 Hindmarsh SA 4007 www.atf.org.au

Interface is published twice a year and describes itself as *"... an ecumenical and interdisciplinary theological journal dealing with issues of a social and cultural nature."* Each issue is devoted to a specific theme and engages contributors from a wide diversity of theological backgrounds as well as practitioners from the area under consideration.

In the latest issue of *Interface* entitled "Refugees: justice or compassion," policy, politics, theological and ethical reflection have been brought together to provide a substantial contribution to reflection on the issue of refugees in the Australian Christian community.

Several of the theological pieces are particularly outstanding:

- Andrew Hamilton SJ, who teaches Systematic Theology at the United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne probes thoughtfully around the question of the importance of asylum seeker detention for theological reflection and teaching. Alan Nichols provides a focussed account of his understanding of the biblical grounding of human rights and its relevance to refugee policy.
- Gordon Preece, known to many readers of this newsletter as a lecturer at Ridley College, is provocative and disturbing in his contribution "We are all Boat People: an exposition of a Biblical view". Themes from Israel's history and their continuation in the life and teaching of Jesus are opened up by Gordon and set against the questions raised by recent Australian government policy on refugees.
- There is much else of value and interest in this collection for Christians who are concerned to have their discipleship practice shaped by a thoughtful and informed reflection on Scripture and the Christian tradition particularly when conflict with the powers that be seems unavoidable. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Doug Hynd

AROUND THE NETWORK

AAANZ ACADEMIC RECOGNISED INTERNATIONALLY

Chris Marshall's recent book ***Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment*** has been named in the 2002 Outstanding Academic Titles list produced annually by the leading American book review journal ***Choice***. The journal reviewed over 6500 titles last year, in 54 academic disciplines, and from that number selected less than 10% as 'the best of the best'.

The journal describes the Outstanding Academic Title list as "a prestigious list of publications [that] reflects the best in scholarly titles and attracts extraordinary attention from the academic library community."

Last year ***Beyond Retribution*** was also listed in the Top Ten Books for Parish Ministry by the American Academy of Parish Clergy and was nominated, unsuccessfully, for the coveted Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

Dr Christopher D Marshall teaches New Testament studies at the Tyndale Graduate School of Theology in Auckland, New Zealand.

DISARMING THE SADDAM WITHIN

Listen to Radio National on Sunday, 6 April, at 7.10 am, (repeated Wednesday, 9 April, at 7.10 pm). AAANZ's own Mark Hurst is part of a discussion on twentieth century peacemakers like Gandhi, King, and Howard Thurman. Check the Encounter website http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/default.htm later for a transcript of the program.

LIFE IN THE LOO

Ross Coleman

Hope is easily snuffed out. I was walking through a paved area near the Backshed Café, a ministry program of Baptist Inner City Ministries (BICM) to the homeless and residents in Woolloomooloo, when George approached me. It was clear in his manner that he had been drinking heavily. I went to shake hands with him but George grabbed both my arms. With a firm grip he looked me in the eye, just centimetres separating our faces, and said "I'm stuffed Ross. I'm no good. I'm gonna drink myself to an early grave." George struggles with his addiction to alcohol and had only just concluded his previous employment due to constant drinking bouts. Recovery groups and AA had only given him temporary relief. He was a beaten man. "I'm good for nuthin" he concluded. When hope evaporates, so does the quest to live.

What do you say to a man without hope? What are the words that inspire hope for a better future? I haven't seen George since that encounter.

Peter has walked through some difficult patches in his life. We have had some deep talks about his painful past. When he was invited to attend a group that would build community and share stories as a way of bringing healing, Peter backed right off. He said to me "You can't fix a clock that's broke." What does hope look like to Peter?

These two encounters with George and Peter rattled me. I felt that my words and compassion seemed to count for little. I disagreed with their self-assessment assuring them that God thought more highly of them and that I valued their very being. But my words and attitude did little to sway their opinions. When pain runs deep, hope is not easily embraced.

So what does hope look like? Diane and I were having a meal with some dear friends of ours. We had been sharing about the challenges we faced doing ministry in the inner city. We were in a tough patch. Our friends asked, "What keeps you going?"

It was an excellent question. What does keep us going, what instils hope when the present looks so overwhelming? What kept the Biblical heroes of faith like David, Jeremiah or Paul going? What keeps you going?

I believe hope is built through community. Hope is a collective term. When my friends asked the question, I could answer taking time to express frustrations, doubts, and fears. I felt heard, affirmed and emerged with a renewed sense of hope and mission. We spent time sharing and then I threw the same question back at them. The seeds of hope take root when we are in close proximity to others. Just read the language of the Bible … "and hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit .." (Rom 5:5); "let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23) As we journey together, we discover what it means to be people of hope.

But the community option is a risky one. For people like George and Peter (and most of us) risking being vulnerable is tough stuff. Revealing your journey to another has danger stamped all over it - who knows what gossip might be spread around the community, who knows what pain may be lurking deep within? But little by little Peter steps around those risky options and in his own way is forging community although he wouldn't call it that. We talk, he engages with other staff and

residents, he shares deeply even just for a moment and I listen. I sense, at times, that a seed of hope is taking root.

What keeps me going? Fellow sojourners and the hope that there is One that sees a far bigger picture than I could ever grasp. And that's what BICM is about in the Loo.

PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST

Kara Martin reports on Tom and Christine Sine's March 8th workshop at Macquarie University co-sponsored by Macquarie Christian Studies Institute (MCSI) and AAANZ.

"We believe you want the best God has for you and your loved ones. The tragedy is that too many of us settle for less, and we miss God's best. We have little sense of how to find a direction and a rhythm for our lives that flow directly out of our faith. When we fail to find a compelling sense of direction from our faith, we unwittingly allow others to define both the purpose and pace of our lives. Many of us wind up exhausted and unfulfilled. The question we fail to ask is: 'Why does our faith seem to have so little influence in defining both the direction and tempo of our lives?'"

This is the premise for Tom and Christine's workshop, entitled "Living on Purpose". If that quote failed to strike a chord, perhaps this poem by Marcia K. Hornok will:

The clock is my dictator, I shall not rest.
It makes me lie down only when exhausted.
It leads me to deep depression, it hounds my soul.
It leads me in circles of frenzy for activity's sake.
Even though I run frantically from task to task,
I will never get it done, for my "ideal" is with me.
Deadlines and my need for approval, they drive me.
They demand performance from me, beyond the limits of my schedule.
They anoint my head with migraines, my in-basket overflows.
Surely fatigue and time pressure shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the bonds of frustration forever.
Psalm 23, Antithesis

The Sines pointed to the bigger picture as well. It's not just our personal and family lives that are rushed and out of order, we have war, terror, and environmental degradation and poverty on a scale that is beyond imagining. Consider the appalling fact that 30 million kids die annually from hunger; consider that 250 million of those living in absolute poverty are our brothers and sisters in Jesus.

How can we make a difference? By faith, respond Tom and Christine. Not by a faith that sees heaven as something that happens after death, and not by a faith that sees God as only part of our spiritual lives. We need to see ourselves caught up in God's big vision for the world. "God offers us a 'future and a hope', but it isn't just about us and our spiritual lives. It's about the transformation of every part of our lives and every facet of our world. Jesus didn't come to offer us a little private piety to work in around our busy lives, but he offered a new reason for being – to join him in seeing his new order bring that welcomed celebration and restoration into the lives of others."

Christine explained this vision from Genesis to Revelation around the Hebrew word: "Shalom". Shalom is usually translated as "peace", but Christine explained that a more accurate translation would be "wholeness" or "completeness". In the beginning, God created everything good. People were whole and happy, in relationship with each other and God, and being good stewards of the earth. Then came the Fall, and we began the path to broken and fractured lives. God predicted in Genesis 3.14-19 that the impact was broken relationship with him, with each other, and the beginning of environmental problems.

We are on a journey to restoration of wholeness in Jesus, a description of which we find in Revelation. In Jesus, we have the example of a whole person, seeking to bring wholeness physically, emotionally and spiritually to those around him, and who gave us great teaching on how to bring wholeness to our relationships and in our daily living (see especially the beatitudes). Jesus' dying and rising is the means by which God sought to restore relationship with people, between people and ultimately with his creation.

This is a vision that crosses over from the spiritual to the economic, from the personal to our neighbourhood, from daily life to all of life.

Workshop members began to come up with responses and ideas about application of this to our lives and families and churches and workplaces:

- Start small = work on bringing wholeness to the relationships around you
- Realise this is a journey to wholeness, and yearn for heaven
- Be passionate for wholeness in ourselves and with others
- People are more important than buildings
- Have a heart for the poor and the marginalised
- Look to not just meet needs of poor, but a broader transformation
- Start with the local, our neighbourhoods
- Go out, don't just expect people to come in
- Don't conform to our society's expectations that we work longer and longer hours to possess what we don't need = work less and do more
- Ensure our teaching is culturally relevant
- Equip our congregations to be life stewards – apply their faith to whole of life – how to use time and work and lifestyle to bring shalom
- Teach people how to connect with their neighbours or working community
- Build community = bear each others burdens or maybe move towards living in cooperative community to reduce consumption and free resources
- Celebrate life!

Our model is always Jesus: "Jesus' teachings and the character of the common life he shared with the first community are as countercultural today as they were in the first century. Jesus teaches us that losing is winning, the last shall be first, the way to deal with violence is to turn the other cheek. He tells us we are to love our enemies, forgive our friends, and learn from little children about the coming of God's new order. Jesus himself renounced the pursuit of wealth and power, washed feet, cared for the broken, and spent time with the most disreputable members of his society." He has given us his spirit to enable us to do likewise.

This was an exciting time of working together on something that is bigger than the individuals involved. Robert Banks, Director and Dean of MCSI, thanked the Sines and affirmed them as people who put their lives where their mouths are, even when it means living differently, less comfortably and provocatively.

The Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc.

The purposes of the Association are:

- To nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
- To provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
- To convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals, churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grassroots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

- Baptism upon profession of faith
- A view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- A commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- Separation of church and state
- Worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service

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