

ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE SCHOLARS NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Reflecting on Anabaptist Sociology

By Ryan Schellenberg, editor

Over the years, many of the reflections in this newsletter have treated, in one way or another, a complex question of dual identities: What does it mean to be a Mennonite *and* a scholar? The question has more specific permutations too: Last issue, for example, two of our members asked what it means to be a Mennonite *woman* and a scholar—or perhaps those are three identities: Mennonite, woman, and scholar. In any case, the recurrence of this theme derives, I suspect, from the rather odd nature of the A-MSN. After all, what justifies the existence of a network of scholars who share not research interests nor even disciplines but rather a religious/ethnic affiliation?

For those of us who work in (explicitly) theological disciplines, the question is relatively easy to deal with: Despite our many differences, we generally agree that we share a perspective on our discipline—if not an “Anabaptist theology” *per se*, then at least an Anabaptist theological ethos of sorts. Further, many of us see ourselves as scholars of and for the church, and although that role is itself rather complicated, it is an identity that is often reinforced by work done in church-based institutions, by the receptivity of the church to least some aspects of our scholarship, and so forth.

It is no surprise, then, that a majority of A-MSN members work in theology or related disciplines. Still, we are an interdisciplinary group, with members across the humanities and social sciences: historians, literary critics, psychologists, and more. To my mind, this is what makes the A-MSN peculiarly stimulating; but it also just makes it peculiar.

Similar questions have been confronted by the Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association (ASAA), which, as Lynda Nyce explains (p. 4), serves a dual constituency: social scientists who study Anabaptist groups, and social-scientists who are Anabaptists. Both Nyce and Randy Haluza-DeLay, who also contributes to this issue (p. 6), belong to the latter group. Neither focuses his or

her studies on Mennonite groups in particular. So, why do they value membership in the ASAA and A-MSN? What makes their sociology “Anabaptist?”

Both scholars find that their Anabaptist-Mennonite identity shapes their work in various ways: Nyce highlights how her Anabaptist convictions influence what sort of sociological questions she asks—in particular, questions about how systemic factors perpetuate injustice and inequality. Haluza-DeLay concentrates on what sociology can offer the church, namely, the capacity for critical self-examination. Both also note that in Anabaptist circles—and perhaps churchly circles more generally—sociological insight is not always a welcome contribution. As Haluza-DeLay emphasizes, it troubles the waters, exposing the oppressive structures that maintain false “peace.” His reflections left me pondering Jesus’ cryptic assertion that he came to bring “not peace but a sword” (Matt 10:34).

News

The Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College recently launched the “Global Anabaptist Wiki,” which is committed to helping Anabaptist groups share their stories with one another and become better informed about other groups in the global Anabaptist fellowship (<http://www.anabaptistwiki.org>).

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary announced in February that the seminary program of its Fresno, Calif., campus will be transferred to Fresno Pacific University, effective June 2010 (<http://www.mbseminary.edu/news/2010-02-05>).

Bethany College (Hepburn, Sask.) has appointed Howie Wall as President, effective July 2010. Wall is currently an administrator at the University of Saskatchewan, and has served on Bethany's Board of Directors for ten years.

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Membership dues

1 year: \$25
3 years: \$65

Dues for graduate students have been waived thanks to a grant from the Faculty Calling Project of the Mennonite Education Agency.

Make cheques payable: "Conrad Grebel University College" and send to the address above.

Members outside Canada and the U.S. may pay via Visa or Mastercard. Contact the editor for details.

Book Notes

- Gareth Brandt**, *Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality*. Herald Press, 2009.
- M. Darrol Bryant, **Susan Kennel Harrison**, and **A. James Reimer**, eds. *On Spirituality: Essays from the Third Shi'i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue*. Pandora Press, 2010.
- Abe Dueck**, **Helmut Harder**, and **Karl Koop**, eds. *New Perspectives in Believers Church Ecclesiology*. CMU Press, 2010.
- Jacob W. Elias**, *A President's Journey: The Memoirs of Henry Poettcker*. CMU Press, 2009.
- Ted Grimsrud**, *Theology as if Jesus Matters: An Introduction to Christianity's Main Convictions*. Cascadia Publishing House / Herald Press, 2009.
- John D. Rempel**, ed. *Jörg Maler's Kunstbuch: Writings of the Pilgrim Marpeck Circle*. Pandora Press, 2010.
- Tripp York**, *Donkeys and Kings: And Other "Tails" of the Bible*. Resource Publications, 2010.
- Tripp York** and **Chris Huebner**, *The Gift of Difference: Radical Orthodoxy, Radical Reformation*. CMU Press, 2010.

Journals

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology 11.1 (Spring 2010), edited by Dan Epp-Tiessen, focuses on the theme "Unity and Diversity" (www.MennoVision.org).

Direction: A Mennonite Brethren Forum 38.2 (Fall 2009) contains essays dedicated to John E. Toews, originally presented at a symposium in his honour at Fresno Pacific University, May 2008.

Mennonite Quarterly Review 84.2 (April 2010) features an article by James Urry revisiting the notion of a "Mennonite Commonwealth" in Imperial Russia, as well as articles on early Anabaptist hermeneutics, the ongoing and fast-paced growth of the Amish, a "Foucauldian perspective" on just policing, and a review article of recent Mennonite poetry.

Conrad Grebel Review 28.1 (March 2010) features the 2008 and 2009 Benjamin Eby Lectures: Marlene Epp on the historical role of midwife-healers among Canadian Mennonites; and Laura Gray on "The Idea of North: Sibelius, Gould, and Symbolic Landscapes." As always, book reviews are available online at <http://www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/cgreview/reviews.shtml>.

Events

TMTC Sessions at TST 40th Anniversary Conference

May 7-8, 2010, Toronto School of Theology, Toronto, ON

The Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) will be hosting three sessions at a conference on the theme of ecumenism held at the Toronto School of Theology. More details will be provided at www.adsa.ca/events/conference.

“Martyrs Mirror: Reflections Across Time”

June 8–10, 2010, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies presents this study conference focusing on the Anabaptist martyrology, “Martyrs Mirror.” The conference marks the 350th anniversary of its first publication in the Netherlands in 1660. The three plenary presenters are James Lowry on the author Thieleman van Braght, Marcus Meier on illustrator Jan Luyken, and Patrick Erben on the translation of meanings as “Martyrs Mirror” was translated into German at Ephrata in 1748.

“Marginal or Mainstream? Anabaptists, Mennonites and Modernity in European Society”

June 25–26, 2010, Bethel College, North Newton, KS

This conference will explore how European history can be better understood by incorporating key aspects from five centuries of Anabaptist and Mennonite history. How did Mennonites experience and help to shape industrialization, urbanization, capitalism, imperialism, feminism, republicanism, nationalism, institutionalization, and Enlightenment rationality? Or were most Mennonites happy to stay on the margins of European modernity? Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Heinz Schilling, Professor of Early Modern History at Humboldt University, Berlin, and co-editor of *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*. For more information, see www.bethelks.edu/mennosandmodernity.

“Peace Among the Peoples”

July 18–31, 2010, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

The Decade to Overcome Violence, sponsored by the World Council of Churches, will culminate in 2011 with an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. “Peace Among the Peoples,” organized by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, will prepare peace scholars, clergy, and activists in North America to contribute to the larger process. Contact information: Kent Yoder: kentjyoder@gmail.com; John D. Rempel: jrempel@ambs.edu. Further information will be available on the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu.

“Conversations on Attachment: Integrating the Science of Love & Spirituality”

March 31–April 2, 2011, Harrisonburg, VA

A conference hosted by the Shenandoah Anabaptist Science Society and Eastern Mennonite University. Featured Speakers: Sue Johnson, PhD; Daniel Siegel, MD; James Coan, PhD; John Paul Lederach, PhD; and Nancey Murphy, PhD.

Recent neuroscience demonstrates that connection is crucial for health. If relationship is essential for survival one of our most important tasks is to learn how to form healthy attachments—with each other, with the earth, and with God. This conference explores these dynamics through the lens of attachment theory and by bringing together nationally recognized voices from a variety of disciplines who will apply key insights from attachment theory to current research and practice.

Visit www.emu.edu/sass/conference for more information. Conference brochure and registration will be available in the fall of 2010. This conference is being funded by a grant from the Metanexus Institute, an organization dedicated to “Advancing the constructive Engagement of Religion and Science.”

What's Anabaptist about Anabaptist Sociology?

By Lynda Nyce

Perhaps the invitation to write this essay could not have come at a worse time, or a better time. Forms of this question have been part of my personal and professional struggles for quite some time, and I appreciate the chance to reflect on this topic. My reflections include questions and I hope to inspire discussions among colleagues.

My first response to the question of “What’s Anabaptist about Anabaptist Sociology?” is to say that I do not believe there is only one answer to this question. There certainly is a Sociology of Anabaptism—for example Claus-Peter Clasen’s 1963 dissertation from the University of Berlin where he discusses the “Sociology of Swabian Anabaptism,” or Calvin Redekop’s work on the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (*Leaving Anabaptism: From Evangelical Mennonite Brethren to Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches* [Telford/Scottsdale, PA: Pandora/Herald, 1998])—where the driving questions are about the factors contributing to people’s choice to join a sect of Anabaptist believers, or how that sect changes its beliefs and behaviors over time. But to say “Anabaptist Sociology” where Anabaptist is the qualifier of sociology suggests another interpretation and field of inquiry, as evident in the ASAA statement of purpose.

The Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association (ASAA) has as its purpose “to promote contact and fellowship between two groups of people: a) those social scientists interested in studying Anabaptist groups, and b) those social scientists affiliated with an Anabaptist-related group” (<http://www.bethel.edu/cas/dept/anthropology/asaa/index>). The first group is clearly practicing the Sociology of Anabaptism. The second group implies that one’s religious affiliation matters for one’s practice of the discipline. I certainly do not want to claim that the groups A and B are mutually exclusive, nor that this distinction exists only in the field of sociology. Indeed, there would be Theologians of Anabaptism as well as Anabaptist Theologians.

I fall into the second category: a sociologist who is an Anabaptist Mennonite by conviction and choice as well as by cultural socialization, teaching at an Anabaptist-Mennonite University (Bluffton, Ohio). But, I do not study Mennonites or any other Anabaptist group such as the Amish. My research is conducted by spending time among people who are immigrants, homeless, imprisoned or detained. In my teaching and research, my goal is to expose societal, structural inequalities, privilege and disadvantage granted on the basis of race, class, gender, and immigration status. My very convictions as a Mennonite push me to study the intersections of inequality and jus-

tice, give voice to those often rendered voiceless by systemic factors, and push students to explore the world beyond their limited scope of experience.

Sociologists study any facet of human behavior in groups (a dyad or more), including the relationship of the individual to the group in any of these settings. As such, we could study most anything in the world around us. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, sociologists attempted to practice value-free sociology, claiming that one’s personal background or beliefs did not, and could not, have bearing on one’s methodology or conclusions. Critical theorists, post-modern and post-structuralist theorists of the 20th century refuted those value-free claims, instead arguing that sociologists are subjects as much as those whom we study. Influenced by these recent scholars, I believe that my own subjectivity as female, white, US American, Anabaptist-Mennonite does affect the questions I bring to research, the topics that I find worth studying, and the pedagogical approaches I employ.

I attempt to practice an embodied sociology, or as Dorothy Smith writes, a “sociology from people’s standpoint” or “a sociology for people, as contrasted with . . . the sociology in which people are objects, they whose behavior was to be explained” (*Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* [Lanham, MD: AltaMira, 2005], 1). Such work compels me to begin with our everyday lives, and “explore social relations and organization in which our everyday doings participate but which are not fully visible to us . . . Hence it becomes a means of expanding people’s own knowledge rather than substituting the expert’s knowledge for our own.” (Smith 1). To me, this view of sociology fits with my Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of personal faith as well as ecclesiology. The intersubjectivity of embodied sociology suggests that my research and teaching, as an Anabaptist Sociologist, will emphasize social justice, community, reconciliation and peace building, and being part of a multi-cultural world.

At times, often unexpected, my Anabaptist-Mennonite connections create opportunities for research and illustrate that, as an Anabaptist Sociologist, I am interested in the Sociology of Anabaptism. A few years ago while listening to Canadian sociologist Tanya Basok present her research with Mexican agricultural migrant workers in Southern Ontario, Dr. Basok mentioned being perplexed by the presence of *blanco* (white) German and Spanish speaking migrant workers. While spending time with agricultural migrants, she discovered that there were Mexican Colony Mennonites among the workers. Some of these Colony Mennonites were working in the fields of distant relatives in Ontario, not because of family ties, but

because of the Canadian government's program to bring in temporary workers. While the dynamic is different, I have also met Mexican and Mexican-American migrant and immigrant workers in the Midwestern US and in Texas who are members of Mennonite churches. What interests me is the experience of these migrant workers as Mexicans, as migrants and immigrants, laborers, Mennonites, etc.

Practicing embodied sociology also leads me to be critical, hopefully constructively, of the institution for which I work, and of the broader church. Over the years I have wondered what my place is among the Sociology of Anabaptism. Of late, I have wondered what my place is among Anabaptist-Mennonite institutions. The institutional environments of Mennonite higher education and the church are the primary ways I interact with the broader Mennonite (largely theological) academy. I have not yet become part of what Ruth Krall, writing in this publication in the Fall of 2009, called the "Mennonite feminist graduate-prepared-professional academic diaspora." Instead, I have chosen to try to be a Mennonite feminist graduate-prepared-professional Anabaptist Sociologist *within* a Mennonite institution. But, this has not been an easy choice.

During the past ten years, the Mennonite institutions of the US have undergone dramatic change vis-à-vis sociology. Bethel College, Bluffton University, and Eastern Mennonite University have all discontinued majors in sociology during this time. Goshen College restructured its program and offers a SOAN (combined Sociology/ Anthropology) major. So, none of the Mennonite Colleges, as defined by membership and articulation agreements with the Mennonite Education Association of Mennonite Church USA, now offers a Sociology Major. Many of these decisions to drop or alter sociology majors have been motivated by the financial constraints facing small colleges and universities, and the relatively small student demand for the major in sociology. I am concerned by the loss of sociology as a traditional liberal arts discipline at these schools which promote themselves as Anabaptist-Mennonite liberal arts institutions. Our institutions rely on a sociological perspective in many disciplines (for example, Peace and Conflict Studies, Communication, History, International/Intercultural Studies) but do not see the necessity, and value, of having students who will focus their studies on this field nor study with multiple sociologists.

As the Anabaptist-Mennonite academy has shifted priorities away from sociology, I am concerned that one effect is that it is difficult within the Mennonite academy to "find" Mennonite sociologists who can study the church. One to three academic generations ago, sociologists employed by Anabaptist-Mennonite higher education institutions were sought out by the church to help the church

understand itself. Today, I fear that the broader church does not see the need for sociological inquiry and self-examination. In 2002 I initiated research with the church when my research on homeless shelters and poverty policy intersected with the church around the US Federal Faith-Based Initiatives. But, I found church support lacking beyond the Mennonite academy and MCC. Was this door closed due to my being a female, or a sociologist? Or, have I, as an Anabaptist Sociologist, not expressed enough interest in working with the church?

Thus, what is Anabaptist about Anabaptist Sociology? For me, being an Anabaptist sociologist means that social justice, community, reconciliation and peace building, and multiculturalism are assumptions and expectations for my research and teaching. These assumptions are rooted in my understanding of Mennonite theology and practice, and in my practice of embodied sociology. In addition, the opportunity to engage in research with or for Anabaptist-Mennonite organizations is an aspect of my contribution to community. Another role I play in that community is to be a thorn in its side; to ask who is represented and why; to uncover the patterns of behaviors that exclude and include. Is there a place for Anabaptist Sociology in the world of the Sociology of Anabaptism? Yes, I believe so. Is there a place for an Anabaptist Sociologist in Anabaptist-Mennonite academic and church institutions? For my sake, but more importantly, for the sake of those institutions, I surely continue to hope.

Lynda Nyce is Professor of Sociology at Bluffton University.

Transitions

Randolph Haluza-DeLay received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of Sociology at The King's University College, Edmonton, AB in March 2010.

Margot Kottelin-Longley of Abo Akademi University, Turku, Finland, is retiring from her scholarship for medical reasons.

Jean Killeffer Hess, an independent historian in East Petersburg, Pa., recently launched StoryShare, a business providing oral history interview services to individuals, businesses, and institutions. (givestoryshare@gmail.com)

Jon Hoover began teaching Islamic Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Nottingham (UK), in January 2010. He taught previously at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

Joni S. Sancken has been named Assistant Professor of Preaching at Practical Theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisburg, Va.

What's an Anabaptist Sociologist?

By Randolph Haluza-DeLay

Answering the question in the title means determining two things. First, let's clarify terms: What's this being Anabaptist, and what's sociology? Secondly, how do these two identifications relate—if at all—and, which really modifies which?

I take it as axiomatic that to be Christian means discipleship to Christ. Anabaptists have emphasized the discipleship of the whole person to Christ, including body, heart, mind, and being. Furthermore, Anabaptists have historically claimed that this discipleship is to be as full as possible *now*, with the flourishing of the kingdom of God a present and becoming event. Finally, this discipleship includes participation in the Body of Christ, that is, the people so identified as disciples. If we understand that *all* disciples are called to faithfulness in the entirety of life, then we probably need also to understand that the Spirit is constantly at work in those disciples and their work. The corollary is that the Spirit is not more at work in theology or pastoral ministry than in the attentive farmer, counsellor, artist or, ahem, sociologist.

Part of the particular genius of sociology is its ability to question understanding of social phenomena, and often to “debunk” the normalization of social things. Peter Berger's characterization of sociology as “questioner of the common sense” is still relevant: We ask how that which is widely understood to “make sense” came to be commonly held—especially since many things that were once “commonsense” we now believe to be nonsense. Religion is a social phenomenon, thus part of the value of sociology is to interrogate religion as well.

According to David Martin, “sociology, properly done, can subsidize us precisely to instances in which Christians are subverting the gospel word on behalf of human idols, such as nation, economics, sex, politics, etc.” (John Stackhouse. “David Martin: Sociologist as servant of the church,” *Books and Culture*, May/June 2004). That's the first benefit of a sociological consciousness for the church—becoming aware of the social processes that shape our fellowship and discipleship.

The second benefit of a sociological consciousness is that it improves action. If we are called to love, such action is more effective when conducted with awareness of social processes that operate at the diverse scales that range between the one-to-one and nation-states. For example, a sociological understanding shows that effectively loving others requires knowledge of their social contexts, which are not entirely of their own making. Why are people poor? It's a mix of personal attributes and decisions, low wages, discrimination, gender bias, the high costs of basic needs, socio-economic systems

and structures. Why isn't there housing to go around? Partly it's because of market forces in a system that has been developed over time but is not immutable truth, because of government policies, and because housing is now comprehended as a commodity to be exchanged primarily for profit-making. We have to query these social phenomena and ask to what extent they represent the *shalom* kingdom of God. Whether it is marriage, parenting, or care for creation, assessing these phenomena requires a sociological consciousness as well as a theological imagination.

The mission of a Christian university (and one might extrapolate this to include Christian scholars no matter where their placement) is often described as trying to integrate Christian/faith understandings and disciplinary knowledge. But such a formulation presupposes that there are two knowledges that must be combined. That cannot be the case if we are all called to *participate* in the “unity of truth” as represented in him “by whom all things were created . . . who was before all things, and in whom all things hold together” (Col 1:15–20).

Still, in the modern social imaginary, faith and reason have been assumed to be divided (see esp. Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* [Durham: Duke University Press, 2004]). Raymond DeVries suggests there are three orientations the Christian social scientist can adopt. (He does not even allow one possibility—that there is an inherent *conflict* between sociology and faith.) The first orientation is that of *compartmentalization*, that is, separating religious orientation from social science work. A second orientation is *complementarity*, or the notion that social science and faith-based understandings will work together, as represented by the statement that “all good social science points us toward God's truth” no matter where/how it is found. The final orientation is that of *conspiracy*, which DeVries describes as bringing religious orientation and social science into co-occurrence such that neither takes precedence, and each “disciplines” the other (“Introduction: Christian Sociology: Consciousness with Conscience?” in *The Sociological Perspective*, ed. Michael Leming, R. Raymond G. DeVries, and Brendan F. J. Furnish [Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1989], 11–14).

Christian social scientists adopt each orientation. I stress *my* orientation here as one of conspiracy (which I admit surprises students!). Central to this orientation is a notion of “discipline”, which might be defined as “*training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior; controlled behavior resulting from disciplinary training; self-control.*” In that race of discipleship, both sociology and faith inform my running. Some ways that they discipline each other are presented in the adjacent box.

A “Conspiracy” of Sociology and Christianity

Christianity disciplines my Sociology:

Seeing “sin” as part of the human character, I am especially attentive to the ways that Power, Interests, Symbolic Violence, etc. are part of the social order.

My sociology is not descriptive only; it is geared towards “God’s good purpose,” often towards social justice.

“Social construction” is not all there is (there is some foundation, reality, an ontological base).

Historical tradition and theological rigour form a check on intellectual fads, and undermines overemphasis on empiricism.

Sociology disciplines my Christianity:

Sociological tools applied to the practice of faith and the institutions of the church (e.g., how norms develop that “normalize” some practices, or how power and interests are deployed, even in “good” causes).

Enables rejection of needless dogma, via recognizing things as socially constructed or cultural in nature (e.g., 1Cor 11:5-6, women covering their heads in church).

Enables clearer vision of the failures of being human (less judgmental; faith communities are no more idealized than other social institutions).

Challenges my “idealism” with evidentiary practices (e.g., my pacifism must take account of social reality”).

Summary: We see unclearly—”through a glass darkly”—so both Christianity and Sociology can help me/others/us see more clearly *if* we dialogue about what is being seen.

I am convinced that Christians must engage with the “ruling ideas” of our day. This provides a two-way benefit: We so engage for *apologia*—witness and the practice of the gospel—but also for the benefit that the truth present elsewhere—in sociology, for example—can bring to improved discipleship as the Body of Christ. To say it again: Sociology can serve the church. It is uniquely positioned to produce reflexivity in the face of the revelation of Christ and the realness of living as social beings. The church and the people who are part of it have ways of doing things, norms of behaviours, symbols, coded practices, power relations, stratifications, and hierarchies and forms of cultural capital that come into play in its actions. By its systematic collection of data leading to confident explanation of social phenomena, sociology can serve the church by helping to discern the basic social patterns that “confirm or put to lie to their theological legitimisations,” as David Martin explains (Stackhouse 2004).

Developing a sociological consciousness in the church can be a challenge. The central problem is that religious

claims are often presented as truth claims. Such claims are also often central to the identities of members (see Stanley Fish, “God Talk,” *New York Times*, 3 May 2009 [available at: <http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com>]). Because sociology may challenge components of things they have attached to the centre of the gospel, Christians may find such a discipline challenges them at the core of their self-identities. Sociology, as I see it, demands the hard task of reflexivity.

The changing conditions of Christianity in North America also presents challenges to developing a sociological consciousness in Christians. By one analysis, contemporary Canadian Christianity is immersed in a “discourse of loss”—“a sense of betrayal of the arrangement upon which Canada has been founded” (Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, eds. *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008], 13). Canada is not post-Christian (understood as cultural), but it is post-Christendom. While I am excited by the prospect of a post-Christendom society that I can engage as a Christian, many Christians are more sanguine. And it is at this point that I find something more peculiarly Anabaptist about this integration of sociology and Christian discipleship.

H. Richard Niebuhr described a classic set of types of ways that Christians engage with their societies (“Christ” and “Culture”). Niebuhr’s system has been subject to frequent review, including recently by Craig Carter (*Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006]). Carter builds on Duane Friesen’s work to re-imagine these categories in an environment where the Christendom consensus no longer holds. Among other functions, in a Christendom circumstance, it was assumed that the structural function of the church was to provide the moral basis of society. While I perceive this assumption to be sociologically faulty (based on overemphasis on societal homogeneity and orderliness), it remains a common assumption of many Christians. However, it serves as a form of violence—physical violence sometimes, but more often symbolic violence as a form of coercion to consensus. The churches’ involvement in native residential schools in Canada is an instance of this.

Theologian Donald Kraybill has famously called Christianity the “upside-down kingdom” because it subverts the expectations of “normal” social relations. This is the reason not to separate religion (the social institution) and theology, as the latter can expose the sociological failures of the former.

Prised apart from theology, religion is a resource of cultural, symbolic and political capital well fitted for domestication in law and in civil society. Religion can be invoked as a resource for authority and the

enforcement of equality in ways that secure social solidarity. The attachment of religion to theology impairs these ambitions (Kieran Flanagan, "Sociology into Theology: The Unacceptable Leap," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25 [2008], 237).

For the sake of this subversive discipleship of which Kraybill writes, an Anabaptist sociologist cannot bracket the theological apart from the sociological.

The perceptive (and long-suffering) reader will notice to this point that I have hardly mentioned the peace or justice orientation that one might have expected. I do assert that to love people means understanding their social conditions, including the way social structures lead to undesirable choices and patterned outcomes. Participating in social justice is inherent to faithfully loving, since eliminating oppressive social structures is part of the work of *shalom*.

My own entry to sociology was first through the condemnations of social evils by the Prophets, and then through liberation theology which sought to explain why present societal patterns so poorly conform to the vision presented of the Kingdom of God. Amos condemned social evils that Marx explained (D. Hiebert, "Can We Talk? Achieving Dialogue between Sociology and Theology," *Christian Scholar's Review* 37 [2006], 199–214; cf. Jacques Ellul, *Perspectives on our age: Jacques Ellul speaks on his life and work* [2nd ed.; Toronto: Anansi, 2004]). Political theorist Romand Coles in his book with theologian Stanley Hauerwas claimed that "resting in the peace of Christ" has often meant believers have given up the struggle against "odious" forms of power and non-

liberatory social structures (*Christianity, Democracy and the Radical Ordinary: Conversations between a Radical Democrat and a Christian* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008]). If so, sociology as I see it is likely to trouble the "peace" of Christians. To be sure, there cannot be true *agape* unless we engage in that struggle against both odious power and superficial "peace" that mocks rather than mimics *shalom*.

What does that love look like in social reality? Let me be honest: I don't know! Christian faith and action is, in the words of Chris Huebner, "precarious" (*A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge, and Identity* [Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 2006]). It needs to be figured out in context, rather than have an abstraction of an answer applied. But if I don't have the answers, we have lots of resources—we have the insights of the social sciences to combine with a theological vision of a new society in the Kingdom. This, finally, is my way of being an Anabaptist sociologist—to model an intellectual discipline and an openness that is radical in its alterity to the ways of the world and fidelity to Christ. We construct new norms and practices and shape institutions to help the flourishing of the Kingdom as it becomes into the world through its visible expression in the people who have freely chosen to follow the Christ.

Randolph Haluza-DeLay is Associate Professor of Sociology at The King's University College, Edmonton, AB, and co-editor of Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada (University of British Columbia Press, 2009).

Research Notes

My new book, *Multifaith Musing: Essays and Exchange*, is now available. Dr. Paul F. Knitter wrote the Foreword for this resource with chapter titles as diverse as: "Wisdom from the East," "Living Faiths 'Tread' Life-giving Water," "Splitting Differences"—a one-act play, and "Paradox of World Religions: Conflict and Peace-building." The 176-page book is available for \$10 plus shipping from: evangelauthorservices.com (1-800-253-9315); or directly from the author for \$10: dyodnyce@bnin.net or 1603 So. 15th St., Goshen, IN 46526.

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I am presently a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. I am working on a book tentatively titled *Matthew within Judaism: The Changing Face of Jewish and Christian Origins*. In this work I am developing a picture of Matthew as a book produced within the Jewish environment of Sepphoris as the Jewish community began to build more settlements in the Galilee. The first gospel represents a sectarian Jewish movement in a Jewish community that also contained other sectarian movements which were in competition with one another for the allegiance of Jewish followers and for power in the community.

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Research Notes

My essay "Reconsidering the Letter of Mara bar Serapion" will appear shortly in *Aramaic in Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from the 2004 NEH Summer Seminar at Duke University*, ed. Eric M. Meyers and Paul V. M. Flesher (Eisenbrauns 2010). In collaboration with Annette Merz and Teun Tieleman of the University of Utrecht, I am working on a critical edition and translation of the Letter of Mara bar Serapion to his son, with an introduction and interpretative essays, to be published in the series SAPERE (Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia) by Mohr-Siebeck later in 2010. If, as my colleagues and I believe, this letter is to be dated in the 70s of the first century CE on historical, philosophical, and linguistic grounds, it would be the earliest preserved Syriac literary text; would reflect adoption of Stoic philosophy by a writer in Aramaic; would represent a response to Roman imperial action in Commagene from the perspective of an elite person among those conquered; and would contain the earliest allusion to Jesus (although not by name) outside the New Testament.

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Preaching Social Justice in the Lectionary is a three-volume ecumenical resource to be published by Westminster John Knox Press (first volume scheduled for release in 2011). The series offers commentary on Scripture texts found in the Revised Common Lectionary as well as Scripture texts for newly designated "Holy Days for Justice" (e.g., World AIDS Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Salt March: Marching with the Poor, International Women's Day). Contributors include Mennonite scholars Willard Swartley (Prof. Emeritus at AMBS, writing for "International Day of Prayer and Witness for Peace") and Joni Sancken (Post Doctoral Fellow at Candler School of Theology). Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm (Assoc. Prof. at Bethany Theological Seminary and member of the Church of the Brethren) is a contributor and co-editor of the series.

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I recently completed my doctoral dissertation, entitled "Strengthening rural social work practice with older persons: The relevance of intermediate resources in one Newfoundland community," at Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland. The capacity for older residents to age in place in rural communities of Newfoundland and Labrador has been profoundly affected by out-migration and the resultant dismantling of traditional networks of support. Using a case study design, this qualitative research project asks what we can learn from residents in one such rural community that will strengthen rural social work practice and policy with older persons. More specifically, the research asked what intermediate resources were necessary to ageing in place, how they were maintained in the context of depopulation, and about the relationship of the presence and organization of intermediate resources to social work policy and practice with older persons. Intermediate resources are defined in this research as non-intimate, non-professional helping encounters that assist older persons to maintain or restore their capacity to remain in their homes and communities despite health or mobility restrictions. The contribution of the study to strengthening social work practice and policy with older persons is that it provides a framework by which to assess the availability and effectiveness of intermediate resources as a level of support apart from formal and informal care. The study also builds knowledge of the social work practices that are relevant to the development and maintenance of intermediate support in rural communities. The practices themselves are not new; they are long standing and foundational principles of community development models in general, and of locality development theory in particular. This research highlights the need to return these considerations to the forefront of professional social work education and practice.

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Faculty Positions

The **Bethel College** board of directors invites applications or nominations for the position of **President**. See the complete position announcement at www.bethelks.edu/bc/careers/openings.php. EOE/AA.

Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) seeks a full-time **Theater** generalist starting August 2010. This position combine instructional duties and recruiting new students for theater performance. See the complete position announcement at www.bethelks.edu/bc/careers/openings.php. EOE/AA.

Eastern Mennonite University, Department of History, seeks qualified candidates for a full-time faculty member in **Political & International Studies/Sociology**. Ph.D. required. Teaching experience required. Applicants should be trained in Political or International Studies and will ideally have expertise in some area of sociology in addition to significant international experience. Courses will focus on political studies but may also include sociology, international relations and international and community development, depending on the experience, qualifications and interests of the applicant.

Position begins in mid-August 2010. Review begins immediately. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters to Dr. Vernon E. Jantzi, Interim-Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; ugdean@emu.edu. For more information, see: www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/fac-history.html.

Baylor University, Department of Religion invites applications for a tenure-track or tenured faculty member in **World Religions** with an emphasis in Asian Religions. The successful candidate is expected to teach the World Religions course required of Religion majors and upper-level electives. Specific teaching responsibilities will be tied to the interests and competencies of the faculty member. A faculty member must have completed a Ph.D.; an established research agenda is also required. Teaching experience is desirable.

Position will begin with the 2010 Fall Term. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To ensure full consideration of your application the following are required: a letter of application; curriculum vitae; transcripts; three letters of reference. The above items should be submitted to: Chair, World Religion Search Committee, Department of Religion, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97284, Waco, TX 76798-7284. Baylor University is affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Successful candidates will be active in the Baptist tradition. As an Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity employer, Baylor encourages minorities, women, veterans, and persons with disabilities to apply. For further details, see www.baylor.edu/religion/index.php?id=67660.

Call for Papers

“My Spirit Rejoices in God my Savior: Mary in Anabaptist Dress”
March 24–26, 2011, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

A call for papers will be released in the near future.