

**John Howard Yoder
An Annotated Timeline¹**



John Howard Yoder

Facts need testimony to be remembered and trustworthy witnesses to be established in order to find a secure dwelling place in the domain of human affairs.

Hannah Arendt²

Virtually everyone leaves a trail behind them in the form of tracks, objects, relationships, official documents, and the memories of others. These bits and pieces are preserved in their environments, though they may be scattered across it like shards. The writer's job is to find them, sort them, and assemble them in such a way that offers the reader a coherent collage of that character.

John Vaillant³

A Methodology for Proceeding⁴

In an attempt to observe and document John Howard Yoder's life from a distance of fifteen years after his death⁵ I created this time line to help me locate the sequence of events in an orderly fashion. I have utilized a variety of primary and secondary resource materials. Included is information from:

- Waltner Gossen, R. (January 2015). Defanging the Beast: Mennonite Responses to John Howard Yoder's Sexual Abuse (pp. 7-80). *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* (89) 1.
- Mennonite Church press in Canada and the United States, the ecumenical American religious press, and the United States' secular press;⁶
- Course catalogs and yearbooks from the three incorporated Mennonite seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS), Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS) and Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS). I also utilized catalogues and yearbooks from the Goshen College Biblical Seminary (GCBS) which preceded GBS and AMBS;⁷

- *The Mennonite Yearbook* published by the Mennonite Church Press in Scottdale, PA;⁸
- Published articles in Mennonite scholarly journals: the (Canadian) *Conrad Grebel Review* and in the (United States) *Mennonite Quarterly Review*;
- The eulogies of friends and colleagues at Yoder's memorial service (1998);⁹
- Published obituaries in a wide variety of publications;¹⁰
- A paper trail of relevant information provided to me by individuals who kept memorandum and working documents from their encounters with Yoder;
- The work of Tom Price in his series of investigative journalism articles published in *The Elkhart Truth* during in the summer of 1992¹¹.
- Official church announcements about the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church discipline process with Yoder in the summers of 1992 and 1996. Subsequently, Mennonite Church and secular news organizations reported these press announcements.¹²
- Mark Thiessen Nation's published biographical works regarding Yoder's life and work, (1998, 1999, 2003, 2006)
- Earl Zimmerman' published work, (2007)
- Stanley Hauerwas' published commentary regarding Yoder, (1993, 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2004, and 2010). In addition, I listened to Hauerwas' Commencement address to Goshen College's graduating class of 1992.¹³
- James W. McClendon's published work about Yoder (1998)
- Glenn Stassen's (2013) blog-published comments¹⁴
- Ted Grimsrud's blog-published work about Yoder; (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013)
- Al Keim's biography of H. S. Bender, 1998;
- *The Bethel Collegian*, Spring, 1992 issues;
- *The Eastern Mennonite Weathervane*, January, 1997 issue;
- Materials from Yoder's archival boxes 200 and 215 which are located in the Mennonite Church Archives on the Goshen College campus in Goshen, IN.
- To gain a working sense of what other scholars see as Yoder's major contributions to theology, ethics, missiology, ecclesiology, and political science I read the posthumous Yoder festschrift (*Hauerwas, et al., 1999*), a posthumously published series of festschrift-like essays edited by Ollenburger and Koontz (2004) and a series of critical essays edited by Budziszewski (2006).
- In an attempt to once more hear Yoder's voice, I listened to his ordination sermon from 1973.¹⁵ I listened to a forum presentation on the topic of homosexuality given at AMBS in 1979.¹⁶ I re-read a number of his CONCERN Movement essays. I re-read *The Politics of Jesus* and for the first time read *Body Politics*. I also read the rough draft of *You have it Coming, Good Punishment: The legitimate social function of punitive behavior*. South Bend (1995, unpublished).¹⁷
- I spoke or corresponded with a wide variety of individuals who knew Yoder personally. Some of these individuals had been Yoder's undergraduate college friends and associates. Some had been professional colleagues in a wide variety of Mennonite Church agencies. Some knew him during his work in Europe in the 1940's and 1950's. Some were employees of various Mennonite institutions where Yoder had been employed or where he had served as an organizational consultant and speaker. Some individuals had been his students during his teaching tenure for GCBS (later GBS), AMBS or the UND Department of Theology.
- I consulted with a variety of individuals who had been aware of the issues faced by President Marlin Miller and the GBS/AMBS Boards of Overseers during the years from 1976 to 1984.

- I consulted with a variety of individuals who had been aware of the issues which surfaced from approximately 1988 until Yoder's death in 1997.
- I talked or corresponded with several retired administrators from Mennonite Church agencies (1970-1997).
- I talked or corresponded with a number of women who in one way or another contacted me about sexual misconduct during Yoder's lifetime. In turn, several of these individuals connected me to additional women who were also in one way or another connected with the Yoder-Mennonite Church story.
- Andy Alexis Baker/Jesus Radicals Blog (2012)\
- Sara Wenger Shenk/Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary Statement on Teaching and Scholarship Related to John Howard Yoder (2013).¹⁸
- Ross Bender's correspondence with AMBS faculty from the 1980's (2004/2013)¹⁹
- Ted Grimsrud's EMU Thinking Pacifism blog (2013)²⁰
- Mark Thiessen Nation's EMU-Anabaptist Nation blog²¹
- Finally, I also utilized my own memories from the years 1978 until 1997.

Many of the individuals who spoke or corresponded with me did so with the stipulation that I not identify them in any way. In what follows, therefore, I have attempted to find secondary sources for any factual information which they provided me.

A final note before proceeding: I utilize the academic year as an organizing feature below. This is necessary because Yoder's professional life was regulated by the yearly ebb and flow of the academic calendar.

A Working Timeline²²

1927

Birth date: John Howard Yoder was born on December 27, 1927. In a set of electronic correspondence messages from members of the Yoder family, Nation (2013) reports that *John as a boy and young man was "caring and respectful of his mother, sister, grandmother, aunts, and female cousins. There was nothing in his behavior that would have indicated otherwise (p. 5).*²³

1931 - 1932

A brother, Charles Good Yoder, was born in February, 1931. He died on March 31, 1932 at the age of 1 year, 1 month, and 3 days. John was 3 years old. A sister, Mary Ellen was born sometime after these dates. Mark Nation interviewed John's mother in the Spring of 1991. Mrs. Howard Yoder commented that John was very young when his little brother died. He was very close to him. His death seemed very painful – very difficult – for John. Maybe, she suggested, this traumatic experience affected him deeply.²⁴

1935

In 1935, when John was 8 years old, Howard C. and Ethel Good Yoder moved the family to Wooster, Ohio in order to provide better educational opportunities for John.

1947

John graduated from Goshen College in 1947 (age 19)²⁵

A classmate, Geraldine Harder, (July, 1992) corresponded with Mark Thiessen Nation (2013) and recalled John in these terms: *John and I walked the streets of the Locust Grove community in Elkhart, IN, every Sunday morning to share the good news about Jesus. With Bibles in hand, this very intelligent young man and I knocked on doors and sat with low-income, poorly educated wonderful people and shared our lives. He was able to do this in a beautiful way. I wish you could have heard his comments and prayers...I know John Howard Yoder. I know that honesty, decency and integrity were always part of his life (pp. 4-5).*

In 1947 John's home congregation, Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Ohio, was excommunicated from Ohio Conference because of a contested ordination. Progressive and conservative conflicts in this era of Mennonite Church history were often deeply conflicted and acrimoniously debated.²⁶

1948-1949

Returned to Ohio where he attended the University of Akron.

1949

Mennonite Central Committee, Director of MCC-France: In April, 1949 (age 21) John went to post-war Europe to help in re-construction projects and he supervised children's orphanages for orphans and war-displaced children. He served in this position until 1954.²⁷ Nation (2013) reports that during these years one of Yoder's tasks was to connect French Mennonites with the homes for war-orphans. A second task was to assist French Mennonites re-commit their communities to peace (6).²⁸

1952

He and Annie Guth were married on June 12, 1952. He was 25 years old. Before the family returned to the United States, three of their daughters were born. The second of these, a girl named Rachel, died in infancy.

1954

John stopped working for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in order to do full-time doctoral studies. During this time Algeria had a devastating earthquake and John agreed to coordinate relief work through the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).²⁹

1957

G.C. President Paul Mininger, GCBS Dean, H. S. Bender, and MBS President Erland Waltner met *in spirited discussion* to discern Yoder's teaching future (if any) in the Mennonite Seminaries that would subsequently become AMBS.³⁰ John was almost 30 years old at the time.

The Yoder family moved back to the United States. He took a position as an administrator at the Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart.³¹ This employment continued until 1965.³²

1958-1959

Interim Instructor in Theology (sabbatical replacement for J. C. Wenger), GCBS.³³

Employed by MBM in Elkhart, IN³⁴ as the Administrative Assistant for Europe. His immediate supervisor was the board's chief executive officer, J. D. Graber.

1960-1962

Instructor in Theology, Goshen College Biblical Seminary (GCBS)³⁵

Dr. Theol, University of Basel, 1962. *Dissertation title: Anabaptism and Reformation in Switzerland.*³⁶ Dissertation advisor, Karl Barth.

1962: H. S. Bender, Dean of GCBS, died of pancreatic cancer. John (who previously had been openly hesitant about working in a full time capacity for Bender) now agreed to join the full time GCBS faculty.³⁷

In the early 1960's Marlin Miller (future president of Goshen Biblical Seminary) was a protégé of Yoder's. At Yoder's suggestion he moved to Europe for advanced theological study. From 1968 until 1974 Miller administered programs for the Mennonite Board of Missions (Elkhart, IN) in Paris. In this role he collaborated with Yoder who had functioned as an administrator in this agency for several decades.³⁸

- **Yoder published:** *The Christian and Capital Punishment* (1961)
- **Yoder published:** *Christ and the Powers* (Translator, Hendrik Berkhof, 1962)

1963 - 1964

John joined the full-time teaching faculty of GCBS as an Associate Professor of Theology. He continued to do consulting and personnel work MBM. He was 35 years old. As part of his mission board portfolio, he supervised missions abroad and was engaged in program development activities. He also did consultation work on peace and justice issues for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Akron, PA. He served as an informal church liaison with organizations such as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches inasmuch as the Mennonite Church did not have a formal denominational relationship with these ecumenical Christian organizations.

1964

Associate Professor of Theology and Director, Faculty Theological Studies, GCBS³⁹

- **In 1964 Yoder published:** (1) *The Christian Pacifism of Karl Barth* and (2) *The Christian Witness to the State* and (3) *Discipleship as Political Responsibility*

1965

In his autobiographical memoir (2010), *Hannah's Child*, Yoder's colleague, friend and primary apologist American theologian-ethicist Stanley Hauerwas states that Yoder's sexual "experiments" with "weighty" Mennonite Church women began in the 1960s. In this awkward turn of phrase Hauerwas does not seem to mean obese Mennonite women. Rather he seems to mean women with a certain mix of personal authority, church position authority and institutional power. Inasmuch as Hauerwas does not give a specific date nor identify the source

of his information, I have arbitrarily chosen 1965 to represent the first publicly referenced date for Yoder's sexual misconduct and sexual violation of adult women. In addition, Hauerwas does not extensively discuss the question of whether Yoder's *experimental* behavior consisted of (1) consensual adultery or (2) sexual abuse and harassment but he does acknowledge that at least some women did not consent to participating in Yoder's sexual "experiments" and were offended by them.⁴⁰ Later these "weighty" women, according to Hauerwas, lodged formal complaints against Yoder with Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church. This leads me to conclude, therefore, that Hauerwas' code phrase "experiments" for Yoder's behavior actually refers to sexual abuse and harassment misconduct (i.e., forms of sexual violence) rather than (or, perhaps in addition to) mutually consenting adultery misconduct.

1967-1968

John served as a faculty member at GCBS in Goshen and at AMBS in Elkhart, Indiana.

Yoder began to teach courses at the University of Notre Dame (UND) in South Bend, IN.⁴¹ His mentor and theological elder at Notre Dame was a noted Roman Catholic scholar, John (Jack) McKenzie.

According to Bill Klassen's correspondence with Ross Lynn Bender (October 9, 2004) Father Theodore Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame convened a consultation at Notre Dame in the wake of political assassinations in 1968 (Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy) and the resulting city-burnings across the USA. Yoder was one of the invited speakers. One result of that consultation was that Yoder was asked to increase his teaching hours at Notre Dame even as he continued teaching at AMBS,⁴²

Yoder was in the middle of an eight year term as the Associate Director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS) on the AMBS campus. This term ended in 1973.⁴³

He was in the middle of an eighteen year term as a board member for the Mennonite Historical Society. This term ended in 1986.⁴⁴

He was in the middle of a thirty-one year term on the board of editors for the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. He was quietly dropped from this editorial function in 1992.⁴⁵

- **In 1968 Yoder published:** *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism*
- **Unpublished manuscript:** *When is a Marriage not a Marriage?*

1968-1970

The GCBS Bulletin and Catalogue did not list Yoder as a faculty member.

1969-1970

The Yoder's last child, a son, was born in 1969.

Associate Professor of Theology, GCBS⁴⁶

Al Meyer, MBE Executive Secretary and Yoder's brother-in-law, announced that Yoder was to become the first president of newly incorporated and re-located Goshen Biblical Seminary during its first year of combined operation with MBS on their newly constructed and shared

campus in Elkhart, IN.⁴⁷ Along with MBS President Erland Waltner, Yoder would serve as a co-coordinator of the new organizational entity, AMBS. Yoder was 42 years old.

In 1969, Yoder's future friend Stanley Hauerwas was appointed to the faculty of the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame (UND). Hauerwas remained at Notre Dame until the 1984-1985 academic year when he moved to Duke University.⁴⁸ According to his biography (2010), as a rising star in theological ethics, Hauerwas was among Yoder's UND faculty colleagues who urged UND theology department administrators to utilize Yoder's time more consistently.

- ***Yoder published: Karl Barth and the Problem of War***

1970-1971

Promoted to full Professor at GBS⁴⁹

Because of a prior commitment, Yoder spent this academic year living in Argentina where he lectured in the Christian Seminary in Buenos Aires and also in the Mennonite Seminary in Montevideo, Uruguay.⁵⁰ While living in South America he did some sensitive mission personnel supervision and consultation work for the Elkhart-based Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Mark Nation locates the time frame of the early 1970's to the early 1990's as the time frame for Yoder's "experiments" in sexuality.⁵¹ Nation identifies a variety of extra-marital relationships.

- Respectful long-term collegial relationships with women (p. 17).
- Initiated intimate relationships with women who resisted him and, accepting the resistance, stayed friends (p. 17).
- Pursued physical intimacy with women who resisted him and he did not accept the rejection, becoming harassing (p. 17-18)
- Forceful and abusive attempts at intimacy (18)
- Long-term, consenting, and mutually-fulfilling relationships with women who were aware of his marital status (p. 14).
- Married women to whom he made propositions, sometimes using secret correspondence addresses; sometimes inappropriate touch (p. 16)
- Single women to whom he made propositions

1971-1972

Yoder returned to the United States and began his in-residence presidential leadership of GBS. With President Erland Waltner of MBS, Yoder co-coordinated the organizational unit named AMBS. In this organizational unit, GBS and MBS each had a presidential officer but the organizational unit shared an Academic Dean (Ross Bender), faculty, staff, and physical facilities.

During his presidency Yoder doggedly pursued the institutionally contentious matter of ownership and location of the GBS library collection which included the H.S. Bender collection.⁵² Only when this matter was eventually settled in 1980, did the residual rancor between the two organizations wane. There are some indications, however, in private conversations with individuals that Yoder's collegial rancor continued and was, at times, demonstrated by the polemical manner (usually perceived and reported by its recipients as

passive-aggressive hostility) in which he addressed his Mennonite professional peers in GC's institutional administration.

Yoder served as the co-chair of a special interest group on war, religion and society for the Society of Christian Ethics (North America).⁵³

Yoder published: (1) *The Original Revolution: Essays of Christian Pacifism* (1971) and (2) *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*

1972-1973

Yoder continued his GBS presidency. In addition to the controversy about the MHL book collection stories and rumors began to circulate inside Elkhart County (IN) Mennonite organizations about Yoder's intimidating, authoritarian, conflict-ridden, and intellectually aggressive style of institutional management. Some of his seminary colleagues and other Mennonite peers in church-wide institutional leadership positions found him difficult to work with and openly began to distrust his ideas as well as his institutional leadership style.

In addition, according to Tom Price (June 29, 1992) there were allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior which either immediately preceded the presidency or occurred during it.⁵⁴ These were lodged with one or more un-named Mennonite Church officials. Some individual(s), according to Price, at this time called for Yoder's resignation from the presidency of MBS.

Mennonite historian Theron Schlabach at the time of Yoder's death in 1997 commented that Yoder's seminary presidency had been *disastrous*.⁵⁵

Whatever happened and however it happened, after only two years in residency Yoder's contract as president was not renewed. In terms of the Mennonite Church press, the ending of his presidency was not announced. As far as I have been able to ascertain no reasons for such an abrupt ending of his short presidency were ever announced to the church at large.

In contrast to the failed presidency, Yoder's academic teaching and scholarship career began to thrive.

- **Yoder published: (1) *The Politics of Jesus* (1972).** This book established a national and international reputation for Yoder. He began to lecture extensively on college and university campuses around the world.

Yoder remained a full-time professor on the GBS/AMBS teaching faculty and Joe Hertzler was quietly named acting president of GBS. Systematic theologian Marlin Miller joined the teaching faculty. He and Yoder co-taught one course.⁵⁶ Miller, like Yoder, had done mission work in post-war Europe and had obtained his Ph.D. in Europe.

During this year, on the cusp of leaving the president's office and his return to a full time teaching role, Yoder was ordained at Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio – the congregation of his childhood and adolescence.⁵⁷ Sources close to Yoder at that time comment that he was highly ambivalent about becoming an ordained individual. Nevertheless, in a letter to the GBS board of overseers, J. C. Wenger, seminary faculty member and influential churchman, suggested a strong need for Yoder's ordination. One of Wenger's reasons for the ordination was that it would send a strong signal from the board of overseers in support for Yoder and his work. Another perhaps more major reason was to secure the ministerial housing

tax allowance for Yoder.⁵⁸ Wenger's strong insistence upon the need for Yoder's ordination as an aspect of his teaching role at the combined Mennonite seminaries seems to have tipped the balance as it influenced Yoder's willingness to cooperate with the both seminaries and the Mennonite Church in this matter. In a certain sense, this was an aberrant ordination in Mennonite polity for Yoder was not assigned to a congregation. He was ordained to a non-specific teaching and preaching role in the Elkhart seminaries.⁵⁹ Ohio Conference maintained his active ordination credentials until 1991 or 1992.

During his lifetime Yoder never served a congregation as its full-time or part-time pastor. Alexis-Baker (2012) states that *Yoder preached at churches around the world...Each month for decades he was traveling and preaching sermons at least once a month, sometimes three times a month. All year. He preached in churches, at rallies for peace and other such things (p. 21).* In addition, according to Yoder's archival files, he performed weddings for students and friends and provided pastoral counseling to individuals who corresponded with him. He was, therefore, known and recognized inside denominational and ecumenical Christian circles as an ordained Mennonite minister.

In addition to his preaching role, Yoder also had an active professional career as a lecturer invited speaker at denominational, ecumenical, and academic conferences. His role at UND guaranteed that he was an invited participant in many professional conferences about a diverse set of topics.

Yoder joined the contributing editorial board of the evangelical periodical, *Sojourners*. He later stepped down in 1988.⁶⁰

At UND, as a part-time faculty member he began to chair its program in nonviolence studies.⁶¹

- **He published:** *The Legacy of Michael Sattler (1973)*

In 1992, "Clara" discussed her early 1970's student experiences with Yoder and reported *inappropriate hugs* in his AMBS faculty office. She told him at the time, she said, that his behavior was unwelcome and inappropriate.⁶²

During the 1973-1974 academic calendar year Yoder represented the AMBS teaching faculty in its very first course about women's issues in ministry at GBS/MBS/AMBS. This course was an experimental course because it was designed, supervised, and evaluated by a guiding committee of student women. Yoder was the assigned faculty liaison to the student leadership team.⁶³ In 1976 in his lectures at Regent University in Vancouver, British Columbia,⁶⁴ Yoder reflected upon this course and wrote, *I've been thinking about these themes [singleness and sexuality] during the last three years, as a result of the provocation of a seminary course we had (student-planned of course) on the feminist issue. The singleness question was visibly, noticeably neglected. That neglect became conscious as we tried to think about how that had happened. Thus, from "the women's set of issues" to a set of singleness issues there was a certain continuity and yet also a certain sense of shifting of gears. I had previously (for a long time) had a minimal, just-under-the-threshold awareness of some kind of bias. This experience in 1973-1974 helped this awareness to surface.*

- **Several of Yoder's sexuality manuscripts are dated 1973:**

(1) *A brief footnote on vocabulary to use;* (2) *When is Adultery a Marriage?* (3) *Affective resources for singles;* (4) *Respect for the single person;* and (5) *Singleness*

in Ethical and Pastoral Perspectives (This memoranda or working paper was widely circulated and archive box 200 has a number of letters to and from Yoder regarding the paper's content. Most of these letters affirm his position and are appreciative.)

1973-1974

Joe Hertzler became the interim president of Goshen Biblical Seminary. Marlin Miller and John Howard Yoder would co-teach a course on Mennonite theology.⁶⁵

1974-1975

Yoder and his family lived in France where he taught at the Protestant seminary in Strasbourg.

- **Two of Yoder's manuscripts on marriage and one requesting conversations about his sexuality and singleness work appear in 1974:** (1) *A call for aid*; (2) *What is Adultery of the Heart* and (3) Edited and reproduced from an earlier 1968 text. *When is a Marriage not a marriage?*

Women later reported receiving sexually offensive mail from Yoder during his year in France.⁶⁶

1975-1976

Yoder and his family lived in Jerusalem where he lectured at the Ecumenical Institute-Tantur. Price (July 13, 1992) reports that "Clara" received a sexually explicit letter from Yoder. In it he asked her for personal information about *how, I a single woman, dealt with my sexuality*. Yoder gave her the address of a private mail box in Jerusalem.

Marlin Miller was inaugurated as the second president of GBS. In addition to his GBS presidential role he also co-coordinated AMBS with MBS President Erland Waltner.⁶⁷

- **Yoder circulated a manuscript:** *What is adultery of the heart?*
- **Multiple Rough Drafts:** *The Challenge of Singleness*

1976-1977

Yoder and his family returned to the United States. He continued to teach full time at GBS/AMBS. He began regular part time teaching at UND.⁶⁸

"Clara" (Price, July 13, 1992) described Yoder's uninvited visits to her apartment. She told him to stop coming to see her.

Marlin Miller in the late 1980s and again shortly before his death in 1994 reported to several different individuals that it was in 1976 that he received the first complaint about Yoder's sexual misconduct. As far as I have been able to ascertain, Miller never clarified in these conversations if the complaint was about adultery, sexual propositions, offensive correspondence or outright sexual harassment.⁶⁹

Waltner Gossen reports that during this time period, President Miller's major concern was two fold: preserve the Yoder marriage and preserve his career.⁷⁰

One of Yoder's manuscripts about singleness is dated 1976. In addition, there is a large section of material that was given during an in-residence lectureship at Regent University in Vancouver, British Columbia.

- **Yoder edited and translated *The Schleiheim Confession* (1977)**
- **Yoder circulated a manuscript: *Single Dignity***
- ***Rough Drafts: Regent Materials presentation***

1977-1978

Yoder joined the full time teaching faculty in the Theology Department at UND. He continued to teach on the GBS/MBS/AMBS Elkhart campus in a part time role as an adjunct professor. In this arrangement, AMBS bought back some of his time from UND and he taught on the Elkhart campus. He maintained an office on both campuses.⁷¹

During this year, President Marlin Miller first learned about Yoder's *extramarital* behavior from a family member.⁷²

In a memorandum dated May 5, 1978, Marlin Miller requested an appointment with Yoder in order to discuss his travel schedule for 1978-1979. One of the issues that Miller desired to talk with Yoder about were his *family priorities*" Miller wrote, *Before I am ready to support the Pomona invitation, I would therefore like to have more information on your use of time projection as well as how this relates to family considerations with regard to calendar and availability.* While Yoder's primary employment was now at Notre Dame, it is clear that Miller was carefully monitoring Yoder's travel schedule calendar and was insisting on some kind of family accountability.⁷³

- **Several manuscripts appear:** (1) *Affective Resources for Singles*; (2) *The ethics of the younger generation*; and (3) *Intergenerational affection*

1978-1979

Yoder continued teaching at UND/AMBS. He was an invited participant in the Mennonite Church's first round of discussions about homosexuality and church membership for sexually active gay men and lesbian women.⁷⁴ He participated in these discussions because the Mennonite seminaries were asked to contribute to this physician-led and therapist-led Mennonite study of the issue. Yoder's presentation was subsequently published in the consultation's written findings.⁷⁵ In addition, he gave a thoughtful forum at AMBS about the consultation process and its findings. During the forum he talked about the reality that perhaps Christians could not agree on the specific nature of homosexuality as an orientation but it was possible for a community of faith to come to agreements about sexual behaviors which were acceptable and sexual behaviors which were not acceptable.⁷⁶

During this year Waltner Gossen describes an encounter in which Professor Willard Swartley walked into a dark classroom where a woman, apparently a student, was kneeling between Professor Yoder's thighs. Professor Swartley abruptly left the classroom and did not confront Yoder about his behavior. He did, however, report it to President Marlin Miller. At that time President Miller told Professor Swartley that he'd received multiple letters about Yoder's activities with a number of women.⁷⁷

It was in the 1978-1979 school year that I had my first personal encounters with Mennonite professional women's complaints about Yoder's behavior towards them. It was also the year in which I learned about his offensive and abusive actions towards women students at AMBS.

Mark Thiessen Nation includes an important commentary about Yoder's emotional life during his discussion of the 1979 academic year. I will quote that commentary at length because of the discussion on other blogs about Yoder's likely diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome with its flat emotional affect.

*The empathic side of Yoder – perhaps partly because of his incredible intellect and reasoning powers as well as his discomfort with personal relationships – has often gone unnoticed. But it was there as both the French Mennonites and these Latin American theologians saw. I noticed it as a student at AMBS in the fall of 1979. One day Yoder shared at our Peace Studies Colloquium. He spoke about his recent visit to South Africa. The main thing that I remember is that he could hardly speak. He was clearly holding back tears as he spoke of the moving way in which black and white Christians expressed their unity in Christ, despite the fact that some expressions of their unity was a breaking of the laws of apartheid. They were willing to pay that cost. I have come to know that this is hardly the only time that John expressed such empathy. I have received e-mails from those who saw him quite moved when listening to a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. or when he would hear about people being murdered and those who gave their own lives trying to protect others from murder.*⁷⁸

In this year Yoder joined the Board of Editors for the *Journal of Religious Ethics*.⁷⁹

Waltner Gossen reports that in 1979 Yoder compiled a list of behaviors in which he and a number of women had engaged. These included superficial touches, discussions about the meaning of deeper touching – including handclasps, hugs, or kisses, lap sitting and kissing, disrobing, sexual touching of the penis or pubis, further exploration of arousal, coitus interruptus which he called intermission. She further reports that President Marlin Miller was concerned about the status and well-being of the Yoder-Guth 27 years of marriage.⁸⁰

- **In this year he circulated the following:** *A brief footnote on vocabulary to use when discussing affective resources.*
- ***His homosexuality consultation presentation was published:*** *Is homosexuality a sin: How not to work at a question*

1979-1980

Yoder continued his full time appointment at Notre Dame and his part time GBS/AMBS faculty appointments.

Complaints about Yoder's behavior began to surface as rumors and gossip inside the larger Mennonite community of Michiana (southern Michigan and northern Indiana). Female church women began to hear Yoder stories from women he'd propositioned and they fielded questions and complaints about his behavior from their subordinates, friends and colleagues. Individual women began to lodge formal complaints with Marlin Miller whenever their experiences related to seminary issues. Other women lodged complaints with the ministerial team and board of elders at Prairie Street Mennonite Church. Not all affected women, however, were willing to do

this. Not all complaints, for example, originated at the seminary. Some originated among church agency employees where Yoder was hired as a consultant. In addition, some originated at UND and SMC.

During this era, some student and staff women at AMBS alerted new female students and staff to be very cautious around Yoder and warned them never to be alone with him in his office, in the library stacks, or in closed-door classrooms. Clearly a hostile climate had developed at AMBS for some student women in (1) Yoder's classes or (2) assigned to his academic advising load.⁸¹ In addition, he also created a hostile climate for some of his female academic colleagues and the seminary's female support staff.

- **Several audiotapes of Yoder's teaching are extant:** (1) *Homosexuality: The Shape of the Problem for the Church*. Audiotape of a forum held at AMBS on October 12, 1979.⁸² and (2) *Sexuality*. Audiotape of a lecture presented at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, Canada.⁸³

1980-1981

Unknown to seminary outsiders, Marlin Miller had begun to organize a "fact file" in which he collated a master list of names of everyone who complained directly to him (or other seminary administrators and board officers) about Yoder's behavior. He began to collect information by interviewing women who made complaints to him.⁸⁴ In 1982 upon being directly confronted by several concerned women regarding the seminary's non-action in regards to Yoder's behaviors, Miller stated that the complaints he knew about were *too old for action at this time*. However, Miller added, if *anything new has happened since December, 1980 then I am willing to re-open disciplinary conversations with Yoder*.⁸⁵

Clearly, December, 1980 was a line in the sand of some sort or other in Miller's (and the seminaries' governing boards') administrative concerns about John's behavior with women. Yoder's "sexually experimental" behavior, however, did not visibly change.

We now know from opened files that in 1980 President Miller established a secret and confidential disciplinary process with a cadre of insiders at Goshen Biblical Seminary. This collection of seminary board members and senior faculty was called the *Covenant Group*. They met from 1980 until 1984.⁸⁶

During this time period, faculty and staff women from the campuses of St. Mary's College (SMC) and Notre Dame (UND) began to share first-hand experiences and rumors from their campuses with Mennonite faculty women from AMBS and GC. The first of these conversations spontaneously began during an informal social gathering in a GC faculty member's home. Later they became more planned and deliberate. More formal discussion meetings were, somewhat later, held on the Indiana University South Bend (IUSB) campus in South Bend, IN. IUSB Women's Studies faculty members provided a neutral meeting place where Roman Catholic and Mennonite women could discuss the Yoder situation without being attacked or otherwise professionally sabotaged on their home campuses. In this manner, faculty and staff women from all four campuses (AMBS, GC, SMC, and UND) shared information with each other about their respective conversations with institutional administrators and, at times, facilitated the flow of information between their respective campuses. Women shared information about what was known about the type of offenses and the frequency of offenses. Obviously, a lot was not known. But concerned student women on these campuses shared their experiences and concerns first with women faculty. Faculty and staff women, having received these reports,

needed to make decisions about their own actions on behalf of student women. Thus, they consulted with other women faculty and staff women.⁸⁷ For some women faculty, they too had personal concerns regarding John's behaviors towards them.

In addition, the IUSB meetings led Mennonite and Roman Catholic women faculty members to talk with their respective administrators at Notre Dame and at AMBS. Allegations and complaints about Yoder's behavior were, therefore, known in this era by AMBS and UND administrators. In addition, because women knew each other and were sharing information, they also knew that AMBS and UND administrators knew women knew that administrators knew. Faculty and staff women's frustrations with institutional inaction at both institutions grew with each unsuccessful administrative confrontation.⁸⁸ Institutional failures to protect women faculty, students and staff members caused a small group of Mennonite churchwomen to commit themselves to various forms of denominational political activism regarding Yoder's career in Mennonite organizations. In the 1980's Yoder described "stuffing" to Mennonite Seminary leaders in Elkhart. "Stuffing" consisted of genital penetration without ejaculation.⁸⁹

- **Yoder returned to the theme of marriage and divorce in three manuscripts:** (1) *Further impressions on the theme, "What makes a marriage?"* (2) *Losing gracefully in the politics of accommodation on divorce and remarriage;* (3) *Revisiting "What is a marriage?"* and (4) Correspondence regarding student sexuality (with the Goshen College faculty and student life committee which was creating a document (*Standards of our Life Together*))

1981-1982; 1982-1983: 1983-1984

In the fall semester of 1981 or the spring semester of 1982, a faculty committee of senior, tenured faculty was formed at AMBS to deal with the continuing allegations of improper behavior on Yoder's part. According to Millard Lind the assignment of this committee was two-fold: (determine the extent of Yoder's behavioral problems and (2) to help him overcome them/redemption.⁹⁰ Members of the committee were Marlin Miller, AMBS president, Evelyn Shellenberger (Mrs. Wally), chair of the board of overseers, Marcus Smucker, member of the board of overseers, Millard Lind, tenured professor, Willard Swartley, newly appointed seminary dean.⁹¹ Waltner Gossen identifies this as the second effort at Goshen Biblical Seminary to understand Yoder's behavior within a theological framework. There was concern to challenge Yoder's unwanted and offensive behavior towards women.⁹²

Mennonite and Roman Catholic women continued to discuss Yoder's harassment inside a regularized inter-disciplinary and inter-institution group of women faculty and staff. Some women reported being terrified of what Yoder might do to them if they complained to their institutional department heads about their harassment experiences with him.⁹³ Some student women later wondered if their academic grade had been affected by their specific responses to Yoder's inappropriate behavior.⁹⁴ Several Goshen College faculty and staff women proactively obtained unlisted telephone numbers.

In their meetings with each other, women from AMBS, UND, and SMC reported increasingly erratic behavior on Yoder's part. In one situation, a frightened faculty woman activist reported her impression that Yoder had deliberately threatened her with his moving car in a university parking lot.⁹⁵

In late 1982 or early 1983 several women made the decision to lodge yet another formal written and verbal complaint about Yoder's behavior with the AMBS president and selected AMBS board members. It is my unverifiable memory that similar complaints were simultaneously lodged at Indiana-Michigan Conference and at Prairie St. Mennonite Church.

In early spring, 1983, *there was a disciplinary process within MBM....Missionaries on location were urged not to foster the inviting of John to various events because he was using the fact of his popularity to stymie what his colleagues saw as an effort to get him to practice the revolutionary subordination he was preaching.*⁹⁶

At the same time, the seminary's disciplinary efforts were being blocked by *Yoder's threats if became public.*⁹⁷ Walter Sawatsky writes, *the silencing of the seminary was quite burdensome to many of us. I recall raising the question when this would be lifted, and it was Wilbert Shenk who told me in private that recent "incidents" of complaint by women were the reason we could not continue working with him.*⁹⁸

From 1981 to 1984, I was a doctoral studies student in Southern California. After I wrote a classroom paper in which I worked with Yoder's then-secret sexuality papers, two members⁹⁹ of my doctoral studies teaching faculty told me that Yoder's sexual misconduct behavior towards professional women was also known within the ecumenical Christian academy and inside the Society for Christian Ethics. For this reason – and others as well - both men advised me against working with Yoder and his written work as one component of my doctoral studies program.

I was astounded. My contacts with Yoder and the Mennonite women he had sexually approached or propositioned had all been inside our shared ethnic Mennonite community. While I was aware of issues at UND and SMC with Catholic women, I had no idea about the reach of his ecumenical influence around the world. My only personal knowledge of Yoder occurred in the context of our shared denominational membership. In that context, I knew he could be arrogant, abrasive, patronizing, and interpersonally rude.

Before my move to California in 1981, I had received information from clients, colleagues, and friends that he was sexually propositioning single women who were his professional Mennonite colleagues. As a part time AMBS seminary student from 1978 until 1981, I had learned about faculty, staff and student women's concerns. As a participant in the first gathering of Mennonite and Roman Catholic women at IUSB I knew some Mennonite and UND/SMC women privately considered him to be totally creepy and they refused to have any personal or professional contacts with him that their jobs did not mandate.

After my encounters with women in Elkhart County and in light of my professors' warnings, I came to believe that Yoder was a chronic serial womanizer. I did not, at this time, yet have the language of sexual harassment or hostile climate harassment to guide my thinking about Yoder and Mennonite Church institutions. The only language I (and other women like me) had to describe behavior like Yoder's was that of marital unfaithfulness, infidelity, womanizing, or adultery. The terms *sexual harassment*, *sexual abuse*, and *hostile or chilly climates* had yet to be coined inside the second wave of the American's women's movement in the 1980s and 1990's.¹⁰⁰ Inside the Mennonite academic women's community of Elkhart County the nascent awareness that Yoder's behavior was not only inappropriate or immoral but also interpersonally violent took some time to mature.

In 1982, I was in my first year of graduate studies at Southern California School of Theology and had just completed my first ethics courses. On September 9, 1982 I wrote to Miller of my awareness of his problems with Yoder. I identified that I had discussed these problems with my Goshen College supervisors before leaving campus for Southern California. I described Yoder's behavior as a form of violence and harassment. I tried to educate him about the intersection of institutional sexism and Yoder's sexual violence.¹⁰¹

From 1978 on, I had been aware of and increasingly offended by the ways Yoder was rumored to treat his women colleagues, and students. By 1981 I was offended at the way the Mennonite Church and the male administrators of its educational institutions appeared content to protect Yoder from public accountability. I was appalled that church agencies continued to send him around the world representing the Mennonite community and its peace theology.

I began to ask myself the questions that Roman Catholic scholars and lawyers later (2002-2012) asked themselves about priests and bishops during the American Roman Catholic pedophile and clericalism scandal:¹⁰² was Yoder part of an underground network of Mennonite churchmen who were sexually active (in the sense of adultery)? Did this hypothetical network of similarly inclined (and also ordained) men protect him as a way of protecting themselves? I had no data at all. As a well-trained clinician, it was simply a reasonable question to ask myself. It was, however, not an answerable question given the absence of specific factual data. At the time, however, all I had were unanswerable questions about why the church, knowing what it had been told, refused to act. The inherent sexism of the church's "hands-off-Yoder" praxis offended me. I was quite sure that if I was to behave in the way John was allegedly behaving, my institutional contract would be cancelled immediately on the grounds of unprofessional behavior or perhaps *moral turpitude*. A gendered double standard for moral behavior inside the Mennonite denomination seemed to be operational.

I had no language to describe what Greeley (2004) and Sipe (ud) would later identify and discuss about the relationship of clergy sexual abuse to supervisory and collegial or peer blackmail. I had no real understanding of the influence of a clerical culture or institutional fears of scandal and financial liability.

Many years later I would locate and read Peter Rutter's 1989 discussion about socialized male group behavior in unchallenged situations of professional sexual abuse of their clients.¹⁰³ In that book, he asked why professional men, who, themselves, behave in moral and ethical ways, do not, in a timely manner, confront and report their abusive colleagues to professional boards and professional supervising bodies. He identified complex intra-psychic motivations. I paraphrase his work: (1) some men hold on to fantasies that although this kind of sexual behavior has never happened to them in the course of their professional career, a fantasized hope that one day it may happen to them is active in their imaginations. Hearing about a colleague who has crossed appropriate sexual boundaries, such fantasies are encouraged. (2) Some men live vicariously through the abusive behaviors of others. In such a scenario a known-to-be or a-rumored-to-be sexually inappropriate or sexually abusive professional serves as a *surrogate* who lives out the sexual fantasies of his professional colleagues. Professional colleagues, therefore, do not want to prevent abusive sexual misconduct done by their fantasized surrogates.

In religious circles, self-righteousness may also figure in. Inasmuch as everyone inside human religious communities is a sinner, it is possible to think, *I have a better moral character than he does*. Condemnation of the other, by rumor and gossip, serves to reinforce a self-image of self-righteousness, of being better than someone else. Thus, individuals are not confronted with

their own moral failings because they are busy pointing out the moral failings, in gossip or even in administrative decisions, of the other. Some Buddhist literature and some clinical literature would point out the dangers of such self-righteousness as a form of projection.

Yoder continued to travel extensively in lectureships and Church-sponsored consulting assignments around the globe. The Mennonite Church continued to utilize his theological writings and his trouble-shooting consultation abilities. Nation comments that during his mature academic career Yoder lectured in twenty countries in four languages (writing in five).¹⁰⁴

- **In 1982, Yoder produced additional manuscripts:** (1) *On falling off bicycles: How to test what can be learned* and (2) *History and Hermeneutics, a transcription of remarks on homosexuality*

In August, 1983, two Mennonite Church women – usually not allies on church politics – met privately and had an extended conversation about the damage Yoder was doing to other women’s lives *and* to the reputation of the Mennonite Church. In this conversation, the older and politically better connected woman confirmed for her younger woman colleague that the Mennonite Church’s male hierarchy did, in fact, know multiple allegations that Yoder was continuing to sexually approach UND, SMC and Mennonite Church women.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the older women told the younger that she had personally confronted Yoder about the inappropriate and harmful nature of his behavior vis-à-vis Mennonite church women and AMBS women students. She told him about her concerns for the damage he was doing to the institutional church and to the seminary. She continued that she had subsequently informed Mennonite institution administrators about her conversation and provided them with details of her lengthy and direct confrontation with Yoder about his misconduct.

Subsequent to this Mennonite-woman-to-Mennonite- woman conversation, several additional Mennonite churchwomen – on hearing its details - initiated personal conversations with Mennonite church male leaders they knew personally in mid and upper level management positions in the USA and Canada Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) network and with Canadian and United States Mennonite Church elected and executive officers. At the time women saw this as creating an early warning network because of Yoder’s institutional work around the world representing the Mennonite Church’s peace, justice, and nonviolence theology. Several of the women who had these conversations wrote or telephoned me to tell me that several denominational administrators admitted to them that they had already heard allegations and rumors regarding Yoder’s personal behavior. None, however, had chosen to confront him. None had chosen to restrict his professional activities within their organizations. None had chosen to stop their organization from hiring him to represent, formally or informally, the Mennonite Church in the United States and abroad.

John’s Father, Howard C. Yoder died on October 31, 1983. He was 86 years old. The funeral sermon was preached by Oak Grove Mennonite Church minister Peter Wiebe

In December, 1983, GBS/AMBS administrators coerced Yoder’s resignation from the seminary faculty by informing him that his teaching contract with AMBS would be terminated as of July 1, 1984. John would not teach on the AMBS campus again until one year prior to his death in 1997. Information for the church simply said that *Yoder has resigned in order to teach full time at Notre Dame.*¹⁰⁶ Nothing was noted by the seminary’s president, by the governing board’s personnel committee, or by the executive secretary of MBE about Yoder’s sexual misconduct as the cause of his *coerced resignation*. AMBS and MBE issued no public, church-wide statement or warning about the actual reasons behind Yoder’s resignation. Information about the specific

reasons related to his abusive behaviors towards women was limited to a small circle of insiders including the seminaries' tenured teaching faculty and the seminaries' boards of overseers.

Many years later (Price, June 29, 1992) Marlin Miller commented about the December, 1983 decision, *the reasons that led to John's termination here was the result of an extended process over long-standing issues. This was considered the best way to deal with those issues.* According to Price, Miller refused to make any further comment on the advice of legal counsel. Since Miller had heard his first complaint about Yoder's sexual misconduct behaviors in 1976, more than seven years had passed.

To my knowledge this is the first (and only) public acknowledgement (nearly nine years later) by any seminary or MBE administrator that Yoder had been fired for *long-standing issues*. At the time he was notified his AMBS teaching contract would not be renewed, Yoder was 56 years old.

Rumors inside Mennonite institutional circles have since claimed, but I have not been able to verify this historical memory in the present moment, that Yoder became *persona non grata* on the AMBS campus. In effect, if this rumor is true, he was personally barred from setting foot for any reason at all on the AMBS campus. This prohibition lasted, I've been told, until 1996 or 1997.

- **In 1983 Yoder published** (1) *Christian Attitudes towards War, Peace, and Revolution: A Companion to Bainton* and (2) *What Would You Do? A Serious Answer to a Standard Question*
- **Yoder returned yet again to his thinking about marriage and divorce:** *More scattered thoughts on marriage and divorce.*

By the fall of 1983, things began to fall apart for Yoder at Goshen Biblical Seminary. Members of the Covenant Group recommended his dismissal to the Seminary's Board of Overseers. In addition, Mennonite Biblical Seminary – which shared campus facilities with Goshen Biblical Seminary, had a new president. President Henry Poettcker had begun to receive information and complaints about Yoder's behavior.¹⁰⁷

1984-1985

Yoder's contract to teach at AMBS was not renewed. He continued to teach full time at UND. Mennonite undergraduate and graduate students who wanted to study with Yoder now needed to take courses at UND.

During 1984-1985 an investigation task force formed at Prairie Street because of allegations and rumors of sexual misconduct. According to Price (June 29, b-5) the task force was disbanded because *no woman would come forward for a face – to - face meeting alone with Yoder.*¹⁰⁸

- **He published:** (1) *The Priestly Kingdom*; (2) *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking* and (3) *God's Revolution: The Witness of Eberhard Arnold*
- **He also wrote and circulated** *Rethinking Marriage*

He continued to consult with a wide variety of Mennonite and other-than-Mennonite organizations. As A. Alexis-Baker notes (2012) he traveled constantly (p. 23).

In unguarded conversations with concerned individuals, after Yoder's departure from AMBS, Miller would reveal that he had fielded complaints about Yoder's behavior from Africa, Canada, Europe (in French, German, and English) South America and the United States. I am also personally aware of complaints originating in Central America and in Israel. Thus Miller's late in life 1990's exasperated comment to me about *five continents and in five languages* begins in 2015 to make some sense.¹⁰⁹

1985-1986; 1986-1987

During this era, Goshen College administrators, acting on advice of teaching faculty members Anna Bowman and Ruth Krall – during the presidency of Victor Stoltzfus – barred Yoder from on-campus events. He was not permitted to lecture in convocations or to speak in chapel nor was he allowed to do guest lectures in classes. He was permitted access to the Mennonite Historical Library and to the Mennonite Church archives – both of which were located on campus.¹¹⁰ Nor was he barred from attending activities in the College Church building which was also centrally located on the GC campus. The intent of refusing to allow Yoder to lecture and preach on campus was to limit his access to and personal encounters with vulnerable faculty, staff, and student women. Scheduled to speak in a Peace Colloquium, he was quietly disinvented by presidential action.¹¹¹

Yoder's academic role was now completely centered on the UND campus. He continued, however, to serve the Mennonite Church as a writer, as a lecturer, as a visiting preacher, as a consulting editor for its scholarly journal, *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, as a consultant theologian, and as a traveling North American representative in his denomination's relationships with Mennonite and ecumenical churches in Europe and in Spanish-speaking South American and Central American churches. In addition, he represented the Mennonite Central Committee's interest in peace and justice work. Although no longer hired by AMBS, his Mennonite ordination credentials remained unchallenged.

In 1985, Yoder was elected to the Board of Directors of the Society for Christian Ethics. In 1987 he became the Society's president.¹¹² During this time Yoder was instrumental in the establishment of the Joan Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies on the UND campus. In 1986, he became a Fellow of the Kroc Institute in addition to his ongoing faculty role in the University's Department of Theology.

Price (June 29, 1992) reported that in 1986, a small group of women lodged complaints about Yoder's abusive behavior with the Board of Elders of his home congregation, Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart (IN).¹¹³ Upon hearing about the allegations, Yoder insisted in meeting with the women individually and privately to hear their complaints. Already afraid of Yoder, the women were intimidated and refused to meet alone with him. Subsequent to their refusal to comply with Yoder's demands, Prairie Street Church dropped its investigations with the reasoning that the church's legalistic requirements based on a proof-text reading of Matthew 18 had not been met. In its collective wisdom, the institutional church had met its own textual and polity requirements for considering and managing such allegations about sexual misconduct. It would not act at this time to directly confront and manage Yoder's behavior as a churchman. Yoder continued to travel on behalf of Mennonite Church agencies and to lecture on Mennonite graduate and undergraduate campuses. No Mennonite administrator stepped forward to insist that the denominational church must protect students or church women from further events of abuse and victimization.

In 2004 Loren Johns reported that *somewhere around 1985 or 1986, Herald Press received a request... asking that Herald Press no longer publish John's writings due to his sexual infractions*. Ben Cutrell, the President of the Mennonite Publishing House (MPH), and members of the MPH Book Approving Group refused to honor this request.¹¹⁴

- **In 1985 Yoder published:** (1) *He Came Preaching Peace*
- **In 1986, he published:** *Singleness in Ethical and Pastoral Perspective* (in ***Being Single***, ed. David Selzer).

1987-1988: 1988-1989: 1989-1990

In 1988, Yoder chaired the Society for Christian Ethics. Although he no longer was tenured by any Mennonite educational institution, his theology continued to be taught as the theological canon in Mennonite graduate and undergraduate educational programs. In connection with one of their annual professional guild meetings, Mennonite religious studies academics honored Yoder by focusing on his theological contributions. Yoder and his wife both attended this meeting.¹¹⁵

- **In 1987 he published:** *The Fullness of Christ: Paul's Revolutionary Vision of Universal Ministry*

Waltner Gossen summarizes the 1980's in this manner:

Into the 1980's, Miller was determined to keep word of his dispute with Yoder from spreading. Exchanging lengthy notes with his colleague about sexual mores in biblical and contemporary times – in addition to investigating Yoder's specific behaviors – was time-consuming and emotionally draining. Still Miller considered his adversary his mentor, and he regarded Yoder's theological contributions of nonviolence and discipleship to be of incalculable value. Convincing Yoder of his errors had become the hidden agenda of Miller's seminary presidency (p. 34).

Somewhat later she continues:

Miller had a range of concerns in keeping Yoder's secret. Given the strains on the Yoder marriage, it was possible that Annie Yoder would become so angry that she would expose her husband's behaviors to the broader church. It was also conceivable that some woman, known or unknown to Miller might tell her story publicly. Yet another risk lay in exposure by aggrieved husbands (p. 35).

1990-1991

By now Yoder's behavior was an open scandal inside Mennonite institutions. Whenever Mennonites professional church workers chanced upon the topic of Yoder's alleged behaviors, stories and rumors flowed. This was clearly a secret that *everyone who was anyone* knew. An example of this generalized North American Mennonite awareness can be found in the endnotes of Darla Schumm's (1991) master's thesis at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Schumm wrote, *there is current controversy among Mennonites with respect to the credibility of Yoder's work. Unconfirmed allegations have been made about his personal conduct and rumors are widespread* (5).

During the 1990-91 academic year GC and its Bible, Religion and Philosophy Department began to plan a Believer's Church Conference on the topic of church discipline. GC, in this plan would host the conference on its campus. Many years before Yoder had been one of the original envisioning members of this group. Since its earliest days, the group met every couple of years around a theme of interest to churches who identified themselves as *believer's churches*. Included in this group of denominational churches were Mennonites, Baptists, Brethren and other Christian religious groups which practice adult believer's baptism. Goshen College made an exception to its ongoing ban regarding Yoder's presence on campus during academic events and he participated in this conference.

Yoder, himself, was deeply involved in planning this particular 1992 conference. In the background of his inclusion was a desire of a few highly placed male Mennonite administrators, theologians and ethicists to *rehabilitate Yoder's reputation* for the church.¹¹⁶ In their below the surface actions and correspondence, these churchmen recognized and acknowledged that Yoder's professional reputation had been significantly damaged by allegations and pervasive insider rumors of sexual misconduct. In one extant letter about Yoder's need for rehabilitation so the church can continue to use his theology, there is no expression of concern at all for the protection of vulnerable women. There is no evidenced awareness that there were church women with grievances about the absence of church action. This particular piece of correspondence identifies Yoder's clear desire to be rehabilitated. Thus, we can conclude that some sort of initiatory conversations was held with him about the requirements for rehabilitation. We do not know what that conversation included.

The denomination's era of reluctance to act after his termination at AMBS in 1884 meant that no one seemed to recall or be concerned about the reality that Yoder's Mennonite identity and ministerial ordination credentials remained active ones. Whether or not the institutional church wanted to be accountable for his behavior and its consequences in the lives of others, in terms of denominational clergy supervision polity, it legally (and morally) was.

In the winter of 1991, I taught a sabbatical replacement course on the AMBS campus. As part of my informal orientation, one of the women staff members took me aside and said something like this. *We believe that when John Yoder left the faculty here in 1984 he kept a set of keys for the building. If you plan to work in this building when classes are not in session, my personal advice to you is this: when you are in your office, keep the door closed and locked. When no one else is visibly in the office building, do not enter the library stacks. We believe he uses his key to enter the building, and in particular, the library's basement stacks. The women here who know about Yoder's behavior do not consider him to be safe. Protect yourself.*

I was too astonished by the woman's obvious fear to do more than indicate that I understood and would heed her advice. Women individuals on the AMBS campus, realistically or not, remained actively afraid of John eight years after he had been fired and declared *persona non grata* on the campus. I did decide, however, to heed her advice and be cautious when I was in the seminary building after hours. I had no personal desire to confront a brilliant and denominationally protected and reputedly sexually aggressive individual in a nearly empty office building.

- **In 1991 Yoder published:** (1) *The Death Penalty Debate: Two Opposing Views of Capitol Punishment* and (2) *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World*.
- **In 1991 he co-published (with Douglas Gwyn, George Hunsinger, and Eugene F. Roop):** *A Declaration of Peace: In God's People, the World's Renewal*

1991-1992

In 1991 - 1992, the ministers and board of elders at Prairies Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Indiana continued their work with the John Howard Yoder Task Force to in order to investigate rumors of Yoder's sexual misconduct.¹¹⁷

Bethel College (KS) Conference on Non-violence in America

In the early months of 1992, the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries co-sponsored a conference at Rocky Mountain Camp in Divide, Colorado. A group of male leaders from both conferences gathered with a group of women who were prepared to tell their personal stories of encountering violence inside the Mennonite Church. Staffed by a group called Men Overcoming Violence, the conference featured story telling by women. In his 2013 reflections about the 1992 decisions at Bethel College to disinvite Yoder as an on-campus speaker, Professor James Juhnke writes:

The February 1992 meeting in Colorado took place two months before the "Violence and Nonviolence in American history" conference at Bethel College. Mennonite leaders at Colorado signed a contract to do something positive about patriarchal violence. The case of John Howard Yoder had been discussed there including some dramatic testimony from the victims. It was natural for freshly motivated people to focus on Yoder's prospective appearances at Bethel. Three men (Fred Loganville, Ken Hawkey, and Gordon Houser wrote on February 13, 1992 to President Zehr: "We have learned that Dr. Yoder has sexually abused at least thirty women. Many of these women first met him at a conference like this one, we understand. We do not want more women abused by him."¹¹⁸

Juhnke concludes by stating that Bethel College was placed in a position of needing to act. On February 21, 1992 President Zehr wrote to Yoder that until "serious accusations of a moral and ethical nature" were resolved, *the General Conference Mennonite Church and Bethel College would be better served if you were not to participate.*¹¹⁹

Yoder's essay (1993), *The Burden and the Discipline of Evangelical Revisionism*, was published alongside of the conference presentations in a book published by Bethel College.¹²⁰

During the spring semester of 1992, Yoder was disinvited as a speaker at Bethel College in North Newton, KS.¹²¹ The student body newspaper reported the story and other Mennonite Press agencies picked it up. This was the first major public coverage of the Yoder sexual misconduct story anywhere inside the Mennonite community. The news traveled rapidly inside the Mennonite Academy. Eventually the ecumenical religious press also reported on the story as did the *New York Times Religious News editor* Peter Steinfelds. Yoder was 64 years old. The Mennonite Church academic rumor mill later reported that Yoder felt betrayed by Bethel College administrators and conference planners because news reports of his disinvitation were published in both the Bethel College student newspaper and subsequently by the Mennonite Press in the United States and Canada. He apparently felt, according to some of his friends'

later recollections, that the Matthew 18 so-called Rule of Christ had not been appropriately and legalistically followed. In short, his rights to professional collegiality and privacy had not been recognized or honored. In this kind of thinking, it now seems to me, he became, in his own mind and frame of reference, the institutional church's victim. He became his victims' victim.¹²²

Prairie Street Mennonite Church's John Howard Yoder Task Force

In July, 1991 Prairie Street Mennonite Church (Ruth and Harold Yoder, co-pastors) formed a Yoder task force to investigate the wide network of rumors and complaints regarding Yoder's abusive and sexual misconduct behaviors.¹²³ Yoder was in Europe on an academic sabbatical for part of this academic year. When he returned, the committee met with him 5 times before issuing an interim report to the Prairie Street Congregation and to Indiana-Michigan Conference.

According to Price (June 29, 1992, B-5), *Yoder who was abroad for much of the latter half of 1991, wasn't informed of the current process until August, and didn't formally meet with the task force until March 14, 1992 when he was presented with the allegations.*

In light of the *Bethel Collegian* news coverage of Bethel College's disinvitation of Yoder as a conference key note speaker, the Prairie Street John Howard Yoder Task Force (and Board of Elders) on March 15, 1992 made a formal report to the congregation about their work and findings to date.

The Believer's Church Conference on Church Discipline, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana

Planning for the Believers Church conference on church discipline continued and the conference was held in May, 1992 on the Goshen College campus. One Mennonite woman pastoral theologian (Friesen, 1992) and two Church of the Brethren women theologians (Hersch Meyer, 1992; May, 1992) presented papers in which they openly critiqued male domination and religious leader violence against women.¹²⁴ Without utilizing the word *clericalism* they critiqued the church's inappropriate use of the Mathew 18 text¹²⁵ in situations of sexual violence. The church's unfaithfulness in covering-up leader sexual abuse was noted. According to one of these women, Yoder's behavior during her presentation was provocative, disruptive and offensive. She told me years later that it was her belief that he intended, by rude public behavior, to intimidate and disempower her work.

Support Group for Victims Formed

In 1991-1992 several Mennonite women - each intimately acquainted with Yoder's behavior - formed a support for group women survivors of Yoder's abusive behaviors. One goal for such a gathering was to begin to heal their individual and collective wounds. In October, 1991, they enlisted Marlin Miller's reluctant help in contacting additional Yoder victims.¹²⁶ He was asked to send a letter to every woman who had complained to him about Yoder's behavior. In that letter information was given about how to contact members of the support group. More than thirty women responded, in one way or another to Miller's letter.

Subsequent to this a small group of Yoder's victims (drawn from the pool of the October correspondence replies) arranged to meet in the greater Michiana area (February, 1992). At the group's first meeting, they begin to strategize means by which they could attempt to protect other women. In the context of this face-to-face meeting of women, the group decided to force the issue of Yoder's behavior in light of his ordination. To do this they decided to go public with

their personal stories. 8 women from the group felt personally and professionally secure enough to volunteer for this work. Price (July 13, 1992) reported that this smaller representative group of women talked with the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task force, elected and staff officers of the United States Mennonite Church, officers of Indiana-Michigan Conference and members of its Church Life Commission about their personal encounters with Yoder's unwelcome sexualized behavior.¹²⁷ The group of individuals who represented Prairie Street Congregation, the national Mennonite church and the regional Indiana-Michigan conference listened to their stories, confronted Yoder, and later issued a statement to the press.¹²⁸ As part of their Statement to Prairie Street, the eight women reported that they knew first-hand and by name, *an additional 30 women*.¹²⁹

The women's stated that regarding their personal complaints directly to Yoder, *that in no case in relation to us has John accepted moral responsibility for his behavior (1)*. In late-in-life conversations with several women, Marlin Miller reported that in 1991 he knew the names and allegations of 38 women.¹³⁰ By the end of his life he knew more first hand stories and his estimate of numbers had increased significantly.¹³¹

Three women from the group of eight later talked with Tom Price, an investigative reporter for the *Elkhart Truth* (Elkhart, IN).

Collegial Interventions Staged

In the spring of 1992, a proposed Yoder Festschrift was cancelled because Stanley Hauerwas, James McClendon, Glenn Stassen and Mark Thiessen Nation became aware of Mennonite Church disciplinary processes with Yoder.¹³²

In the spring of 1992 three of Yoder's professional colleagues and academic supporters staged an intervention. Learning that Yoder was actively considering a decision in which he would refuse to cooperate with Indiana-Michigan Conference in a process of church investigation and discipline conservative evangelical religious studies scholars and ethicists Stanley Hauerwas, James W. McClendon and Glenn Stassen organized a conference call to Yoder. They advised him of the legacy implications of his refusing to cooperate and strongly urged him to fully participate in his denomination's disciplinary process. Nation writes, *they thought the future credibility of his writings was in jeopardy if he did not submit*¹³³ While Hauerwas, in his published description of this intervention, does not forthrightly and directly comment on the reasoning of the three men in staging such an intervention, it is clear that Yoder's academic, evangelical contemporaries understood that his failure to participate would seriously affect any future reception of Yoder's ecclesial and ethical theology.¹³⁴ In short, by failing to cooperate with Indiana-Michigan Conference and its Accountability and Support Group (ASG), Yoder's theological and doctrinal legacy was likely to be permanently tarnished, tainted or perhaps even destroyed. His lifetime legacy of theological and ethical work, could, therefore, be disregarded by future generations of evangelical Christian and secular thinkers and ethicists.

A woman who knew Yoder wrote to Mark Nation of this time in his life:

*Although John agreed to the discipline of the Mennonite Church...and the borders they set him...he was never convinced that he was wrong about sexuality. He thought the rest of the world (of the Christians) did not understand. He had this "special insight and wisdom", which others were not able to see. And because they could not understand, he had to revert to secrecy – to privacy and closed doors when he tried to "help" his sisters all over the world. Later I had close contact with a number of these "sisters."*¹³⁵

Mark Nation appears to concur in this opinion. *I am sure that one of the things which complicated matters is that, so far as I know, Yoder was never convinced he was wrong, theoretically, in his views about physical intimacy outside marriage. And because he was a man of integrity, he refused to say that he was.*¹³⁶

Hauerwas also reports that during the commencement weekend at Goshen College, where he was the invited speaker, he met with conference administrators and the denominational Accountability and Support Group (ASG) that would supervise Yoder's denominational crisis for the next four years. Since Hauerwas' commencement address was about forgiveness and second chances for offenders, one can only assume that a strong advocacy position of grace and a generosity of spiritual forgiveness for Yoder was the primary message he carried to the Elkhart offices of the Mennonite Church and the Goshen offices of Indiana-Michigan conference. I see no evidence in Hauerwas' published memories of this weekend of conversations that anyone evidenced any concerns about the need for public accountability to (or even justice for) the victims of Yoder's abusive behavior.

In 1991, the Mennonite Historical Society (MHS) *discussed the implications of the suspension of Yoder's ordination credentials, since he had been ordained as a teacher of the church – i.e. publication through the Mennonite Quarterly Review (MQR) and general activism through MHS committees was a key expression of that. I became president of the MHS just as the Society was getting ready to present a proposal to the board about suspending John's role in MHS committee, so sending John a letter indicating what MHS was proposing to do was one of my first official acts. John responded in a letter in which he resigned from all MHS-MQR positions then turned personal in the letter and asked me how I could condone such actions...*¹³⁷

Inter-conference Agreement

Indiana Michigan Conference established two working groups to deal with Yoder's sexual misconduct. The first of these was an accountability and support group to work directly with Yoder to bring him into compliance with conference standards for ministerial behavior. Its work encompassed 1992 to 1996. The second group to work with the Yoder misconduct allegations was the Executive Board of Indiana Michigan Conference. Its work encompassed the years 1992 until 1997.¹³⁸

On June 29, 1992 Price reported that Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church (after consultations with Ohio Conference where Yoder's ordination had taken place) announced on June 27, 1992 that it had suspended Yoder's ordination credentials. The actual suspension of his credentials was done by the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Church Life Commission on May 18, 1992. This suspension began a 42 month process of church discipline.¹³⁹

UND Responds to Michiana Publicity

Lawrence S. Cunningham, Chair, Department of Theology at Notre Dame and Yoder's immediate academic supervisor commented to Price (June 29, 2002),

I am not privy to the situation. I am distressed to hear about the action of the Mennonite Church. But it is my understanding that these events happened before Professor Yoder came to Notre Dame. [Beginning in 1967 Yoder taught sporadically for the theology department. Yoder's regularized part-time employment at Notre Dame began in 1977.

Yoder's full-time status began in 1984.] *It is not clear to me that his standing in the University is affected by the actions of his church [It wasn't]. This is not to say that the University condones this kind of behavior [there is no public evidence, however, that the University condemned it either].*

To contextualize, time-wise, Cunningham's June 29 1992 comments as a theology department chair: In December, 1991 UND administrators had announced the politicized and coerced resignation of another member of the University's theology department. Yoder's Notre Dame departmental colleague Father James Tunstead Burchaell was a member of the Brothers of the Holy Cross, UND's founding religious order. He was most well known for his anti-abortion ethics and theology. The reason for his resignation from the UND faculty was that he had been credibly accused of sexually abusing a number of young male college students who were assigned to him for spiritual care.¹⁴⁰ Beginning in 1984, Roman Catholic activism regarding clergy sexual abuse began to spread throughout the American Catholic Church. Catholic student activism on the UND campus regarding priest abusers was one factor in Burchaell's dismissal.¹⁴¹

The Yoder situation vis-à-vis UND occurred inside a department in which he was the second individual to be credibly accused within a twelve month time period. Thus, the UND Department of Theology under Cunningham's leadership chose a passive role in supervising Yoder's tenure. The most succinct way of understanding this is to see a collegial and supervisory attitude that *Yoder has a Mennonite public relations problem to manage, not a UND or Roman Catholic one.*

- ***In 1991 Yoder published: A Declaration of Peace.*** This book was jointly published by the Mennonite Church, Church of the Brethren and Society of Friends Presses. ***In 1992 he published: (1) Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World; (2) Nonetheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism***

Heggen and Koontz (ud. likely 1998) report that from 1992 until 1996 Yoder and his wife Annie attended church services somewhere other than Prairie Street Mennonite Church. They further noted that each continued to keep their congregational membership at Prairie Street (3).

1992-1993; 1993-1994: 1994-1995; 1995-1996

John's mother, Ethel G. Good Yoder died on August 4, 1992

- ***In 1994 Yoder published: The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical***
- ***In 1996 Yoder co-published: Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*** (with Glenn Stassen and Diane Yeager).

Yoder continued to teach full-time at the University of Notre Dame. He continued to publish religious studies books. He continued to lecture and preach in the United States and in a variety of world locations. Mennonite Church publishers, however, did not publish his work. The *Mennonite Quarterly Review* dropped him from its ranks of consulting editors. Mennonite Church institutions did not utilize him as a speaker or consultant. He clearly resented these denomination-wide restrictions on his professional life and scholarship.¹⁴²

Hauerwas reports that ecumenical *friends of Yoder* placed on-hold their ten-years-old decision to publish a festschrift to honor Yoder.¹⁴³ Only after the summer of 1996 did this group of friends

and theological-ethical apologists re-open their plans for a Yoder festschrift. Eventually published posthumously *The Wisdom of the Cross* contains 22 essays: 1 by Yoder; 4 by women; and 17 by men.

Two of Yoder's Mennonite theological contemporaries are not included in the collection: These two colleagues are Mennonite theologian-philosopher and ethicist J. Lawrence Burkholder, former president of Goshen College and formerly of the Harvard Divinity School faculty, and Gordon Kaufman, Harvard Divinity School theologian. Both men were, perhaps, in 1996, the only living American Mennonite theologians-ethicists-philosophers in Yoder's general age group who were his equally brilliant academic peers in the fields of theology, philosophy, and ethics. All three men knew each other well and each interacted with the other two in academic and church-wide conferences. Both Burkholder and Kaufman were well-acquainted with Yoder's thought. It is unclear to me if their absence from the Yoder festschrift represents a deliberate academic snub on the part of the collection's editors or an un-thinking exclusion. Perhaps Yoder's denominationally well-known disdain for the orthodoxy of these two men's ethical and theological thinking influenced the editors' festschrift choices.

The Mennonite Church discipline process regarding the status of his ordination credentials continued for four years (although Yoder saw it as a five year process beginning in the summer of 1991).¹⁴⁴ Rumors circulated inside the Mennonite higher education academic community about Yoder's continuing recalcitrant resistance to full participation. Sometime during this particular era in John's life, I was told about John's deeply held intellectual rationalizations for his prior behavior and his denial that he had harmed any women. Both I was told were tenaciously held and were being very difficult for the ASG process and therapy process to dislodge.¹⁴⁵ In all, John's Indiana-Michigan Conference appointed ASG met 31 times with Yoder and his wife during a three and a half year period.

On December 18, 1994 representatives of AMBS, Prairie St. Mennonite Church, and the Church-Life Commission of Indiana Michigan Conference met to confer about the Yoder – Mennonite Church situation.¹⁴⁶

In addition, I have been told by some of Yoder's victims or victim advocates that Yoder sometimes represented himself as a persecuted victim of his victims or as a sacrificial victim of his punitive denominational church. In the thirty two years I have been aware of the Yoder story, I have never heard any stories of spontaneous remorse for his behavior, genuine behavioral repentance, and an embodied determined willingness to apologize to his victims. This is not to say these things could not have happened or that they did not happen. It is just to say that individuals who have consulted with me at various times during the years since 1992 did not report them as significant mileposts in Yoder's church-wide reconciliation process with them and with his denomination.

Waltner Gossen reports that Marcus Smucker (former board member and faculty member) *took exception to Yoder's portrayal of himself as a victim of injustice*. He wrote to Yoder: *In particular, Marlin has invested heavily with his time, energy and personal anguish, to try to make this work out in your behalf. Somehow his concern and interest for your welfare seems to have escaped your awareness, instead you appear to be translating this into primarily an authority issue.*¹⁴⁷

In December, 1995, the Church-Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church passed its findings and recommendations to Conference officers. After

discussions between Yoder and Conference officials, his ordination credentials were permanently revoked.¹⁴⁸

During the interim between December, 1995 and July, 1996, the conference's legal council worked out specific wording agreements between Yoder and the church. At this time, the specific content of these agreements are not accessible to scholars.¹⁴⁹ According to denominational representatives in various church agencies and archives the denomination's Yoder personnel management files are permanently sealed with emphatic instructions that they are never to be opened.

In the summer of 1996, Indiana-Michigan Conference's periodical (*Gospel Evangel*, July/August 1992) reported that Indiana-Michigan Conference had completed Yoder's disciplinary process. Conference administrators announced that Yoder's ordination status was permanently revoked. Conference officers and Prairie Street Mennonite Church then restored Yoder to full membership and commended him to the church for his teaching and his writing ministries.

As a contextual note, during the early months of 1995, four Midwestern Mennonite conferences met to review church practices towards allegations of sexual misconduct by ministers. These conferences were Ohio, Indiana-Michigan, Illinois, (all Mennonite Church) and Central District (General Conference Mennonite Church). *The Mennonite Weekly Reporter* (July 18, 1996, 9) noted that *for the past year, an ad Hoc committee from the four conferences has been studying how Mennonite conferences and other denominations are responding to clergy sexual misconduct*. It is impossible to believe, at this distance in time, that these four mid-western conferences were not concerned with legal and financial liability issues. It is equally impossible to believe that the Indiana-Michigan contemporaneous experience with Yoder was not a core concern.

During the summer of 2009, I asked several women who Yoder had harassed by means of non-contact violations¹⁵⁰ if they had ever received any apology, either directly or indirectly, from Yoder. I asked about any efforts at restitution (paying for therapy, perhaps) or any attempt at restoring justice accountability by Yoder. I asked about their perception of his repentance or contrition for his actions. These women told me that Yoder never apologized. In addition, each told me that she had seen no personal evidence of remorse for his past behavior towards her. Several separately told me there had been no efforts to make amends or offers of restitution.

One of these women told me that she had chosen to manage their Mennonite-shared denominational situation by actively avoiding any and all in-person contact with Yoder. Another women volunteered that she knew a number of other victimized women and that she knew from talking with them that no apologies or offers of restitution had been forthcoming to them either. Each reported to me that they had been personally relieved by news of his death. Neither of these women knew the identity of the other. Neither was informed of my multiple conversations with other women.

Such personal first-hand information contradicts information reported in the evangelical press after Yoder's death. For example *Sojourners Magazine* reported:

*Incidents of sexual impropriety two decades ago brought Yoder estrangement from the Mennonite Church and dismissal from AMBS. Recently, he went through a formal process of restitution that included apologies to all of the women involved after which he was reinstated in the ministry of his church.*¹⁵¹

These words directly contradict the reality that Yoder's ordination credentials were permanently withdrawn by Indiana-Michigan Conference. In addition, there never was a public process with Yoder which included apologies and restitution. Indeed, in 1997, Yoder reported on the Eastern Mennonite Seminary campus that the officers from the Mennonite Church had forbidden him to apologize.¹⁵² There are also denominational rumors that legal counsel to various involved Mennonite institutions has advised all involved institutional supervisory personnel to refrain from apologizing, appearing to apologize and to refrain from ever using the word apologize in connection with the church's management of Yoder.

At some time during these years of church discipline, Yoder had a serious car accident which greatly limited his mobility. For the rest of his life, he used crutches to walk.

In 1994, AMBS president Marlin Miller died very suddenly at his home.

- **In 1994 Yoder published:** (1) A revised edition of *The Politics of Jesus*; (2) *The Royal Priesthood*
- **In 1995-1996 Yoder was working on a book length manuscript:** *You Have it Coming: Good Punishment. The Legitimate Social Function of Punitive Behavior.*¹⁵³ As of December, 2011, a manuscript form of this book was available on the UND faculty webpage under the name of John Howard Yoder.
- **In 1996 he published:** *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just War Thinking*

1996-1997; 1997-1998

During the months between the end of the church discipline process and his death (December, 1995 to December, 1997) Yoder continued to teach at Notre Dame. He was invited to re-visit the AMBS campus. He and his wife Annie returned to Prairie Street Mennonite Church and John wrote to the congregation's elders that he appreciated the congregation's warm and welcoming spirit.

Heggen and Koontz (undated) report that during September, 1996 the Yoder ASG reconvened a gathering of several of the 8 women who brought their 1992 allegations against Yoder to the attention of Prairie Street Mennonite Church. The intent for this 1996 meeting was to provide the women with a first hand report about the conclusion of the ASG's work with Yoder. Heggen and Koontz report that *many of those who participated in that conversation left it struck by the significant changes reported by the accountability group members and [were] supportive of the recommendation that John's writing and teaching gifts be used once more in the church (3).*

After Indiana-Michigan Conference released its 1996 report to the church, symbolic steps were taken to begin to restore and reconcile Yoder and his work to the denominational church. He and Annie met on the AMBS campus for personal conversations with the AMBS faculty and administrative officers. During the fall semester, 1997 he returned to AMBS to teach several classes. Prairie Street Mennonite Church members reached out to John and Annie and both began to attend services there once more (Heggen and Koontz, 3).

During these remaining months of his life, Yoder taught a course on the AMBS campus (Fall, 1997), lectured at McMaster Divinity College in Canada (October, 1996), lectured on the Conrad Grebel campus in Canada (March, 1997)¹⁵⁴, and lectured on the shared EMU and EMS campus in Harrisonburg, Virginia (January, 1997).

Before his scheduled 1997 lecture visit to EMS, controversy erupted about the seminary's decision to invite him. Some on-campus individuals believed EMS faculty and administrators had made an unwise decision and called for EMS to disinvite Yoder. University administrative officers refused, however, to do this. Therefore, Yoder did speak.¹⁵⁵ During his visit to the Virginia campus he insisted that "the Mennonite Church had formally instructed him not to apologize to any of his victims."¹⁵⁶

Yoder died of an aneurism in his office at Notre Dame on December 28, 1997. He was seventy years old. His funeral was held on January 3, 1998. Loving eulogies were given by friends who represented many eras and many varying aspects of his private and public life. His wife Annie and six of his seven children survived him.¹⁵⁷

- **In 1997 he published:** *For the Nations*

A Brief Lifeline Commentary

From information publicly available, it appears as if Yoder sexually approached and harassed women in many different sectors of his life from the 1960s until 1992. Women with an insider's view of Yoder's life hold to a common belief. That belief is quite simple. Nobody knows how many women Yoder sexually approached. Nobody knows how many short or long-term consensual extramarital relationships he maintained. It is simply not possible to know. It is quite possible that he, at the end of his life, did not know. His constant travel and the multiple institutional roles and the multiple role identities he occupied provided cover for the extent of his abusive behavior.

In addition, the so-called secrets about his behavior were held too tightly for too long by a small group of Mennonite administrators in positions of institutional power. Some of those individuals are now dead and cannot tell us what they knew. Written records of church agencies' supervisory relationship with Yoder are tightly sealed and kept away from the clean air of truth-telling.

Perhaps it is the ongoing presence of victims' personal wounds or the ongoing presence of institutional wounds to which Tom Yoder Neufeld (1998) referred in his funeral sermon for his father-in-law. In this sermon he described Yoder's life as a treasure contained in a clay vessel and described the wounds that clay shards can cause. Perhaps it is these wounds to which Erland Waltner (1998) referred in his loving collegial eulogy at Yoder's funeral. In his remarks Waltner commented that *unfinished work* remained to be done even though the Mennonite Church had finished its *very necessary* discipline processes with Yoder.

About this era of history, Waltner Gossen writes:

With no legal charges ever filed, adjudication such as it was, took place in local Mennonite settings – seminary lecture halls, conference quarters, and living rooms – often involving Mennonites who were deeply connected to Yoder through collegiality, educational history, congregational fraternity, and even family relationships. She concludes that while these Mennonite leaders' intentions were often well-intentioned, they were largely ineffectual (p. 17).

Yoder's Posthumous Legacy

Collections of Yoder's work continue to appear. A Mennonite colleague reported to me recently (March, 2012) that a current Mennonite Church academic said to her in an informal conversation, *It seems as if everybody wants to get on the Yoder bandwagon. A stream of publications by and about him is in the process of appearing.*

1999

Since Yoder's death, the Yoder family has maintained his scholarly presence on the UND webpage. Unpublished works by Yoder are gradually being added to this site and can be downloaded by anyone with internet access.¹⁵⁸

In 1999, the Yoder family established an annual John Howard Yoder lectureship at UND's Kroc Institute where John had been a fellow in residence.

In 1999, Yoder's friends, colleagues, and former students (Hauerwas, et. al.), published a Yoder Festschrift. *The Wisdom of the Cross*, honoring him and his work.

The Conrad Grebel Review (Spring, 1999) published an issue devoted to Yoder's intellectual legacy and influence.

2001

Craig Carter published *The Politics of the Cross: The Theology and Social Ethics of John Howard Yoder*.¹⁵⁹

John C. Nugent published *The End of Sacrifice*.¹⁶⁰

2002

In 2002, a Yoder legacy conference (*Assessing the theological legacy of John Howard Yoder*) was held on the UND campus as part of the Believers' Church Conference Series. Goshen College and its Bible, Religions and Theology Department along with AMBS helped provide funding support for this conference.

2003

The Mennonite Quarterly Review (July, 2003) both published an issue devoted to Yoder's intellectual legacy and influence.

2004

In 2004, Ollenburger and Koontz of the AMBS faculty edited and published a book of essay, *A Mind Patient and Untamed*, about Yoder's thought. 15 men and 1 woman are represented in this collection.

2006

Budziszewski (2006) included Yoder as one of four influential evangelical authors from the 20th century whose work has influenced an evangelical perspective on political thought.¹⁶¹

Mark Thiessen Nation published his biography of Yoder.¹⁶²

2007

In 2007, A Yoder legacy conference (*Inheriting John Howard Yoder: A New Generation Examines His Theology*) was sponsored by the Mennonite Theological Centre in Toronto.

2009

Ted Koontz and Andy Alexis Baker edited Yoder's *Christian Attitudes To War, Peace and Revolution*.¹⁶³

Glenn Stassen, Mark Thiessen Nation, and Matt Hamsher edited a collection entitled *John Howard Yoder: The War of the Lamb; The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking*.¹⁶⁴

Jeremy Bergen and Anthony Siegrist published *Power and Process: Engaging the Work of John Howard Yoder*.¹⁶⁵

(Mennonite Resource). Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups; Conrad Kanagy, primary investigator (June 16, 2009). *Analysis of Sexual Abuse Among Mennonites*. Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College.

2010

Christian Early edited *A Pacifist Way of Knowing: John Howard Yoder's Nonviolent Epistemology*.¹⁶⁶

Paul Doerksen published *Beyond Suspicion: Post Christendom Political Theology in John Howard Yoder and Oliver O'Donohan*.¹⁶⁷

2011

Orbis Press published a collection Yoder's *spiritual writings, John Howard Yoder: Spiritual Writings*.¹⁶⁸

2012

Herald [Mennonite Church] Press published *John Howard Yoder: Radical Christian Discipleship*.¹⁶⁹

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2013

Andy Alexis Baker and Gayle Gerber Koontz edited Yoder's *Theology of Mission: A Believer's Church Perspective* for Intervarsity Press.¹⁷⁰

In August and September of 2013, Ervin Stutzman, CEO of the Mennonite Church/USA announced the formation of a discernment group to review issues regarding John Howard Yoder's legacies in the lives of the church and individual women.¹⁷¹

In December, 2013, the board and staff of Mennonite Media (the official publishing arm of the Mennonite Church/USA and Canada) announced that *Mennonite Media to include a "publisher's" statement in Yoder books.*¹⁷²

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Mennonite Church Archives, Goshen, IN: John Howard Yoder digital library of 250 +/- published works by John Howard Yoder announced by Mennonite Church USA. Retrieve from <http://www.mennoniteusa.org/works-of-john-howard-yoder-now-available-online/>

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2014

In 2014, J. Denny Weaver edited a collection of male-authored essays about Yoder and his theological legacy. Marva Dawn, a former student of Yoder's, wrote the preface and Lisa Schirch of the Eastern Mennonite University wrote the afterword.¹⁷³

Eberhard Arnold published *God's Revolution: Justice, Community, and the Coming Kingdom.*¹⁷⁴ John C., Nugent published *Real Christian Fellowship: Yoder for Everyone.*¹⁷⁵

Scott Prather published *Christ, Power and Mammon: Karl Barth and John Howard Yoder in Dialogue.*¹⁷⁶

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Concluding Remark

If it is true that Yoder was the most brilliant and influential Mennonite theologian since Menno Simons it becomes self-evident that his academic legacy will continue to be studied and utilized for many years. What is unclear is how the present and future church will come to terms with his second legacy – sexual abuse of women rationalized in some of his writings as a needed practice.

¹Resources

As credible information becomes available in the public domain, I will correct and update this timeline.
Last updated on January 15, 2015

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Hannah Arendt, 1969a, 6.

³ John Vaillant (2010). The Exchange: John Vaillant on the Siberian Tiger. *New Yorker Magazine Online*. See <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2010/09/the-exchange-john-vaillant-on-the-siberian-tiger.html>

4

Based on the internet blog discussions since this was originally posted and based on several personal letters I have received, this timeline was first updated on October 31, 2013. Since then I have updated this information two additional times. If information is known because of newly reveal sources, I have removed incorrect factual data. I have added the changes in the yearly locations where these resources have located them. Again, only if and when Mennonite Church agencies open their Yoder files will these approximate dates be confirmed or disconfirmed.

⁵ Yoder died in 1997. I am writing these words in 2012. This timeline has been amended in October, 2013 and again in January, 2015 following the release of Rachel Waltner Gossen's extended essay about Yoder and the Mennonite Church in the January, 2015 edition of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. See <https://themennonite.org/daily-news/mennonite-quarterly-review-sexual-abuse-will-ebook/>

⁶ Back issues of Mennonite Church periodicals can be found in the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College Campus in Goshen, IN and in the library of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, IN.

⁷ These various seminary catalogues are available in the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College Campus.

⁸ These annual Mennonite Church yearbooks are available in the Mennonite Historical Library and in the Mennonite Church Archives. Both are on the Goshen College Campus.

⁹ Audiotapes of the memorial service for Yoder are available from the Mennonite Church Archives on the Goshen College Campus.

¹⁰ See Appendix V for a partial and incomplete listing of obituaries honoring Yoder and his life.

¹¹ These articles are included in the Appendices (G through L) with the permission of the *Elkhart Truth*. They are also available in the downtown branch of the Elkhart Public Library. In addition, copies are available in the Mennonite Church Archives in Goshen, IN. They can also be found on Mennonite theologian Ted Grimsrud's web page. To view or to retrieve, follow the links at <http://www.thinkingpacifism.net>

¹² For the official Indiana-Michigan announcements in its publication, *The Gospel Evangel*, see Appendix M. Included with permission of the *Gospel Evangel* editor.

¹³ Available from the Mennonite Church Archives located on the Goshen College campus.

¹⁴ Glen Stassen, September 24, 2013. See <http://thinkingpacifism.net/2013/09/24/glen-stassens-reflections-on-the-yoder-case/>

¹⁵ Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, AMBS campus, Elkhart, IN

¹⁶ Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

¹⁷ This rough draft and unpublished manuscript *You have it Coming, Good Punishment: The legitimate social function of punitive behavior*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Faculty webpage. Retrieve from:

<http://theology.nd.edu/people/research/yoder-john-yoder>. See also Wikipedia and its John Howard Yoder page.

¹⁸ Sara Wenger Shenk/ Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (April 30, 2012). AMBS Statement on Teaching and Scholarship Related to John Howard Yoder. See <http://www.ambs.edu/about/documents/AMBS-statement-on-JHY.pdf>

¹⁹ Ross L. Bender (August 18, 2013). AMBS and John Howard Yoder. See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

²⁰ Ted Grimsrud (August 2, 2013). Reflections from a “chagrined” Yoderian, Part One – Introduction. *Thinking Pacifism*. See <http://thinkingpacifism.net/2013/08/02/reflections-from-a-chagrined-yoderian-part-one/>

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²¹ Mark Thiessen Nation (September 20, 2013). John Howard Yoder’s Sexual Misconduct; why do I care and why do I write? *Anabaptist Nation*. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/20/john-howard-yoders-sexual-misconduct-why-do-i-care-why-do-i-write/>

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²² In his eulogy at Yoder's funeral, Erland Waltner (President Emeritus of Mennonite Biblical Seminary) commented that when Yoder was thirty years old (1957) Paul Mininger (Goshen College President), H. S. Bender Goshen College Biblical Seminary Dean) and Waltner (MBS President) had a spirited *conversation* about inviting Yoder to join the faculties at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries campus in Elkhart. At issue was John's critical assessment of some aspects of the Mennonite church and its teachings about Christian discipleship (*Conrad Grebel Review*, 1998, 105-106). The upshot of these discussions was that in 1958 John began teaching (a) Systematic Theology, parts one and two; (b) War, Peace and Nonresistance; and (c) Contemporary Theology (106).

²³ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

²⁴ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, p. 18). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

²⁵ Source: Correspondence with the Registrar's office at Goshen College. July 3, 2007.

²⁶ Fred Kniss (1997). *Disquiet in the Land: Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

²⁷ Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue Supplement, 1963-1964

²⁸ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013). On Contextualizing The Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

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³⁰ Erland Waltner's eulogy at Yoder's January, 1998 memorial service

³¹ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, p. 7). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

³² Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, P. 7). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See

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³³ Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue, 1958-1960

³⁴ Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue Supplement, 1963-1964

³⁵ Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue, 1960-1962

³⁶ Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

³⁷ See Al Keim's biography of H. S. Bender for his commentary on the complex nature of the Bender-Yoder relationship from 1945 until 1962.

³⁸ Waltner Gossen, R. op.cit., p. 13.

³⁹ Goshen College Biblical Seminary Bulletin and Catalogue, 1964-1966

⁴⁰ Stanley Hauerwas writes, *He [John] would begin by asking women to help him in his work. He would suggest that they touch him, and that he touch them, without engaging in sexual intercourse. John was intellectually overwhelming. He may have convinced some women that what they were doing was not sexual, but they later came to know that John was clearly misusing them. They somehow made contact with one another, compared notes, and John was in a heap of trouble (244).*

⁴¹ Lawrence Cunningham (UND Theology Department Chairperson, quoted in Price (*Elkhart Truth*, June 29, 1992).

⁴² William (Bill) Klassen correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 9, 2004). See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

⁴³ See Mark Thiessen Nation biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross* (pp. 1-23) in *Hauerwas, Stanley, Huebner, Chris, Huebner, Harry, and Nation, Mark (Eds.) (1999). The Wisdom of the Cross: Essays in Honor of John Howard Yoder*, Eugene, OR: Wlpf/Stek.

⁴⁴ See cover pages for the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 1990, 1991, 1992. See also Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp. 1-23.

⁴⁵ See Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp. 1-23.

⁴⁶ See Goshen College Yearbook. Available in the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College Campus

⁴⁷ See March 24, 1979 *Gospel Herald*

⁴⁸ See Stanley Hauerwas webpage resume, Duke University

⁴⁹ See GBS Catalogue

⁵⁰ See Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp.1-23.

⁵¹ Nation, Mark T. (2013, pp. 13-14). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See

<http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

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See Appendix R

⁵³ See Mark Thiessen Nation's Nation biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp. 1-23.

⁵⁴ See Appendix G for more information.

⁵⁵ Schlabach, T. (1998). *JHY Memorial Service: Copy of Electronic Message to John E. Sharp*. Goshen, IN: January 9. Mennonite Church Archives, Hist. Mss. 1-48; 01/5.

⁵⁶ GBS 1973-1974 course catalogues, Mennonite Historical Library,

⁵⁷ John Howard Yoder's ordination service was in May, 1973. An audiotape copy is available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies on the AMBS campus in Elkhart, IN.

⁵⁸ John C. (JC) Wenger (July 16, 1972). Correspondence to the Goshen Biblical Seminary Board of Overseers; Yoder, J. C. Wenger archives, Mennonite Church Archives on the Goshen College campus; May, 1993 Ordination Sermon Audiotape, Institute of Mennonite Studies, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries Campus.

⁵⁹ One consequence of this non-ordinary form of ordination became evident in 1992. Yoder's ordination credentials were held by the Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church while Yoder lived, worshipped, and worked inside the geographical boundaries of Indiana-Michigan Conference. He was able, therefore, to remain untouched by ordinary conference supervisory processes for many years. Only in 1992 did conference executives from both regions decide in a conference phone call that Indiana-Michigan Conference would take the lead in disciplinarily confronting Yoder about women's allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviors.

⁶⁰ See Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, 1-23.

⁶¹ See Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, 1-23.

⁶² Tom Price, July 13, 1992

⁶³ John Howard Yoder, (Fall, 1973). Memorandum to Weyburn Groff, Registrar, AMBS Re Course Syllabus, Mennonite Church Archives, Box 200, File 74.

⁶⁴ Mennonite Church Archives, Goshen College campus, Yoder Collection, Box 200.

⁶⁵ Waltner Gossen, R. (January, 2015). op. cit, p. 23.

⁶⁶ Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force. (1992). June 26, 1992 *Report* (by the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force) to the Board of Elders and Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference: *Summary Report of the Work of the Task Force with JHY*; Tom Price (June 29, 1992). Theologian cited in sex inquiry. *Elkhart Truth*, B-1 ff); *Statement of 8 Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force* (February 21 or 22, 1992).

⁶⁷ GBS course catalogs, 1974-1975; 1975-1976. Available from the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College Campus.

⁶⁸ Lawrence Cunningham (UND Theology Department Chairperson, quoted in Tom Price (*Elkhart Truth*, June 29, 1992).

⁶⁹ Personal conversation with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries' President Marlin Miller at AMBS; A later conversation was reported to me as well by one of the women who was offended at Yoder's behavior. She told me that she and her husband had both confronted Yoder. She later talked with President Miller in his office about the confrontation.

⁷⁰ Waltner Gossen, R. (January, 2015). "Defanging the Beast": Mennonite Responses to John Howard Yoder's Sexual Abuse (p. 13). *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (89) 1, pp. 7-80.

⁷¹ See Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, 1-23.

⁷² Waltner Gossen, R. op.cit. p. 13.

⁷³ Marlin Miller (1978). Internal Memorandum to John Howard Yoder: Invitational and Schedule Questions. Yoder archives, Mennonite Church Archives, Box 200.

⁷⁴ These consultations were conducted for the Mennonite Church under the auspices of the Mennonite Medical Association (MMA) and the Mennonite Nursing Association (MNA). The topic was considered too volatile for an official church-sponsored consultation. John R. Mumaw, President Emeritus of Eastern Mennonite College, was the executive director of MMA. He requested AMBS administrators to send a participating (rather than just an observer) representative and Yoder was asked to do this.

⁷⁵ John Howard Yoder (1997). *Is Homosexuality a Sin, How not to work at a question* in Mumaw, J. R. (Ed.). *Findings of Consultations One and Two on Human Sexuality and Homosexuality*. Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association.

⁷⁶ John Howard Yoder, (Audiotape: October 12, 1978). *Homosexuality – The shape of the problem for the church: a public forum*. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, AMBS.

⁷⁷ Waltner Gossen, R. op.cit, pp29-30.

⁷⁸ Nation, Mark T. (2013, pp. 8-9). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

⁷⁹ See Mark Thiessen Nation's biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp. 1-23.

⁸⁰ Waltner-Gossen, R. (2105). "Defanging the Beast: Mennonite Responses to John Howard Yoder's Sexual Abuse (pp. 7-8). *Mennonite Quarterly Review*

⁸¹ In conversations in either 1991 or 1992, Marlin Miller told me that he had received and/or knew about complaints from more than 100 women. This conversation was in the context of him asking me if I would serve on a denomination-wide Yoder discipline committee. Because of my prior professional connection with several of the affected women, I needed to decline.

⁸² Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies on the AMBS campus

⁸³ Available from the Mennonite Church Archives on the Goshen College Campus

⁸⁴ Personal correspondence with two women who had reported Yoder's unwanted behavior to President Miller. Very late in her life in 2013, one of these women asked me directly if I knew what Miller did with his interview notes. I informed her that I did not know. Unfortunately she died before just months Waltner-Gossen's article was published.

⁸⁵ Personal conversation with a woman from this early network of concerned women who lodged a complaint with Miller

⁸⁶ Waltner Gossen, R. op. cit, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁷ Culturally this was the era in which well-prepared women faculty first began to be hired as seminary faculty at UND and AMBS. Women faculty was well-aware of their ground-breaking role.

⁸⁸ Once the concepts (1) of sexual harassment and (2) hostile academic climates for women students and faculty began to be accurately described and diagnosed in American universities and colleges, women recognized that oral conversations were not effective. Nationwide legal advice was for women to put their concerns about sexual harassment into writing and send these by certified mail (1) to their abuser telling him to stop abusing them and (2) to his institutional human resources supervisors. Failure of institutions to act could then be used in internal arbitration efforts to force institutional action. A continuance of the behavior by abusers could also then be reported to local law enforcement personnel. In the 1970s and the early 1980s AMBS, GC, SMC, and UND faculty and staff women did not yet have this information. I also think (from the vantage point of 2012) that even if Mennonite women had this information, they would have been reluctant, on religious and theological grounds, to report Yoder's behavior to local law enforcement agencies. Thus, given the failure of his institutional supervisors to act he was free to continue his behavior without any fear of women's reprisals or law enforcement investigations and consequences.

⁸⁹ Waltner-Gossen, R. op.cit, p. 12, footnote # 19.

⁹⁰ Millard Lind (October 20, 2004). Correspondence with Ross L. Bender. See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

⁹¹ Millard Lind (October 20, 2004). Correspondence with Ross L. Bender See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>; See also Willard Swartley correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 15, 2004 and October 29, 2004). <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

⁹² Waltner Gossen, op.cit, p. 14.

⁹³ According to the *Statement of 8 Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church Task Force on John Howard Yoder*, women remained physically afraid of Yoder. According to several women I know, their fear of Yoder's unwanted visits, harassment and violence eased after Yoder's severe car accident. Following this accident he needed to use crutches to walk. At the time one woman said to me, *now I know I can outrun him if I need to do so.*

⁹⁴ *Statement of Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force*, February 21 or 22, 1992.

⁹⁵ Reported in a meeting of faculty women from AMBS, GC, IUSB, and UND

⁹⁶ Walter Sawatsky Correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 18, 2004). See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

⁹⁷ Walter Sawatsky Correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 18, 2004). See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

⁹⁸ Walter Sawatsky Correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 18, 2004). See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

⁹⁹ John C. Bennett and Dan Rhoades, Professors of Christian Ethics, Southern California School of Theology, Claremont, CA.

¹⁰⁰ See Peter Rutter (1989: *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power Abuse Women's Trust*, Los Angeles, Jeremy P. Tarcher) for his discussion of the timing of social awareness, social terminology and social change.

¹⁰¹ Krall, R. E. (September 2, 1982). Letter to Marlin Miller from Ruth Krall. In my possession.

¹⁰² A. W. Richard Sipe (ud). Clerical Sex, Blackmail, and Sexual Abuse. Retrieve from http://www.catholica.com.au/gc2/occ/028_occ_141108.php

¹⁰³ Peter Rutter (1989) describes the advent of the term *sexual harassment* in the mid-1980s.

¹⁰⁴ See Mark Thiessen Nation' biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp.1-23.

¹⁰⁵ Personal conversation with one of these women

¹⁰⁶ A Mennonite academic colleague recently said to me, *this allowed Yoder to go to Notre Dame appearing to have outgrown AMBS, as a preferred opportunity to teach full-time in a prestigious university. John and AMBS administrators allowed this impression – perhaps even fostered it as a way of avoiding conversations about his sexual violence and abuse.* My response to this conversation was to comment that this obfuscating policy of releasing no information did nothing at all to protect student women and church women who had not yet been victimized. It did nothing to vindicate and support women who had already been abused. In addition, it denied Yoder an opportunity to confront his shadow and to make behavioral changes, i.e., to find redemption.

¹⁰⁷ Waltner Gossen, op.cit, p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ In his autobiography, *Hannah's Child*, ethicist Stanley Hauerwas comments about John's literalist belief that the Matthew 18: 15-20 teaching meant that *he should be allowed to confront his accusers* (244). Since 1978 I have listened to several of Yoder's victims. It has become clear to me that when women and/or their husbands protested his sexually harassing behaviors in writing or in person, John simply ignored the protest and did not acknowledge it in any way. Asked to apologize for his behavior, his conversations with his victims (or their spouses) abruptly stopped. I have decided – as have some of Yoder's victims – that his insistence upon a literal enforcement of the Matthew Rule of Christ text was another public rationalization which allowed him to continue doing what he was already doing – harassing a wide variety of women all around the world. Such an obsessive or literalist approach to this text was yet another way to bully other churchmen – his institutional supervisors and conference ministers – into a refusal to act.

¹⁰⁹ Waltner Gossen, R., op. cit, p. 48.

¹¹⁰ Electronic mail correspondence between Ruth Krall, Rachel Waltner Gossen and Norman Kauffmann, October-November, 2014. Former President Stoltzfus confirmed this information in his electronic conversations with Waltner Gossen and Kauffmann.

¹¹¹ Electronic correspondence (October, 2013) from Don Blosser who at this time was the Program Director for Peace Studies on the Goshen College campus.

¹¹² See Mark Thiessen Nation's' biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, pp.1-23.

¹¹³ Waltner Gossen, op.cit, p. 14.

¹¹⁴ Loren Johns Correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 18, 2004). See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

¹¹⁵ During American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature national meetings, Mennonites in attendance sponsor a formal set of presentations as a way of developing a Mennonite identity in theological, biblical, and religious studies. These biennial meetings provide the Mennonite academy with opportunities to honor a well known and well-regarded Mennonite colleague and his (almost never her) body of intellectual work.

¹¹⁶ Goshen College President Victor Stoltzfus, correspondence with James Lapp, Arlene Mark, and Marlin Miller, (Undated, likely, May 1991).

¹¹⁷ Waltner Gossen, op.cit, p. 14.

¹¹⁸ James Juhnke, December 10, 2013, *Q & A Essay on Yoder and the 1992 Conference*, p.1.

¹¹⁹ James Juhnke, *ibid.*, p. 3

¹²⁰ Yoder, J. H. (1993). *The Burden and the Discipline of Evangelical Revisionism* in Hawkley, L. and Juhnke, J. C. (Eds). *Nonviolent America: History through the Eyes of Peace*. North Newton, KS: Bethel College. No mention was made of Yoder's disinvitation nor was there any discussion about the apparent disconnect of Yoder's life to Yoder's teaching.

¹²¹ See *Bethel Collegian*, March 5, 1992, Mennonite Church Archives, Bethel College Campus, North Newton, KS

¹²² One wonders whether Yoder believed that Bethel College betrayed his collegial rights to privacy and confidentiality in mind when he wrote in 1995 the following words: *As [Rene Girard] notes there is a particularly painful paradox just at this point to which our culture has come, since the newly developing reason for punishing a new victim is the punitive demand of the [his?] former victims. The cause of victim vindication turns in on itself. Can it avoid being a vicious circle? Does the victim's re-vindication not tend to validate, by replicating it, the very offense it seeks to rectify? Both the fact that the victim affirms victim status as her self-definition, and the further fact that in return she mimetically victimizes another reinforce the very structure she denounces* (1995, Chapter 7, p. 3). Earlier in this essay he asserts the etymological root of two words: "victim" and "witch" but denies he is saying that the victimized individual is a witch. *The linguistic link of "victim" with "witch" does not mean that the victim demanding compensation is in the role of witch. It is rather that the system oppressing her, against which she rebels claims numinous or spooky validation so that her rising up to resist it is comparable to disenchantment or exorcism* (1995, Chapter 7, footnote # 11, p. 4). In the months since this timeline was first published in *The Elephants in God's Living Room, Volume Three* (March, 2013), I have been informed about several instances where Yoder and/or his personal lawyer contacted individuals who were working to hold him accountable for his actions with implicit or explicit threats of legal action against them. Again, since church records are sealed, these allegations cannot be proven or disproven.

¹²³ See Tom Price articles, *Elkhart Truth* June 29 and July, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.1992.

¹²⁴ Delores Friesen, Laurie Hersch Meyer and Melanie May presentation manuscripts from May 23-25, 1992 are located in the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College campus.

¹²⁵ Mathew 18: 14-16 (New International Version): *If your brother sins against you, go and show him his faults just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.* See also Deuteronomy 19:15 (New International Version): *One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses*

¹²⁶ Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries Office of the President. (October 23, 1991). Correspondence with women named in Miller's AMBS Yoder complaints fact file.

¹²⁷ *Statement by Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church Yoder Task Force*

¹²⁸ Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Church Life Commission Press Release, (June, 1992).

¹²⁹ *Statement by Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church Yoder Task Force*

¹³⁰ In two separate conversations with two different women, an exasperated Miller stated that he eventually knew about more than 100 women in four languages and from several continents and island communities.

¹³¹ Marlin Miller, personal conversation, AMBS.

¹³²

Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, p. 21). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

¹³³ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, p. 21). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

¹³⁴ For further information see Stanley Hauerwas' autobiography, *Hannah's Child*, pp. 242-247

¹³⁵ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, pp. 15-16). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

¹³⁶ Mark Thiessen Nation (2013, p. 23). On Contextualizing Two Failures of John Howard Yoder. Blog: EMU: Anabaptist Nation. See <http://emu.edu/now/anabaptist-nation/2013/09/23/on-contextualizing-two-failures-of-john-howard-yoder/>

¹³⁷ Walter Sawatsky Correspondence with Ross L. Bender (October 18, 2004). See <http://rossbender.org/AMBS-JHY.pdf>

¹³⁸ Waltner Gossen, op. cit, p. 14.

¹³⁹ Yoder claimed the process lasted five years. See, J. H. Yoder (January 14, 1997, dated 1996). *Objections to my Visit* Fax Correspondence: A Memorandum to George R. Brunk, III.

¹⁴⁰ See Priest Resigns Post at Notre Dame amid Accusations of Sex Abuse, *New York Times*, December 3, 1991. Retrieve from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fulpage.htm?res9DOC4D8173C930A35751C1A96795>; See J. M. Vore, Investigate Hidden Sexual Scandals at Notre Dame, *Viewpoint-Observer, online*, 37 (29), October 7, 2002. Retrieve from <http://www.nd.edu/observer/1007/2002/viewpoint/2.html>

¹⁴¹ See <http://www.BishopAccountability.org>; Mouton, Doyle, Peterson, 1985; Doyle and Rubino, 2003).

¹⁴² April 4, 1994, Yoder Memorandum to Historian and Archivists. Mennonite Church Archives, Box 34, file 52.

¹⁴³ See Stanley Hauerwas introduction in *The Wisdom of the Cross*, p.x

¹⁴⁴ J. H. Yoder, (January 14, 1997). *Objections to my Visit*. A faxed memorandum to George R. Brunk, III:

¹⁴⁵ Personal conversations with Marlin Miller, ca 1991-1993; Personal conversations with Atlee Beechy, ca 1992-1993.

Perhaps the closest we can come to seeing Yoder's perspective is to read his 1995 unfinished work, *You Have it Coming. Good Punishment. The Legitimate Social Function of Punitive Behavior*. According to the Yoder webpage maintained on the UND website, this manuscript is also available for today's readers from Shalom Desktop Publishing. As of the summer of 2011 it could be downloaded from the UND faculty webpage. <http://theology.nd.edu/people/research/yoder-john-yoder/>. See also the Yoder entry at Wikipedia for additional commentary about this unfinished book.

Actions taken by Indiana-Michigan Conference and its Church Life Commission

¹⁴⁶ Waltner Gossen, R., op. cit, p. 44, footnote # 180.

¹⁴⁷ Waltner Gossen, R., op. cit, p 46.

¹⁴⁸ Actions taken by Indiana-Michigan Conference and its Church Life Commission are sealed. I learned this in a telephone conversation with a conference staff member who volunteered the information. Thus, the exact content of conference negotiations with Yoder remains hidden. In 1996 conference administrative officers and the conference's legal counsel conferred about the questions of if/when/what information could be released and what should be buried inside confidential Conference files.

¹⁴⁹ Conference minutes and brief consultation with Indiana-Michigan staff member

¹⁵⁰ See *The Elephants in God's Living Room* - Volume One, Chapter 15 for definitions of the various forms of sexual harassment, pp. 369-372. Retrieve from www.ruthkrall.com.

¹⁵¹ *Sojourners Magazine* (March-April, 19980, p. 8.

¹⁵² See C. Eshleman, January 1997, pp. 1 and 6.

- ¹⁵³ *Wikipedia*: John Howard Yoder. Retrieve from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/johnhowardyoder>
- ¹⁵⁴ J. Reimer, 6.
- ¹⁵⁵ C. Eshleman, (January 23, 1997) Seminary Features Yoder: Theologian's Return Raises Questions. *Weather Vane* (Eastern Mennonite University) 42 (10), pp. 1 and 6.
- ¹⁵⁶ C. Eshleman, *ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁷ Yoder's living children: Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, Martha Yoder Maust, Elizabeth Yoder Ayyad, Esther Yoder Strohan, Daniel Yoder and John David Yoder. The couple's second daughter, Rachel Yoder, died in infancy.
- ¹⁵⁸ <http://theology.nd.edu/people/research/yoder-john-yoder/>.
- ¹⁵⁹ Carter, C. A. (2001). *The Politics of the Cross; The Theology and Social Ethics of John Howard Yoder*. Available in Kindle.
- ¹⁶⁰ Nugent, J. C. (2011). *The End of Sacrifice: The Capital Punishment Writings of John Howard Yoder*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press.
- ¹⁶¹ Budziszewski, J. (2006). (Ed). (2006). *Evangelicals in the Public Square: Four Formative Voices in Political Thought and Action: Carl F. H. Henry, Abraham Kuyper, Francis Schaefer, and John Howard Yoder* [includes response by Ashley Woodiwiss], Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Books.
- ¹⁶² Nation, M. T. (2006). *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience; Evangelical Witness; Catholic Convictions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- ¹⁶³ Koontz, T. J. and Alexis Baker, A. (2009). *John Howard Yoder: Christian Attitudes Towards War, Peace and Revolution*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Press.
- ¹⁶⁴ Stassen G., Nation, M.T., and Hamsher, M. (Eds.). *John Howard Yoder: The War of the Lamb; The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
- ¹⁶⁵ Bergen, J. M. and Siegrist, A. G. (2009). *Power and Practices: Engaging the Work of John Howard Yoder*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press.
- ¹⁶⁶ Early, C. E. (2010). *A Pacifist Way of Knowing: John Howard Yoder's Nonviolent Epistemology*. Eugene, OR: WIPF Stock.
- ¹⁶⁷ Doerksen, P. G. with Kroeker, P. T. (2010). *Beyond Suspicion: Post Christendom Political Theology in John Howard Yoder and Oliver O'Donovan*. Eugene, OR: WIPF Stock.
- ¹⁶⁸ Martens, P. and Howell, J. (2011). *John Howard Yoder: Spiritual Writings*. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Press.
- ¹⁶⁹ Nugent, J. C., Alexis-Baker, A., and Branson, L. P. (Eds). *John Howard Yoder: Radical Christian Discipleship*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press. Post-Christendom Political Theology in John Howard Yoder and Oliver O'Donovan. Eugene, OR: WIPF Stock.
- ¹⁷⁰ Alexis Baker, A. and Koontz, G. G. (Eds). A Paternoster Theological Monograph: *John Howard Yoder: Theology of Mission: A Believer's Church Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

¹⁷¹ For additional information see: (1) Stutzman, E. (August 19, 2013). Members of John Howard Yoder Discernment Group Announced. *The Mennonite*.
http://www.themennonite.org/public_press_releases/Members_of_John_Howard_Yoder_discernment_group_announced

(2) Stutzman, E. (September 23, 2013). Recent News: John Howard Yoder Discernment Committee. See:
<http://www.mennoniteusa.org/2013/09/23/11987/>

¹⁷² A December 9, 2013 Press Release reported the action of Mennonite Media's board of directors. In this Mennonite Media release Russ Eames, Director of Mennonite Media (<http://www.mennonitemedia.org>) reported the background to this decision. *[Earlier this year] we discussed that the process of reconciliation and healing is incomplete for many of Yoder's victims. Some have asked that we cease publication of his books entirely; others have suggested that we go on as before and say nothing, We are opting to continue to make his work available but are placing a statement from the publisher in the front of all John Howard Yoder books published by Herald Press. Amy Gingerich, Editorial Director, added John Howard Yoder's legacy remains painful and complex. Many have found Anabaptism because of his writings. At the same time, we are signaling that Herald Press wants to be about reconciliation and healing, not masking abuses of power.*

The statement reads as follows:

John Howard Yoder (1927-1997) was perhaps the most well-known Mennonite theologian in the twentieth-century. While his work on Christian ethics helped define Anabaptism to an audience far outside the Mennonite Church, he is also remembered for his long-term sexual harassment and abuse of women.

At Herald Press we recognize the complex tensions involved in presenting work by someone who called Christians to reconciliation yet used his position of power to abuse others. We believe that Yoder and those who write about his work deserve to be heard; we also believe that readers should know that Yoder engaged in abusive behavior.

This book is published with the hope that those studying Yoder's writings will not dismiss the complexity of these issues and will evaluate and learn from Yoder's work in the full context of his personal, scholarly, and churchly legacy.

To retrieve information about the press release, see: http://www.themennonite.org/public_press_releases

¹⁷³ Weaver, J. D. (2014). *John Howard Yoder: Radical Theologian*. Eugene, OR: WIPF and Stock, Publishers.

¹⁷⁴ Arnold, E. (2014). *God's Revolution: Justice, Community and the Coming Kingdom*. Plough Publishing.

¹⁷⁵ Nugent, J. C. (2014). *Real Christian Fellowship: Yoder for Everyone*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press.

¹⁷⁶ Prather, S. (2014). *Christ, Power and Mammon: Karl Barth and John Howard Yoder in Dialogue*. UK: Bloomsbury TT and Clark.