The Elephants in God's Living Room
Volume Three

The Mennonite Church and John Howard Yoder
Collected Essays

Ruth Elizabeth Krall, M.S.N., Ph.D.

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Includes bibliographic references

1) John Howard Yoder
2) Clergy Sexual Abuse – 20th Century Mennonite, United States
3) Religious Institution Clericalism – 20th Century Mennonite, United States
4) Mennonite Church Polity
5) Psychobiography or psychohistory
6) Accountability and forgiveness

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Abbreviations

AMBS	Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries Elkhart, IN
ASG	Accountability and Support Group, John Howard Yoder, Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church
BC	Bethel College North Newton, KS
GBS	Goshen Biblical Seminary Elkhart, IN
GC	Goshen College Goshen, IN
GCBS	Goshen College Biblical Seminary Goshen, IN
GCMC	General Conference Mennonite Church (USA and Canada)
IMS	Institute of Mennonite Studies Elkhart, IN
IN-MI:	Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN
IUSB	Indiana University at South Bend
MBM	Mennonite Board of Missions Elkhart, IN
MC	Mennonite Church (USA and Canada) Lombard, IL
MCA	Mennonite Church Archives Goshen, IN and North Newton, KS

MCUSA	Mennonite Church (USA) Elkhart, IN
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee Akron, PA
MCGB	Mennonite Church, General Board
MHL	Mennonite Historical Library Goshen, IN
MICHIANA	Geographical region consisting of Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan
TMTC	Toronto Mennonite Theological Center Toronto, Ontario, Canada
UND	University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN
SMC	Saint Mary's College Notre Dame, IN

In Loving Memory

Nelle Morton

Dedication

For every victim of clergy and religious professional sexual abuse
and for every compassionate individual who seeks to help.

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[1] Included with permission from the *Elkhart Truth* editors
[2] Included with permission from the *Gospel Evangel* editors

Foreword

The Church will begin to solve its problems and resolve its tensions when, and only when, clericalism and its adherents reverse priorities and place truth and justice ahead of institutional image.

Harry J. Byrne[1]

Introductory Comments

Truth exists only as the individual himself produces it in action.

Soren Kierkegaard[2]

American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1971, 1973, 1980, & 1983) described his research methodology as t*hick description.* In writing the various essays contained in this book, I have been influenced by Geertz's methodology of observing, organizing information and creating interpretations. In order to examine religious leader and clergy malfeasance[3] or institutional practices of clericalism[4] it is useful to consider these social behavior patterns as cultural forms. Any particular cultural form, Geertz's body of work demonstrates, can be studied and read as a living text. By means of close observation and thick description, three kinds of understanding emerge.

The *first* is an understanding of the cultural context in which a particular piece of human behavior emerges. The *second* is a better understanding of the piece of enacted behavior itself. The *third* provides us with a way to develop understanding regarding the interplay of roles and relationships and to examine the faith which each behavior or pattern of behavior contains. In this book the behaviors to be examined are 1) clergy or religious professional sexual abuse of others and (2) clericalism, the systemic response of religious or spiritual teaching organizations to abusive leader behaviors.

Sexual abuse of the laity by ordained clergy persons or other spiritual-religious teachers and leaders consists of sexually aggressive anti-social actions done by individuals. These actions form one aspect of a larger category of interpersonal violence. Because clergy sexual abusers violate individuals who are known to them, they are a part of another large category of violence, affinity or acquaintance violations. In short, clergy or other religious professional sexual abusers do acts of interpersonal violence to individuals who know them and have institutionalized reasons to trust them. Thus, the violations are personal in nature. Because they are personal, they involve betrayals of trust. These abusive, trust-betraying actions may involve physical coercion, economic coercion, emotional or psychological coercion, spiritual or religious coercion, or other forms of manipulative behavior designed to threaten, frighten, and dominate the victims.

Any act of sexual abuse occurs inside a particular socio-economic-cultural environment. Therefore the context for any particular cultural form, for example, clergy sexual abuse of the laity, includes, references, or is integrated with the beliefs, values and social practices of their surrounding culture (Geertz, 1980, pp. 103-104). In situations of clergy abuse, the surrounding context includes the religious organization and the surrounding culture in which that religious organization lives. Thus, in the essays which follow, I am aware of allegations of individual abuse. These alleged actions were located in the context of the Mennonite Church of North America. Surrounding abuser and institution is the larger American culture. Individual, church, and secular culture are all interactive realities in the creation and maintenance of behavior patterns.

It is truism that individuals are born inside specific communities of reference and, as they mature, assimilate to their particular culture's languages and points of view about appropriate and non-appropriate forms of social behavior. Beliefs, attitudes and values are all developed inside particular cultures. An individual's actions in the social world represent these internalized aspects of an individual's personality.

Each culture has rules for understanding culturally conforming behaviors and culturally transgressing ones. Acts of transgression reflect the surrounding cultural matrix just as do non-transgressing acts. Conformity and transgression, therefore, both reflect the communities of reference in which an individual's behavior occurs. Both conformity and transgression

reflect the norms in place during an individual's cultural era in history. Individual decisions about transgressing accepted cultural norms are always made within a particular culture. Because this is so, both aspects (the behaviors of conformity and the behaviors of transgression) can be read and studied as revelatory texts.

In this book the encompassing culture is North American Christendom. The particular institutional culture, in this case, is a denominational sub-group, the American Mennonite Church, during the years from 1960 until 2000. As a religious subgroup inside the larger socio-cultural boundaries of Christendom, it shares much with the dominant culture. The Mennonite subculture can be seen, in my point of view, as a refraction of the larger culture of American Christendom in its religious and secular elements. That said, however, the ethnic Mennonite community of faith also has unique characteristics and beliefs about what it means to live acceptably inside a human faith community. These unique beliefs, attitudes, values, and socio-cultural characteristics reflect, reinforce and seek to perpetuate the Mennonite community's ethnic socio-cultural and religious history and identity.

The intersecting aspects of these complex cultures (American Christendom and the American Mennonite Church) shape an individual Mennonite's personal history and identity, his awareness of his socio-ethnic cultural identity, his community's religious history and his choices of conforming or transgressing behavior. The choices any individual makes reflect, therefore, his personal identity, his national identity, his socio-cultural-religious ethnic identity, and the dominant social norms of his various communities of reference. In addition, they reflect an individual's gender and all of the cultural ideologies which surround it.

Mennonite culture and the culture of American Christendom have many interlocking or interpenetrating beliefs, values, and practices. They both utilize, for example, English as their secular and their religious cultures' language. They both use the monetary system of their nation state. They both utilize various forms of social media designed by their encompassing culture.

A particular language such as English both reveals and limits revelation as a condition of its cultural location. There are, for example, words from the Hebrew Bible that do not have an adequate English equivalent. Therefore,

translators must use approximate words and metaphors – and in this process of translation, these Hebrew words lose the precise culture-rooted meaning of the original in its own historical heritage. Once translated the new wording takes on nuances from the contemporary surrounding language that it may not have had in its original culture and its language. These nuances change, therefore, the meaning of the teaching in significant ways. As these meanings shape individuals and their identities, the original text metamorphoses into something rather different than its original meaning.

The same reality is true as contemporary languages are translated back and forth into other languages. Thus, language, itself shapes the identity of individuals inside specific cultures. It may, in fact, be the most important shaper of individual identity *and* cultural identity for language not only expresses personal experience, it also shapes it.

Other cultural artifacts work in similar ways. After Dante's *The Inferno,* for example, Western cultures began to have a specific iconographical view of purgatory and hell which does not reflect the content of Jewish and Christian scriptures. That which was once metaphorical and allegorical has become concretized. Iconic images of devils with horns and pokers pervade the Sunday morning cartoons and one does not need to be a baptized Western Christian to understand the allusions and imagery. Hell's topography as a concrete place in the mental geography of Western Christian faith and its surrounding culture is securely anchored in Western imaginations. Its inhabitants are familiar enough that cartoonists count on all of their readers' recognition in the visual short hand distortions of cartoon art.

Without precise language and imagery to describe human experience, it is questionable whether that human experience can be understood for the complexity of meaning that lodges within experience. Without adequate language and imagery, human experience cannot be shared with others. It remains inchoate inside the situation (or situations) in which the experience occurred. Human beings need language to think about any human experience. The more precise the shared language, the more likely it is that individuals will understand the experience which lies underneath the language. Discussions about sexual abuse are no exception to this general rule. The more precise our shared language is, the better able individuals are to capture the harsh realities of abuse.

A wide variety of interlocking socio-cultural realities (familial clan, language, visual iconography, economic and power variables, etc.) determine, to a large degree, the nature of an individual's socio-cultural environment *and* her or his personal identity. These variables help to shape and determine the nature of the cultural norms and forms which guide individuals' ordinary and routinized behaviors. As individuals conform to or transgress the ordinary norms, their sense of personal identity is shaped. The way that others see them is also shaped by this process of cultural shaping.

When I first lived outside of North America in a second language, I learned by first hand experience that it was not only verbal language that identified me as a North American and as a United States citizen. I did not only communicate in language. I occupied space in different ways than women in my new homeland did. My nonverbal behavior was an important aspect of the way I communicated. My cultural practices regarding eye contact had to be reversed and as a woman I quickly learned not to look directly at others, most particularly male others of my approximate age, on the streets. My North American ideas about women's liberation and appropriate assertive role behavior in my nation of origin needed to be addressed, understood, and culturally modified if I did not wish to be harassed, hassled, and hustled on the streets of my new homeland.

Unexamined, beliefs, values, and cultural practices are formidable obstacles to cultural change, to institutional change and to personal change. As humans we embody our beliefs and values and manifest them in our behavior. Much of our behavior fits into large cultural forms that guide us in daily life. This is, I have come to believe, as true in my original culture as it was in my second one.

For Geertz such a close reading of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors allows a more accurate interpretive analysis of cultural forms and individual behavior. According to his books the goal of such close observations, descriptions, and analysis is for the observer to learn the behavior's embodied faith, which in turn recursively reveals the values of the cultural whole.

When we choose to look at culture-embedded or culture-saturated human behavior, hermeneutical issues of reader and text converge (Geertz, 1980, p.130). By means of the reader-observer's interactions with the

encountered text (cultural form and embodied behavior), new understandings emerge.

By examining, therefore, (1) clergy and professional leader sexual abuse and (2) institutional clericalism as cultural forms, new understandings emerge about the meaning(s) of these complex embedded violations to their victims.[5] As a clinician-theologian it is my personal belief that understanding cultural forms *and* discrete incidents of abusive violence are both needed for helping individuals who seek to assist victims of such violence as, for example, victim therapists, victim advocates, victim lawyers, victim family members, victim spiritual helpers (such as priests, pastors, spiritual directors, and pastoral counselors, etc.).

Geertz's theoretical work – particularly his hermeneutical methodologies of interpretation - underlies each volume in this series of books about (1) clergy and religious professional sexual abuse and (2) institutional clericalism with its corrupted forms of institutional management practices vis-à-vis sexual abusers.

Volume One Reprised

The credibility gap has turned into an abyss.

Hannah Arendt[6]

Volume One provided readers with foundational materials that are helpful in understanding the correlated phenomena of clergy sexual abuse and morally compromised institutional responses to individual episodes or situations of religious leader sexual abuse. The first volume's chapters provide readers with building blocks for creating a theoretical framework or cognitive construct regarding the practices and prevalence of sexual abuse inside the human institutional church. This foundation of western psycho-sociological theory, public health theory, and recent strides in understanding human consciousness itself can then be applied by the reader to unique situations of clergy abuse and clericalism.

In that volume, I identified elements of two cultural forms of abusive behavior: (1) personal acts of sexual abuse and (2) institutional responses of religious organizations to an employed individual's acts of abuse. The

underlying forms, as we look closely, contain cultural elements which facilitate the unchallenged and ongoing abuse of religious professional sexual violence perpetrators.

In the writings of Jungian analysts Guggenbuhl-Craig (1991) and Rutter (1989), the problem of professional sexual abuse of clients (those who in one way or other seek a professional's help) is not limited to ordained clergy or to religious leaders. In addition to religious institutions, problematic and abusive sexual relationships occur in a wide variety of settings: university athletic teams, multinational corporations, institutional administration, government, and the helping professions of medicine, education, psychotherapy and law.

As evident in the works about sexual abuse inside other-than-Christian religious communities (Downing, 2001; Ford, 2006; Goldberg, 2004; Keen, 1994; Kramer and Alstad, 1993; Lesser, 2010; Pelhem, ud.) the issue of religious leader abuse is not limited to Christian denominations. Religious leader abuse, no matter which spiritual house it occurs in, has many common characteristics. For example, Kramer and Alstad assert that leader abuse is most likely to occur in situations where spiritual seekers and religious disciples are expected to unquestioningly surrender their own wills and where they are expected to automatically obey a teacher or community leader as a mandated aspect of their religious or community heritage.

Roman Catholic scholars (Doyle, Sipe and Wall, 2006; Kennedy, 2001; and Sipe, 1996) inform us that the issue of religious leader sexual abuse is not only a twentieth or twenty-first century phenomenon in Christian Church history. These authors document the presence and history of religious professional sexual misconduct in the Christian Church. Written historical records in the Roman Catholic tradition, for example, reach back nearly 1700 years to a Church Council held at Elvira in Spain. Nor, other individuals tell us, is contemporary clergy sexual abuse only an American Roman Catholic phenomenon (Kenny, 2011; Robinson, 2008).

Academic scholars and practitioners (Cooper-White, 1995; Fortune, 1989c: Labacqz and Burton, 1981; and Rutter, 1989) inform us that sexual impropriety or sexual misconduct among male ordained clergy is not limited to isolated or deranged individuals, the rare rotten apple in the religious institution barrel. Instead, clinical profiles of male abusers, with the

exception of pedophiles, indicate male clergy abusers of adults fit a culturally normal socio-psychological profile.

Shupe (1998, 2008), an academic sociologist, notes the paucity of sociological studies of sexual abuse and institutional responses to such behavior in religious organizations. Inasmuch as much religious clergy misconduct is criminal behavior and inasmuch as some forms of institutional behavior represent criminal corporate behavior, he wonders why more empirical l studies of such deviance have not been done.

In denominations where the phenomenon has been studied by appropriate demographical research methods, the population of abusive clergy appears to be approximately 10 to 12 percent of all ordained clergy nationwide (Cooper-White, 1995; Labacqz and Burton, 1991). While, generally utilizing the 10 to 12 percent data, Rutter's work (1989) indicates that he believes that the percentage of abusers among members of the ordained clergy is likely to be higher than 12 percent. Some very small, therefore inconclusive studies during the past twenty years tend to support his perception. Because of methodological issues, however, I have chosen, however, not to include these smaller studies in my analysis of these perplexing problems.

Volume Two Reprised: An Independent Study Model

Volume two of this series provides a bridge for independent learners. It is a study guide that accompanies the first volume. In addition, it anticipates this current volume. A reading unit on Post-traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) provides newcomers to this field of study with information about the clinical disorders which accompany affinity sexual violations and institutional betrayal violations. To date in this series of volumes, volume two is the only place where clinical material about victim's psycho-social-emotional and physical responses to victimization are referenced in any depth.

Individuals who are interested in working with the survivors of affinity sexual violations or individuals who are interested in working to heal the wounds of institutions where betrayal disorders have occurred need to have a working "seat-of-the-pants" understanding of PTSD. Recent findings in clinical medicine indicate that this understanding must, of necessity,

include the physical body as well as the emotional body and the cognitive self.

Volume Three: A Way Forward

In this current volume, I examine issues raised by women's allegations about clergy and religious leader sexual misconduct as they emerged inside the twentieth-century American Mennonite Church. I have chosen to do this by focusing on the life and professional activities of John Howard Yoder and his encounters with institutions of the American Mennonite Church during the last third of the twentieth-century.

The over all goals of this volume are (1) to explore what factually happened in the Mennonite Church's 20th century encounters with abuse allegations towards John Howard Yoder; (2) to raise questions about the responses of individuals and their faith communities after such incidents and accusations emerged; and (3) to interact with historical facts in an effort to encounter the embedded meaning of these complex situations.

Once the socio-psychological dynamics of clergy abuse *and* clericalism are better understood, then religious communities can begin to identify methodologies of dismantling the individual and cultural buttresses that are needed for these forms of violence to perpetuate themselves across time. For example, once we understand the phenomenon that pre-pubertal and adolescent boy children who are sexually abused in early childhood can and often do become adult sexual abusers of others, we can deliberately apply public health principles of curtailing, stopping, healing, and preventing. We can begin to work systematically and effectively in our individual and collective efforts to address multiple roots and manifestations of this problem.

To create violence-resistant cultures, not only do we need to stop events of violence after they have begun; not only do we need to heal the individual and collective wounds that such acts of violence have already caused: it is urgent that human individuals and human cultures around the world begin to self-transform in order to prevent the continuous re-occurrence of the cultural forms of violence in human history (World Council of Churches, 2001; World Health Organization, 2002a, 2002b). This transformation can only begin and spread one individual at a time until a collective mass of

transformed individuals has occurred. At some future time (in this model of individual and collective transformation), underlying violence-perpetuating cultural belief systems and ordinary violence-supportive daily practices will have been successfully modified (Bolen, 1999, 2005).

We can and should provide therapeutic and spiritual resources to children, adolescents, and adults who have been sexually abused by religious leaders. This is an essential step in breaking the generational chain of recurrent and sexually abusive violence. We can and should do public information events about the symptoms and damages of clergy sexual abuse. These kinds of events can serve as a spiritual immunization process in helping to prevent additional events of abuse. We can and should work to change the surrounding culture and its implicit permissions for ordained adults to abuse others. We can and should create effective institutional and managerial strategies to prevent or discourage incidents of sexual abuse and to efficiently and appropriately manage sexual abuse aftermaths.

Systems theory teaches us that any small change in a positive direction (less abuse of women and children) will affect the entire culture of violence and move it towards becoming a more violence-resistant one (Bolen, 1999 and 2005; Kelman and Hamilton; 1989, Satir, 1972). Whenever even one event of sexual violence has been prevented, the future holds a less violent promise for future generations.

One way to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural forms of (1) clergy and religious leader sexual violence and (2) institutional clericalism or systemic malfeasance is to do a close reading of these cultural forms in light of (or from) the perspective of victim experiences. Well-designed demographic or epidemiological research is urgently needed. Case studies are needed. Historical research is needed. Methodologies and insights from the social sciences as well as the clinical sciences are needed to provide us with research and interpretation tools.

A wide variety of variables must be uncovered and addressed and examined within sexual violence-prone cultures (Robinson, 2008). Today, as contemporary Roman Catholic scholars and activists seek to understand the underlying ideologies of their church's contemporary scandal of pedophile priests and corrupt church management practices, they provide us with one model for how to begin. Multidisciplinary research and

conversations are needed. The research and analytic tools of anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and psychotherapy are needed as well as the tools of theology, ethics, and management theory. Inasmuch as the Roman Catholic work is not finished, other denominations can add to our multi-faith understanding by examining their unique church polity and praxis as it applies to sexual abuse done by members of the ordained clergy and other religious or spiritual leaders.

Rarely, if ever, is an individual sexual abuser's action isolated from all cultural influences and ideologies. We need to ask, therefore if the sexual predator is the hands of the sexual violence cultural form? Even the rationalizations which a predator uses to deny the harm of his actions to others – his personal defense system against awareness and change – usually reflect commonly held beliefs, attitudes, and ideas. If we wish to move in the direction of preventing clergy and religious leader sexual abuse of the laity, then we need to isolate and begin to transform the socio-cultural and ideological variables which contribute to its ongoing presence in religious communities.

Shupe's (2008, p. 2) claim that criminal clergy malfeasance occurs, in part at least, because of the sociological nature of the religious institution itself is one that, in my opinion, must be taken very seriously. Any efforts to prevent clergy and religious leader abuse of the laity must understand, therefore, the socio-anthropological nature of religion as a cultural institution. Questions must be raised and studies about this reality. What is there about institutional religious life that facilitates and enables clergy sexual violence? What about institutional religious life promotes practices of institutional clericalism?

Individuals (or communities) who seek (in situations of clergy sexual violence and institutional clericalism) to become healers and culture change-agents need to examine the developmental and institutional taproots of sexual violence. These taproots are not only manifested in external and visible behaviors. They have burrowed deep inside structures of the human mind. They occupy space in the transpersonal sea of collective consciousness.

Healers and other cultural change agents such as victim advocates need to recognize, however, that no human being has the power to change the behavior of another human being if that individual is resistive to change.

This means that institutions and administrative managers must be prepared to identify individuals for whom change is impossible because these individuals acknowledge no need to change. Once this principal is comprehended, it becomes self-evident that sexually abusive individuals do not belong in ministry or positions of religious and spiritual influence. They do not belong in administrative positions. They must be removed.

In addition, to this general principle of management, I have come to believe that all forms of criminal clergy sexual behavior must be reported to the civil authorities for adjudication and long-term management. All forms of criminal management practices must be reported in a similar manner. If the church cannot or will not protect vulnerable individuals from sexual predators and their colluding managers, then the civil order must step in and do so.

In order to understand, to manage, and ultimately to transform cultures of sexual abuse and sexual violence, we must also understand, manage and transform ourselves. As long as communities of reference tolerate sexual abuse and collude with it, sexual violence perpetrators will have few reasons to make efforts to change their behaviors. It is important, I have come to believe, that all healers and all victim advocates need to ask themselves the following questions, *where in my personal and professional activities do I harbor the seeds of violence? Where have I become a carrier for my culture's preoccupation with violence? Where do I manifest these?*

Because each one of us is shaped by our culture, its language and iconography, a pathogenic violence-prone culture infects all of us. We are all, therefore, carriers of the seeds of violence. Each of us is prone towards doing harmful things towards others. We are each capable of betrayal and victimizing behavior.

This awareness of our common humanity with sexual violence perpetrators and with corrupt institutional managers however does not mean (when confronted with situations of abuse and injustice) that we need to retreat into silence and passivity. It means that healers and victim advocates must strive to the develop compassion for every actor in the sexual violence-clericalism dance as the foundation for their speech, action and committed service to those individuals victimized by other's violence.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro (2012, pp. 66-71) indirectly addresses this issue in his discussion of *evil speech* (that speech which harms others). He recognizes that at times it is necessary to speak that which will not be perceived by others as kind. In seeking to avoid unkind or evil speech, one needs to ask before speaking, (1) is what I am about to say truthful in the sense of being factual; (2) is it kind; and (3) is what I am about to say necessary? Regarding the latter question he writes about the necessity to speak: *Do your best to find a compassionate way to say what must be said, and then say it. Just know that there will be consequences* (68-69).

As the World Health Organization (2002a) notes, discussions about violence prevention and the creation of violence-resistant cultures are very difficult because individuals inside the community are personally committed to the violence-supporting ideologies, beliefs, attitudes and values which give rise to the cultural forms of violence which their communities of reference support. Only as individuals engage themselves in dialogue with their own belief systems, can they begin to make changes in the direction of truthfulness and openness to change.

One place to begin, therefore, is with self-culture examination. Pervasive personal changes in our cultural acceptance of all forms of interpersonal violence are urgently needed inside the communities of religious faith. This is not the only place to begin but it is, perhaps, the most difficult one.

Footnotes

[1] Monsignor Harry J. Byrne, July 24, 2008, 1

[2] Soren Kierkegaard quoted by Rollo May, 1983, p. 49.

[3] *Clergy malfeasance* is the exploitation and abuse of a religious group's followers by trusted elites and leaders of their religion. It includes criminal behavior such as knowingly protecting the perpetrators of the rape of small children or adolescents. It also includes the criminal behavior of becoming a witness to another's criminal abuse and acting as an accomplice during *and* after the fact.

[4] *Clergy sexual abuse* is unwanted sexual attention from an ordained individual or religious professional such as a pastor or priest; sexual relationships of a pastor or priest with members of his congregation.

[5] See Ruth E. Krall, 2012, Volume One for a more complete description of Geertz's hermeneutical and methodological approaches to studying culture and human behavior.

[6] Hannah Arendt, (1969a), p. 4.

Introduction

> *It is in daily life and especially in the life of children that the human propensity for violence is founded, and we now suspect that much of that excess of violence which distinguishes man from animals is created by those child-training methods which set one part of him against another.*
>
> Erik Erikson[1]

The essays in this book began as I recalled and considered a specific example of clergy and religious professional sexual abuse. That example was drawn from the historical efforts of the twentieth-century American Mennonite Church to manage a large number of sexual abuse allegations made by adult women against John Howard Yoder, arguably his denomination's most internationally celebrated and prestigious twentieth-century theologian, ethicist and ordained clergyman.

As I investigated some of the issues which are embedded inside any spiritual leaders' sexual misconduct behaviors and abuse of his followers, disciples, students, or peers, various questions about the Yoder-Mennonite Church encounters entered my thinking. Some of these I did not have answers for. Additional questions surfaced in conversations with others as they, too, sought to understand these historical events and encounters.

When I looked outside the cultural borders of my denomination to learn how other religious groups encountered and managed abusive leaders, I soon discovered that victimized individuals (and their helpers) from a wide range of religious or spiritual teaching groups were also struggling to understand their own situation-unique variations of these same questions. Buddhists reported and struggled to understand the presence of abusive spiritual leaders; new age spiritual seekers encountered abusive teachers. The contemporary world-wide Roman Catholic Church is engaged in a protracted internal political and religious struggle involving reform efforts and reform resistance efforts.[2] In the United States alone, billions of Roman Catholic dollars have been expended as members of the church's hierarchy (monsignors, bishops, archbishops and cardinals) fought to defend the institutional church (its clergy and members of various religious orders as well as members of its hierarchy) in the nation's criminal and civil

courts.[3] In court room after courtroom all across the United States, Roman Catholic victims of sexual abuse by priests and religious have claimed that their institutional church's leaders deliberately and maliciously protected pedophile priests and members of religious orders thereby exposing successive generations of Roman Catholic children to danger.[4] In many situations, jurors and judges have agreed.[5]

As I read and then corresponded with experts in the field of religious leader sexual abuse, I began to acquire a clinical-theological vocabulary to describe and discuss that which had previously been simplistically defined in my consciousness as perpetrator sin and institutional structural violence. A wide variety of authors and correspondents in this area of study expanded my personal awareness and helped me to define issues more precisely.

In the first volume of *The Elephants in God's Living Room: Clergy sexual abuse and institutional clericalism* (February, 2012) I reviewed contemporary American literature about clergy and religious leader sexual abuse. In that volume I sought to abstract and deconstruct critical issues for denominations and other religious organizations or spiritual teaching centers to consider as they developed means and methods (organizational polity) for managing abusive religious leaders. In particular, as a case study in institutional management, the first volume of this series examined the contemporary American Roman Catholic Church's experience vis-à-vis (1) sexually abusive pedophile priests and (2) institutional clericalism, a form of secretive managerial protection of pedophile priests which allowed individual priests and members of religious orders to continue to abuse children and adolescents.

In the course of that literature review, several issues fell into place for me. The *first* was that a typology of clergy sexual abuse was needed.[6] Following a public health model of prevention, it became clear to me that without more precise definitions and examples, it would be close to impossible to successfully intervene and prevent future episodes of leader sexual misconduct and sexual abuse. Unless religious or spiritual seeker groups knew which type (or types) of abuse was prevalent in their communities, they would be unable to deal proactively and effectively with abusive individuals when they appeared.

Given that demographic survey research indicates that approximately 10 – 12% of all clergy and religious leaders report (or are reported as) engaging in acts of sexual misconduct, it is essential to differentiate consenting adult sexual conduct misbehaviors from non-consenting and, by definition, abusive, actions.[7] This means that members of religious institutions or spiritual teaching communities (such as denominational seminaries or spiritual retreat centers) need to be able to differentiate between the impact of sin and the impact of criminal behavior. Differential prevention and treatment methodologies need to be developed and implemented.

Even though the Christian Church, in general, names both consenting adultery *and* sexually abusive behavior as sexual misconduct, it is essential to differentiate one kind of behavior from a second kind of behavior. While both experiences are part of a sexual behavior continuum, the contact violence of rape manifests in different methodologies than does a non-contact violent act of sexual harassment such as obscene phone calls or stalking. Both differ radically from mutually initiated, non-coercive, and consenting adult acts of adultery.

Learning to call things by their proper names is, therefore, an essential step in educating new generations about sexual violence as a religious institution problem. It is a necessary step in moving towards sexual violence prevention inside religious denominations. Accurate knowledge and accurate naming form two of the foundation stones which are needed to create and maintain safe churches.

When we look carefully at violent sexual misconduct behaviors, *a second issue* emerges: an individual's sexual orientation is not the same thing as the object of her or his sexual desire. Adult heterosexual individuals and adult homosexual individuals may be sexually attracted to small children, to pre-majority adolescents or to other adults. In abusive situations, sexual orientation usually establishes the gender of their victims. For example, a heterosexual man (sexual orientation) who is sexually attracted only to pre-pubertal female children (his sexual objects of desire and action) is legally and medically classified as a pedophile. A homosexual man who is similarly attracted only to pre-pubertal male children is also classified as a pedophile. Some individuals are attracted to pre-pubertal children of both genders. Although I know of no extended clinical or criminological discussion of this small sub-group of abusive individuals it is likely that

while the objects of their sexual behavior are pre-pubertal children, their adult sexual orientations are bi-sexual or polymorphous in nature.

The *third issue* that surfaces is that abusive individuals abuse others for multiple reasons. These reasons usually have roots in the personal and cultural life history of individual abusers. In short, each abuser's life history provides us with a personalized cultural topographic map to read. In a certain number of cases, for example, adults who were sexually abused in childhood become, in their turn, adult sexual abusers of small children. Yet, not all abused children become abusive individuals in adult life. However, when we examine adult abusers and their adult sexual lives, we often find a history of some form of severe abuse or encounters with violence which they experienced in early life.

As we continue to look at sexual abuse misbehavior inside multiple religious communities, a *fourth issue* becomes visible. Sexual abuse is not particularly caused by sexual expression deprivation (for example, an absence of sexual intercourse) in adult life. Every individual in the transition from childhood to adult life must learn to manage his or her sexuality. Making decisions about engaging or refusing to engage in specific sexual acts is simply one aspect of an individual's life journey to personal and interpersonal socio-spiritual maturity.[8] Making decisions about full mutuality or coercive behaviors is another. Many individuals live happy (or perhaps even desperately unhappy) celibate lives without choosing to sexually coerce and abuse others. Many religious leaders – even those who live in voluntary or mandatory sexual celibacy such as Buddhist monks or Roman Catholic clergy - do not sexually molest and abuse others.

Even more to the point is the fact that many, perhaps most, sexual abusers have regular consenting permanent or sometimes relatively impermanent (as in serial monogamy) sexual relationships with other adults – a life partner, a series of recreational sex partners, a prostitute or series of prostitutes, or other mutually consenting adults. Thus, sexual abuse is more about abuse and violation than it is adult deprivations of sexual pleasure and satisfaction per se. This means that acts of sexual abuse, therefore, are primarily about violence and only secondarily, in the service of violence, about sexuality.

The quality and quantity of violence in all abuse situations is more about an abusive individual's manipulative effort to gain and maintain dominance

and control than it is about sexual desire per se. Abuse is never about establishing relationships of equality, sexual reciprocity and mutuality. Sexually abusive adult individuals choose to abuse others by means of their sexuality just as other abusive adults choose to abuse their victims by means of their mental status, levels of intoxication, religious ethnicity, skin color, or national origins.

In this respect, then, sexual abuse and the abuse of physical battering have similarities of response in their victims – an experience of betrayal, mistrust, fear, anxiety, psychic numbing, an inability to trust others, and a loss of inner security. After being the victimized target of physical and sexual abuse, its recipient's sense of self and world is inexorably changed. Some clinical authors (as well as some victimized individuals) consider this loss of a predictable world and self to be equivalent to soul death or soul murder (Frawley-O'Dea, 2007; Rosetti, 1990; Shengold, 1989 and 1999). Since I do not personally believe that, as long as life breathes us, the human soul ever dies, I prefer, therefore, the cross-cultural term of soul loss or the clinical term of psychic numbing.

Finally, when we examine the multiple forms sexual abuse can exemplify, it becomes evident that not all forms of abuse are equal in the amount of physical violence or physical coercion extended. Some forms of sexual abuse, in contrast to the raw violence of physical abuse and battering, for example, are primarily communicational, emotional, or psychological. The goal of sexual or gender abuse in all of its forms, however, appears to be that of expressing one's corrupted sense of authority and power over weaker individuals. Some abusive individuals do this by rape. Others do it by sexual harassment. While each form of abuse has its own behavioral signature every act of sexual abuse presents itself to its victims as one very harmful or personally toxic form of interpersonal violence.

Conceptual Maps

> *The human being who is engaged in studying…natural phenomena is in a particular and significant relationship to the objects studied and he must make himself a part of the equation. This is to say, the* **subject***, man (sic), can never be separated from the* ***object*** *[of study] which he observes* (emphases are May's).
>
> Rollo May[9]

As we do any careful examination of particularities – this specific abuser or that specific victim of abuse - complexities pile upon complexities. Yet, if we have some generalized conceptual maps in place, complex situations can begin to sort themselves out. Some of the interpersonal and socio-cultural dynamics begin to clarify themselves. As we look closely, it becomes possible to make appropriate interventions. It becomes possible to rescue and help those who are being victimized. It becomes possible to help protect victims (or potential victims). It also becomes possible to call victimizers and perpetrators into full accountability.

One of the most useful of these internal conceptual maps is a moral one. Sexual abuse in terms of the Christian religious community is a sin. In terms of the civil order, it is quite often a criminal act. Administratively managing a criminal act of sexual abuse by a perpetrator only by a denomination's privatized theology of sin is usually (perhaps always) a bad idea because it allows perpetrators' criminal acts of sexual abuse and sexual violence to continue unacknowledged and unchallenged. The abuser's victims' needs and rights for truth and restored safety, in such a situation, by definition, go unrecognized and unacknowledged.

When they are appropriate at all, theological preoccupations with victim forgiveness and victim-perpetrator reconciliation are secondary in importance. Much earlier concerns must be dealt with first. These include (1) victim protection and safety and (2) containment or quarantine of perpetrators and (3) an insistence upon predator accountability, in public, for his actions. Concerns about the likelihood of perpetrator recidivism and additional victimizations of additional individuals need to be acknowledged and addressed. Institutional secrecy as a means of managing sexually abusive clergy serves, therefore, to protect victimizers and to guarantee the likelihood of even more acts of victimization.

In many situations, even those where the criminal justice system does not choose to intervene, abusive behavior perpetrators can be tried and judged in civil court rooms. Abusive individuals and those who hide and protect them can be found culpable for their failures to protect vulnerable individuals from victimization. Damages can be assessed and financial penalty settlements incurred. In both religious and secular communities, sexual abuse of vulnerable individuals violates a communal moral agreement about appropriate or inappropriate adult sexual behavior.[10] The secular community and the religious community recognize individual and

social transgressions of the common cultural code of expected behavior for adults.

When religious institutions and their managing administrators encounter allegations about leader sexual abuse of others, the only appropriate response is (1) to investigate all complaints promptly, (2) to effectively adjudicate credible complaints, (3) to publicly acknowledge and attempt to stop the abuser's offending behavior, and (4) to work towards victim safety and healing. In a moral universe, genuine healing, forgiveness, and genuine reconciliation (if possible at all) do not occur when (a) victimizing behavior continues and is socially ignored, denied, trivialized, kept secret, or condoned, (b) victims are blamed for their victimization, (c) victims are financially, emotionally or spiritually abandoned and/or attacked by their communities of reference, (d) victimizers continue to be revered or honored as wise, insightful, or powerful spiritual leaders and influential teachers, and (e) the moral offense is treated socially and religiously as unimportant.

A second conceptual map is lodged within the growing realization of clinical and criminological communities that sexual abuse is a methodology, a choice of a sexual means to express aggressive hostility and to do so by enacting interpersonal acts of violence. Sexual abuse is the methodology by which sexually or gender abusive perpetrators seek to manipulate, control and dominate the lives of their chosen victims. When we understand this principle, the need for prompt and effective intervention is clarified. In many situations, the criminal and civil justice system needs to adjudicate allegations in order to effectively protect the general welfare of a particular population of vulnerable individuals.

It is essential, therefore, to recognize that the primary moral offense of sexual abuse presents itself in the domineering violence of the act. Only secondarily is the moral offense one of transgressed sexual mores. When we recognize this reality, it becomes clear that moral responsibility for the violence of sexual abuse lodges with the victimizer and not with the victims who are the recipients of his violence.

A Case Study in Progress

In this current volume, I apply information from Volume One to issues raised by the relationships of John Howard Yoder to the accusations of his

victims and to his church. From 1970[11] until his death in 1997 allegations, rumors, and gossip regarding sexual abusiveness dogged Yoder's personal and professional lives. They also dogged his denominational home, the American Mennonite Church, his home congregation, Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, IN and a denominational seminary - the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries also in Elkhart, Indiana. This volume's essays, therefore, circle around my study and analysis of that historical twentieth-century situation.

While I am an Anabaptist-Mennonite clinician-theologian addressing a 20th century Mennonite situation, my questions regarding this historical situation are, I believe, relevant to or applicable in a wide variety of abuse situations. They can be, therefore, transferred into other denominational or spiritual teaching center environments. Other religious and spiritual teaching groups can modify and adapt my questions' syntax and grammar, as needed, to fit cultural-ethical differences of opinion and theological practices within their own traditions and communities.

As his denomination encountered repeated allegations and rumors of sexual misconduct in Yoder's professional career and personal life, denominational personnel managers sought (1) to keep awareness of Yoder's behavior hidden away from the ordinary rank and file Mennonite individual; (2) to keep Yoder's professorial, clerical, academic, and consulting career alive for denominational purposes; (3) to avoid embarrassing his extended family; and (4) to avoid a visible denominational scandal. Another way to state this is to assert that the institutional church was determined to keep the collective silent peace at any cost.

For more than twenty years denominational administrative personnel officers and chief executives managed allegations, rumors, and gossip about Yoder's behavior by secrecy and by facilitating geographical and professional work relocations. They chose, therefore, a preferential option to maintain Yoder's theological career as a spokesperson for a Mennonite theology of non-violence and cultural identity rather than a preferential option to provide safety to vulnerable women potentially in Yoder's grasp.

Thus, denominational leaders, knowingly or unwittingly, created a hostile religious climate in which Yoder's behavior could continue and proliferate. Victims and potential victims were left to fend for themselves. Ideology, institutional authority and denominational leader power, therefore, trumped

a viable living communal praxis of justice, accountability, individual healing and collective reconciliation.

Clinical psychologist Robert Grant (March 15, 2010) notes that when initial incidents (the first marker events) of sexual misconduct are not managed appropriately and effectively victimizing individuals are psychologically and sociologically freed to continue their abusive actions. In other words, ineffectively or inappropriately supervised, abusing individuals are freed to repeat and to extend the reach of their abusive behavior by refining their skills as abusers.

Sociologist Anson Shupe (2008) notes that over time and after multiple instances of abusive behavior, a transformation of the abuser's identity occurs. In life situations of serial abuse with multiple victims, the abuser's social and personal identity shifts to that of anti-social deviant. Once that identity shift is complete, the individual appears to lose internal restraint warning systems that his behavior is inappropriate.

Given the wisdom of these two social science scholars, it seems clear to me that as instances of sexual misconduct accumulate in an individual's behavioral life history, a habitual pattern forms that is quite probably the source of recidivism even after a confrontation does finally challenge the abuser's behavior as inappropriate. The body's emotional and physical patterns of behavior have become more and more automatic. The skill patterns of embodied abuse and the body's physiological and neurological responses to one's abusive actions increasingly begin to dominate the personality and its choices. Defensive, perhaps even recalcitrant, cognitive patterned responses rationalize his behavior to himself and to others (as either desirable or appropriate). Such rationalizations become more and more entrained to an abusive individual's actual behavior. The individual's psyche replaces uncomfortable experiences of cognitive dissonance (an uncomfortable internal judgment about one's personal behaviors) with the much more comfortable one of cognitive congruency (by adjusting one's moral sensitivities and cognitive justifications to rationalize one's actual behavior). As the habitual skill patterns come to dominate the personality, internal and behavioral resistance to change intensifies. Defensiveness and active hostility towards external challenges from others become more frequent, more intense, and thus more visible to others. Eventually many (probably the majority) serial sexual abusers lose any ability to change their behavior without extensive and well managed intervention efforts carried

out by skilled clinical practitioners. In this kind of situation, the abuser's inability to change is similar to individuals who struggle with multiple addictions. Powerless to change his behavior, he continues it.

What twentieth-century Roman Catholic experiences with recidivist sexually abusive priests teach us is that some sexual abuse perpetrators do not (and perhaps cannot) ever change their behavior. It does not seem to matter (1) how many managerial interventions are carried out; (2) how many geographical relocations occur; (3) how many spiritual admonitions are given; (4) how many confessions and absolutions are negotiated. It is not, I think, that transformation is theoretically impossible: it is that for many serial sexual abusers, with each act of abuse, substantive transformation becomes more and more unlikely.

As I thought about Yoder's life, in light of women's allegations of inappropriate behavior and in light of growing body of clinical and criminological literature about sexual abuse perpetrator recidivism, I came to believe that his life – most particularly during his most productive intellectual years - needs to be studied by the church's religious academy, the group of his peers that he left behind in death. In my clinical and theological opinion, his abusiveness needs to be addressed as issues for the contemporary church and its religious academy to seek to understand. An effort needs to be made to determine what went wrong in his life trajectory that he became a sexual abuser? What went wrong in his denomination's management of his career? What were the issues which his abusive lifestyle raised for his various supervisors and personnel managers? What can we learn from his life that will help the church to prevent future instances of abuse that resemble his? What can be learned that will help future church administrators to choose more transparent management practices with situations of clergy and religious leader sexual abuse?

When an abuser's life is examined closely by means of the anthropological methodology known as thick description,[12] some situations and issues become self-evident. After constructing a partial life timeline for the middle academically prolific years of Yoder's chronological life, some questions for his denominational managers, for example, seemed obvious to me.[13] Others emerged only as I sought to make sense of the Roman Catholic experience of pedophile priests and denominational cover-up activities. Still others emerged in conversations with friends and colleagues from a wide

variety of religious and spiritual traditions. In this series of essays, I seek to address my own questions in the hopes that a wider discussion will eventually begin.

At the very least, vis-à-vis this period of history in Yoder's life and in the socio-cultural life of his denomination, questions regarding the intersection of his life's abusiveness and the church's habitual and enabling patterns of managing the aftermaths of clergy and religious leader abusiveness need to be identified, analyzed, and communally dissected. This is, I believe, especially essential for the religious academy in situations where it has continued to approvingly teach Yoder's system of non-violent theological ethics and confessing church polity. Talking only about Yoder's positive contributions to Mennonite identity is a continuing form of collective denial.

The more I read and study the complex inter-relatedness of individual abuse and cultural permissions for such abuse to go unchallenged, the more certain I become that while some questions about John's relationship with his denominational church might remain unanswerable, they still need to be identified, disseminated, and studied. Intellectual honesty insists upon an examination of the factual realities as one foundation for relevant theologizing.

The Personal Voice of the Inquirer

> *[In modernity and in contrast to burning misbehaving or heretical individuals at the stake] policing religious membership is now a social matter – not a legal one. Today, a religious community that seeks to preserve its traditional structure must maintain its boundaries using whatever independent means it can muster.*
>
> Noah Feldman[14]

As philosopher and depth psychologist Rollo May (1983) has noted, it is impossible to distance the voice of the subject – who asks the questions – from the voice of the object of study – the one who is questioned. There is no neutral place of beginning any study of human phenomenon. Each individual who enters the research dialogue of subject and object begins from his or her socio-cultural and experiential life location.

I did not begin my twenty-first century study of the Yoder-Mennonite Church situation from outside my own observations and questions. Nor did I begin from a positional foundation of objective neutrality. Indeed, I doubt there is any such beginning place in academic study. This is especially true when the object of our study is another human being whom we knew personally, when our search for understanding involves another individual with his own experiences and sense of himself.

Academic Inquiry and Pre-existing Opinions

In the summer of 2007, I began my research into Yoder's life history with a set of personal opinions that had been formulated years earlier during the late1970's and early 1980's. The first set of opinions could be simply stated: what Yoder had been reported as doing to women was spiritually, morally and ethically wrong. His behavior (as identified by women) was not only inappropriate and harmful behavior for a Christian; it was inappropriate and harmful behavior for any adult male. As reported, his behavior transgressed social norms within his church *and* within that church's surrounding secular American culture. His reported behavior consisted of deliberate violations of other individual's rights to live in safety. While, occasionally his harassing actions may have been opportunistic ones, in most reported situations they appeared to be pre-planned and methodically carried out.[15] Potential victims were identified and they were groomed for acts of victimization.[16]

I also began with a second twenty-five year old set of opinions about Yoder's denominational church. These opinions too could be simply stated: the way Yoder was consistently managed by his denomination during the 1970s and 1980s was not only inappropriate; it had actively harmed some of Yoder's victims and permanently damaged the Mennonite Church as a religious institution.[17]

The actions of denominational leaders in keeping Yoder's religious academic and international consulting career vitally alive, participated in the violence, Yoder, himself, did to women. The denominational church, therefore, in my opinion, collusively participated in the violence Yoder did – indirectly to be certain – but nevertheless by their non-action and secrecy denominational leaders prolonged the time in which he was able to sexually harass adult women without being questioned, in a public forum, about his

choices and actions. In modern clinical language, therefore, Yoder's denominational church actively enabled his behavior to continue. They became accessories and accomplices to his anti-social behavior after the fact. Because this was so, additional women were victimized – women who might have been warned away from Yoder's advances to them.

Historical Roots

Not only did I begin my research with pre-existing opinions. I also began with historical awareness and knowledge of the situation. In the summer of 1976, I began a denominational career inside the Mennonite church's undergraduate religious academy. Within 18 months of my return to Mennonite life (from a clinical-teaching-administrative position in the secular academy), I began to hear first and second-hand stories about Yoder's sexual misconduct. As I watched denominational leaders in their apparent unwillingness or inability to manage these complaints, rumors, gossip, and first-hand stories, my puzzlement grew.

I heard my denomination's Sunday morning pronouncements and read the church press' insistent messages about sexuality, premarital sex, abortion, homosexuality, divorce, remarriage, adultery, and the need for celibate singleness. I read position papers and denominational study documents. As a clinically trained resource person I participated in denominational conferences about various aspects of human sexuality. I taught human sexuality in the classroom. I did not necessarily agree personally with every element of these preached pronouncements and written documents. Not au courant with every nuance of my denomination's historical sexual teachings, I did understand politically, however, that as a young, single, female church employee, I could and most likely would be summarily fired were I to engage in adulterous, abusive or harassing actions towards students or colleagues.

Over time it became very visible to me that in matters of the denominational church's theology of human sexuality, the white male voice of tradition and clan was dominant. Very few, if any, women's voices were present in the programs, proclamations and documents. Even fewer voices represented people of color. And no sexual minority voices were present at all within the official church's conference proceedings and publications. In addition, the

emerging scientific findings of academic research regarding human sexuality, most especially sexual orientation, were almost totally absent.

From the denominational sidelines of untenured employment and unmarried female gender, I watched older, white, married male denominational leaders and fellow academics apparently ignore (to my clinical way of understanding), a pathological socio-cultural situation. I watched church leaders clandestinely appear to approve of forbidden behaviors done by one of the church's leading intellectuals. In addition, in several other situations I eventually learned about, several other male religious professionals, in addition to Yoder, who deliberately violated the sexual morality rules which the denomination prescribed as essential to membership. In none of these denominational situations were there any visible consequences or applied sanctions for sexual misconduct behaviors.

The conclusion I reached in my late thirties (about Mennonite theology and its sexuality teachings) was that Mennonite church theologians and church institution administrators viewed sexual morality as situation-person-specific. If, for example, a relatively powerless and untenured individual, a female college instructor, for example in her first denominational academic position, was engaged in sexual misconduct or sexually abusive activities, she would be judged by the denominational church in one way. As a consequence of that judgment, she would be immediately excluded from the community by being fired from her position on the grounds of sexual misconduct or moral turpitude.

If, however, clan-protected, powerful tenured white married male individuals did the very same behavior, they would be judged by a different moral standard. They would be treated in a significantly different manner. They would continue to be included in the community. Indeed, they would continue to be seen as sages and wise elders. They would continue to be sought out for their skills, knowledge and life wisdom. They would be communally honored for their contributions. They would be promoted up the ladder of institutional power and authority. They would be protected from within.

Only in a blatant, deliberate, incendiary, and publicly provocative display of sexual misconduct, I thought then, would a powerful abusive white male Mennonite church executive or tenured college professor be disciplined

and excluded from the community for his sexual misconduct behaviors. Only then, I thought in those years, would a powerful ordained clergyman and church academic ever be publicly reprimanded for his behavior. By virtue of his brilliant intellect, his positional authority, his publications, his powerful friends, his international career, and his family and clan connections, such a man was, it seemed to me then, above the morality demands preached on Sunday morning for ordinary people. Vis-à-vis this work about the intersection of Yoder's life with the Mennonite denominational and institutional church, a friend of mine recently commented upon my research and writing, *at that point in time it appears that Yoder was given a free denominational pass to do whatever he wanted to do.*

Shortly before entering my doctoral program of studies, untenured and with no real job security, I also had made a decision that I would join with other Mennonite women in attempts to get Yoder's behavior known to still other Mennonite women. If the men in charge of my religious denomination would not act to protect vulnerable women, and it appeared as if they would not, then aware and concerned Mennonite women needed to act. Vulnerable women needed to be identified and protected. Information about factual realities needed to be sorted out from rumors, innuendo, and outright gossip. Women seeking to protect other women from abuse needed to consult with one another. In the late 1970s, therefore, I became part of a small Mennonite-Roman Catholic coalition of feminist women who tried to make a difference in their respective churches and church educational institutions.

Never directly victimized by Yoder, I understood only intuitively at first and only much later cognitively, that his behavior undermined Mennonite theologies of nonviolence, nonresistance and active peacemaking. In short, I came to believe that his reportedly abusive sexual behavior was a much stronger witness to his personal theology and to his church's collective theology of violence than his pious written and preached words about non-violently following the non-violent Christ.

In graduate studies, as I continued to do research about human sexuality and gendered human relationships, I grew more and more certain that interpersonal forms of physical and sexual abuse were both forms of interpersonal violence. Living inside the sociological boundaries of a community of faith committed to non-participation in warfare and state-

organized authorized violence, I came to see these internalized and denied forms of socio-cultural violence in very different ways than many of my Mennonite male colleagues did.

To me, the presence of privatized forms of interpersonal violence (acts committed largely against women and small children) in the heart of the faith community called the Mennonite Church meant that the community's historical and theological witness against war's violence was called into question. Ideologically protesting other men's violence in war, while accepting Mennonite religious leaders' acts of domestic violence and clergy sexual violence as a cultural given, simply made no intellectual or theological sense to me. When known abusive clergy men, in particular, protested and preached against the sinfulness of war's violence, I learned to discount their speech and their theology. In my opinion, their theologies of non-violent love were compromised by their own personal embodied commitment to violence as they physically or sexually abused women, children and adolescents.

Inside the little fish pond of Mennonite cultural life, sexual violence represented one aspect of the larger American culture's commitment to violence as the way to solve problems and as a way for the stronger to dominate and control weaker individuals. While each form of violence (war, domestic violence, and affinity sexual abuse of women and small children) had a unique cultural signature, all were, I came to recognize, manifestations of an authoritarian male-dominating and social bullying will to power and control.

The human trauma response, as it began to be understood among mental health clinicians during and since the 1980's, reinforced my theological-ethical opinion. Perpetrators and victims of war's violence, victims of physical domestic abuse, and victims of sexual violence demonstrated similar physical, psychological, emotional, and social responses to victimization and experienced violence. During the 1980s and 1990s these responses became categorized under the diagnostic category now known as post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). The issue at hand was the human organism's physiological, emotional, and cognitive response to the threat and reality of perpetrated or experienced or witnessed violence. One thing that these three forms of violence shared in common was their victims' responses of terror, fear, anxiety, helplessness, a sense of depersonalization, and a dissociative splitting of the personality.[18] Violence

in its many disparate forms participated in the disempowerment and dismemberment of victims' lives. Less visible, perhaps, was the reality that those who engaged in acts of violence were also deeply affected by their actions and were subsequently changed from the persons they were before they began to enact violence in their interpersonal and social spheres of engagement.

Violence (domestic violence and religious leader sexual violence) inside the socio-cultural boundaries of the Mennonite Church called into question, therefore, the church's central teachings of peace, Christology and denominational polity. At least it did this for me, an ethnic baptized cradle Anabaptist-Mennonite.

In trying to understand the puzzling Mennonite responses to domestic abuse and sexual harassment and violence, I returned to my examination of my denomination's theology and praxis regarding warfare. If a Mennonite young man, conscientiously choosing to do military service for his government and country, could be summarily excommunicated by his religious denomination for sinfulness and disobedience to the church's official teachings about violence and warfare, then I wondered why a middle age Mennonite man, choosing to do acts of sexual violence against the women of his denomination (and other denominations), was seen as a privileged insider – an honored theologian and teacher. Why, I wondered, did our collective Mennonite cultural understanding of Christ as the non-violent savior of humanity, create a cultural demand for a young man's absolute obedience to the human denomination's cultural prohibitions against participating in warfare? Why were we adult baptized members of the community) so willing to communally condemn the young soldier – often a baptized cradle member of the community – to communal exclusion, religious exile, and social damnation at the very same time we (members of the same denomination) deliberately overlooked (and denied the importance of) a middle-aged male sexual harasser's acts of abusive sexual violence inside the Mennonite community of faith? Did we as Mennonites I wondered, have a theological and ethical mental construct or continuum of violence that condemned some forms of violence and accepted or promoted other forms? Was violence a relative matter in which powerful leaders could do violence while less powerful and less experienced members of the community were forbidden to do violence? Which reality question was more important, I wondered: *who you were* in terms of clan identity or *what you actually did?*

In my bleakest, most despairing moments, I wondered if Christ, himself, instituted and sanctioned male control and male violence against women and small children as an essential foundation stone – the keystone - for the success of the Christian Church. Maybe clergy sexual abuse was Christ's purifying will for his community in some way I was too ignorant or too spiritually immature to understand. Perhaps the human church really did, in its corrupted socio-cultural reality, represent and model Christ's ongoing will for the human community which was named for him. If so, then in such a reality, dominant and authoritarian powerful men (Christ's respected representatives and teachers on earth) were free to act according to their personal system of morality, no matter how violent or how degraded, while less powerful individuals (their followers) were obliged to obey the powerful even if this meant continuing victimization. In such a church, a victim's silence about abuse was the only way to sustain the church's peaceful coexistence on earth – the only way to inaugurate the peaceable kingdom of God.

If, I was certain then, this was even remotely the case, there was no way at all that the human church was, or even could be, a source or conduit of human non-violent morality. Like its socio-cultural twin the nation-state, the human church in such a model needed violence in order to survive as a socio-cultural institution. Protecting the status and actions of its powerful leadership caste was essential for the religious hierarchy in order that they could ensure the continued unquestioning, silent obedience of the majority.

Eventually, I resolved, for myself, the question, *why is sexual violence and domestic violence tolerated by Mennonites when military violence is not tolerated*? Both forms of violence shared in the sinfulness of the human community. Both destroyed human life and well-being. Neither represented a divine will for the human community. Excommunication, or the refusal to excommunicate, solved nothing. These actions simply consolidated the power of the socio-cultural boundaries and human administrators of the church. They had very little to do with Christ's teachings and compassionate will for human life. My answer was simple: sexual violence inside the church happens because it can happen. Sexual violence cover-ups in the church happen because they can happen. Both represent the internal seed of human violence manifested.

Until each form of violence could be understood and addressed, neither would be effectively challenged or excised from the modern world. Much of war's violence in the twentieth-century had been directed against civilians and non-combatants (aged and handicapped men and women, women of all ages and their children).[19] Most acts of clergy sexual violence in that century had also been directed against weaker men, women and their children. Vis-à-vis violent acts done against the most vulnerable, the twentieth-century Mennonite church and society were holograms of one another.

Each form of violence was, therefore, an expression of authoritarian and powerful men's individual and collective willingness to violate the vulnerable - usually in the name of their gods – to gain control and to exert dominating power and authority over them. The violence of warfare against an unknown and un-named enemy and the violence of domestic and acquaintance abuse against individuals one knew personally had much in common.

Neither form of violence advances the reign of God on earth. Neither addresses any recognizable formation of the people of God as a spiritual community. The implicit nihilism of both forms of violence works against an eschatology of hope. Both forms of violence deny a spirituality of love and compassion – that spirituality or ethic of care which Jesus taught in his story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 28-34).

It was not God's will – or Jesus' actual human teaching - I finally assured myself - which was being obeyed when the human institutional religious community allowed clergy sexual violence against less powerful men, women and their children to go unacknowledged, unaddressed, and uncorrected. Denominational enablement and cover-up activities were not in accord with the divine will as revealed in scripture.

In addition, I came to believe, Christ's will for his earth-based community was not the absence of intra-community conflict or an absence of cultural scandal. Jesus' own teaching about the corrupted religious community leaders of his time provided, instead, a human model of moral challenge and truth-telling. Seeing moral corruption, Jesus, Christian scriptures teach us, did not blink. He did not look away. He did not issue passes to protect the powerful or offer excuses to isolate the religious community from scandal. He named the corrupted religious establishment situation in his

day for what it was – spiritually dead unfaithfulness to the teachings of the Mosaic Torah about justice. We know the outcome of his forthrightness: the powerful religious and political leaders of his time eventually pushed back. Jesus' unrelenting critique of systemic evil inside the gates of Jerusalem eventually led directly to his crucifixion….just as a similar critique of corrupt human behavior in high political places had assured the execution of his forerunner, John the Baptist.

The breakdown in the Mennonite community as it managed allegations of Yoder's behaviors was, therefore, both a moral and spiritual one. In addition, the breakdown was individual and communal in its scope and expression. In short, the religious institution, the socio-cultural church, was corrupted by individual leader's decisions regarding authoritarian power, institutional status and leader position and prestige. Rather than lose position, status, and control, denominational leaders were prepared to accept clergy sexual misconduct and to protect its perpetrators from accountability rather than to risk conflict and institutionally debilitating scandals. Protection of an institution's financial resources and denominational prestige took precedence over the protection of vulnerable human beings.

A Beginning Hypothesis

It is my professional opinion that individual instances of abusive sexual behavior done by clergy and other religious leaders will continue to appear and reappear in any given denomination's or spiritual teaching center's cultural life. To encounter this historical phenomenon, all one needs to do is to examine Christian Church history from its origins to the present day. When one does even a cursory reading of Church history, a wide variety of sexual misconduct episodes and leader perpetrators appear and reappear.[20] At times these misconduct episodes have been popularized or perhaps even mythologized inside Western culture.[21] Many others have been buried for decades, centuries, and millennia inside institutional practices of secrecy, lies, and denial. [22]

One of the consequences of Western secularization (and America's Constitutional separation of church and state) in our current century is that the nation's religious and academic establishments are being called to account for their actions in the world of public opinion. The secrecy, for

example, of the nation's college and university campuses about professional sexual misconduct has been shattered by victim's actions in the secular arena of courts and juries.[23] The most recent (summer, 2012) widely publicized and legally adjudicated incidence of sexual violence against young boys by an assistant coach (Jerry Sandusky) at Penn State University provides a clear warning to all secular and religious organizations about how not to manage allegations of sexual misconduct.

Neither is the religious establishment immune from secular judgment. In the same week that Jerry Sandusky was judged guilty by a jury of his peers, in Philadelphia a Roman Catholic monsignor, his diocese's priest personnel manager, was convicted of child endangerment because of the way he mishandled abuse accusations against pedophile priests in a Philadelphia County (PA) diocese.

In one of these situations, the Penn State one, a jury convicted an institutionally powerful sexual abuser of adolescent boys. In the second, the Philadelphia Roman Catholic diocese one, a jury convicted a bureaucrat and member of the church's hierarchy, for endangering, i.e., not protecting children.

In addition, a time-honored academic rite of inclusion: the telling of insider stories (about their predecessors' sexual peccadilloes) by university professors to their favorite graduate students has changed. The whispered secrets which only academic guild insiders knew during the middle of the 20th century have become, in the twenty-first century, published materials and the internet summarizes this information for anyone who is literate.

For example, during the last half of the twentieth-century, sexual misconduct of some of Protestant Christianity's leading theologians, philosophers and ethicists became visible because of the historical research of their biographers and the analytical research of their academic interrogators.[24] The same kind of public discussion about leader sexual abuse has also begun inside Eastern religions.[25] These discussions are a religious equivalent to the secular academy's studies of secular intellectual giants.[26]

John Yoder was, therefore, not the only accused religious academic professional during his lifetime. He was not the only alleged clergy sexual abuse perpetrator inside the Christian Church during the twentieth-century. He was not the only accused abuse perpetrator identified in the various religious academic and theological settings where he was employed. He was not the only adjudicated serial sexual abuser among the American Mennonite Church's ordained clergy during the years from 1965 until 1997. Nor was he even the last known sexual abuser inside the socio-cultural institutions where he carried out his professional and personal lives.

In the years since his death other sexual abusers have been identified inside the Christian (and Mennonite) religious academy. In addition, awareness of other clergy and professional religious abuse situations has become public information inside the American Mennonite community of faith.

During the twentieth-century, however, Yoder, by virtue of his intellectual ability, his connections to institutional power and authority, his friendship, family and clan ties, and his international academic career, was indubitably the most powerful and the most famous Mennonite recipient of multiple allegations of sexual abuse. Fifteen years after his death, the scandal of his behavior continues to re-surface and reverberate in questions of Mennonite identity and Mennonite theology. The violence of his behavior in their personal experiences with him continues to haunt some of his victims. Issues of individual and communal healing and reconciliation remain unaddressed and unresolved.

Going Forward

The essays, which follow, circle my professional questions and reflections regarding the twentieth-century's John Howard Yoder-Mennonite Church encounters. While they raise biographical questions, the essays are not primarily biographical. They do not pretend to be the only way Yoder's life or the life of his sociological church as it encountered him can be viewed or interrogated. They do not intend to be the last word. They are simply a beginning place, an invitation to other Mennonite academics and scholars

to publicly join the conversation by adding their own information and wisdom to the question, *what went wrong?*

As I worked with various written resources about these years inside Mennonite communities and as I talked with a wide variety of friends and professional colleagues [inside of and outside of the Mennonite Church], certain issues surfaced in my own mind about a wide variety of Mennonite Church agency practices with Yoder as administrators directly or indirectly encountered allegations, rumors and gossip about his sexual misconduct behaviors with others.

Therefore these essays address, first of all, my own idiosyncratic set of questions. If I were a different person or if I had experienced different realities in my life, these questions might be shaped somewhat differently. Secondly, I identify and address issues which were raised in conversations and correspondence with a wide variety of friends and professional colleagues. Were my friends and colleagues different persons with different life experiences, they too might phrase and parse these questions in very different ways. Finally, I attempt to address several issues which were raised by a number of individuals who reported, in one way or another, being victimized by Yoder's behavior.

I am quite certain, however, that victimized individuals shape their individual questions for their denominational church and its religious academy in different vocabularies than I shape mine. This is inevitable since our experiences of the world are different. In our conversations and correspondence, their sense of betrayal, personal humiliation and outrage at the way Yoder invaded their lives and at the inept way their church responded to their complaints is much more focused and much more nuanced than are mine. They are, inevitably and reasonably so, much more attuned to their residual wounds.

My interests, in contrast to the interests of victimized individuals, at this stage of my life are predominantly theological. I am interested in the link between a community's ideologies, cultural praxis and its expressions and experiences of violence. I believe that only as we come to understand human phenomena can we intervene in appropriate manners. At this moment in time, we cannot correct Yoder's embodied life. He is dead. We can, however, seek to understand his life and the meaning of his life to his denominational church. He cannot speak for himself from the grave (except

in his written work) so we must rely on historical records to interrogate him about his life and its decisions.

As some one who has known several women who were offended by Yoder's behavior towards them, it is my hope that my theological concerns and academic reflections compliment their more personal ones rather than overwhelm or even silence theirs. One of my personal practices in preparing these essays has been to include offended women in the conversation whenever possible without violating their own rights (1) to personal privacy; (2) to speak for themselves only within their own sense of appropriate timing; and (3) to determine-for themselves–the interpersonal and religious safety of specific situations or events in which topics regarding Yoder's life are in play.

I also hope that my reminiscences and reflections can be helpful to other individuals who seek to understand contemporary (or historical) instances of religious leader abusiveness inside their own religious or spiritual teaching communities. If the code language of sexual violation which has been un-coded by clinical writers and if the code language of clericalism which has been un-coded by church professionals in other Christian denominations can help us, as Mennonites, to understand our own encounters with intra-community domestic violence, clergy sexual violence, and corrupt institutional malfeasance then we do not need to reinvent the world. We can build upon these understandings to create less violence-prone communities and institutions.

One of my academic friends, a former Mennonite, has written to me about this manuscript that it is *a love letter to your church.* It is that – and more. This set of essays represents my hope that my denominational church will make a turn in the road. Rather than making a preferential option in its theology and praxis for actions which protect the powerful, I hope it remembers its historical roots and its radical Reformation religious calling to create hospitable spaces for the weak, the disempowered, and the vulnerable. For this to happen, denominational institutions and their human authority figures need to mature sufficiently so that they can create a living and viable intention for the future that enables the human church to manage these internal socio-cultural issues of abuse and violation in more appropriate ways. Failing to learn from the failure of the past is probably the fastest and most certain path to repeating that failure in the future.

In a spiritually mature denomination, spiritual formation activities in denominational seminaries will deliberately foster a new "breed" of spiritual leaders. These will be men and women who do not now and who will not in the future chose to sexually assault or harass others in the course of their ministries. These will be men and women who manage the future church in ways which are morally credible and spiritually wise. In order for this to happen, however, today's seminary curricula need to be re-shaped in order to guide ministers-in-training to develop a flexible and secure personal identity. They need to be guided, as well, to learn democratic and more violence-resistant style of leadership. Learning the intricacies of historical Christian theology and textual biblical study is no longer, if it ever was, a sufficient preparation for ministry in an increasingly complex and violent world.

Concluding Comments

My awareness of victimized or offended women pervades this manuscript. Some of these women I know personally; others I know about because of stories told inside the Mennonite women's community; still others I know about from confidential accounts inside the therapeutic community. My awareness of real women with faces and stories permeates my thinking about Yoder's life and work. It is important to state that while I do not know the factual realities of their lives first-hand, I believe them. The congruence of many women's stories lends credibility to each woman's story. While I was not physically present during incidents which they experienced as abusive and violent, their stories are believable.

Yet this manuscript does not directly address victims and their residual issues with Yoder. It does not expressly set out to address them regarding their opinions about the way in which his church (and theirs) managed their accusations. It does not address issues which victims faced as they sought to regain personal control of their lives. It does not address the transitory and permanent wounds of being offended against and victimized. It does not directly address the multiple layers of individual and institutional betrayal which various women and their advocates endured.

During the 1970's, 1980's and early 1990's women offended by Yoder's behavior and their clinical and institutional advocates sought to find a way (1) to stop his offensive behavior – which they saw as violence; (2) to prevent additional victimizations of other women; (3) to help Yoder find a

path of full spiritual and psychological accountability and healing for his deeply wounded personal and social identity; and (4) to help their church *and* its victimized individuals heal the wounds Yoder's actions created. In my opinion, only the first two of these goals have been definitively addressed – in part by Mennonite Church actions and in part by Yoder's sudden death. The remaining two, however, remained, at his death, uncompleted tasks. Today, therefore, only the last one remains do-able.

In the essays which follow, readers encounter my idiosyncratic gaze backwards through time at a particular historical era in Mennonite Church life (1965-1997). These essays reflect the reality that, in my mid-seventies now, I am older than John Howard Yoder was when he died. I lived, as a Mennonite Church employee, through the historical era when rumors regarding his life littered the Mennonite Church's social and spiritual landscape. I lived through the era of his denominationally scripted encounters with church discipline.

Now living in retirement outside the large ethnic socio-cultural centers of Anabaptist-Mennonite life, I have continued to observe my church. At a great and now institutionally non-participating distance I have watched Yoder's denominational church and the ecumenical evangelical academy honor him with legacy conferences, named lectureships, festschrifts, collected essays, and multiple juried journal articles.

No where, however, have I witnessed his denominational church or members of the evangelical academy pay any attention at all to the voice and narrated life experience of his victims. His victims and the church's victims live outside the boundaries of posthumous attention and honor which he has received. Their absence from the conversations about John's legacy provides a profound commentary upon the priorities of the church and its academic professional.

Since I do not know all aspects of this complex story, I attempt to tell the story I do know with faithfulness to factual truth. I reflect on the story, as I understand it, as an expression of my belief that the Christian community should be one where a leader's personal integrity and a community's trust in its leaders can meaningfully co-exist with each other. For individuals seeking to re-create and to live inside of a faithful Christian community sexual betrayal and abuse is never an option, In addition, institutional cover-ups of managerial misconduct by leaders is never an option.

In addition, in my opinion, a Christian Church (or any other religious or spiritual teaching institution) should set in motion the processes of releasing individuals from the bondage of trauma. The religious calling is, I believe, one of seeking to heal the wounds of violence and violation rather than ignoring, hiding, denying, reinforcing and re-inflicting them. This means that church agencies must begin a series of repentant and confessional conversations towards this end.

Where the institutional church has actively participated in maintaining structures of violence or has expressed its preferential option for abusers rather than for victims of abuse, that human church is called to repentance and to reform. I unequivocally agree with Richard Sipe: any institution, but most specifically a religious institution *that cannot tell the truth about itself has nothing worth listening to* (Sipe, October 24-25, 2003, p. 2).

By telling the story as I knew it then and as I perceive it now, perhaps other Mennonite and evangelical academics will decide it is time to come forward with their own story-telling and analysis. It is by such an intellectually honest, open, mutually respectful and extended process of collective study, I believe, that the embedded wisdom of the Yoder-Mennonite Church relationship can be unpacked by means of thick description. Perhaps, fifteen years after his death, the Yoder-Mennonite Church story can finally begin to be truthfully studied in the hopes of understanding the embedded truth which it contains.

Such wisdom is needed to heal the wounds of (1) Yoder's victims who feel simultaneously betrayed by Yoder *and* by their church, (2) victim-advocates who felt betrayed by their denominational church as its managers and governance personnel ignored them, judged them as meddlesome troublemakers, and resisted their pleas to change the situation with Yoder towards one of less structural violence and one of more honesty and transparency, (3) church institutions and church managerial personnel who were distracted, corrupted, and/or wounded by their own and other's actions, and (4) Yoder's personal intimates and any of his theological disciples who initially believed in him as a wise spiritual guide, accepted his teachings as canonical or authoritative but later felt betrayed by his behavior.

I firmly believe that the best way to prevent similar situations from emerging in the future church is for the present church to give up its self-protective denial about its past complicity with Yoder. If we as Anabaptist-Mennonite Christians do not learn the lessons which are embedded within the Yoder-Mennonite Church story, then future generations will inevitably encounter repetitions of this story. More individuals will be victimized. More institutional corruption will betray the faith of the faithful. The peace witness of the church will be, once more, compromised by the betrayal internal violence within the community of faith.

Footnotes

[1] Erik Erikson, 1969, p. 234.

[2] See Elizabeth Lesser's July-August, 2010 (p. 54) advice to spiritual seekers about detecting and protecting one's self from abusive spiritual leaders.

[3] See Michael D. Schaeffer, June 24, 2012, pp. A-1 and A-25. See as well Thomas P. Doyle, March 2, 2013.

[4] On June 22', 2012, a Philadelphia County (PA) jury convicted Monsignor Lynn on *one count of child endangerment for covering up alleged abuse by Catholic Priests* (who were under his direct supervision).

[5] There are many internet websites which continue to document the unfolding of this Roman Catholic story in contemporary America. The most accessible of these, in my opinion, are (1) www.bishopaccountabiity.org, (2) www.richardsipe.com, (3) www.snapnetwork.org, and (4) www.ncronline.org.

[6] For my working typology of clergy sexual abuse, see Appendix E.

[7] For information about demographic data projections, see (1) Karen Labacqz and R. G. Barton, 1991 and (2) Peter Rutter, 1989.

[8] Philosopher-theologian-psychologist Sam Keen (1994) describes mature sexual expression in this way: [In practical terms sacred love-making] *means that I do not turn you into an object. You are not a "piece," a conquest, a body for fulfillment of my desire. We remain ends, not means,*

to each other, irreplaceable persons, not mere sense organs, genitals or interchangeable bodies. We come to each other with respect, recognizing that we are inviolable beings with complex and unique histories. Anything that pulls us apart from the totality of the lives to which we have committed ourselves desecrates us (177).

[9] Rollo May, 1983, p. 70.

[10] See Gregory Love & Kimberlee Norris, (ud, web article), for their comments about religious institution financial liability in situations of clergy sexual abuse. Retrieve from http://www.ministrysafe.com/resources-helpful-articles/VPC%20-%20Cost%20of%20Being%20a%20Shepherd%206-1-11%20%283%29.pdf

[11] See Stanley Hauerwas (2010, pp. 242-247) for his identification of the 1960's as the historical era when Yoder began "experimenting" with sexual abuse. Using Robert Grant's terminology, this is when the first marker events of sexual transgression became public information – at least to some members of the Mennonite Church's bureaucratic hierarchy. Using Anson Shupe's theoretical framework, this is when Yoder began to make the shift into a deviant personal identity.

[12] See Clifford Geertz's (1971, 1973, 1980, 1983) for his discussion of thick description as methodology.

[13] See Appendix F.

[14] Noah Feldman, 2008, in Philip Zeleski (Ed.).

[15] Statement of Eight Women, February 21 – 22, 1992.

[16] Tom Price, July 13, 1992.

[17] In the course of writing this series, I came to the conclusion that Yoder's denominational church managers first became after-the-fact accomplices to his behavior. Then, by their failure to appropriately manage women's complaints, they became complicit on-going accomplices as his life-story played itself out in front of them. The managerial behaviors which protected

him provided Yoder spiritual and religious cover. Thus, inadvertently or deliberately they provided him with additional opportunities to offend.

[18] Because of advances in medical science research methodologies such as brain imaging, we now know there are changes in the amygdale – which regulates emotional responses – and in the hippocampus which manages the body's memory storage systems. For an accessible discussion of medical research and PTSD, visit the PBS archives for Charlie Rose's brain series # 2 two, session # 12 PTSD). This segment aired in Tucson on December 17, 2012. See also Schiraldi's 2009 sourcebook about PTSD.

[19] See L. A. Lorentzen and J. Turpin, J. (Eds.), 1998, for more precise information about war casualties in the twentieth-century.

[20] See Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall's 2006 book, S*ex, Priests and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2000-yeqr paper trail of sexual abuse* for their discussion of sexual violence reform movements throughout the Roman Catholic Christian centuries.

[21] For example, the relationship of the intellectually gifted and socially privileged Heloise d'Argenteuil (?1101-1164 CE) and her academic tutor (a medieval scholastic philosopher and theologian) Abelard (1079-1142 CE) illustrates various forms of interpersonal violence. While the mythological story emphasizes obsessive love and masochistic female suffering, a close reading of her letters indicates the presence of his manipulation, coercion, and physical violence. In doing such a close reading it is not hard for an experienced clinician to hear a victimized woman's anguished question, *why me?* It is not hard to hear her insistent message, *tell me why you treated me this way.*

[22] See Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall (2006).

[23] See B. W. Dziech and L. Weiner (1990) for their discussion of sexual harassment on college and university campuses.

[24] See the official biography of Paul Tillich by Pauck and Pauck (1976). Additional information about Tillich's relationships with women can be found in Hannah Tillich's biographical writing (1974, 1976) or Rollo May's memoirs about Tillich (1973). See Selinger's 1998 biographical enquiry into

the nature of the personal relationship of Karl Barth and his live-in secretary, Charlotte von Kirschbaum. A second source about Barth and von Kirschbaum can be read in K. Sondregger's September 8, 1999, *Christian Century* article.

[25] See Natalie Goldberg (2004) for her account of sexual misconduct in the life of Dainin Katagiri, the head Abbott of the Minneapolis Soto Zen center. See also the account of Abbot Richard Baker's sexual misconduct at the San Francisco Soto Zen Center in Michael Downing (2001). For a more theoretical discussion of sexual misconduct in Eastern religions see Joel Kramer's and Diana Alstad's important (1993) book about the misuse of religious or spiritual power and authority.

[26] See L. Appignanesi and J. Forrester (1992) for their discussion of the questions surrounding the nature of Sigmund Freud's intimate relationship with his sister-in-law. Questions regarding Freud's personal sexual behavior have been debated inside psychoanalysis guilds for many years. Only within the past twenty years, however, have these questions been addressed openly in the public press. In addition, see C. Dunne (2000) for a discussion of Carl Jung's sexual relationships with his students and patients.

- 1 -

Methodologies of Psychohistory or Psychobiography

Sane action – action that is compassionate and just and supportive of both self and others - is the most appropriate action in the situation at hand.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro[1]

Introductory Comments

The European-American psychoanalyst Erik Erikson published his biography of Martin Luther in 1958. For the first time in North America, ideas (about human development and the structure of the human psyche) from the European psychoanalytic movement were rigorously applied to the long-dead Luther, a man who had been both a cultural critic and a cultural instigator during his lifetime. Erikson's book established a new biographical model for understanding great historical religious figures.

Twenty one years after Erikson's book was published, ecclesiastical theologian Roger Johnson (1977) noted: [Erikson's] *Luther was quickly recognized by historians as a powerful example of psychoanalytic exploration* (1). By means of Erikson's psychoanalytic description of Luther's human development two major theoretical constructs became visible. The *first* of these established the importance of any individual's early childhood experiences inasmuch as these early life experiences created living templates or foundations for an adult's later life. The *second* established the need to incorporate *cultural symbols and social institutions within the dynamics of human development* (2). Johnson continued: *Taken together both provided a psychological theory more amenable to the purposes of historical inquiry; for in Erikson's theory, the public data of adult life and social institutions becomes expressive of, and inseparably bound up with, the inner depths of the psyche* (2).

A new field of theoretical enquiry was born. It is at times called psychohistory; at others it is called psychobiography. Johnson describes the reality that not all historians were ecstatic about this new methodology.

Inside the disciplines of history and religious history dissent and controversy erupted about the benefits and liabilities of putting culturally important but long-dead individuals on the psychoanalytic couch.

In his introductory essay to his book of essays about *Young Man Luther*, Johnson comments about Erikson's historical errors. From Johnson's perspective, the *worst historical errors* [one assumes of facticity] made by Erikson were *not as a result of Erikson's psychological methods or historical ignorance, but as a telling witness to the particular shape of his religious vision* (6).

Without naming it as such, Johnson has introduced a hermeneutical question for us as we read Luther's biography through Erikson. To what degree are we reading Luther and to what degree are we reading Erikson? And, to further complicate matters, in reading Johnson's critique of Erikson's work on Luther, to what degree are we reading Johnson? Finally, to what extent are we reading our own perspectives or biases regarding any of this?

Another central question looms. Can the dead be appropriately interrogated? And, if so, what psycho-social categories or typologies are useful in making such an interrogation? Is epigenetic biography helpful or necessary to human understanding of critical issues which are repeatedly faced in human life and in human communities? If understanding biography can help us to understand cultural issues, how do we integrate biographical understanding with larger cultural issues which face us?

One more issue surfaces when interdisciplinary studies, for example, history, psychology, sociology, theology and ethics, are undertaken. Members of various intellectual disciplines have no common interdisciplinary language. To combine, for example, psychology, sociology, historical methodology, anthropology, clinical concepts, theological discourse and ethical inquiry means one needs to be somewhat cognizant of and fluent in a variety of professional languages. In general, in such a situation, one's primary language of conversation is the most clear and most adequately developed one. Hence, there will inevitably be points of contention with persons from other intellectual methodologies and discourse patterns. Some, but not all, of the disagreements that emerge inevitably reflect this problem of an inadequate or even a totally absent linguistic meeting ground.

As one listens in on the debate among Reformation historians with Erikson's published work on Luther, another principle gains some clarity. No two individuals will see another's life and work in exactly the same way. While there may be broad historical consensus about a life and its trajectory from birth to death, reading the meaning of another's life is complex because invariably we bring our own historical era and its biases, our personal life history and biases, and our culturally-shaped perceptions to the task. The best we can do, I think, is to stay as close to the factual truth we ourselves know while remaining open to the possibility that we or our sources may be mistaken.

For readers interested in learning more about Erikson's methodology, they are referred to Erikson's 1969 book, *Gandhi's Truth.* This book presents the mature work of a psychoanalyst and human theorist at work in the business of uncovering psychological understanding by means of human biography. By examining Gandhi's work in light of his biography, Erikson seeks to shed light on the origins of Gandhi's thinking and action as an adult leader of the community into which he had been born. Gandhi was born into an India colonized by the British. He died in an India which had been freed of British colonial rule. His non-violent resistance to colonial oppression had created a pathway for his people away from their colonized status.

Erikson's work interrogates Gandhi by means of (1) his legacy of nonviolent theory and activism, (2) his written work, (3) the memories of people who knew him when he was alive, and (4) newspaper accounts written by others, (5) by applying Erikson's own theoretical epigenetic approach to understanding human development and human action.

Mid-way through the book, Erikson writes a personal and conversational letter to the long-dead Gandhi. In this letter he addresses some of the complexities of Gandhi's life which other Gandhi biographers had skirted. While an extraordinary leader of his people in nonviolence, Gandhi had not been, it is clear, an exemplary, compassionate, patient, non-coercive and nonviolent husband and father. His nonviolent patience was not, it turns out, universal. By means of this letter, Erikson raises central questions about the practice and meaning of nonviolence in Gandhi's life because of the personal issues raised by Gandhi's sometimes abusive impatience with his wife and children.

Erikson's Contributions

> *I do not understand my own actions. I can will what is right but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in me.*
>
> St. Paul[2]

As an analyst interested in human development across the life stages, Erikson moved somewhat beyond Freud in repudiating a strict biological and social determinism based on events and experiences in the individual's childhood. He critiqued the Freudian fallacy of originology in which human beings are reduced to the earliest, simplest, and most infantile precursor to human behavior.

Johnson writes [Erikson] *views any significant human event as a recapitulation of multiple meanings from both past and present. Comparing the psycho-historian to an archeologist, the task at hand is to elucidate the varying levels of meaning in any event, not to claim that the chronologically oldest is the 'real' cause* (Johnson, 1977, 10).

When we look at adult lives, it is, therefore, necessary to remember that motivations and intentionality are rarely simple. The longer a life continues the more complex its inner and outer realities are. The biological network of neural connections alone is more complex. The quantity of stored memories and the ability to recall them is more complex. The power of learned and practiced habits grows stronger in their hold on a person's behavior. A *plurality of motives* is thus the norm in adult behaviors (10). A common clinical aphorism applies here: the best way to predict an individual's future behavior is to know and understand his past behavior.

In examining the historical life of others the question of individual pathology arises. This is not, per se, a developmental question. Rather, it is a question of the presence of pathological symptoms or behaviors. It is a question of personality fault lines. When pathological and anti-social patterns of behavior and thought are noted, clinicians ask questions of the pathology and its history. Do particular anti-social behaviors manifest in a single event? Or, do multiple, repetitious events appear and reappear

throughout the life span? Where are the roots of such behavior: in the personal life history or in the cultural life history or both?

For Erikson, another aspect of human behavior is lodged in an individual's developmental journey through the course of a lifetime. The developmental tasks of infancy, for example, form the foundation for the developmental tasks of early childhood. And in a similar way, the way that individuals have mastered or not mastered the developmental tasks of early childhood provides clues to whether or not they will be able to master the developmental tasks of mid-childhood and adolescence. Many biologically based developmental tasks have a window of opportunity in which the individual can optimize his mastery. If that window of opportunity is missed or damaged in some way or another, the individual engages further developmental demands with a handicap. If we look at language learning, for example, small children can learn a second language rapidly – outstripping adults who seek to learn the same language three or four decades later. Erikson's methodology suggests that emotional and psychological and social learning follows a similar pattern. There is an optimal time for specific forms of socialization and learning.

When unresolved developmental tasks persist into adult life, the adult human being is faced with increased social complexity and a handicapped ability to be flexible and resilient in meeting the challenges of adult life in a healthy and well-integrated manner. In Luther's case, as described by Erikson, for example, he displayed many pathological symptoms over a long period of his life. The quantitative and qualitative amount of pathology distinguished him from his contemporaries although they all shared in the common cultural pathologies of their time (15).

The clinical question immediately becomes more complex. The question *is there pathology in the person's life as manifested by symptoms or maladaptive behavior* is modified by questions of meaning and interpretation. Not only does the depth psychologist ask questions about useful *and* ill-suited demons*trable behavior.* She seeks to expose and explore underlying experiential issues of causation and correlation. Most of all the clinician-theorist seeks to find a useful interpretive framework: (1) In the presence of anti-social behavior, for example, w*hat is its meaning?* (2) To what problematic dynamics in the psyche or personality does it point? (3) What, if any, significant socio—historical-cultural factors are in also play?

In sexual abuse situations, it is likely that most of us can agree that some level of anti-social behavior is present in the perpetrator. Somewhere during an individual's life prior to the onset of anti-social behavior, personality fault lines developed. These fault lines become evident (or are manifested) by their consequent behavioral pathology. While we know that most adult male abuse perpetrators who violate adult women match a general psychological profile of normal, non-abusive adult males in our culture, it is clear that a majority of men are not sexual abusers and sexual predators.[3] The more critical issue at hand is, therefore, how to interpret this anti-social abusive behavior when it does appear in an adult male.

Here we arrive at the complex clinical issue that the very same underlying personality fault line and motive for behavior – for example, depressive sadness – can be expressed in many different forms of behavior. The individual's expression of his personal experience of depressive sadness can be experienced and expressed in a wide variety of ways. The individual's personality utilizes an individual's life-history of patterned habitual thoughts and emotions as well as learned behavior. It builds upon and expresses any pre-existing cultural fault lines in order to express or to manifest itself in symptomatic behavior. For some individual adults, the behavioral symptom of depressive sadness could be expressed in substance abuse. In others, it might be expressed by religious obsessive-compulsive behavior. It might be expressed in suicidal ideation. In still others, it may be expressed by engaging in abusive sexual behaviors.

According to depth psychologists, the inner reality is often conflicted. Life-affirming drives and self-other-destructive drives continuously seek expression and it is this conflicted inner reality which must be managed by the individual's personality, in particular, the ego.[4] To fail to do so in socially acceptable ways causes or enables the personality to demonstrate manifested pathology in the shared social world of others. According to Erikson manifested pathology (symptomatic behavior) is both rooted in and expressive of the epigenetic life-history of the individual. In this model not only the personality fault lines and their behavioral expression must be identified and explored. Socio-cultural ones must be as well.

Not only will individual needs and learned patterns of behavior shape the behavioral symptoms of a sexual predator's anti-social behavior. Densely constructed socio-cultural factors do so as well. For example one of my

clinical professors talked about paranoid ideation in these terms: It *is hard to be paranoid about trains if one has never seen a train or heard a train or known that trains exist.*[5] Each system or manifestation or pathological or anti-social behavior, therefore, expresses individual *and* socio-cultural realities.

The principle here is simple in statement but very complex in application. Any form of human behavior that is not strictly biological or genetic in origin includes cultural learning and cultural shaping. In addition, even in situations where a strong genetic component is present, cultural shaping is always a powerful co-existent component of the behavior and its motivating forces.

Expressions of predatory anti-social sexual behavior often manifest themselves in situations where two or more contradictory driving or motivating messages are concomitantly operant regarding a specific situation. In choosing between the options available to the personality, neither will be correct because neither can satisfy the competing drive states or motivating forces. In choosing choice A, the driving force of choice B is neglected. In its turn, choice B then becomes the driving force. When subsequently choosing option B, option A is neglected. The cycle continues to express itself unless the individual can deconstruct both driving messages to understand them and make conscious and non-obsessive choices. For individuals to move free of their internal pathology, it is necessary in some way or another for them to deconstruct their hidden and unconscious mechanism and then to re-construct the driving forces into a single coherent motivating force.[6]

For example, an individual may experience an urgent desire to sexually molest another individual. One part of the personality knows that this is inappropriate behavior and attempts to stop the individual. Another aspect of the personality, however, is driven to do the behavior. Whichever choice the individual makes, habitual patterns of behavior begin to be shaped. If there is an internal disconnect between moral or religious values and behavior, the individual will find himself in a situation of cognitive discrepancy. He then needs to find a way to rationalize his sexually abusive behavior *first* to himself and *secondly* to others.

With a successful history of abusing others and getting away with it in terms of the socio-cultural milieu in which he lives, the more likely it is that

future acts of abusive behavior will occur. Over time the individual begins to take on the personal and social identity of sexual abuse perpetrator. The characteristics of this identity begin to be ingrained into the personality structure. The prohibitive messages of the conscious mind get over-ridden by habitual patterns and by the satisfaction or personal rewards of the anti-social urge itself. In some lives at least, the prohibitive voice can be so silenced so that it no longer provides a warning about the inappropriate nature of the embodied and enacted behavior.

In another example, if a particular culture has no available pornographic iconography, the pornographic mind and its vision are missing. This is true in the cultural milieu and it is true in the individual mind. These social-personal realities form a hologram. There may be – and often are – sexually explicit iconographical images but these images do not imply pornography's voyeuristic themes of male domination, control, dominance and violence. Thus, an individual in this pornography—free culture may be violent in other ways but he will not choose pornographic images and meanings to display his intentions to manifest domination and violence within his culture. When cross-cultural contamination subsequently occurs, individuals in the once-pornography-free culture adapt and develop a pornographic vision. Subsequently, they can use the pornographic mind to create and manifest additional ways to violate others in their drive to gain interpersonal control and the ability to dominate others.

The principle here is that human behavior has complex motivations and that complex behavior patterns can serve multiple motivating forces. Some behavior can serve creative and life-giving impulses. Others can serve life-destructive ones. Regarding Erikson's *Luther*, Johnson comments, *Luther's passionate quest for a gracious God was driven both by the psychic disorders of his personal life and the ideological disorders of medieval religiosity* (Johnson, 1977, 17). Therefore, to understand Luther, according to Erikson, one needs to understand the pathological ideologies of his medieval period in history. One needs to also understand the fault lines in his personal life history and character.

Consequently, according to Johnson, Erikson finds the salient features of Luther's theology to express simultaneously a resolution of his personal anguish and a reformulation of the excessively forbidding belief system dominant in his age (17). Another way to state this I think is to assert the principle that the creative works of an individual mind always contain or

reflect, in some way or other, the central struggles or dynamics of his personal and cultural consciousness. His creative intellectual or spiritual work and his troublesome behavior with and towards others arise from the same mind and from the same mental processes or internal conflicts of life-affirming and life-negating issues.

Embedded within this principle is another one. In the behaviors enacted by an individual in his life time, we can find evidence of the central driving issues or conflicts faced by his personality. His behavioral expressions, as for example, a drawing or a published book, provide a road map to his psychological and emotional make-up and personal development.

A similar reality is true in the historical artifacts or legacies of an individual's life after death. By close readings, we can often find traces of the central and conflicted driving forces of his personality. This is especially true in the recorded rationalizations the individual utilized during his lifetime to avoid full responsibility for his sexually abusive behavior.

An Erikson-Influenced Methodology for Proceeding

Psychohistory (or psychobiography) is a narrative form utilized to examine a dead individual's life. It utilizes the methodologies of history, depth psychology and socio-anthropological, socio-historical, or socio-institutional building blocks. By means of such a complex case study methodology, now-dead individuals can be interrogated in order for living individuals to understand their lives and work, their health, their pathologies, and the long-term positive and negative consequences of their work for future generations. In other words, the legacies the dead leave behind them can be studied or, in my language, interrogated for the faith which they contain.

In addition to exploring the past through an individual's life, the methodology also adapts itself well to the development and analysis of socio-cultural history itself. In this particular aspect of its use, Johnson notes that it becomes more in tune with theology, religious narrative, and a philosophy of history than of biography per se (Johnson, 1977, 127). Thus, not only events in time can be studied, questions about the meaning of these events can also be pursued. By carefully combining both approaches, it is possible to examine that which is ambiguous and complex in another's life without resorting to simplistic and inaccurate reductionism.

To generate and utilize case study materials in an Eriksonian model, several important issues need to be juggled.

1) Historical accuracy is important. As much as is possible the individual's life should be re-constructed on a factual basis. Here one model is that of a clinician taking a personal medical history. To use a physiological model here: a physician who does not know his patient recently returned from international travels to nations with compromised water sources may never pick up the reality that his patient's abdominal pain is caused by water-born parasites that are not known inside industrialized nations with purified water. The physician may fail, therefore, to order the needed identifying laboratory tests that can conclusively diagnose intestinal parasites. Physicians and psychotherapists know that as many factual details as it is possible to ascertain about the individual's medical and social history facilitate the formation of an accurate diagnosis. A similar principle is operational in the creation of epigenetic case studies.

2) To understand developmental issues in an individual's lifetime a systems model is helpful in identifying and seeking to understand critical life events of early childhood. An assumption here is that childhood learning experiences form a working and continuously-adapting template for the personality as it develops and utilizes life experiences to further its maturation.

3) Broad cultural awareness is also essential. An individual's behavior is embedded within his culture and expressive of that culture. Here too a systems model for understanding social relationships is helpful.

4) In examining the contributions or the pathologies of an individual, the self-creative and the self-destructive energies are both in play. It is very useful to remember that the interrogator or biographical narrator begins within her own lifetime of motivations and experiences. There is no absolute place of pure objectivity from which to begin and to proceed. The interrogation of the dead is always, therefore, a dialogue in progress. Whatever truths are uncovered in the process of examining another's life must be tentatively held.

In considering such a list it is necessary to realize that the present realities and the long-term consequences of any one's life and work can never be

seen in their completeness. All remains open to re-consideration and re-configuration in the light of succeeding generations and eras of history. This is especially true for culture instigators or cultural critics whose intellectual work has shaped generations of students or disciples. As an individual's creative work fractures and passes through the prisms of other lives, the work's shape changes and its generational consequences proliferate in multiple directions and reconfigure themselves in unpredictable patterns.

How we read an individual's work is deeply influenced by what we know of his life and of the era in which he lived and worked. As students of the now-dead individual and his work, our knowing is deeply shaped by cultural realities. Thus, our knowing is always incomplete and partial. Being absolutely certain that we understand another, his life, and his work is a dangerous illusion. However one can muster it, non-judgmental humility in facing the life of another is a useful characteristic.

Concluding Comments

Our essential unity as human beings provides us with a bridge to exploration and understanding. It does not, however, provide us with divine omniscience.

Nevertheless, even if the windows we look through are smoky and glazed by historical distance and cultural realities quite different than the ones we live in or by deliberately obfuscated political ideologies and motivations, it is possible to discern that life legacy which has been productive and life-affirming in the work of the other and that which has been malicious, pathological and life-destroying. Broad trajectories of outcomes are capable of being made visible.

Even if we find ourselves in the situation in which deliberate obfuscation of a life has occurred because of various social or personal desires to avoid accountability, it is still possible to examine the known facts of the situation and to intuit the hidden realities that led to obfuscation. In a post-modern electronic society few lives can remain totally hidden. In any situation where written documents remain visible, these can be used to re-construct a life structure and narrative. These can then be used to intuit the life conflicts and the life trajectories.

A truthful reading of the life history of another must, of necessity, include positive and negative, healthy and pathological realities and their consequences. Otherwise, on the one hand, it becomes hagiography and perpetuates hagiolatry while on the other hand it participates in dishonest intellectual acts of demonizing the other. Neither is helpful.

Footnotes

[1] Rami Shapiro, 2012, p. 109.

[2] Paraphrase by Sam Keen, 1994, p. 24.

[3] Judith L. Herman, 1997.

[4] As we saw in Volume One (Chapter Four) Freud named the destructive drive Thanatos and the creative drive Eros or libido.

[5] Charles Hofling, classroom lecture, ca. 1964-65.

[6] For example, an individual addicted to sexual violence may be "driven" to sexually molest another individual. One part of the personality knows this is inappropriate behavior and may even attempt to stop the individual. Another aspect of the personality, however, is obsessively tied to repetitions of the behavior. Whichever choice the individual makes, habitual patterns of behavior continue to be shaped. With a personal life history of "successfully getting away with" abusive behavior in terms of the socio-cultural milieu in which he lives (in other words, the more that culture enables his addictive behavior in any way), the more likely it is that he will continue to abuse. The prohibitive messages of the conscious mind get over-ridden by habitual patterns and by the pleasures inherent in his satisfaction of the anti-social urge itself. Until the individual hits rock-bottom, addictions specialists tell us, it is unlikely that he will be able to change his behavior – no matter how problematic it has become for him in terms of his relationship with life and other people.

- 2 -

A Meditation for Dealing with the Dead

Free-floating rage is a faulty foundation on which to construct either an understanding of the sex abuse story or an adequate remedy for what it revealed.

Peter Steinfels[1]

Introductory Comments

As an on-looker or witness to another's death, some things become clearer in our perceptions of the individual while others rapidly recede away from our awareness. After death we can no longer consult with the dead individual in person about his own sense of the matters at hand. Inside our own life trajectories, however, we can and often do continue our conversations with him. Long after his death we distill and extract information about him and the life he led while alive. Our ongoing conversations with the dead are usually held with individuals that have been important to us in one way or another. Sometimes these conversations continue because we have unaddressed and unanswered questions that only they can answer.

The questions we have for the dead often change from the questions that we had for them while they were still living. For example, an 84 year old cousin of mine whose father has been dead for more than 30 years recently said to me, a*s a young man I never thought to ask him about his life as a child. Now, I have so many questions and there is no one alive to ask.*[2]

Because the individual has died (perhaps recently, perhaps many years ago) we are unable to question and conclusively understand his inner realities or even the personal obstacles and struggles he encountered while alive. His life's guiding motivations may remain shielded in death. We may be forever unable to comprehend the questions and issues which he

needed to resolve while he was alive. Even though this is so, it is still possible to ask questions of the dead. One way we do this by examining the multiple legacies of their lives – the legacies which outlive them

A Contemporary Parable

In one situation I knew about many years ago, a large family was settling the personal estate of a son and brother who had recently and unexpectedly died. As they worked through the material remnants of his life, they encountered substantive evidence about repeated episodes of financial misconduct in his life. During the first weeks after death, family members would ask themselves and each other, w*hat was he thinking? Why did he do this? He knew better. Our parents taught us better values than these. What went wrong in his life that led to this hidden behavior*? *How could we have not recognized his behavior before now?*

Obviously there were no immediate answers. But as several years passed individual family members adjusted to a newer and, in some ways, a more accurate and truthful understanding of this beloved family member who had so suddenly died. Over time, the now-dead son and brother's behavioral legacy came into a clearer focus. That behavior which had been secretive and hidden during his life became starkly visible. This difficult-to-understand-and-to-accept-life-legacy slowly came into view.

After his death, material artifacts revealed new information about the dead one. These uncomfortable facts became revelatory moments for his living family. Individual family members came to understand that during his lifetime, his quasi-criminal financial chicanery had been hidden in plain sight. Trusting him, they had not been attentive or perceptive enough to understand that he and his life were not what they had appeared to be during his lifetime.

After quite a long time had passed, one of his siblings said to me, *the information was there all along. But I never saw it for what it was. I never stopped to question him. I never understood it. Things about him which had puzzled me over the years are clearer now. Our family has spent time talking about this issue of his life and behavior and there has been a lot of sorting out of our individual and family memories and relationships. Some of these conversations happened whenever we all got together and one of*

us – usually my oldest sister - would say, "You know I've been thinking about Bobby (not his real name). Do you remember that day at the shore when we all got to talking about money and he ……?"

As this particular family re-examined their shared life together in light of Bobby's death, more and more clarity emerged about who their dead son, brother, and uncle had been during his lifetime. His sudden death and the material witness of his life which he left behind him became a magnifying glass through which they looked at his life and his decisions. That which had been unknown, became known. That which had been hidden became revealed.

For the entire extended family, Bobby's death and this after-death information had been a crisis. While each member of the family processed this new information about Bobby's life in unique and deeply personal ways, the family's collective willingness to talk with each other about their respective information and perceptions brought the living family closer together.

There is a certain sense, I think, in which Bobby's death provided a time of mingled crisis and opportunity. Faced with new information, the living had to make decisions about how they managed this new information – within themselves, with each other and with the external world. The suddenness of his death provided them with an impetus to think about their individual and collective lives in light of his now extinguished one. How individuals interpreted and responded to new information created a living situation in which the whole network of family relationships needed to adjust, accommodate and mature. Over time a certain transformation of this family occurred.

In a family systems model, we might conclude that Bobby's death triggered a whole series of billiard ball like interactions and accommodations inside his extended family system. How each family member named (narrated) and understood (interpreted) the situation after his death affected every other individual family member *and* the entire family network. Not only Bobby's death but also the various ways in which family members dealt with his death changed them as individuals and changed the family as a collective whole.

After his death, the family's shared acknowledgement of the truthful and painful realities of his life (and a related acknowledgment of their anger, disappointment, grief, and sadness) opened the family system, as a whole to the possibilities of growth and healing. Individuals and the collective whole needed to make decisions about how to understand and interpret Bobby's entire life – its positive and its negative aspects.

This particular family, in choosing not to deny troubling aspects of Bobby's life developed a deeper, healthier, more transparent, more resilient, and emotionally connected set of relationships with each other. After ten years had passed, it seemed to me that many aspects of this family system were more emotionally connected and flexible than they had been at the time of Bobby's death.

Decisions, for example, about what young children needed to know about their uncle's life and death became intentional. As these conversations occurred each family sub-group needed to make decisions about what to share and when to share it with its own children and grandchildren. Bobby's siblings decided together that they needed to be open and responsive to the sometimes uncomfortable questions raised by the extended family's children and adolescents.

As a friend to one of these family sub-groups, I listened in on their conversations and as I did so, it seemed to me that the extended family had unified around a set of newly articulated core values or attitudes. They never wanted this kind of financial misconduct to happen again in their extended family. They warned their children about the emotional, social and spiritual costs of secrecy and dishonesty in financial matters. Where they were capable of doing so, several individuals in the family attempted to repair the damages Bobby left behind him in betrayed relationships.

As an outsider to this family system, my hypothesis is that individuals in the family continued to keep some secrets from each other since most families do. But, as I watched this family network interact with each other, I was often amazed at their blunt honesty with each other. They were able to say difficult things to each other in an atmosphere of accepting and compassionate love. By wading together through the difficult times immediately after Bobby's death, they built a more honest, a more resilient and supportive family network.

Bobby's death, it seemed to me, changed each person who had loved him and these changes resulted in family system changes. The crisis of unexpected death became a time of ripening. The family, as a whole, gradually matured into compassionate and interconnected adult relationships which allowed, indeed encouraged, younger generations to question and to know a truthful family history. Telling the truth as they knew it was not a forbidden family taboo. Painful questions were allowed. Not having all the answers to all questions was equally allowed. Open expression of difficult emotions such as sadness, anger, and grief was allowed. So too were the positive ones of love.

Thus intense moments of confusion, anger and sadness about Bobby's behavior were no more hidden from each other than their shared grief at the time of his death had been. The family's ongoing love for him was visible in the stories they told about him. Ten generations down the road, there would be no family shock at finding this particular *horse thief* in the lineage of ancestors.

That which had been at least partially seen but not recognized or named was now known and acknowledged. As the family gained more accurate factual information about Bobby, this information needed, in some way or another, to be integrated into the family's ongoing narrative of Bobby's life.

Bobby's now-extinguished life, once interrogated and understood by each family member in turn, was now included in family stories as the imperfect reality it was. Avoiding the dual temptations of denial and secrecy as a way to manage unpleasant and messy family realities, the family moved confidently into its living future no longer encumbered or shackled by a shame-filled need to keep Bobby's behavior a denied and hidden secret. The secret of his dishonest life once exposed and integrated into the family narrative, freed individual members of the family to trust other family members. Individuals could live securely inside the family knowing that this particular secret did not lay in wait to trap them or harm them (or their descendents). Having faced the difficult truth of Bobby's financial misconduct together, they did not need to lie to their children or friends. They also did not need to obsessively ruminate about it. Family members were freed to make personal decisions about when to keep Bobby's behavior private and when to acknowledge it more publicly. Over time the love, the grief, the anger, the sadness and other complex emotional

responses became part of the fabric of their shared life. Individual family members moved back into engaging the complexities of ongoing life.

In a certain sense, then, Bobby was finally allowed to be fully dead. The wisdom of his life for his remaining family was available to all family members as a warning about the pain his life had caused them. None of the living family members needed to carry Bobby's secrets for him. His examined life freed them to move back into their future – a future which he would never see.

As a family friend and onlooker, I came to believe that by not needing to deny or secret away the factual realities of Bobby's life, his surviving family members came to know him more truthfully and more intimately. Because the family as a whole was willing to acknowledge this particular elephant in their family living room, individual family members did not need to lie, deny and hide their dismay at what he had done nor did they need to deny and hide their continuing love for him as their son, brother or uncle. In death, Bobby remained the complex and fallible individual that he had been in life. The good which he had done was held in some kind of family balance which also acknowledged the harm he had done. The multiple legacies of his life were acknowledged and his surviving family members and their descendants could continue to learn from them.

Grief-work as Essential Psycho-spiritual Work

This kind of long-term grief and anger work is especially needed when an individual has been important to us in some manner or another. The relationships of spouses, of parents and children, of siblings, of sexual partners, of important teachers and mentors, of close friends, of trusted colleagues, and even of detested enemies have collectively helped to shape the persons we are. During their life times our living relationships with our important dead influenced our emotions, our attitudes, beliefs, and values. Some of their influences on our lives have been fully incorporated into the persons we have become. Their presence in our lives has indubitably affected our own choices of behavior. As we encounter their deaths in our own life journey, we revisit our connectedness with them. Learning to recognize and acknowledge the factual truth of their lives helps us to recognize, name and acknowledge the factual truths of our own.

In the midst of our recalling the dead, we come to a paradoxical moment of understanding. After death, we see much more clearly the dead one's life as a seamless whole than we did while he was living among us. We see it as an integrated life now viewed from its ending. We see the broad contours of his character and personality more clearly. What was behaviorally present in his lifetime was what it was. While our understanding of another's life may develop, change and mature until we ourselves die, the now-dead life is closed. The life's factual realities remain as they were at the moment of his death. For this particular life, the future is closed. There are no more opportunities the dead individual to change his life history or to make amends to those he harmed.

Obviously, the living can distort the purity of images which emerge with death. Yet healthy grief allows a relatively truthful image of the dead one to surface. In truthfulness, the living can find freedom to continue living. As they seek to comprehend death, they find previously unrecognized reserves of courage (and humility) which allow the dead to be precisely who he was during his lived-life. In confronting the life of the dead, those who continue to live are given many ongoing opportunities to shape and reshape their own life trajectories in light of the wisdom they gained in their relationship with him. Gradually, over time, a sense of completion and acceptance becomes manifest.

A Buddhist-informed Teaching about Suffering

> *The Buddha told the story of a man who was struck in the heart by an arrow. He came to Buddha, begging to know: Who shot the arrow? Why was I shot? What is the purpose of the arrow in my chest? Here is what the Buddha said: Pull the arrow out.*[3]

In an address to African-American Buddhists on a spiritual retreat, Alice Walker's (2006) application of the story unfolds in the following manner:

> *Suppose someone shot you with an arrow, right in the heart. Would you spend your time screaming at the archer, or even trying to locate him? Or would you try to pull the arrow out of your heart? White racism, that is to say, envy, covetousness and greed (incredible sloth and laziness in the case of enslaving others to work for you), is the arrow that has pierced our collective heart. For centuries we have*

tried to get the white archer even to notice where his arrow has landed, to connect himself, even for a moment, to what he has done. Maybe even to consider apologizing, which he hates to do. To make reparations, which he considers absurd.

This teaching says enough. Screaming at the archer is a sure way to remain attached to your suffering rather than exiting or eliminating it. A better way is to learn, through mediation, through study and practice, a way to free yourself from the pain of being shot, no matter who the archer might be (pp. 103-104).

Our Troubled Relationships with the Dead

As we gradually learn to let the abusive dead individual enter eternity unencumbered by our own illusions and fantasies about who he really was, we can begin to acknowledge his impact on our own lives. With sadness and anger, we can enumerate the wounds he left behind. We can acknowledge the pain and suffering we and others received because of his choices of behaviors. We can attempt to see his life as a whole. And then we have choices. We can continue to hold revenge-filled grudges against the dead one or we can allow him to exit our psyche and spirit and move on into eternity. After his death, any psychological or emotional engagement or entanglement with him becomes our choice.

Because this important one in our lives was an abusive individual, we can learn how to acknowledge the violation and violence he did to us and others. We can make conscious decisions about how to manage our ongoing life without his presence in it. We can learn how to become strong at the wounded places.

The Living Community as a Human Family

After the death of a significant other, an abusive culture creator or an abusive culture critic, for example, members of the living community who survive his death review and revise their personal and communal narratives of his life. His living survivors revisit their multi-faceted relationships with him. Individually, they may encounter unique and very personal experiences of rage, terror or profound grief. Eventually, they also

encounter and share in a wider community's responses to his death. Individuals who were victimized by his decisions and behavior will inevitably encounter a wide variety of opinions about the various legacies which a culturally important individual left behind him at his death. Individuals whose life he blessed may find it difficult to acknowledge the legacy of pain he left behind among victimized individuals. Victimized individuals may find it difficult to believe that the blessings others experienced were genuine. They may believe that any positive memories represent personal and cultural lying.

Unless the community he left behind him accepts the necessity to acknowledge the ambivalent and at times violent legacies he left behind him, the community will likely splinter. Slowly, the remaining community then enters into complex and conflicted forms of repudiation and denial. His disciples and supporters see only the good which he did. His victims and their supporters see only the harm he did. Individuals from all factions dig in their heels and refuse to consider the factual situation from any other perspective than their own.

As an example: for five decades or more inside the American and European psychoanalytic movement, research questions about Sigmund Freud's sexual relationships with his wife's sister elicited heated debates and personal attacks against professional colleagues inside the professional psychoanalysis guild. Since there was no conclusive evidence during most of that era, both sides were guided by clinical hypotheses and rumors. The absence of definitive data did not preclude opinionated and divisive arguments. Groups of Freudian psychoanalysts lined up on both sides of the argument. To be for one opinion automatically meant needing to disregard any conversations or opinions offered from the other side of the argument. Personal and professional animosity was frequently expressed towards others. Young analysts in training were recruited by both sides. Which side they lined up on affected their career options. Antagonists on both sides of the debate refused to look at this question except through the eyes of their pre-existing opinions.

When European historical researchers eventually gained access to hotel passport documentation and additional information about shared sleeping quarters, the debate was not resolved. Some individuals discounted historical information and pronounced the presence of actual documents as irrelevant and inconclusive. Others on the opposite side of the debate, as

might be expected, engaged in some version or another of *Nyeh, nyeh: we were right and you were wrong!* Questions regarding Freud reputed sexual transgressions and life behavior eventually became bad form to discuss at all as his professional descendants sought to protect Freud's reputation and the psychoanalytic guild from additional scandal and question.[4]

Others, however, insisted the new information proved their prior opinion on the matter. Questions were raised about psychoanalytic methodology. Outsiders (individuals with no psychoanalytic licensure or credentials) entered the fray. Whatever factual truth there is about Freud's actual behavior is often obscured or completely lost inside the argumentative nature of the debate.

One consequence of this kind of intractable opinionated debate is that an incisive discussion of the ways in which Freud's legacy affected the sexual morality and mores of twentieth-century Europe and America remains to be done. When individuals who survive an individual's death focus obsessively on the questions of "did he" or "didn't he" they tend to see an individual's life through their preconceived opinions. Other important questions are overlooked. Rare, for example, in the psychoanalytic guild are there relatively objective discussions of the ways in which Freud's personal life and his other-than-clinical relationships affected his theory and practice.

Freud's legacy, at this moment in time, therefore, includes not only his written theoretical work and his clinical work. It also includes a divided and often intellectually pugnacious community of disciples and anti-disciples. One consequence, in my opinion, is the wearing of intellectual blinders. No where, for example, have I seen any major discussion of the impact of Freud's late Victorian sexual ideas and behavior on either his wife or his wife's sister. The impact of these on his work with clients and students is also missing.

In addition to personal responses to an abusive individual's death, entire communities can become polarized by these deeply personal responses to his life. In this polarization, the multiple legacies of an individual's life are fractured and may be used as weapons against other individuals. Truth is inevitably fractured. When the community subsequently makes a choice among these splintered realities – which one to promulgate and which one to deny, the individual's multiple legacies begin to isolate and alienate survivors from each other in much the same way the abuser's behavior did

while he was alive. The violence which the dead one did during his lifetime has now infected the community which has outlived him.

Refusing to compassionately engage our communal grief and our anger, we cannot allow ourselves to set ourselves or our communities free of his continuing violent hold on our lives. Unable to return to full engagement with life's truthfulness we remain stuck in half-truths or outright lies. We may remain fog-bound in an emotional miasma or mired in psychological quicksand. We may choose to mute the rich emotional nature of our communal lives in order to avoid dealing with the conflict, sadness, anger, and pain that his death's wake has given us. We may deny any awareness of collective grief because of the way this individual, in part, wasted his gifts and talents by putting them in the service of his abusiveness. We may refuse to look honestly at the messy facts of his life and we may dishonestly shape them into revisionist factual history. We may even create a fantasy legacy of heroic greatness which we seek to pass on to future generations.

Once individually and collectively we have survived the death of an abusive other, refusing any step of the necessary grief process of separating ourselves from the complexities of his life simply aborts our ability to fully return to life – now unaccompanied by his living presence. If we, as individuals and as entire communities, do not acknowledge the factual truthfulness of the life that has been lived in the manner it has been lived; if we do not acknowledge the impact of that life on our own: we remain enmeshed in the confusing patterns of energy that bound us (and continue to do so) to him during his lifetime. Not able to fully accept and acknowledge what we intuit and know about the dead one's life engages us in denial and untruth. This denial and untruth subsequently stunts our own life and its ongoing maturation.

When our personal relationship to the dead one has been troubled it may be especially hard to let the other go. We can hold on to our obsessive questions about why he did what he did to us. We can remain tied to our wish for revenge or for reconciliation. We may engage in wistful fantasies or outright denial in which factual truths about his life get buried. We may refuse to speak what we know. We may deny others the right to speak what they know. Personally betrayed by him, we may find that our ability to trust others has been permanently damaged.

Allow me to use a personal example here. In my extended network of friends and colleagues, a known-to-be-abusive individual died after a long illness. In talking about him (shortly after his death) with a mutual acquaintance, I overheard myself saying, *I could just kill him for what he did to Samantha* (not his wife's name) *and his children*. Hearing my words (and their vindictive anger at him for his abusive behavior towards his family) only after they were spoken, I continued, *since he is already dead, I am spared from the need to commit murder.* Our shared rueful laughter acknowledged the anger and the emotionally bound nature of my original comment. In this situation, I might even have said (although I didn't) *I hope he is in hell for the way he treated her and his children.* Clearly, I had internal work to do before I could allow this violently abusive individual to enter eternity unencumbered by my attempts to keep him in the finite world of time and space so *he would know and acknowledge the evil he had done to his life partner and his children.* As long as I wanted him to suffer for his decisions and actions, even after death, I was still bound emotionally to him. As long as I remained tied to my anger at him for his behavior I was not free to let this dead individual be dead. In applying Alice Walker's teaching above, I was refusing to remove the arrows from my heart. I continued to suffer because of my anger and rage at his behavior towards a good friend of mine.

Parenthetically, this kind of by-stander anger rarely helps the individuals whom the abuser assaulted. It diverts victimized individuals from the needed work at hand – healing their own wounds. My rage at Samantha's now dead husband did not serve her needs for healing; it did not serve her children's needs for healing. I needed to do my personal work but Samantha and her children also needed to do theirs. I could not do their work for them. But I could do my own work. It was important for me to realize that I needed to act in ways which did not require them to care for my personal angers by embroiling them in my work.

Had Samantha needed to deal with my rage and anger at her dead husband, my undone emotional work had a great potential to divert her and her children from their own needed post-death grief and anger work.

As a non-victimized individual, being too insistent and too public about my own responses to the abuser's death is a very subtle form of taking over another's story and making it my own. This too is a form of controlling and abusive behavior. It is a form of personal neediness that blames others

and seeks revenge or retribution on behalf of those who have not asked for this. I have never heard individuals in this situation express gratitude to the enraged bystander. As an onlooker, one does not need to be enraged in order to act as a healing presence. In addition, one does not have to agree with the abuser's behavior in order to develop compassion about the insane tragedy of abuse – the tragedy which has devastating consequences for everyone caught inside the lived story of that abuse.

Even if we are overjoyed at an abuser's death and celebrate it with an intense cathartic sense of emotional relief, we can still remain psychologically and emotionally bound to him and to the harm he did to us or others. We are, therefore, not free of his influence over us. As in Alice Walker's short parable about black responses to white racism, the arrow(s) which the sexually abusive dead one shot into our hearts (or others' hearts) during his lifetime still lodge in our individual and collective hearts long after his death. Still embedded, these arrows continue to wound and limit us as individuals and as communities. We cannot move forward in genuine freedom, until we pull those arrows.

Now dead, there is no way the sexually abusive individual can apologize for the wrongs he did nor can he seek to make amends and reparations. He can no longer explain or rationalize his behavior to us or to others. We are left with the questions, the confusions and the wounds he created in our lives.

It is our individual and collective task, I believe, to learn how to remove these arrows from our own hearts so that we can return fully restored to life. To do this, we need, first of all, to recognize that there are arrows and that there are wounds. We need to deal with the factual nature of these arrows and their complex wounds in our individual and collective lives. The arrows need to be truthfully named; the wounds need to be individually and collectively named so that they can be healed.

If we see only the damages the individual has done to us and to others, we cannot allow ourselves to recognize the good which he may also have done. Seeing him only in the simplicity of our problems with him we bond more and more obsessively with our victimization and with our wounds. When we refuse to do our own grief and anger work after his death, we may end up creating a malicious caricature of the dead person in our minds. We may consign him to hell. Since as philosopher Sam Keen

(2005) indicates we not only imitate our friends, we also imitate our enemies, we can begin to engage in repetitive self-other destructive behaviors which are structurally similar to the ones he did to us. Betrayed by him during his lifetime, we can betray others – or ourselves - in our own. Conversely, our insistence on seeing only the good he has done denies us the opportunity of individually and collectively recognizing the complex truth of his life. If we are not one of his victims, we participate in the on-going silencing of his victims. We participate in collective and enabling denial. In our collusive desire for peace, the absence of conflict, harmony and premature reconciliation, we may re-victimize the individuals he victimized.

If we are one of his victims, living inside a re-victimizing and enabling community, we may be unable to name our suffering for fear of community reprisals against us. We can become isolated in our suffering and feel abandoned by our community of reference. We can enter an extended, perhaps unending, dark night of the soul. In our abandoned isolation we become exiles. That which we know as factual truth is denied. The spiritual role of being fully heard and healing which is the birthright of every individual living within a communal family of any kind is denied and forbidden to us.

In light of troubling situations of abuse in the lives of religious culture instigators and spiritual teachers (those individuals who have shaped generations of lives by their intellectual work) it may be controversial to examine the facts of the now-dead individual's his life as a way to understand what the life and its legacy of work means to us and to others. Others, for example, may want to hide aspects of his life inside secrecy and silence. They may protest that our work of interrogating the dead one about his life is unnecessary. They may insistently point out to us that any attempt to interrogate the abusive dead one about his life and behavior is harmful to his living family or to the community at large. Inside religious communities, they may attack his victims. They may attack the abusive one's interrogator's character or motivations. They may accuse those who seek to understand the factual truths and multiple legacies of his life as being motivated by hate-mongering or building divisiveness inside the community. They may accuse his victims of lying or exaggerating the damage he did. They may demand he be forgiven as the price of our continued participation in our shared community. They may urge his victims and their advocates to let the abusive issues of his life remain hidden so

that his positive legacies are not tainted in a communal awareness by a communal awareness of the abusive and negative legacies.

Family system models, tell us, however, that it is precisely in a truthful acknowledgement of the factual truth of an abuser's fully embodied life that we and future generations begin to free ourselves and our communities to make different behavioral choices than he chose to make during his lifetime. Acknowledging the legacy of good he did in his life time frees us from the need to demonize him. Recognizing the legacy of harm he did to us and to others, frees us from idolatry. Once free, we can view his life as a precautionary tale that teaches us, and future generations, what not to do. In recognizing and speaking the factual truth of our lives, we individually and collectively free ourselves and future generations from the tyranny of his legacy of abuse.

If we allow it to do so, a perpetrator's abusive life and the harm he did to others can serve as a search light that reveals the fault lines in the communal realities we once shared with him. If we allow his life, in all of its complexities, to teach us, we can examine the painful realities and fault lines of our own lives.

As we encounter the death of this abusive *other* in our lives (or in other's lives) and as we acknowledge and sort through the meaning(s) his death has for us, we open many doors or paths into the future. We can acknowledge our personal indebtedness to him; we can count our angers; we can detail our rage; we can keen in deep grief at his suffering or for that which he did; we can clutch our victimization as a medal of honor, we can cry over that which we have lost; we can even deny the importance of his death in our life. These and many other emotional possibilities are open to us.

With some regularity these days in these kinds of complex life situations, I say to my friends and to my self, *being a grown-up is hard work*. One part of that grown-up work is separating ourselves from the growing numbers of our important dead (and most especially from our abusive dead) so that we may go on living (joyfully and healthily) in the present moment. It is in the doing of this work of separation that we remain open to the limitless future towards which each of the living continues to move.

Being open and fully present to factual truth allows us to get on with our personal engagement with life. It is not only our love that binds us to the dead; it is our terror, fear, anger, resentment, and rage as well. We not only imitate those we trust, admire and love. We also imitate those whom we fear, despise and hate.[5]

Learning to deal with the abusive dead from within a life position of authentic compassion and integrity helps to free us (and our community) from needing to repeat their mistakes in our own ongoing lives. We can learn from the complexity of their lives. We, the living, are, in the present moment, able to make other choices and to shape a different future for ourselves and our descendents. However, this shaping and transformation cannot be done if individually or collectively we deny the damaging behavior an abusive other has done to us and others during his lifetime.

Concluding Remarks

> *Less visible [than warfare], but even more widespread, is the legacy of day-to-day individual suffering. It is the pain of children who are abused by the people who should protect them, women injured or humiliated by violent partners, elderly people maltreated by their caregivers, youths who are bullied by other youths, and people of all ages who inflict violence on themselves. That suffering – and there are many more examples that I could give - is a legacy that reproduces itself, as new generations learn from the violence of generations past, as victims learn from victimizers, and as the social conditions that nurture violence are allowed to continue.*
>
> Nelson Mandela[6]

As acute and intense experiences of grief and anger [or relief and joy] wane after someone else's death, we become more able to ask questions of meaning. We can begin to look in new ways at our own lives and the impact his life and abusive misconduct had on us.

We are forever connected with the dead who once populated our lives. We carry them and our memories of what they did to us in word-and-cellular - encoded memories until we, ourselves, die. In terms of physical contact violations and sexual assaults, our body's physical structures remember

the violation, perhaps more accurately than our cognitive mind does. The body, not only the mind and its cognitive memory system, carries our memories for us.

Even though we remember the abusive dead and what they actually did to us and others, we do not need to remain self-destructively attached to them. We can allow them to move on. We do this best, I think, by learning to celebrate our own breath and the life force which in the present moments of our lives is always present. Deciding and than learning how to live well is perhaps the best way to respond to the death of a sexual abuse perpetrator. Making and embodying a decision for life reminds us that, as an abuser's living survivors, we have choices about how we live our own lives.

When *we* choose to become fully alive in each present moment, we no longer need to defend or protect the dead one from the consequences or legacy of his life actions while he was alive. We do not need to pretend to ourselves that his behavior was inconsequential to us and to others. In addition, we do not need to pretend, indeed insist, that the social consequences of his life choices and behavior died with him.

In my opinion, therefore, it is not reasonable to continue to fear his attacks upon our own safety and well-being. He is truly dead. He is now living in eternity rather than in our shared earthly human community. Who he was while he was living is who he was. No more. No less. After his death, any harm which his behavior continues to create in our own psyches must be addressed in the inner world rather than in the outer world we once shared with him.

Living after his death, we can continue to carry his pathology forward in history for him. Or, we can refuse to be this living bridge. To actively refuse to re-create his personal bridge for violence to pass from him through us into the future inevitably takes focused healing work. This kind of work is both psychological and spiritual. It engages the intellect and the emotions. It engages the psyche, the mind, the physical body and the spirit. Doing this work inevitably changes us forever.

We do not need to continue to hate, fear, despise or even, paradoxically revere him. We do not need to continue submitting to his perverse and damaging intentionality for a relationship with us. His life can now be

closely examined with more objectivity. In the light of his death we can seek to understand his whole life - one that is by virtue of his abuse of us interpenetrated with ours for as long as we live.

As we respectfully and compassionately examine his life, it is inevitable that we will come to understand our own lives in a more truthful and realistic manner. Recognizing his mistakes, errors in judgment, and deliberate, violent choices towards others, we can learn from them. We do not unconsciously need to repeat the same kinds of actions with others that he modeled.

It is better, I think, to seek the factual truth about the dead and their legacies wherever thy lays and to learn something from them for our own individual and collective lives. If we proceed in our work with compassion for a once-victimized body-Self as well as with compassion for the dead one, we come to a point of recognition. As human beings all of the potentialities for our social relatedness to one another are contained in each one of us. We all carry the seeds for doing good and for doing evil.[7] What is possible for any one of us is possible for each of us. Each one of us connected to all that is. The choices faced by any individual are also the choices faced by the collective us.[8]

In a clinical teaching workshop physician and spiritual teacher Richard Moss addressed this complex issue of interrelatedness and personal responsibility by analogy.[9] In my memories of his lecture, he said something like this: *I am not personally polluting the river which flows through my property in the Sierras. However, human beings are polluting this river. I am part of the whole. Therefore, I have a responsibility to the river for human-originated pollution. I cannot excuse myself. My choice of actions will affect future generations and the life of the river itself.*

If we choose to live well and seek to heal our wounds, we must come to terms with the abusive dead who, during their lifetime, complicated our lives by their acts of violence towards us (or others). In searching through their life history to glean wisdom for our own lives, we can begin to come to terms with our personal responses to their violations and their death. Moving in a dialogical process between the dead one's life and our own, we can begin to construct a more truthful *and* healing factual narrative of our shared life encounters.

In learning to know and to acknowledge factual truths, we empower ourselves to develop freedom and courage to shatter or dissolve the bondage of spirit and the barriers to personal maturation that the victimizing one placed in our lives by who he, in factual truth, was. We come to terms with what he actually did to us.

In addition, we come to understand that our particular narrative of his life is partial and that other individuals will have other narratives and see other truths. We understand that no human being possesses the final truth about any one else's lived-life. Part of this awareness includes coming to recognize that the dead one was neither a saint nor a demon. He was simply another very fallible human being, in many ways like our selves. We can begin to come to terms with the reality that in his lifetime, he made some very regrettable and very self-other destructive choices.

The work that death demands of us, the living, is that we be willing to do the work of reckoning and coming to terms with the meaning of this particular death in the middle of our individual and communal lives. In moments when our emotions are raw, fresh and immediate, we open because we have no choice but to do so. The wound of an influential other's death is always primal. It reminds us of our own eventual death. In the moments of our lives when we confront the death of someone who, in one way or another, for good or evil, has influenced our own life trajectory in major ways, we are given the opportunity to psychologically and cognitively re-enter and then transcend a difficult and troubling past.

One consequence of an abusive individual's death is that those who survive are given multiple opportunities for healing their wounds in each present moment. Dealing honestly another's death, its multiple legacies, and our responses to it, we can find our way into untangling ourselves from the damaging past. We can begin to engage and enlarge our personal freedom for the future. In part at least we learn to do this by pulling the arrows out of our own hearts and by helping others to pull the arrows out of their hearts.

This opportunity for beginning again always occurs, I think, in specific moments of present-time awareness and real choice. By our ongoing choices of personal responses to his death, we can make a conscious, semi-conscious, or unconscious bargain with ourselves to stay stuck in the ordinary or even extraordinary resentful enmeshment of our personal life

with the extinguished life of the abusive one who has died. We can continue to scream that he needs to remove the arrows he shot into our heart. Or, we can choose to do the unfinished and unresolved work he left behind him for us to do. Choosing life, we can very carefully and self-compassionately begin to remove the arrows, one by one, that he shot into our hearts.

The abusive individual's death provides us with an opportunity to heal our individual and collective wounds – those wounds he left in his wake. His death and absence from our shared ongoing life history, does not, however, free us from doing our own work. Nor does it do our work for us.

Footnotes

[1] Peter Steinfels, 2003, p. 43.

[2]Christmas, 2009, telephone conversation with James Roberts,

[3] Retold by Paul Sutherland, March-April, 2010, p. 78.

[4] See L. Appignanesi and J. Forrester, 1992. See also Z. Lothane, June 13, 2007.

[5] Sam Keen, 2006. DVD: *Faces of the Enemy: Three Slide Lectures*.

[6] Nelson Mandela, World Health Organization, 2002b. p. v

[7] Matthew Fox, (2003). CD: Session Four, *Confronting Evil.*

[8] Thich Nhat Hanh, 1987, 1993, 2001.

[9] Richard Moss, 1989.

- 3 -

Mennonite Disagreements about Interpretation and Meaning

The church reforms when a sufficient number of men and women demand integrity and honesty from themselves and force transparency and accountability from those who aspire to serve and lead. It has always been so.

A. W. Richard Sipe[1]

As we saw in volume one, allegations of sexual misconduct by religious leaders and ordained clergy can create intense, long-lasting and divisive conflicts inside religious communities. If, in addition to allegations of clergy sexual abuse, there are allegations of institutional misconduct and cover-ups, the resultant conflicts can provoke intense and permanent feelings of betrayal. Subsequent feelings of animosity spread outward in ever more intricate circles from the initial allegations and eventually focus upon the nature of the religious institution itself.

In the last two decades of the 20th century the North American Mennonite Church began to hold multiple conversations inside congregations and church institutions about affinity rape, incest, spouse battering, the physical beating of children, and clergy sexual misconduct. Victims of these various forms of personal and institutional betrayal began to speak openly about their experiences with a wide variety of betrayals and encounters with sexual abuse and violence.[2]

In part, the American culture's greater openness about all sexual issues helped to open and facilitate this discussion. In addition, the anti-rape movement, the anti-child abuse movement, and the anti-domestic violence movement in secular American culture built a general awareness of these abuse issues and thus helped to open the door for more focused denominational conversations about clergy sexual misconduct as another form of abuse. Children, for example, in public schools began to be taught that no one should touch them without their consent. Colleges and universities sponsored on-campus forums about the relationship of alcohol consumption and date rape. College student women and their community

allies sponsored Take Back the Night rallies. Students participated in the national domestic abuse clothesline tee shirt project to build awareness on their campuses about spousal, parental and date violence. Adult women volunteered at domestic violence shelters and on rape crisis lines.

Within the Mennonite Church, during this era there were several very public instances of leader sexual misconduct in various geographical regions of the denominational church. The intersection of secular culture and American Mennonite ethnic and religious culture created a situation in which there was a growing awareness among ordinary Mennonites in the pews that there was a problem with various forms of personal or affinity violence inside their denominational home. Clergy and religious professional sexual harassment and clergy sexual misconduct were among those forms.

My First Awareness of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

The irony is that the Anabaptist Mennonite community has been far more successful in challenging the legitimacy of the power of the larger body politic than it has been in its own internal congregational life and in the domestic and economic spheres. It seems that it was much easier to define and limit the power of the "pagan" world than that of members of a congregation who live in intimate contexts…If Anabaptism is to complete the transforming challenges to power and domination, it will need to work heroically to develop and nurture structures of accountability in domestic, community and church life.

Calvin W. Redekop[3]

I remember a particular situation which arose mid-century when rumors regarding a Mennonite evangelist's sexual misconduct began to float in my home community. The individual was a well-known and trusted Mennonite minister. The rumors had traveled for more than 500 miles from the community where his ordination credentials were lodged.

My mother, an ethnic and theologically conservative Lancaster County Mennonite woman, sputtered her indignation that such sinful behavior had been known and tolerated inside Mennonite communities and churches. Inside the privacy of our home, she divested herself of her opinions of the

evangelist and of the church which she perceived was protecting him. Her opinions were uncompromisingly hostile to the hiding of sexual misconduct from the laity.

I was in late childhood or early adolescence at the time and my mother's meal time table conversations with my Lutheran father about this affair left no uncertainty in my mind about her position. In her opinion, ordained ministers and evangelists who were sexually active outside their marriages were simply not acceptable messengers of Christ's message. In today's language, she had zero tolerance for all forms of sexual and financial misconduct and chicanery by religious leaders. In her opinion, leaders guilty of these forms of ministerial misconduct needed to be publicly removed from any position of active ministry anywhere inside the boundaries of the Mennonite Church. In her opinion, there were no acceptable half measures. The only responsible church action was to publicly remove the erring minister from his position of ministry.

In my mother's view of ministerial accountability (to God and to God's people) there were no ifs, ands, or buts about the requirement that every minister and every evangelist needed live a life that was above moral reproach. There were no mitigating circumstances which allowed for continuing ministry roles in the presence of documented misconduct.

As I listened to my parents discuss the allegations – I was being taught by osmosis that ministers and other religious leaders were to be held to a high standard for their personal and private conduct because of the trusted position they held as spiritual teachers and religious leaders of the faith community. As members of a gathered community of faith, all members of the laity were also responsible, if necessary, to speak their opinion on these matters of leader morality and integrity. This was especially true when ordained and previously trusted individuals betrayed their community's trust in sexual matters and in financial matters.

Since my parents had never tolerated the common, and disrespectful, Mennonite custom of serving roast preacher for Sunday dinner, to hear my parent's very candid critique of church failures in managing adulterous or financially abusive ministers was instructive. Not only could the organized church and its ordained ministers discipline disobedient members of the congregation who failed to live within the denomination's rules for personal conduct, failed leaders could be, indeed should be removed from their

positions of authority and their ordination credentials withdrawn. Because they had violated their ordination vows and betrayed the people they has been called to serve, they needed to permanently leave their positions of ordination and evangelism.

Before these mealtime conversations, such a possibility had never occurred to me. Ministers, in my limited experience of their roles as community rule enforcers, were ordained for a lifetime of ministry that ended only with death, a desire to retire, or senility. They were expected by the community to be the spiritual guides for everyone in the congregation – from the smallest child to the most elder senior citizen. What they preached about acceptable moral and social behavior was to be obeyed without question. In my parent's noontime conversations, I learned that what religious leaders preached to lay people also applied to ministers, evangelists, and bishops.

Before these table conversations I had never encountered or even thought about religious leader sexual misconduct (or for that matter any form of adult sexual misconduct) so, unlike my parents, I was naïve about human sexual temptation, failings and deliberate (and at times, malicious) misbehavior. At times during the conversations my parents needed to simplify their discussion regarding the situation and my mother's concerns about it so that I could intellectually understand and eventually enter the conversation by asking my own inexperienced questions.

As I write, I wonder if my parents were also deliberately choosing to communicate at some level, their expectations for my own future sexual behavior. As I remember the conversations, this second agenda was not visible to me at the time. What I remember most is my curiosity about the occurrences 500 miles away that had caught my brilliant and deeply pious and institutionally religious mother's intensely focused and very indignant attention. I also intuited at some unspoken level that my Lutheran father agreed with my Mennonite mother about community expectations regarding acceptable ministerial behavior.

The discretely nuanced language of today's society to describe adultery and other forms of clergy sexual abuse was unavailable to my parents during this era of Mennonite life. What I heard, therefore, was a simple and clear description, in behavioral terms, of the rumors and allegations. By the end of this summer in my life, I was no longer naïve about human sexuality

and the sexually and financially disruptive interpersonal behaviors which my parents considered unacceptable social conduct for adults.

Whenever I have stumbled across these memories from my childhood in my adult life, it has always been clear to me that my mother believed the allegations were true ones and felt, at some level of her own institutional religious life and personal spirituality, betrayed and outraged. It was also clear that she believed lay members of the denominational church needed to speak out and to be heard. This was particularly true if the church's supervising hierarchy did not act. For her, at least, lay individual's silence in the face of ministerial sin was not an option.

1970-1992: The Mennonite Context

> *Religious institutions have spent far too much time and money protecting the institution from its people instead of protecting the people from their institution. What is needed is for them to take up the task of protecting their people, even when that means admitting they have failed them.*
>
> Marie Fortune[4]

It would be many years, indeed decades, later when I heard a second set of allegations against a well-regarded and trusted religious leader inside the extended Mennonite community. These allegations arose in Indiana-Michigan Conference during the 1970s and early 1980s. The rumors and allegations I heard were about renounced Mennonite theologian-ethicist and ordained minister, John Howard Yoder. They remained active rumors until his death. By the 1970's however, I was neither naïve or uninformed about the prevalence of such incidents inside religious communities.

Fully fifteen years after his death, rumors and expressions of outrage periodically continue to surface inside Mennonite communities. Today's conversations and rumors often focus on the way in which the Mennonite church managed women's complaints about inappropriate sexual harassment of adult women.

1985 and Beyond

During 1991 and the first six months of 1992, the United States Mennonite Church's denominational press, most specifically *The Gospel Herald,* began to run a series of articles about how the denomination's journalists could or should handle reporting of Mennonite clergy misconduct.[5] In the background of these articles were a variety of issues which faced the Mennonite Church. These included:

1) Clergy sexual abuse issues inside other denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church (1984, Lafayette diocese, LA), had already alerted church liability insurers about emerging financial risks when poorly-managed allegations of sexual abuse exposed the church to potential lawsuits by victims.[6] In 1985, therefore, a Mennonite Church by-invitation-only consultation had been held in Dunlap, IN. The consultant was the Rev. Chilton Knudson, a female Episcopal priest whose work portfolio included management of sexual abuse allegations in the Episcopal diocese of Chicago. She later consulted with four Midwestern regional conferences: the Central District conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Illinois, Indiana-Michigan, and Ohio Conferences of the Old Mennonite Church of America.[7]

2) A series of denomination-wide conversations about sexual and domestic violence inside the socio-cultural boundaries of the Mennonite Church was sponsored by the Women's Concerns Desk of the Mennonite Central Committee. Entitled *Breaking Silence/Bringing Hope* each conference featured at least one first-hand narrative about an individual's personal experiences as a victim of physical abuse or sexual violence.[8] These conferences began in a Brethren-in-Christ Church in Pomona, California and eventually such meetings occurred in Mennonite and Brethren-in-Christ congregations from Canada to Guatemala[9] and from California to Pennsylvania. Somewhat later in time, Central and South American Mennonite Churches also began to work collectively on these difficult issues.[10] Held from the late 1980's until the late 1990's these series of consciousness-raising conferences freed many Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Church sexual and physical abuse victims to tell their stories of abuse and violation. Ordinary members of the laity, members of the clergy, and

denominational leaders were all being educated about sexual and physical abuse inside the boundaries of their denominations.

3) The February, 1992 decision of Bethel College (KS) to rescind a speaking invitation to John Howard Yoder because of allegations of sexual misconduct. Unlike prior administrative conversations with Yoder, as for example the 1983 AMBS conversations which had terminated his employment and had been conducted in secrecy, news stories and student comments regarding Bethel's decision were published in the student newspaper.[11] The story was almost immediately picked up and reported by the Mennonite Church's USA and Canadian press.[12]

4) A pivotal February, 1992 meeting of eight victimized women with members of the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force, Mennonite Church executives, and Indiana-Michigan Conference officials.[13] At one point in the conversation, one of the women stopped the group's flow of first-hand stories and asked the church bureaucrats in attendance, *do you believe us?* Forcing each church bureaucrat in turn to respond, the eight women waited to hear their individual and collective answers before proceeding. Assured by each church official in attendance that the women were indeed believed and their stories trusted, this meeting was a denominational watershed in the church's management of Yoder. For the first time a small subgroup of Yoder's victims and their allegations were denominationally validated as being factually truthful. For the first time victim stories were individually and collectively acknowledged and promises of meaningful action were made.

5) A lawsuit filed on June 9, 1992 in Oregon against three Mennonite Church agencies in a legal effort which *did not* involve allegations about Yoder's misconduct.[14] A financial settlement was eventually reached. Very few details were released to readers of the Mennonite Press.

6) In the summer of 1992, the regional secular press in Northern Indiana picked up the story of inside-the-denominational-church allegations made against Yoder.[15] Because of his national prominence in the field of Christian theology and ethics, the national religious and secular press picked up the story and ran it.[16]

7) In May, 1993, the Mennonite Church of America published its *Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials, second edition.* Conferences were urged to up date their liability coverage, to have clearly-stated policies regarding clergy abuse and to follow these policies whenever and wherever allegations of abuse surfaced.

8) In 1996: *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership: A Statement by the Joint Conference in Ministerial Leadership* was published. Its factual discussion regarding various forms of clergy sexual misconduct was extensive and consequences for this form of clergy misconduct detailed. It was now clear, in writing at least, that clergy sexual misconduct could result in a temporary suspension of ordination credentials while allegations were investigated or in a permanent revocation of ordination credentials if allegations were determined to be factual.

In retrospect, in my opinion, from 1985 until 1992, the issue that loomed largest in the minds of national and regional Mennonite Church leaders was the potential for public information in the secular press to overwhelm the church press – most specifically in the case of John Howard Yoder. In addition, in light of the law suit which was filed in Oregon, it is likely church agency administrators were increasingly aware of the church's potential financial liability in Indiana vis-à-vis the long history of unmanaged allegations against Yoder.

It is inevitable, I think, that questions inside Indiana-Michigan Conference offices surfaced as church agency personnel managers sought to make decisions about the continuing stream of allegations against Yoder. Without a doubt, the Bethel College situation in February, 1992 signaled an end to institutional secrecy vis-à-vis Yoder as a way to manage allegations of his sexual misconduct. Inside the extended network of Mennonite colleges, news of Bethel's decision was spread by telephone. Within hours of the Bluffton College's student news story, I and many of my Goshen College colleagues had long phone calls from members of the Bethel faculty informing us of what had just happened on the Bethel campus. As far as I know, none of these conversations began with surprised indignation at the college's action. The Bethel faculty member who called me, for example, began with her personal sense of relief that a long-silenced story was now beginning to be told in public.

In addition to faculty-faculty conversations, students on the Bethel campus talked with students on the Goshen campus. My experience with student questions was that students were dismayed, angry, and wanted immediate confirmation of what their Mennonite faculty had known and now knew. My sense was that the junior and senior undergraduate students - who came to my office during the 8 or 10 days following the Bethel announcement - felt ethically or even spiritually betrayed by their denominational church and wanted to know why this secrecy had happened. Some of these students – children of church leaders - later told me they had called their parents to interrogate them about their knowledge of Yoder's behavior and the church's response to it.

While awareness of women's allegations about Yoder's harassing and abusive behavior towards women had been well-known to church administrators and religious education professionals, it was not common lay knowledge. By the spring of 1992, however, the potential political fall-out of wider public revelations was great. Issues of church press and denominational credibility became visible as the threat of published information about Yoder's behavior in the secular press became more and more likely.

After February, 1992, when reports of Yoder's misdeeds had once again been formally conveyed to Prairie Street Mennonite Church and Indiana-Michigan Conference, the behind-the-scenes-flow of information, rumors and gossip escalated. Church administrators at all levels of the denomination were well aware that some form of journalistic information-gathering on behalf of Yoder's victims – and factual truth itself - was in motion. To exemplify this general awareness, behind the scenes, church-owned colleges and high schools were privately urged to prohibit Yoder's access to their campuses in any manner at all. The denomination's official press was urged to put a moratorium on publishing Yoder's work. In the absence of specific church sanctions, one of the major church press agencies refused to cooperate with this request. Church agency administrators were scurrying about trying to get a handle on damage control.

Church Press Decisions

Approximately one month after Bethel College's decision to withdraw its invitation to Yoder to keynote a conference on the topic of Nonviolence in America, the *Gospel Herald (March 20, 1992. pp. 6-7)* published an article by James R. Coggins. At the time Coggins was associate editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald. He r*aised the question*: Should the church press report church scandals to the church's membership? He* noted that Meetinghouse (a consortium of Mennonite and Brethren-in-Christ church press editors) frequently discussed these matters with each other. He wrote that the denominational press historically followed a pattern of silence and non-reporting for four reasons: I compact and paraphrase his major points below.

- In Christian circles, gossip is seen as a sin. Lacking money to do investigative reporting, the church press lacks accurate information.
- Individuals believe that local problems cannot be solved at the national level of a denomination.
- Informational reporting embarrasses or inflicts pain on the guilty individual and his family.
- Publicizing sin in the church press discredits the church in the eyes of the secular community – especially, if the church press breaks the news story first.

Coggins then noted that he personally had begun to re-think these four guiding principles. He reported that he now favored open reporting and more public naming of names of known abuse perpetrators. He commented on his reasoning for such a change in his editorial attitudes. Once again I abstract and paraphrase from his article.

- There is a need to warn potential future victims.
- The church should discourage predators from thinking they can prey upon others inside the church with no fear of their actions being reported.
- There is a need to offer compassion and assistance to those already victimized. He notes that the church does not acknowledge that they exist because it does not identify that victimization has occurred.
- Sin (or behavior) that is public in nature needs to be dealt with in a public manner. While some behavior is indeed local and can be managed at a local level, some local behavior has much larger

national or international repercussions and needs to be dealt with openly at those levels. Another way of saying this is that if the abuser's career is a world-wide career, then a different level of accountability is needed than if an individual's sphere of influence is much more limited.

- More open reporting helps to safeguard the reputations of the innocent – those church leaders who do not transgress.
- More open reporting enhances the credibility of the church press. When the secular press reports the information which the church has repressed, charges of *cover-up* and *institutional hypocrisy* are ordinary consequences
- Open reporting demonstrates the church press has a commitment to telling the truth (*If we are not honest about the actions of people, why would anyone believe us when we speak about the actions of God?*).
- By failing to publicize sin (or misconduct) the church fails to publicize its belief in the possibility and reality of redemption.
- Removal of the stigma of the unpublished and hidden (and denied) sin or act of misconduct builds an awareness that all kinds of sin exist inside the community of faith.
- The church can offer salvation to sinners – offering an active opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Whether or not we agree with Coggin's reasoning, it is clear that the *Gospel Herald's* editorial staff was raising the possibility of a change in direction about its sexual abuse coverage for the Mennonite Church's official denominational press. While appearing to raise a possibility, I am personally and intuitively persuaded that the decision to change direction had already been made and was a direct consequence of the denominational aftermath of the Prairie Street and Indiana-Michigan Conference's church hierarchy's meeting with victims. While editorially suggesting the possibility of change, church publishers had already made the decision to change their policies. Coggin's article, therefore, was the first step in denominational damage control. It is my personal hypothesis that an "about face" message had been sent from Elkhart's executive denominational offices and the denomination's official press, located in Pennsylvania, was complying.

On July 7, 1992, *The Gospel Herald* published its newly formulated and formally adopted set of guidelines for Mennonite church press editors to

use when they needed to make decisions about reporting sensitive news stories about sexual misconduct allegations and denominational actions.

In the *first place,* stories about sexual misconduct would be published only after an official action was taken (church board, police or court action, etc.). The working assumption here is that official action elsewhere guarantees the accused due process.

The *second concern* deals with the level of public accountability called for. With public responsibility comes the need for public accountability. *Accountability needs to be at least as broad as the offender's influence on the life of the church.*

Third, there are churchly concerns for confession, repentance, restitution and reconciliation. The church press intends to report on these matters as well – in consultation with church leaders, the offender and the victims.

Fourth, concern for victim safety must be sensitive. In particular, questions of victim identity must be well-handled and need to directly respect the wishes of victims.

In late June and in mid-July, 1992, *the Elkhart Truth* published its series of Price-authored investigatory articles regarding accusations about Yoder's sexual misconduct behaviors and Mennonite Church responses to those behaviors.[17]

During the second week in July, 1992, Meetinghouse reporters and editors published an announcement of Yoder's sexual misconduct and Indiana-Michigan Conference's decision to suspend his ministerial credentials. This was just one week after the new Guidelines had been published.

In August, 1992, *Gospel Herald* editors published a Meetinghouse-commissioned article by Nancy Heisey, an associate executive secretary for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a relief and service agency of the Mennonite Church. In the preceding ten years Heisey (and representative speakers for the Women's Concerns Desk at MCC) had sponsored and spoken at numerous church-wide conferences [18] on issues of violence inside Mennonite and Church of the Brethren families and congregations.

Heisey's article raised denominational questions regarding relationships between the abused person, the abuser and the congregation. She initiated a conversation about the meanings of forgiveness in personal abuse situations, especially where the offender denies that he has done anything wrong. She insisted, for the well-being of the church, that offending leaders must be brought to full public accountability.

In his September 29 editorial commentary *Gospel Herald* Editor J. Lorne Peachey (1992) noted that this newly-implemented policy of reporting leader sexual misconduct information had financial costs associated with it. Individual subscribers who disagreed with the new policies as set forth cancelled their subscriptions.[19]

Questions of Meaning and Interpretation: Managing Accusations of Abuse, 1992

If one steps back a bit from the specifics of the Mennonite church - Yoder controversy and reads all of the 1992 subscriber letters (52 in all) to the *Gospel Herald* editor about the denomination's decisions about what to publish/not publish in situations of sexual abuse and violation, it is possible to get a glimpse into a denomination that was deeply divided on issues of public accountability for church leaders in sexual matters.[20] When one reads all of these letters sequentially in one sitting, several genres or categories of response come into view.

The *first* genre or category of letters reflects individual experiences of victimization. Some anonymous (though known to the editors by name) letters begin with a variation of this comment: *I am a survivor of adult sexual abuse in our church (September 8, 1992, 5).* The writer comments further: *It has taken years of counseling, years of confusion, agony, rage, regression and other serious consequences. How could a trusted brother in the church, a Christian mentor who was there to guide me and help me grow, be so wrong in this one area – all the while insisting it was for my well-being? It didn't make sense. Those who have not experienced this might not understand the self-doubt engendered in and through such an experience.*

The *second* genre or category of letters discusses the abusive minister's personal responsibility for his actions. Other letters are similar to this one

written by Bonnie Heppner (December 29, 1992, 5) whose comment is specific and to the point. *The person who has behaved inappropriately or immorally has taken serious steps towards destroying his own profession. Whether the evens are known and discussed or not, this person is ultimately responsible for his own behavior and professional conduct.* Later in her letter she continues: *In making the decision to publicize valid reports of wrongdoing, I believe it is imperative to consider whether secrecy will enable further misconduct. To look honestly and openly at the whole issue…represents an honorable attempt by the community to protect and provide for the needs of its most vulnerable members.*

Yet *another view* was presented by Paul V. Springer (August 4, 1992, 4) who saw such open reporting as contributing to the reproach of the church within secular society. He wrote, *I fail to see the value of reporting the violation of public trust. Rather reporting magnifies the reproach in the eyes of the general public and impedes the healing process.* He then remarks, t*o continue this kind of reporting might well suggest we call this publication "The Gossip Herald."*

The *fourth* view, a minority position in terms of the number of letters which represented it, held victimized women to be responsible for the minister's acts of sexual misconduct. Lorene Yoder (July 21, 1992, 4) wrote: *I too could have reported a young pastor who would readily have gone too far. But I would never mention his name. It would have made nasty gossip. I knew where I belonged and where he belonged. Blame the women. We can stop this sexual misconduct. I did. Others can.*

A *final* position expressed full support for the editors of the church press in implementing their new policy. Kathleen Kurtz (September 1, 1992, 4) addressed the issues in this way: *I strongly support your editorial policy of reporting actions taken by church bodies in cases of sexual misconduct. A major part of the repentance-forgiveness-healing issue is willingness to be accountable and to hold others accountable. This is not possible if there is secrecy. I strongly encourage you to continue this difficult but necessary ministry.*

Even such a small sample taken from the 52 letters to the *Gospel Herald* editorial team in 1992 illustrates the divisive nature of opinion and conversation in religious communities about clergy and religious professional sexual abuse. This diversity of opinion is not only true of

Anabaptist-Mennonites and other Believer's Church denominations In a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions, individuals and entire communities do not agree on how to understand, manage and interpret these troubling situations or religious leader sexual misconduct.

Questions of Interpretation and meaning: Managing a Posthumous Legacy of Abuse, March, 2002

In March, 2002, a conference on John Howard Yoder's theological and ethical legacy was held at Notre Dame University located in South Bend, Indiana.[21] Notre Dame had been Yoder's academic home at the time of his death in 1997. The conference was sponsored by a coalition of organizations whose institutional life John Howard Yoder had touched. The purpose of the conference, according to its title, was *to examine and assess the theological legacy of John Howard Yoder*. At the time of this conference Yoder had been dead for nearly five years.

According to Robert Rhodes (2002) 300 people attended the conference. A wide variety of papers were presented and the conference proceedings were later published by Cascadia Press (Ollenburger and Koontz, 2004). I remember that a large number of Mennonite professional women – lay and ordained - made a well-thought through personal decision not to attend the conference because there were unresolved issues in the wake of Yoder's death. These issues related to Yoder's victims and the church's management of their complaints. For some of these women, it was simply inappropriate for the church and its various religious academic settings to honor Yoder in this manner.

In his report to the greater Mennonite Church by way of a press release to *The Mennonite,* Rhodes reported very briefly about a controversial session during the second day of meetings. Rhodes commented:

> *On March 8 an open group discussion addressed Yoder's sexual misconduct and how it was dealt with by [Mennonite] church authorities. Gayle Gerber Koontz of AMBS outlined the accusations against Yoder and his subsequent church discipline, which lasted from 1992 until1996* (p. 19).

During the Notre Dame conference members of the religious and church Academy disagreed about how to proceed. Rhodes noted that a small sub-group of conference participants (perhaps 10) refused to participate in this session because they believed this issue in Yoder's life had been resolved by an extended (4 years) process of church discipline (1992-1996). They felt, he wrote, that *an academic conference was an inappropriate place to raise such an issue* (italics mine*)*.

These differences of opinion were later reflected in subscriber letters regarding Rhode's coverage of the Notre Dame event. In response to Rhode's article, two of Yoder's friends and former co-workers in post-war (1946-1955) Europe responded to *The Mennonite* (June 4, 2002). In this letter, Ilsa Reist and Mary Ellen Shoup commented:

> *[We] are distressed that at a conference honoring John's many achievements, a faculty member of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Gayle Gerber Koontz, should instigate a discussion concerning Yoder's inappropriate behaviors towards women some time before3 1992. This was dealt with in a disciplinary process over a period of four years in which Yoder fully cooperated and asked for forgiveness. Since Mennonites emphasize the redemptive nature of restorative justice, why at this time was such a personal matter brought up posthumously* (p.4)?

The July 2, 2002 issue of *The Mennonite* contained a letter written by Daniel Shank Cruz. In it Cruz responded to Shoup's and Reist's letter. Cruz wrote:

> *I believe it is necessary to acknowledge all-of-Yoder's legacy, both good and bad. Celebrating Yoder's important theological achievements without acknowledging his inappropriate behavior is an insult to those people who still suffer hurt from his previous actions towards them. I applaud Gayle Gerber Koontz for making sure Yoder's inappropriate actions were talked about at the conference. Keeping silent about sexual misconduct fosters an environment where sexual misconduct is allowed to keep occurring, which is unacceptable within the community of believers and without* (4).

Mennonite individuals holding such divergent views reveal to us a certain kind of denominational reality that must be faced by today's Anabaptist-

Mennonites as they examine John Howard Yoder's life legacies of work and personal behavior. Either, his life behavior matters to the academic community as it seeks to understand, interpret and appropriate Yoder's theology and system of ethics or the factual details of his lived-life are irrelevant to such an undertaking. Fence-riding on such an important question is a tactic that is incapable of resolving the tension between such divergent viewpoints.

Implicit in these questions is a more complicated one. What is the role of the religious academy in the life of its sponsoring denominational church? Is the religious academy simply the uncritical voice of the official church or is an independent arm of the church devoted to the study and dissemination of truth? Does the religious academy merely follow the theological and moral dictates of the church's denominational leaders? Or, is it perhaps the location and source of study into causes and effects of various social influences on the church? What, if anything, is the leadership role of the religious academy in studying and guiding the life of its denominational church?

Sometimes I ask myself this set of questions in a very simplistic manner. Is the religious academy the servant of the church only when it follows denominational leaders or is it also the servant of the church when it leads by raising awareness and difficult questions? Dithering, rudderless and adrift somewhere in the middle of this question of servile following or courageous leadership is a certain sign that the religious academy and its leaders have lost a sense of meaning about the role of an educational institution in the life of its sponsoring denomination.

May, 2007

In May, 2007, at the tenth anniversary of Yoder's death, a second conference was held regarding Yoder's theological legacy. This conference, *Inheriting John Howard Yoder: A New Generation Examines His Thought* was sponsored by the Toronto (Canada) Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC).[22]

During a panel discussion on the final day of the conference, Canadian Mennonite theologian Lydia Harder (former director of TMTC and former board member at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS) in

Indiana where Yoder had once taught) and United States Mennonite theologian Gayle Gerber Koontz (on the AMBS faculty) again requested the conference group to consider issues of Yoder's sexual misconduct by asking if his life history affected how his theology was being taught and utilized. As part of this discussion, Koontz distributed a course outline for a new Yoder course at AMBS. From reading this syllabus, it is unclear if the course' s teaching faculty actually discuss specifics of Yoder's life history of sexual abuse towards women. Nor is it possible to tell whether or not classroom discussions were held about implications for the church as it utilizes his theology to guide community life.

Once again dissension and conflict about the presence of this topic was evidenced inside the conference group. Whether or not divisive dissension surfaced in the formal conference setting, attendee's report that outside of formal conference sessions people argued with each other and with conference planners about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of raising this topic in an academic setting where Yoder's intellectual legacy was the topic being discussed.

Thus, in both legacy gatherings no commonalities of understanding or agreement emerged about this central question: *should the Anabaptist-Mennonite and Believer's Church religious academies deal in the classroom and in their research activities with the legacy of John Howard Yoder's history of sexual misconduct as well as with his intellectual legacy?*

Regaining Historical Memory

For some of the younger students and theologians present at the Yoder legacy conference in 2007, there was almost no factual and historical memory of the specific abusive behaviors in question. For example, a graduate student of theology in 2007 might have been 5 or 10 or 15 years old in 1992. Some scholars in attendance in Toronto (under the age of 40) reported being unclear about whether the sexual misconduct issue in Yoder's life indicated consenting adultery or something else. Their pre-session and, to some degree, their post-session information was based on vague rumors that they had heard in graduate school or in their Mennonite families and communities.

None of the younger individuals with whom I talked or corresponded after the 2007 conference in Canada had any idea of the reported type or number of transgressions in Yoder's life. The abstractions of his theology and ethics were more visible to them as a result of published books, periodical articles and conference presentation than were his concrete behavioral actions towards others.

After the conference was over, a Goshen College graduate (one of the younger graduate students in attendance at Toronto) called me to ask what I knew. When I shared with her a very brief factual summary of the kinds of behavior which women had reported to AMBS, Prairie Street Mennonite Church and Indian-Michigan Conference, she then asked if I knew how many women had accused him. I responded in the negative and commented that over the years there had been multiple reports from multiple sources. I also noted I had much less direct information about the years (1967-1976, 1981-1985, 1989, and 1995-1996) during which I had lived and worked outside of Mennonite communities.

During this extended conversation it became clear to me that my former student's knowledge of the nature and extent of Yoder's sexual misconduct had been incomplete and rumor-driven before our conversation. When I asked her about this, she said that the information shared in Toronto was not complete. She thought, she said, that t*his incompleteness was because of legal or financial pressures that constrain the seminary, church, and academic institutions such as AMBS from telling the factual truth about his behaviors and the church's response to them*.

I was fascinated by her perception (accurate or not accurate). I had been in neither session (2002/2007) where this issue of Yoder's behavior was raised. Consequently, I had no direct personal impression about how the issue of Yoder's mid-life personal behaviors had been handled.

I did know, however, that in the spring and summer of 1992, when asked by Tom Price about women's accusations regarding his personal behavior, Yoder responded that t*hey* [the accusing women] *have the right to attribute to me what they have attributed*.[23] Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, in its initial press release commented that Yoder had agreed that what he was accused of doing, he had, indeed done (*Gospel Evangel,* 1992).

It did not seem to me, as I talked with my former student, that the issue raised at these conferences was not whether or not Yoder was guilty of sexual misconduct. My former student understood this question when I asked her and agreed with my long-distance perception. The reality of this factual piece of data (Yoder had engaged in sexual misconduct) was an accepted baseline of information for her questions. Several issues seemed to drive her questions: (1) what was the nature of his misconduct? In short, was it a simple case of adultery or was it a more complex situation of something else altogether? (2) How extensive was his misconduct? (3) What exactly did the church do to manage him in light of his misconduct?

Concluding Remarks

> *The behaviors identified as sexual harassment are best understood as manifestations of patriarchy, the unjust system of domination and subordination that values maleness over femaleness and reinforces a long-standing power imbalance designed to keep women "in their place."*
>
> Anne E. Patrick[24]

In the context of church-wide revelations about John Howard Yoder's sexual misconduct, several generalizations become visible.

The hermeneutical disagreements and interpretive conflicts that are raised by leader misconduct or professional abuse have been only rudimentarily addressed in discussions within the Believer's Church religious academy and within the Mennonite denomination at large. They have not been substantively researched and published. While questions of meaning and interpretation have been raised in formal academic settings, the content of discussion has not been published. Thus, these disagreements within the Mennonite Academy regarding these questions remain formally under-represented and are usually unaddressed. No body of Anabaptist-Mennonite juried scholarship has yet begun to address the inherently divisive nature of these questions and issues.

To date, two major Believers' Church Conferences have, at least superficially, identified Yoder's behavior as a concern for the Mennonite academy. But their sponsoring bodies have sponsored no major

conference on this topic. Nor has it sponsored or issued a call for papers for a special journal issue. On the webpage www.jesusradical.com Andy Alexis-Baker (*John Howard Yoder and Sex: Wrestling with the Contradictions*), in response to a blog question by James H. comments that there is an individual who is interested in publishing Yoder's papers on singleness and sexuality. He predicts this will happen within a few years (p. 6). If such a publication does occur, I predict that it will resurface yet again victim and victim-advocate anger about unresolved issues in the church's management and subsequent understanding of Yoder's behavior.

To my knowledge, no American (United States, Canadian, Central American or South American) Mennonite scholar has looked critically at John Howard Yoder's written and taught theology and system of ethics through the lenses of his harassing behavior from 1970 until his death in 1997 (the years of his greatest academic productivity and the years of his sexual misconduct). There has been no legacy conference devoted solely to a professional study of his misconduct and its influence on his theology and system of ethics.

My personal reading of this situation is that Mennonite scholars (and Mennonite academic journals) believe it is professionally unhealthy, perhaps even suicidal, for their academic careers in the Mennonite religious academy to do this kind of scholarly work. In an ethnic, doctrinally conservative denomination whose theology has incorporated so much of Yoder's work into its orthodoxies and customary pieties, it is politically incorrect to raise questions about the contradictions of Yoder's life and the church's use of his intellectual legacy.

Therefore, in my opinion, these significant, valid and needed questions remain: (1) To what degree, if any, does the actual life of any clergy or religious professional abuser affect our reading of the legacy of intellectual work left behind after death? (2) If our knowledge about sexual misconduct does affect our reading and utilization of a professional legacy, should it? (3) In what specific ways does this reading change as we gain more accurate information? (4) If it doesn't affect our reading, should it? (5) In what ways, if any, would our reading of an individual's work change if we read it through the hermeneutical lenses of an individual's life history of sexual misconduct? (6) In theological language we might ask how an individual's orthopraxis informs our understanding of his legacy of doctrinal orthodoxy.

In looking at the interpenetrated Roman Catholic pedophile and institutional scandals,[25] we noted that Roman Catholic lay individuals have been turning away from their denomination's historical teachings on sexual matters – most specifically regarding issues of contraception, masturbation, sexual expression among single individuals, homosexuality, and abortion. The ancient teachings of the church which were once *received from their clergy* by the laity as essential for faith and praxis have to some degree or another been *un-received and behaviorally disavowed by* the laity in the late 20th century.

Perhaps, in one way or another, Mennonite Church intellectuals and leaders are concerned about such a *non-reception* of Yoder's work among future generations of Mennonite intellectuals and scholars and informed laity. In my opinion any such fear is misguided. When factual truth is actively withheld (whether deliberately or unconsciously) for long periods of time far more damage is done to the community of faith than simple unembellished truth-telling and analysis brings about.

An important lesson for other denominations to learn from the Roman Catholic Church's dual priest pedophile and clericalism scandal is this: had the institutional Roman Catholic hierarchy been forthright about its sexually abusive priests and had they competently managed these priests with integrity and compassion, today's world-wide crisis of Roman Catholic doctrine and faith would largely have been averted.

The questions raised by Yoder's management of his personal life and the questions raised by the Mennonite Church's administrative relationships with him remain. They will not go away. Like the proverbial elephant in the living room the questions wait to be recognized and addressed. How the religious academy chooses to deal with this issue of Yoder's dual legacy has short and long term consequences for the use of Yoder's theology to guide the faith community in its understanding of abuse issues and in its future praxis.

Footnotes

[1] A. W. Richard Sipe, October 24-25, 2003, p. 2.

[2] Augsburger, L. (June 9, 1992). Breaking silence, bringing hope (pp. 1-2, 8). *The Gospel Herald* 85 (2).

[3] Calvin W. Redekop, 2001, p. 192

[4] Marie Fortune, Senior Analyst, Faith Trust Institute. See http://religionandpluralism.org/MarieFortune.htm

[5] James R. Coggins, April 30, 1991, pp. 6-7.

[6] See R. Mouton, T. P. Doyle, and M. Peterson (1985). See also R. Mouton (2012).

[7] See Appendix N for more information about this consultation.

[8] See Larry Augsburger, op. cit. June 9, 1992.

[9] Conference daily program: *Hacia la Sanidad*. Guatemala City Mennonite Church and K'ekchi Mennonite Church, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, Central America.

[10] Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, 2008.

[11] See Kimberly Cott, March 5, 1992, pp. 1 and 8)

[12] See Paul Schrag, March 23, 1992.

[13] Statement of Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force, February 21-22, 1992.

[14] *Gospel Herald* Church News, June 9, 1992.

[15] See Tom Price articles in the Elkhart Truth during June and July, 1992. These articles are reproduced in the Appendices.

[16] See Peter Steinfels, *New York Times* Religion Notes, August 22, 1992.

[17] See Tom Price, June 29, 1992, B-1 for his initial article about the Yoder allegations.

[18] These conferences and Sunday morning sermons were sponsored in tandem by Mennonite Church and Brethren in Christ Church congregations and conferences in affiliation with the Women's Concern's Desk of the Mennonite Central Committee. In addition, Mennonite Church regional conference officers independently sponsored local meetings. Individual congregations also began to initiate their own conversations – usually during the Sunday morning worship hour. These various conferences and Sunday morning sermons occurred in some very liberal congregations where visiting lay women speakers could preach from the pulpit and some were held in some of the denominations' most conservative congregations where visiting women speakers were never invited into the pulpit to speak. In these situations, usually the Sunday school hour was utilized and lay women spoke from the floor of the sanctuary or in other large rooms of church buildings.

[19] *The Gospel Herald,* September 29, 1992.

[20] Readers Say: 52 reader's letters to the editor regarding sexual abuse and sexual violation, the *Gospel Herald,* Volume 85, 1992.

[21] Robert Rhodes, (April 2, 1992). Assessing the theological legacy of John Howard Yoder: A Conference at the University of Notre Dame.

[22] Inheriting John Howard Yoder; A New Generation Examines His Theology. Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre Program Announcement. See http://www:grebel.waterloo.ca/tmtc/yoder2html

[23] See Tom Price articles in the Elkhart Truth (Appendices G through L), June and July, 1992

[24] Ann E. *Patrick, 1999, pp. 371-376.*

[25] See *The Elephants in God's Living Room*, Volume One. Retrieve from www.ruthkrall.com

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Hermeneutical Questions

> *Whatever is good and true in Yoder's teaching is not going to be disqualified by his moral failures and shouldn't be. On the other hand, you can't separate personal from theological issues.*
>
> Gabriel Fackre[1]

Introductory Comments

> *The unconscious compulsion to repeat - the one with a repetition compulsion is unconsciously telling the (his) story, in the form of his repetition compulsion, of what happened to him in the name of the high ideals of his upbringing.*
>
> Alice Miller[2]

In his mid-century book about theological construction, Juan Luis Segundo writes: *for certain reasons of convenience, the mechanisms of social reality normally remain hidden from human awareness even though they are operative and determinative* (Segundo, 1976b, p. 47). This is especially true in situations of hidden sexual abuse – where the abusive actions usually occur in private, secretive interpersonal encounters. When sexually abusive behavior done by previously trusted individuals eventually surfaces into a community's awareness, a sense of communal disorientation rapidly spreads by word of mouth. As shocked disbelief gives way to factually informed knowledge, a kind of social disconnection occurs. Individual and group cognitive dissonance occurs. Communities may split into factions as individuals seek to come to terms with and respond to a newly perceived social reality.

Complex questions about how to interpret and manage adult sexual transgressions face any community in which they occur. The specificity of the questions is, in some manner or other, shaped by the particular form of the transgression. Some of these transgressions involve seductive and

overt adult sexual behaviors with minors, professional sexual misconduct with adult clients, violent acts of sexual assault, or repetitive acts of sexual harassment. The presence of these behaviors and their community's subsequent questions of interpretation are not limited only to high-profile secular institutions.[3] Questions of interpretation are not excluded from religious or spiritual institutions.[4] Difficult questions of management and interpretation always lurk in the shadows of organizational supervisory relationships where sexual abuse situations are known but kept secret in order to avoid personal or institutional scandals and financial liability.[5]

When confronted by an informed awareness of sexual transgressions and subsequent cover-up actions in any of our contemporary era's churches or religious institutions, members of the laity in the pews and citizens on the streets intuitively understand that there are issues to be examined and life realities to be understood. As public awareness of previously hidden acts of abuse spreads it results in multiple forms of cognitive dissonance and collective disenchantment.

When abuse happens inside religious organizations, it is inevitable that spiritual and religious problems result.[6] As is evident in the current Roman Catholic conflict about priest pedophiles, some individuals, when confronted with information about the betrayal of clergy sexual abuse or the betrayal of institutional clericalism, may lose their religious faith altogether.[7] Some may lose all spiritual moorings. Others may choose to live in denial as they refuse to believe that allegations have factual substance.

In situations of clergy or religious leader sexual abuse, a formerly trusted individual has betrayed his personal and public responsibilities. How, then, do his various communities of reference make sense of what he has done? How do individuals make sense of that which their church's institutions have done? What interpretive framework can be applied to manage the cognitive and moral confusion such abuses cause?

In the introductory chapters of his book about professionals (lawyers, physicians, therapists, and clergy) who abuse their clients and subordinates, Jungian analyst Peter Rutter (1989) describes such a personal awakening to the social reality of sexual abuse in his own professional guild. As a young analyst he became aware that one of his beloved teachers and mentors was a sexual abuser of clients. While Rutter does not graphically describe his own internal emotional state during this

time of awakening in his professional career, it is clear that a deep and lasting sense of professional betrayal was felt. The man who previously had been Rutter's teacher, mentor and friend was demonstrably betraying the professional ideals of the Hippocratic Oath which he had taken. He was betraying his professional responsibilities to his clients. He was betraying his former students.

As a professional clinician Rutter understood that in addition to his former teacher's betrayal of clients, he was also betraying the teaching he had provided to the preceding generations of his students. He was betraying his profession.

As I re-read Rutter and thought about these multiple betrayals, I came to understand that the abuser not only betrayed his clients, the Hippocratic Oath, and his professional guild: equally and profoundly he betrayed himself. Whatever wisdom he had gained and the books he had written during a long career of psychoanalysis were now called into question. These multiple betrayals did not necessarily negate his prior contributions to the life-understanding of his non-abused clients and to his profession. But they did call his life and its historical contributions into question.

Whenever we look closely at any one scenario of professional sexual abuse of clients, multiple layers of betrayal become visible in every situation. In a similar manner, multiple layers of betrayal become visible in every situation where institutions fail to manage professional abusers in a prompt and proper manner.

For many of us who, in our professional lives, first encountered abusive situations in the living stories of our clients and peers, the search for understanding is rooted in personal experience. My own first such experience as a clinician occurred when I was in my very late twenties or very early thirties. My initial internal reaction to a story of professional sexual abuse was one of shocked disbelief. I had no internal clinical or cognitive maps about how to proceed. My clinical education had not taught me that such behavior was possible. My solution at that time was to resign from this agency as rapidly as I could do so. At the beginning of my professional career, I did not know what to do about the visible presence of professional abuse and sexual harassment in professional guilds. I did know, however, that I did not agree with the behaviors I was witnessing. I wanted no part of a system which tolerated them. In retrospect, 40 years

later, I should have reported the situation to supervisors and hoped they might have known more than I did about protocols for proceeding in such a situation.

In hindsight we realize that we learn more about our own lives and professional responses than we knew at the time. Our initial failures in life to understand our own internalized system of professional ethics, once successfully interrogated, often provide us with wisdom about how to proceed in future situations. Now, as an old woman, looking back, life, it often seems to me, gives each of us repeated opportunities to learn life's difficult lessons. We will be given second (and tenth) chances to learn from our failures and we will, by means of this reflection, learn to respond in different ways.

Faced then with the professional dilemma of knowing how much I did not know about helping victimized individuals in similar life situations, I began to attend professional teaching conferences and I began to read. Over time I came to understand the social reality that many women and children were secretly abused by individuals they knew and previously had trusted. My early clinical experience was not the exception to any rule. Instead, I had stumbled across a hidden clinical management problem that, at that time in American life, was rarely talked about in clinical training and supervision programs.

At one of these continuing education training seminars, I heard a Jungian analyst speak about her own initial immersion into the issue of professional sexual abuse. In her analytic practice, she told us, she encountered a client's story about a sexually abusive clinician. My memory of that story and the discussion which followed is now more than thirty five years old.

At the time the story began, the analyst was in the early years of her analytic career. During the analytic hour she heard accusations about sexual abuse of one of her clients reputedly perpetrated by a very well-established psychiatric practitioner in the greater San Francisco area. The reputed abuser had an internationally famous career as a clinician, as a teacher, as a writer, and as a theorist in human development. His theoretical work was so famous that he was a *household name* not only in psychiatry but in the therapeutic clinical community as a whole. His writings had, in fact, been required reading for one of my graduate school practicum experiences.

The physician-analyst knew, by her professional code of ethics, that this elder statesman of world psychiatry needed to be reported to California's medical professional licensure review board in order to have her client's accusations adjudicated. In the conference where I heard her speak, she talked openly about the difficult emotional aspects of this professional and moral decision-making process. Were, she wondered initially, the stories factual ones? What, she asked herself, did her professional and personal ethics demand?

She helped her client with the difficult personal decisions that respected her client's needs to heal but also assured that the behavior of her previous therapist would be investigated. The client's allegations of sexual misconduct triggered a formal medical board review and adjudication process. After an extensive investigation California's medical licensure board confirmed her patients' allegations. The offending elder statesman and clinician lost his license to practice clinical medicine in the state of California.

At the time of these investigations, she reported, some members of her analytic peer professional community were very disdainful about and openly hostile to her decision. The issues of peer hostility faced by all whistle blowers[8] were painful realities during the earliest years of her beginning career and she needed to deal with them on a day-by-day basis.

This conference took place some years after these events had historically transpired. In her reflections, the speaker remained very clear that it had been her personal and professional duty to believe and support her client and to assist her client to report her allegations of abusive professional behaviors to the state's medical licensure board for investigation and adjudication. She was equally clear that there had been great professional and personal costs consequent to her actions. During her speech, however, she reminded all of us in attendance about our moral, ethical, and professional duties (1) to our clients *and* (2) to the professional oaths of service and conduct which we took at the beginning of our careers. She reminded us about the needs to strive for and to develop personal integrity in our professional lives.

By the time I first heard allegations (1977-78) about John Howard Yoder, these clinical experiences were part of my professional history and they shaped my belief that sexual abuse allegations needed to be heard,

believed and formally adjudicated by professional guilds and employers. In Yoder's life, however, it was – at the time – very unclear to me, as it was to most of his victims, about which supervisory guild or organization could and would listen and adjudicate.

Only in the research and writing processes for these essays have I become aware about the complexities embedded within Mennonite Church issues vis-à-vis the social realities of institutional hearing, interpretation, and action. Only my interests in factual history as one foundation for understanding complex human issues led me into researching the narrative story of John Howard Yoder's ambivalent and complicated relationships with the Mennonite Church and its institutions of higher learning.

Even though my professional life inside the Mennonite higher education academy meant that nearly twenty-five years of my working life were co-terminus with his (1976-1997), many factual details of Yoder's life were totally unknown to me. I certainly knew his public persona but I did not know him. I new his Mennonite identity but I did not really comprehend his world-wide evangelical and missional identity.

Hermeneutical Questions of Interpretation and Meaning Emerge

> *Believers can have more than a little to do with the birth of atheism. To the extent that they neglect their own training in the faith, or even teach erroneous doctrine,* ***or are deficient in their religious, moral, or social life*** (emphasis mine) *they must be said to conceal rather than to reveal the authentic face of God and religion."*
>
> ***Guadium et Spes***, Vatican Two Document[9]

In reflecting upon my early clinical experiences with individuals who had been abused in various ways and in reading questions raised in the literature about clergy and religious professional sexual misconduct behaviors, I realized that some important questions do not appear to be in evidence. This was (and is) I came to believe, particularly so in the Anabaptist-Mennonite and Believers' Church academic guilds and employment institutions which encountered and embraced Yoder's system of theological ethics. I began, therefore to collect, organize, research, and finally to interrogate my own questions.

What follows is a personal accounting of this process.

Because my ethnic identity and socio-religious location is within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and because I personally know some aspects of the story of John Howard Yoder and the Mennonite Church's encounters with him, I frame these questions in light of Yoder's life and academic, ecclesial, theological and ethical legacy.

As I write, however, it seems to me as if these questions can be asked about the legacy of any religious professional who has been misogynous and interpersonally abusive. There is, therefore, a more universal aspect to these questions than might be apparent on their surface. Any form of religious professional interpersonal behavior which transgresses the socio-religious mores of the spiritual community in which it occurs can be examined by a similar process or set of questions as the one I engage in below.

A Way to Proceed

In what follows, I identify and discuss my questions roughly in the order that they emerged in the literature review for volume one[10] as well as during conversations about this work with a wide variety of personal friends and professional colleagues. Some of these discussions involved conversations, after the fact, about the 1997 and 2002 Yoder legacy conferences.[11] Some of these questions arose in my own puzzlement about what I remembered, heard and read. Others arose as I consulted with experts in the field of clergy sexual abuse, and yet more questions arose as I read contemporary authors and scholars in today's Roman Catholic Church about the world-wide dual scandal of pedophile priests and managers who kept active abusers in place as priests of small children.

No question, examined by itself, perhaps, is profound but collectively each question dynamically interacts with others. Each has the potential to guide our own individual and collective thinking about *how to read the work of the culture-creator* and *how to read the readers of the culture-creator*.

In ordering these questions, I number them sequentially. This numbering system cuts across chapter subheadings. In several instances, additional

or clarifying questions arose inside a specific category. I identify these subordinate questions by italicizing them. Not all questions led me to an answer and not all led me to even haphazard a guess about how to begin to study and answer them. These questions are simply, therefore identified because I believe they need further consideration, discussion and research.

Identifying and Interrogating My Questions

I begin with a question raised by one of Yoder's victims.

a) *Was Yoder's abusive behavior a manifestation of some form of mental illness, a psychosis or genetic disorder, in which case, perhaps, collectively and individually we can excuse his behavior because he could not control it?*

Since there is no evident and conclusive sign anywhere in the Yoder landscape that would indicate such a severe mental illness, this question can be bracketed out of our continuing effort to define the question or questions which need to be asked of his life and his work. It may be that later information will cause this question to be re-opened. However, Yoder had a successful academic career. He successfully created and raised a family. He was in demand as a lecturer, preacher, teacher and consultant all around the world. He was a polished and sometimes highly polemical public speaker. His books are well-regarded in evangelical circles. He sat on, and at times chaired, a wide number of professional organizations and their boards of directors. He had prestigious disciples. At his funeral, the eulogies represented many different arenas and relationships of his life and they were warm and loving ones.[12]

Applying Sigmund Freud's famous dictum regarding an individual's ability *to love and to work,* there is ample evidence, as briefly noted above, that Yoder's life fits within the generalities of Freud's definition of mental health.

b) Do Yoder's theological works need to be re-examined in light of his sexual misconduct from 1970 until 1992/1997?

This question, or some variation of it, was raised during the 2002 and 2007 Yoder legacy conferences which examined his theological, ecclesiastical, and ethical legacies. As conference conversations (and dissensions) suggest and as later *Readers Say* letters to the editor of *The Mennonite* demonstrate,[13] there is no universally agreed upon Anabaptist-Mennonite denomination or church academy answer here.[14]

For example, in one of the 1997 sessions, a young woman graduate student theologian began to discuss Yoder's theology and behavior as similar manifestations expressing *domination* and *subordination* themes. A male colleague and friend of mine in attendance at this session told me later about a row-long group of younger male scholars who immediately began to whisper so loudly that they overpowered the young woman's voice. What they were whispering to each other were multiple variations of the theme, *Oh, no, not this again.*[15]

For these theological graduate students and young male scholars, it is clear that the answer to such a question was, at that time, self-evident. Any analysis of Yoder's dominating behavior towards women as an issue in his interpersonal life and as an issue in his theology, ecclesiology, missiology, and system of social ethics was not a worthy topic for their consideration.

In addition to this behavior's fundamental public disrespectfulness and professional rudeness, it communicated quite clearly that the young female graduate student's questions were, in their male opinion, irrelevant to the academy *and* to the institutional church's work in the world. Academic questions about the role of domination and subordination in Yoder's life and in Yoder's written work could be dismissed out of hand as unimportant topics to talk about and to question. For these men, the path to appropriating Yoder's theology and ethics was apparently clear. Themes of obedience, and subordination in Yoder's theology and the concomitant realities of his abusive, dominating, and aggressive behaviors towards women were irrelevant to the religious academy's studies of his intellectual legacy. They were, therefore, irrelevant to a study of his life and work.

c) *Knowing what we do know about Yoder's lived-life (which included accusations of multiple episodes of sexual transgression and sexual harassment directed towards single and married women who had reached their sexual majority) how should we Anabaptist-Mennonites read, preach and teach Yoder. Should we, as Mennonite-Anabaptists approvingly include him in the required canon of Mennonite theologians and ethicists? Can or should we do so without identifying his troublesome behavior to future generations of preachers, teachers, and academic scholars? What, if any, necessary safety precautions in reading and appropriating Yoder's intellectual legacy, do we need to introduce to our readers, listeners, and students?*

This genre of questions arose in an electronic mail discussion with professional Anabaptist-Mennonite colleagues in peace studies, conflict studies, theology, women's studies and Christian ethics. Here it seems to me we have a very different kind of exegetical and hermeneutical question. The life-as-actually-lived becomes the lens by which an author's theology and its meaning(s) are examined. Or, it does not. How such a perspective might change our analysis of Yoder's theology has not been tested.

This is not a simplistic matter of simply excluding an abusive individual's intellectual body of work from our classrooms or our sermons. Nor is it a matter of arbitrarily and automatically concluding that only his words matter and can, therefore, be unthinkingly applied to contemporary problems, situations, and issues. These questions present us with a real dilemma of how to introduce intellectual works written by personally abusive authors in a manner which does not unconsciously envy, exonerate, abrogate, excuse or deny the individual's behavioral transgression; in a way which does not seem to glamorize the abuser and his abusive actions and thus perpetuate it in future generations.

When a body of work is contextualized in this manner, new questions emerge and new interpretations become possible. When an entire life legacy – examined whole – is forwarded into future generations by a contemporary one, then those generations can examine its relevancy for their theologies (or lives) in a more comprehensive manner. They can examine its pitfalls as well as its leaps of understanding.

Published posthumous book chapters and journal articles about Yoder's theological legacy have, in general, avoided the messy factual realities of

his adult life. While the presence of sexual misconduct is abstractly mentioned by phrases similar to *sexual misconduct* or *inappropriately crossing sexual boundaries* (usually in short paragraphs or in footnotes) (Hauerwas, 1999, 2010; McClendon, 1998; Nation, 2006; and Zimmerman, 2007), most of Yoder's friends and apologists do not name Yoder's specific behaviors nor are they discussed in depth. In as much as *Elkhart Truth* journalist Tom Price wrote a series of investigatory articles in the summer of 1992, we do have (or can identify if we wish to do so) a rough continuum of behaviors which specific women found offensive and abusive.[16]

In the religious academy's literature to date we could infer, as casual readers, that an isolated act (or acts) of mutually consenting adultery, not repetitive and offensive, even frightening, acts of sexual harassment towards adult women, was the sexual misconduct issue in Yoder's life. Thus, victim accusations about his repetitive acts of sexual abuse and gender harassment were, and continue to be, in my opinion, implicitly denied, minimized and trivialized. By their very brief and very abstracted presence, readers are distanced from specific questions about the impact of Yoder's behavior. Roman Catholic literature about the current pedophile-clericalism scandal identifies this kind of verbal maneuver as using code words.[17] When we use code words in this way we deflect and cover over factual reality. The deception is subtle. Appearing on their surface to reveal truth, code words actually obfuscate, hide and deflect factual truth from view. Such a deflection always serves a particular ideology and/or a particular social reality - self-institution-protective cover-ups.

No one in the published materials about Yoder's theological and ethical legacies inside the Mennonite or Believers Church religious academy or Christian American ethicists seems, yet, to have recognized *and* publicly acknowledged the consequences of Yoder behaviors in the ongoing lives of his victims. In fact, the reality that there were (and are) victims appears to be totally ignored. Yoder's victims, like the specifics of his behavior, have disappeared into the deep foggy mists of the historical past.

The implicit (and occasionally explicit) assumption is often expressed that Yoder's four year long (1992-1996) engagement with Mennonite Church discipline processes has permanently resolved the hermeneutical issue of how to read, interpret, and appropriate Yoder's theology and social ethic.[18],[19] Embedded in this assumption is a perspective that in 1996 Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church permanently cleared the

deck of all questions regarding Yoder's theological legacy. Such an assumption frees, it is assumed, future generations to appropriate Yoder's theology whole and unquestioned. It assumes that the disciplinary process resolved all of the messy, nasty interpersonal realities in his life from 1965 until 1996.

Because, McClendon,[20]Nation,[21] Zimmerman,[22] and others vociferously assert that Yoder voluntarily, willingly and obediently entered into his denominational church's discipline process, any doubts about his theology have been erased, rescued or resolved. According to this line of reasoning, he faithfully lived within the ancient Anabaptist-Mennonite principles of his inherited faith tradition *and* inside the essential ecclesial and ethical values he preached to others.

In his colleagues' and friends' posthumously published commentary about this time in Yoder's life, it has been stated he fully repented, apologized and that his ordination credentials were restored.[23] No where have I seen it noted or remarked upon, outside of the Indiana-Michigan Conferences official periodical, *The Gospel Evangel,* that his 1992 suspended ordination credentials were permanently revoked in 1996.

The reality that Yoder had to be cajoled and persuaded in a pre-planned telephone intervention by three of his long-time theological and ethical apologists and defenders (Hauerwas, McClendon, and Stassen) to agree to participate in his denomination's four-year-long disciplinary process tells us that personal remorse and repentance were not major factors in his life in 1992.[24]

During the years from 1992 until 1997, Yoder's continuing resentful hostility towards the Indiana-Michigan Conference Accountability and Support Group (ASG) process was an underground topic of conversation within certain segments of the Mennonite higher education community in Northern Indiana. He was often, insiders reported, intensely resistant to these almost monthly conversations as well as the conference-mandated therapeutic evaluation and treatment processes. Significant reports floated inside the local Mennonite community that he often appeared recalcitrant as he argued for his personal belief system and its rationalizations about the impact of his previous behavior in the lives of others.[25] Since not all women, in retrospect, appeared to resent his approaches and propositions, he was supported in this line of arguments by their presence in his life.[26]

In a posthumously published unfinished book (Yoder, UND, 1995) it appears that Yoder believed himself to be an innocent recipient of his denominational leaders' (and maybe his mother's and wife's) arbitrary attempt to respond to and to control his life with punitiveness. It appears that during his encounters with the ASG process, he concluded that his denomination's process of accountability with him was a form of unwarranted punishment.[27],[28] He used, in the preparation and rough draft writing of this complex manuscript, his formidable intellectual ability to create a beginning argument for his status as his denominational Church's victim.

While it is a factual reality that Yoder's denominational church absolved him from any permanent and continuing accountability for his behavior (and the long-term consequences of that behavior in the lives of others), I personally have come to question whether or not Yoder ever privately or publicly repented. In the written records that I have reviewed, there is no evidence of any statement of public accountability to his congregational or denominational church. There is no visible evidence of any serious remorse regarding his actions against his victims. I have found no evidence that he demonstrated remorse, repudiated his behavior or changed any of the elaborate intellectual rationalizations he had created and used (for almost twenty years) to support and defend his behavior. Nor have I heard or read evidence to support the published contention that he sought out all of his victims, apologized for his actions, and sought to make amends.[29]

Restoration to His Role as Denominational Spokesperson

The July-August, 1996 issue of Indiana-Michigan Conference publication, *The Gospel Evangel announced* the denominational church's decisions to restore Yoder full membership but to permanently terminate his ordination credentials. Considering the institutional church's long engagement with questions of Yoder's sexual misconduct behaviors, the announcement is surprisingly cryptic. The announcement begins by notifying the church at large that the Conference's disciplinary processes with Yoder have concluded. It continues:

> *The ASG's final report stated that Yoder made significant changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to bring closure to the process. They also report that Yoder has gained greater awareness of and*

> *appreciation of forgiveness in the faith community. The Church Life Commission commends Yoder for participating in the process to its conclusion.*
>
> *While recommending the continuing use of an accountability plan, the CLC of the IN-MI Mennonite Conference encourages Yoder and the church to use his gifts of writing and teaching* (p. 2)*.*

The Conference's public action of commending Yoder seems very strange to me. The dictionary definition of the word commend includes (1) to praise, (2) to recommend, and (3) to put into the care of another. In the context of the sentence above, it is clear that Indiana-Michigan Conference officers are praising Yoder for his participation.

Do we commend (praise or recommend) a bank robber for doing time? Do we commend (praise or recommend) a child for doing his quiet time outs in a corner? Do we commend (praise or recommend) a domestic abuser for stopping his abuse during jail time? Do we commend (praise or recommend) a victimizer to his victims?

I find this comment to be off-putting. It dissembles the realities of Yoder's life and his often hostile encounters with his ASG committee. It is a profound form of obfuscating dissimulation. The statement does nothing to address Yoder's victims. It ignores the Rev. Chilton Knudsen's 1985 clear warnings to Mennonite Church denominational leaders about the likelihood of recidivism in cases of serial clergy abuse.[30]

The clinical issue of recidivism is complex. Clinical literature teaches us that in situations, extended over a long period of time, of serial sexual and gender abuse, recidivism is a very likely prospect – no matter how much an abuser promises to change. Good intentions do not necessarily lead to good behavior. Thus, clinical wisdom teaches us that sexual and gender abusers, even after concluding treatment, have a high probability to return to their specific pattern or abusive behavior. While the Conference officers in their formal statement recommended a continuing process of accountability to the church for its ongoing management of Yoder's behavior, there appears to be no formal plan. Certainly there is no visible written or anecdotal evidence that such a process of continuing accountability actually occurred. Informally, inside the Elkhart-Goshen Mennonite community, it was clear, ASG meetings with Yoder ended.

They did not continue in the intervening months between the church's announcements of his reconciliation until his death.

Since the Mennonite Church in Northern Indiana no longer had (1) the ability to manage John's professional career because he was no longer in the employment of Mennonite institutions; (2) the ability to utilize ordination credentials as a leverage in supervising his behavior since they were revoked, the denomination was left with few compelling or mandatory tools to monitor Yoder's behavior and to hold him accountable for it. It appears they intended to rely on Yoder's voluntary compliance with the Church's desires for his behavior – a tactic which had not worked in the previous twenty years.

What they did in the above statement, therefore, was to make it possible (1) for the denomination's press to resume publication of Yoder's intellectual work; (2) to re-start his lecturing, consulting, and writing career inside the Mennonite Academy and other Mennonite Church organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee's peace desk; and (3) to allow him to serve on official church-wide boards and committees. The announcement re-established him as a credible source of theological and ethical teaching inside the various denominations represented by the Believer's Church nomenclature. It re-opened the door to an end-of-life festschrift celebrating his life and academic accomplishments.

The Conference's statement appears, therefore, to represent a political decision and statement rather than a theological or pastoral one. It definitely establishes a theological preference for Yoder's academic life rather than for his victim's wounds. To my clinical way of thinking, the church, therefore, casually and without much thought, re-opened the potentiality door to the likelihood of future episodes of misconduct. Only Yoder's precipitous death in 1997, less than two years after his church's announcement of the end of its disciplinary process with him permanently ended any possibility for future violations. In death, unlike in life, recidivism became impossible.

I personally believe the Conference's reasoning in 1996 was both disingenuous and potentially dangerous to new groups of vulnerable women.[31] Their public announcement participated in and continues to participate in the social fiction that all was well (forgiven) in Yoder's

communal life and that everyone was peaceably reconciled to each other and to their denominational church at the end of Yoder's life.[32]

Honoring the Voice of Yoder's Victims

In addition, the Conference announcement's sentence about Yoder gaining *a greater awareness of and appreciation for forgiveness* is puzzling. When I electronically mailed the *Gospel Evangel* press release, highlighting this sentence, to a Mennonite clinical friend and, in a deliberately neutral tone, asked for his interpretation, he replied, *what the %#^* does that mean?* The official announcement's words seem deliberately obfuscating. Does the sentence mean (1) Yoder's church absolved him; (2) Yoder's victims forgave him; (3) that Yoder forgave his church; (4) that Yoder forgave his accusers (i. e., victims; (5) that Yoder's family forgave him or (6) that Yoder forgave his church. Who was forgiven and who did the forgiving?

After reading and re-reading the complete announcement many times – in light of my own questions - I finally hypothesized that conference officers did the forgiving in a process of institutional absolution and that Yoder expressed appreciation for their actions. In retrospect, the announcement's apparent unawareness of the prerogative of victims of abuse to choose the time and manner of their forgiveness is striking.[33]

A more appropriate announcement, it seems to me now, would have been a simple declaration (1) that the ASG process of discipline was completed, (2) that Yoder was restored to full fellowship with his denominational church, and (3) that after conversations with John, conference officials had decided to permanently revoke his ordination credentials. Such a factual declaration would have allowed denominational officials to restart John's Mennonite career without comment. It would have protected John's confidential personnel rights. It would have avoided institutional denial of John's often angry responses to the disciplinary process. It would have allowed for more work to be done with victims and with John regarding complex issues of remorse, repentance, making amends, and seeking reconciliation. It could have, in short, participated in the healing of a denomination whose academic community had been (and remains so today) deeply divided on topics of Yoder's theological and social legacies.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to exhaustively examine the meaning of forgiveness in situations of clergy sexual harassment and clergy sexual abuse, but Mennonite theology has not historically had hierarchy absolution as one of its options in dealing with (1) human sin or human offenses inside the community of faith; (2) managerial decisions about the employment of individuals who have engaged in or who are currently engaging in sinful acts against others inside the community of faith. Even Yoder's own ecclesial theology does not make a place for such socio-theological institutional practices.[34]

It is one thing for a denomination's organizational personnel managers to decide that continuing employment or even restored employment is desirable. It is one thing for a denomination or a congregation to choose to restore a member to full fellowship. It is quite another to publicly and institutionally absolve an individual of all accountability to previously-victimized individuals for his actions. It is difficult to see how denominational officers by this announcement perceived internally that they protected themselves and the denomination by suppressing informed protests – no matter how under the table these are - by Yoder's victims, their families, and their advocates.

I spend time on this set of paragraphs because of my awareness that many individuals in an extended Mennonite environment have said to me that they continue to hold the church accountable fifteen years after Yoder's death, for its collective failures and its managerial mismanagement of Yoder. When I ask them to talk more about these deeply-held personal opinions, they refer to (1) the years between 1984 and 1992 or to (2) the 1996 announcement of restoration. Not one of them has questioned whether or not Yoder *should have been restored* to a participating congregational membership in his denomination.

Many, however, have questioned the denomination's leadership personnel for their decisions to commend and recommend Yoder for his leadership role in the denomination. The apparent decision of denominational leaders to absolve Yoder for his prior behavior infuriates some Mennonite academics. In fact, the words, *he was absolved,* arose first in my personal consciousness inside an extended conversation with some of my Mennonite theological and ethical colleagues and peers. Yoder's denomination's pragmatic use (whether self-consciously or not) of a Roman

Catholic theology of absolution has been repugnant (and remains so) to some Mennonite individuals in the church's academic and pastoral guilds.

I have heard more Mennonite academics swear regarding this topic of Yoder's absolution than any of the other topics contained in this book. When questioned about their anger, my friends' and colleagues' emotional responses are intense and well-focused. Few members of the denomination's various religious studies programs, however, have spoken out about these complex denominational issues in any public forum. My sense of the matter is that many of them, while dissenting from their denomination's policies regarding Yoder's life and legacy, remain silent for fear of collegial and denominational reprisals.

The angriest conversations with non-victimized Mennonites (lay and ordained) which I have listened to during the past six years are with people who are furious with the Mennonite hierarchy's management of the last five years of Yoder's professional life as a Mennonite (1992-1997). They perceive, whether accurately or not, that he was not held to an acceptable standard of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and communal praxis vis-à-vis full accountability towards his victims *and* towards a wide variety of lay individuals in his spheres of influence. They perceive that he was given special considerations and treatment that other less-gifted, less-well-connected, and less-powerful individuals would not have been given. They protest, when asked, the denominational church's double standard in managing Yoder's misconduct and doctrinally mandated sexual misconduct of the laity.[35]

One correspondent rhetorically and cynically commented, *because of who he was, they just gave him a pass, didn't they?* Another individual alluded to the intense lobbying which the ASG and Indiana-Michigan Conference received from powerful and well-connected individuals who wanted the disciplinary process to end sooner rather than later *and* who sought Yoder's immediate return and full restoration to credibility and acceptability. This individual, rightfully so I think, perceived that these powerful intra-denominational and inter-denominational lobbying efforts changed the disciplinary process and its outcomes in dramatic and significant ways. The official church, finding itself caught in a firestorm of under-the-table lobbying by powerful and well-connected individuals, *blinked*, my colleague told me.

In my conversations with victims, on the other hand, I have encountered little outrage and no swearing at all. Instead, I repeatedly witnessed a kind of stoic resignation. The issues that faced them during Yoder's lifetime were never satisfactorily resolved. He did not, they tell me, apologize to them. He did not seek to make amends. Many of them do not believe he experienced remorse or that he repented. In time, they told me, they came to realize that their healing or absence of healing was not dependent on him. These offended and victimized women reported in our conversations and correspondence that they (in one way or another) have gone on with their lives. In other words, they had moved beyond that time in their lives. Yoder's abusive encounters with them are in their past and not in their present. In essence, in the years since Yoder's death, they have moved beyond Yoder's malicious influence over them.

Yet their pervasive and collective silence haunts me. There is an aspect of their lives as Mennonite women that can never be discussed in public because they fear institutional reprisals. In addition, they fear the collective blaming judgment of their faith community. While the damage to their personal lives has been walled off by this silence, its very presence speaks volumes about the political realities of the post-death Yoder church. While Yoder can no longer harm them by his speech and deeds, their institutional church can and sometimes does.

Another reality is present in this landscape. While some victimized women remain active in the Church's life of worship and service, others have removed themselves permanently from the Mennonite community. Some no longer consider themselves to be Christians or Mennonite.

In talking with a variety of colleagues, victimized women and their advocates I sometimes asked them about the wisdom of doing such a case study and book of essays at this moment in Mennonite life and culture. Many of them replied something like this:

> *Yes, telling the Yoder-victim-Mennonite Church story from those years needs to be done! Do it! I cannot or do not want to re-enter that time of my life to write about it, but the story needs to be told and it needs to be told truthfully. I personally refuse to be the face of the Yoder story inside my denomination. If I can help you by telling you my story or by sharing my stash of paper information with you, I will do so. If you want*

introductions to other victimized women, I will put you in touch with them. But I don't ever want to be identified.

After reading an early and very rough draft of the Yoder timeline,[36] one offended woman sent me a very short personal note. All it said was, *you go girl!* This same woman later agreed to read a more finished draft and to comment on it for me. When I asked her if she wanted to be publicly acknowledged for her helpfulness to my process of gathering information and gaining understanding, she quietly refused to be identified. She was content, she said, with the knowledge that the Yoder-victim-Mennonite Church story might be discussed in a different way than it has been to date.

In this set of essays, therefore, I have honored a wide variety of individuals' requests to remain unidentified. Where I tell victim's stories or comment upon victim's experiences, I have merged stories so that no story is, in that telling factually true as an individual's story. I have changed details of those stories in the model I learned for clinical reporting in graduate student clinical papers. Where at all possible, I have used previously-reported and public information to document the types of abuse which Yoder was known by his to have done.

Most assuredly, Yoder's precipitous death assisted many women to move on. Knowing it was no longer possible to find a shared pathway to forgiveness, mutuality, and reconciliation, they were able to relinquish their demand for his change and repentance. They were able to relinquish their internal demand that he explain himself to them, that he acknowledge that he had harmed them. Some of these individuals, however, are not as sanguine or resolved about their personal or professional relationships with the institutional church.

In light of my comments above about the women I know or have met, I do feel obliged to note that several of my clinical friends who live inside various Mennonite communities have reported to me that not all of Yoder's offended victims have made a safe transit into full healing. Some, I have been told, remain stuck inside the experiences of their victimization. Some remain trapped inside the victim's often hidden but insistent plea for understanding: *can you tell me why did he choose me?* Others, upon encountering, specific instances of the denomination's theological and ethical preference for Yoder's academic work, as for example, a laudatory article about Yoder and his theology of nonviolence in a church publication,

re-engage with their rage or their depression. According to one clinical friend, one refrain he has heard in his practice, is that *I really don't know why that happened to me. I really don't understand it at all. My* friend reports that at times offended women have told him, *I don't want to talk about that time in my life at all. I just want to forget it. I want to forget I ever knew that man.*

One woman told me that in the years since Yoder's death she watched the Mennonite Church Press publish and praise Yoder and his work in glowing terms. One consequence in her life has been a slow but continuous disengagement from the ethnic church of her childhood, the denomination into which she was baptized as a teenager. *A long time ago I stopped reading the church press*, she told me. Adulatory articles about Yoder infuriated her. *It seemed so wrong-minded to me to praise him. Disillusioned by my denomination's denial about his abusive behavior, I stopped attending Sunday morning worship services. No one even noticed I was no longer there. Not one person asked me how I was or why I'd stopped attending. Now, the only time I enter a Mennonite Church building is to attend family events such as weddings and funerals. I would avoid all of those events too if I felt I could do so without offending my family.*

The Picasso Question

> *We can consider a work of art. Even though it may speak the same language as the viewer, this latter must have as profound a grasp of that language as the artist who painted the picture. The profundity of our comprehension is bound up with the profundity of our real-life experience, and the latter is bound up with the words of our language.*
>
> Juan Luis Segundo[37]

d) *Does our awareness of Picasso's violence against women change how we look a, understand, and interact with his paintings or sculptures? Does not this same question apply to Yoder's construction of theology?*

This question was raised by a colleague and friend from one of the liberal arts disciplines as I talked about my perception of the 21st-century Yoder

scholarship dilemma: does Yoder's life, as it was actually lived, change our perception or our understanding of his intellectual work in the disciplines of Christian ecclesial theology, Christian missions, and Christian social ethics? Whether or not it does, should it do so?

While raising details of Picasso's life may seem irrelevant to our understandings of Yoder's life and work, I thought my colleague's question was very helpful. It made me step outside the theological guild to look at my questions from a slanted view. It provided another lens with which to examine abusive behaviors towards women by men who were or are culture critics and creators.

This question raises an important comparison because theology, just like the visual arts, is a form of human creation. Theology, just as do the visual, written, and dramatic arts, relies strongly on symbols and sign systems that relate to transcendence. Consequently, these kinds of comparative cross-disciplinary questions cannot easily be dismissed as inappropriate or irrelevant.

The arts, just like other human constructions in theology, philosophy and ethics, are potent acts of culture questioning, culture legitimizing, and culture creating. Each of these human activities has traditional verities and orthodoxies. Each reflects on the human in order to create new future-oriented questions and new values in human experience and communal life. Each creative process (theological construction and artistic creation) of necessity relies on metaphor, image, icon, simile and other subtle forms of communication to express the ineffable. Both explore and express transcendent spiritual realities that cannot be known by other means. Both can reinforce and perpetuate the known, transgress it, destroy it, or transform it. Each of these various forms and disciplines seeks to transcend the present moment. Each responds, therefore, to historical realities and to the contemporary world in light of the present moment and future potentialities.

Who, for example, once having seen Picasso's *Guernica* can see the historical violence of war and the phenomenon of aerial bombing with a sense of moral detachment? In 1981 Spain's Minister of Culture Inigo Cavero commented, *Guernica is a cry against violence, against the horrors of war, against barbarian and against civilized society's negation which supposed a confrontation among men….Nobody should interpret the work*

as a flag for any sector – let us look at Guernica as a pure and simple rejection of brutal force (Quoted in Chipp, p. 190).

Picasso's *Guernica* is not a decorative, sentimental commodity or commentary. It refuses to glorify war and its brutality. Rather, the artist Picasso sought to communicate something much deeper than words allow. Encountering this work, as we enter into our own interior conversation with it, we are moved and changed. Some new space or new understanding opens inside of us. We discover that our personal values and life-commitments are being simultaneously addressed *and* re-shaped.

Because theology's specific task is to talk to us about God (or the gods), it too must create metaphorical, imagistic, symbolic, and iconographic language about transcendence. It is this complex non-lineal language which communicates to us and stirs us. This reality is similar for ethical reflection as well. The theologian and the ethicist each wants to communicate his own understanding of the divine prerogative in human life. Each wants to communicate something to us regarding the appropriate human response to complex socio-personal issues of transcendence and morality.

The ecclesial theologian, in addition, wants to tell us something about life inside God's earthly community. She or he wants to teach us how to live with each other in such a way that, by our lives in community, we become a manifestation of or a witness to God's will on earth.

Since the divine reality and will cannot be grasped directly by human senses and perception, Christian theologians and ethicists attempt to teach us by metaphor and simile about the divine will and a call for moral living in community. To do so, the theologian or ethicist must rely on the rough and imprecise tools of the people's common language. Even the technical languages of theology and ethics are rooted deeply in the soil of the ordinary languages and vocabularies of their socio-cultural origins.

In such a dilemma metaphor, simile, and iconic symbols become the linguistic and visual methodologies for communication. In encountering their works, we are challenged to think about our own perceptions of God (or the gods). Reading their books or attending their classes, we are challenged to think about personal and communal morality. We are guided in our thinking about self-authenticity and communal integrity. As we

ponder and then integrate their ideas into our own, we are changed. What had previously only lived inside the theologian's or the artist's complex personal mechanisms of human consciousness, now resides inside our own. The theologians, like the artist's, images and thoughts become transformed into our images and our thoughts as we think along side of him by seeing, reading or hearing his human work. Our encounters with his life and work, therefore, function as a form of human revelation and transformation.

As with the musical composer who responds to the music heard in the silence before it is written, the poet who encounters the image before it is encoded into words, or the visual artist who uncovers the work in the process of creating it, so too the theologian-ethicist must enter deeply into his or her own pre-conscious and conscious experience of the human condition and question it. It is not only the hand that writes the narrative he wishes to communicate. His entire person, in all of its personal complexity, is engaged as he does the work of theological construction. Who he is as a person is, therefore, inevitably revealed in his work.

Perhaps in our speech and in our writing we human beings reveal what has been, just moments before, only an intuitive yet unformed knowing inside of ourselves. Perhaps it is only in the act of speaking or writing that we know precisely what we want to communicate.

Whatever awareness of God, for example, that the soul holds inside human consciousness we cannot, as human beings, directly share our experience of such an awareness. We need the tools of creativity: speech, visual images or sounded notes. We count on the vocabularies of verbal language and nonverbal gestures to convey what is essentially not precisely and directly accessible or communicable.

As with all of the creative (and perhaps theoretical science as well), human experience is, therefore, the ground of theological and ethical reflection. It cannot be otherwise. Likewise, our reception of others' work is shaped by our own sensing, perceiving, intuiting and thinking human experience. This also cannot be otherwise.

It goes without saying that one can appreciate an artist's creative product without knowing anything at all about its creator. One can stumble into an art gallery and be frozen in place by a work of art that has revelatory

powers in one's life. Likewise, it is possible in a public space to be captured by a piece of anonymous music that expresses a pre-existing but inchoate something inside us or reveal something new altogether. It is possible, theoretically at least, for someone to read theology or ethical texts in such a manner as well. An individual could pick up an un-named book of theology or ethics and find God or a new direction for her life.

However, it seems to me that appreciation of all forms of human creativity – including the arts, theology and ethics - is greatly heightened by cognitive knowledge. If we are informed about German bombing of a village in Picasso's Spanish homeland, we gain more awareness of *Guernica's* social context. We learn, as well, about the man Picasso whose strong reactions to the news of this bombing led directly to the work's creation. If we know that Picasso, himself, sometimes identified with mythical animals as his alter ego, we can perhaps see his face in one of the anguished animal forms of this work. The more we learn about the painting's context and its creator, the more informed we are in our emotional and cognitive responses to it.

The socio-historical context of the life of the artist and the processes of creation of his actual work begin a dialogue inside of our awareness. We become part of the conversation. As a participating conversationalist, our knowledge itself can transform our perception and deeper our understanding of the work we are viewing. Our response to the work is not corrupted by our knowing. Instead, it is deepened and we are transformed. In that transformation, the work gains new meanings. Each subsequent time we visit the work, we may see more and more nuances of meaning.

These overlapping and sometimes contradictory or paradoxical nuances of knowing may complicate our awareness of the work itself. But the now-informed work of creating meaning in our psyche can enliven our understanding of the work. With each encounter, we are given the opportunity to stretch and to grow.

Thinking About the Victimization of Women

Since sexual violence against women is such a culturally accepted reality for Western cultures and since sexual violence is often trivialized, minimized, kept hidden or denied, it is hard to sort one's way through this

hermeneutical question about how to read Yoder's work. If we continue to look slantwise at these hermeneutical questions, perhaps, we can gain a better perspective with which to examine them directly.

Were we to say, for example, as writers of theology and social ethics that the twentieth century Jewish holocaust (the Shoah) in Europe and the nuclear holocaust in Japan have become irrelevant and unimportant issues in our post-World-War-Two theological construction about the doctrine of God or the ecclesiology of the church, our position would be, indeed should be, harshly criticized by our colleagues.

If we knew of a theologian-ethicist who had been convicted and jailed as a serial sexual abuser of pre-pubertal children, it is impossible to believe that his continuing theological legacy regarding the people of God would not be read in light of his aberrant criminal behavior, conviction and imprisonment.

When, however, the issue is sexual misconduct by a male theologian-ethicist towards adult women, there is much less cultural urgency to look at his embodied historical behavior as one test of the credibility and usefulness or faithfulness of his theology and ethical thinking for the people. Because the general climate of religious and secular culture tends to believe that sexual violence towards women is not a serious issue, we are culturally enabled to overlook the serious consequences of this behavior in the actual lived-lives of others. The cultural normality of such behavior, indeed the cultural normality of its male perpetrators, contributes a shared communal sense that the sexual violation of women is not an important theological issue.

Because of the cultural *is-ness* of men's sexual violence towards women, it becomes invisible and almost totally impermeable to examination and critique. There is a certain sense in which we do not see abusive violence towards women as an important form of violence at all. Our culture's blinders assure us that such violence is *the way things are and the things have always been*. We are further assured that such violence is *no big deal*. In such a view, no permanent harm has been done. We are culturally advised that, after all, *boys will be boys*. Our culture's subliminal view of sexual violence against women is that when such events happen in a woman's life, it is her own fault. In this view, either her character is immoral or her behavior is irresponsible.[38] In short, the world cannot be a predictable, trustworthy, and just place, if bad things happen to people who

do not, in some way or another, deserve them. By blaming victims for their misfortune and victimization by another, we seek to protect our view of the world as safe, reliably predictable, and just.

Picasso Revisited in Light of his Relationships with Women

> *My work is like a diary. It's even dated like a diary. To understand it, you have to see how it mirrors my life.*
>
> Pablo Picasso[39]

e) *Does Yoder's alleged or embodied abuse of adult women matter to us as we teach, preach, and appropriate his theology? Is the presence of his historical actions towards women relevant or irrelevant to the words he has written and taught? Can and should we ignore the presence of his actual behavior – his historical actions in the shared world of others when using and teaching his written intellectual legacy?*

In thinking about my friend and her questions about Picasso, more and more questions kept surfacing in my conversations and in my personal reflections, I said repeatedly to myself, *of course everyone knows about Picasso's sexual amorality and his nasty abusive treatment of his models and sexual partners. Of course every one knows about his nightly patronage of brothels. None of this knowledge affects the world's perceptions of his genius nor does it affect our appreciation of his art. None of our knowledge about his personal life and abusive relationships with a long string of women affects our interpretation of his work. None of it changes our transcendent encounter with his work*.

But, I continued to argue with myself: *Picasso was not writing books about nonviolence, ecclesiology, ecumenism, missiology, and Christology. He was not seeking to convert his viewers and listeners to an opinion about desirable non-violent ways to live the Christian life*. As a friend (Gene Miller, 2008) reminded me, it was Yoder, and not Picasso, who was writing about the ethics of *revolutionary subordination*. In Miller's estimation several lacunae exist: Yoder fails to address ecclesial powers and the personal power of individuals.

After a month or so of relentless internal conversation, I found myself wondering about my friend's assumptions that everyone knew, ignored, and excused the behavior of Picasso because of the genius of his life and work. Certainly, I was certain, art world insiders and art historians knew about Picasso's troubled and troublesome relationships with women – his wives, his models, his mistresses, and brothel prostitutes. But did every museum visitor know?

Suddenly, the question about knowing took on a different valence? *Was it important for every viewer of his work to know? Was it essential? Did knowing change the viewer's perception of the work? If so, should it do so? Since the artist was dead, did these questions about meaning matter?*

As I mentally reviewed my first encounters with Picasso's art – most specifically the painting *Guernica,* I realized that in my undergraduate college art appreciation course, no one had raised these kinds of hermeneutical questions about the relationship of an artist's lived-life to an on-going understanding, appreciation and utilization of the intellectual and creative contributions he made to the people. What was, I wondered, the relationship of great creativity to great abuse?

While my undergraduate teachers may have known such information (although recently I have come to a personal hypothesis that they likely did not have this knowledge in 1960), it was not broached in the classroom setting. Having no factual information such considerations and questions were non-issues and non-questions. In the absence of knowledge, it was impossible for students to study a creative work in light of these kinds of questions. It was impossible to discover and discuss questions or the relationship of the lived-life to the work because we had no accurate factual data.

As an undergraduate I heard lectures about the art community in which Picasso had flourished and I learned to place his work in the context of his contemporary artist cohort group. Since, however, no one talked with me about the gender politics of his work. I was, therefore, not given the information I needed in order to ponder the meanings of such a question in my own encounters with his work.

It was not until years after I had graduated, that I began to read feminist criticism and feminist biography about Picasso and his work. Only then did

I learn about his abusive treatment of women. Consequently, as part of my preparation for writing this chapter, I decided to read some of today's biography, art history and art criticism of Picasso's work. I found John Richardson's three volume biography (2007a, 2007b, 2007c) to answer a variety of my questions about how the contemporary art world perceives Picasso's art in light of his sexual preoccupations and abusive personal behaviors. What I found in Richardson was an informed biography, with which Picasso had cooperated, that focused on Picasso's sexuality and sexual behavior as one among many necessary lenses for understanding his life, as *the* necessary lens for understanding his art.

In Richardson's extensive work, I was given tools to read the sexual iconography and sexual biography of Picasso's work. With Richardson's guidance, as I looked at Picasso's increasingly fractured female forms, I could then reflect on his personal and sexual experience with this model or that model. I could contemplate and raise questions about how Picasso's own sexual behaviors with his partners shaped the paintings he created during those encounters and experiences. In Richardson's biography, I was given new tools to understand the progression of forms in Picasso's lifetime portfolio of work.

Knowing about his behavior towards women did make a difference in how I now viewed his work. This was most true as I viewed and interacted with his distorted and often grotesque female figures. To understand Picasso's body of work, it *is* necessary to learn his own unique iconographic language, the language by which he depicts his life experience, by which he illustrates his sexual and gender relationships with prostitutes, with mistresses, with his female children, and with his wives.

At one time during his life, Picasso, himself, commented to Richardson about the artist-constructed images of "his" women.

> *It must be painful, Picasso would say (with more pride than guilt) for a woman to watch herself transformed into a monster or fall from his work while a new favorite materializes in all of her glory* (2007a, 3).

Only in doing this additional reading about Picasso did I learn that Picasso was a disciple of the writings of the Marquis de Sade's and that his more-permanent sexual partners (his wives, models, and long-term mistresses) were each obliged to read and follow de Sade. The writings of de Sade

influenced Picasso and his friends in their views that a woman's essential nature was to submit to the male and to suffer. In this recent reading I learned that Picasso saw himself as a negative shaman – encountering and conquering evil with evil. This work of shamanic exorcism he did by means of his art and by his often violent life-relationships with women.

In one chapter Richardson comments about several paintings that the viewer is invited to become a voyeur of Picasso's sexual preoccupations and sexual relationship with this particular model. At eye level of these works we look at representations of the female model's genitalia from the visual perspective of the embodied physical lover. In this series of work, Picasso has become a procurer and in the act of creating. By the visual power of his work, he forces the viewer into voyeuristically sharing his sexual relationship with this woman or that woman.

One painting, new to me, for example, of his first wife Olga is so violent it is viscerally disturbing. Richardson comments that Picasso was working out his rage towards her and that they soon would divorce. The technical genius of the work simply underscores and heightens the portrait's depiction of Olga's dismembered terrified anguish and Picasso's dismantling rage.

As noted above, Picasso himself noted and explicitly commented to Richardson about the relevance of his daily lived-life life to an informed understanding and reading of his work.

At the conclusion of this extended year-by-year biographical reading, it became very clear to me. The more one knows about Picasso's troubled and turbulent relationships with wives, models, mistresses and bordello prostitutes, the more one understands his work. His multiple representations of dismembered and fragmented female forms are neither a psychological accident nor an emotional mistake.

There is no doubt that this new information about his sexual treatment of his wives, models, and his brothel sexual partners does affect the way I encounter and interpret Picasso's work. This is especially true of his paintings of women and children.

A Relationship of Life to Intellectual Work

f) *Is there any way in which a human product – a sculpture, a painting, a sonata, a fugue, a chorale, a poem, a novel, a book of theological ethics – does not gather together, refract and reflect the inner consciousness and world of its creator into the outer world? Does not every constructed human creation (which has been conceived in consciousness and only then manifested and projected into the outer world have its origin within the life experience of its creator? Does not every manifestation of human creativity demonstrate the personal signature of its creator? Does not every human action function as revelation – telling the individual something about himself; telling others something about him?*

If that relationship between psyche (human consciousness) and behavioral manifestation (a painting, a book) is so, then the now-created item, in some way or another, necessarily contains and reflects its creator's life experience as mediated or refracted by very personal internal reflection and cognitive analysis. The work, created within the life, inevitably reflects and reveals that life.

Once created, such an object (a book or a work of art) lives on independently of its creator. It carries his or her interior world view out into the public corridors of human history. It becomes part of a formative cultural matrix for future generations to encounter, study, and understand.

g) *Is there any way that such humanly constructed work can avoid revealing the values, beliefs, attitudes, and ideals of the work's creator? Do these manifestations of their creator's inner life not participate in the creation of culture for new generations? Do not these cultural memes seek to perpetuate themselves?*

The only way to avoid such questions is to deny the relationship of inner consciousness to manifested behavior as it relates to the artist's or theologian's body of work.

h) *As readers, viewers, or listeners can we avoid encountering the after effects of such an interactive process as the work enters our own consciousness? Do we not take the work – and all its accumulated meanings – into our perceptual processes? Does not the work begin*

to take on its own life inside our personal consciousness and our persona decisions about behavior?

At some level of our search for understanding of a historical artifact such as a book we look, therefore, to understand the creator's life history as clues to the intentionality of this particular self-expression? On a first reading or first viewing we often intuit depths of meaning that we do not yet completely apprehend or comprehend. We may turn to biography or autobiography as a way to gain insight into the meaning of the work. The depths of understanding that we seek, are related to or reside in the creator's life experience and his own search for meaning and understanding.

As we gain information about a culture-creator's lived life, it becomes impossible to completely filter out this knowledge as unimportant or trivial details – which do not affect us. As we seek to understand a book or a piece of art, we utilize all forms of our perception and knowing to comprehend, understand and utilize the work as a guide for our own life.

There is a possibility, I think, that as we read and study we are not only consciously absorbing the creator's point of view. We also, I believe, absorb it into the unconscious mind and the processes which go on there. We not only absorb what is explicit. We absorb that which goes unnoticed below the surface of our cognitive dialogue with the work. In addition, we absorb the implicit life experience and wisdom of the work's creator. It is here, I think, that the work subtly begins to influence our own behaviors and our own decisions. It is here that we become carriers of the work's complex meme structure into the future. An inanimate object, such as a book, cannot reproduce itself. To influence future human history, human hosts, vectors, and carriers must be found. It is in the present moment that each of us transmits the inherited past into the future.

How our common theology is initially shaped – by the initiating and guiding consciousness of a particular human creator or groups of creators – comes back in future generations to shape a similar consciousness and theology. This is particularly so when a work of theology, for example, is accepted as truth and remains, therefore, as an unquestioned verity.

James Carroll's (2001) significant work on Christianity's theology of the cross and atonement as shaping ideologies for Christianity's participation in the Jewish holocaust demonstrates that over time such shaping and re-

shaping processes can yield malignant and evil consequences. The consequences of what initially appears to be innocent intellectual work become truly horrific for the future victims of its impact on future culturally-shaped consciousness.

I think Carroll's model for approaching the question of Christian responsibility for the Jewish holocaust can also serve us as a model for understanding Christianity's complicit responsibility for the contemporary epidemic of violence against women and their children. [40] When we begin to look at the question of how Christian theology and ethical systems are implicated in men's domination of women and small children, we can begin, I believe, to change the trajectory of Christian history and its willingness to tolerate sexual violence for the future.

As future generations retain, refine and reify an original interpretation of a text, the text and their collective understanding of that text become more and more formalized and rigidified into required orthodoxies. Readers of non-criticized and non-analyzed texts can, therefore, use the text (consciously or unconsciously) and its interpretation as a non-analyzed rationale for hatred, domination, and abuse of others.

Carroll's conclusions help us to understand this matter of theology unanchored to its human source.

> *This kind of thinking, with attention to causality and consequences through a narrative unfolding over time, resists the spectacle of isolated incidents on which our sound-byte culture thrives. Reality perceived as uncaused instance is reality of which no moral account can be made. By this schema, for example, the bank deposits and artworks of murdered Jews exist only in locked Swiss bank vaults and on unprovenanced museum walls, and not also in a starkly united rope of history (p. 424).*

Seeking to understand the long-term moral legacies of today's realities (our historical era's narrative seen from the perspective future generations*)* leads us, as Carroll understands, into conversations that look below the surface realities of our individual and collective lives. One of the best ways I can imagine to create a violence-resistant culture in the future is by seeking and subsequently speaking the truth, the best we are able, about our own moment in historical life.

i) *Can the abstractions of human thought (music, art, theology, ethics, theoretical physics, etc) be used or enjoyed seamlessly and morally with no awareness of the historical and cultural context of their creation? Does it matter to us as consumers and appreciators of other's work to consider that one of the long-range consequences of their work may be to reify, and therefore to perpetuate, specific forms of violence inside specific, historical future communities?*

These questions are essentially a variation of the "seven generations" question asked of their European conquerors by Amerindians. We too can ask a seven generations question about our own lives and cultures. *What are the seventh generation effects of our behavioral decisions today about use of the land, about the development of personal and community wealth, about pleasure, entertainment, and morality; about domination and control: about safety and comfort? How do our decisions today affect future generations in the safety and quality of our descendant's lives? Where and what are the future consequences of our acts of violence against the eco-system and against each other? How does our interior world of consciousness shape our participation in the on-going transpersonal world of collective consciousness? In light of future generations, are we willing to be as accountable for our interior life as well as for our visible external life in the communal world? Are we willing to consult the principle of* garbage in, garbage out *in our decisions about entertainment, about theology, or about participation in the arts…or religious institutions?*

Once faced, this internal suspicion, this internal state of disbelief that all is not what it appears to be on the surface, is the *first power of the weak*.[41] It is inevitable that when one learns to honestly and with integrity face the reality of what was or what is factually true, that one's awareness, perception interpretation, and utilization of that reality (and its socio-cultural or personal context) shifts and changes. One learns to distrust the cultural story that one has previously been taught, that one has previously accepted without question. One learns to sift propaganda from reality, cultural lies from factual truths.

As Alice Miller noted above, recidivist behaviors form a topographic map that can be read. It is my belief that intellectual works also form such a map. What we choose to think about and what we choose to do with our lives reflect the complexity of our internal and external lived lives inside a

particular culture. Any search to understand an author and his or her work, of necessity, must examine both of these topographic maps.[42]

Yoder's Influence Lingers

When I think about the relationship of one human life to the life and work of another, I begin to understand the interconnectedness of life and work. Given this reality, I am increasingly cautious – even worried - about the ongoing power of Yoder's intellectual work (his theological, ecclesiological, and ethical legacy) to shape the ongoing sexual and gender history of his denominational church.

At the very least, it seems to me, Yoder's papers on marriage, divorce, adultery, singleness, homosexuality, and similar related topics must be read in the context of and through the hermeneutical lens of his embodied life. Issues in his work regarding themes of power, domination, authority, subordination, submission, obedience and gender relationships carry the potential for a strong correlation between Yoder's inner life and his behavioral life. Because of the interpenetration of war's violence and violence against women – particularly in North American contemporary culture, similar correlations may exist between his theology and ethic of violence and of war and his behavior towards vulnerable women.

Questions Continue

After my dialogue process with my colleague's question about Picasso (*Does his lived-life and his relationships with women affect our understanding and appreciation of his work?*), I was beginning to see that not all was at it appeared to be on the surfaces of such a question. My internal questions, applied to John Howard Yoder's life and his now-separated-from-his-life theological and ethical work continued to ripen.

j) Was there something in John Howard Yoder's personal and cultural life history that enabled him to abuse women? Was there something in his theology and system of Christian ethics that encouraged him to sexually assault women? Was there something in the way he thought about nonviolence that allowed him to rationalize his own violent behaviors in such a way that they continued even after women told

him that his behaviors towards them were offensive and unwelcome? Was there something in the inherited legacy of his religious heritage that prevented him from having empathy with his victims? In the interplay of his own life experience with the creative process of writing theology and ethics, how did his violence towards women factor in? What was contributory or correlative? What was causative? What was result and what was consequence? What was central and what was residue?

In a sense these questions now have a circular existence. Did his theology and system of nonviolent ethics create the occasion for and internal defense of his behavior towards women or did his behavior towards women shape his theology and ethics of nonviolence? Or, just perhaps, were both interactive and interpenetrating realities in play at all times? Until we do a close reading of Yoder's work in light of the factual truth of his historically embodied life, it is impossible to untangle and begin processes of answering such complex questions.

In light of the generational effects in which our understanding vis-à-vis the consequences of his theological and ethical work will inevitably influence future generations of Anabaptist-Mennonites and Believer's Church evangelicals, this type of analysis needs to begin and it needs to be widely disseminated.

The Dharma Growing Straight

Here I turn to Natalie Goldberg's (2004) profound Buddhist awareness that the Dharma (the embodied spiritual teachings of Buddhism) can not grow straight in an individual's life or in a community's shared life if a community's leaders' or its spiritual teachers' sexual abuse of others has been denied, hidden or covered-up. In Goldberg's opinion, the truth of abusive behavior must (1) be sought and (2) be made public so that the practicing Buddhist community can begin the corrective work needed in order to prevent a recurrence of violations and abusive sexual acts in the community's future. Only when the community rights itself by facing the truth of an abusive leader's actions inside the community can the Dharma once again grow straight.

A similar principle can be stated within Christianity. It is, Jesus and Paul teach us, by embodied human behaviors that individuals demonstrate whatever faithfulness to Christ's teachings can be found within historical individuals and communities. An individual or a community corrupted by power and many different forms of interpersonal and communal violence does not and indeed cannot, contain or manifest the truth of Christ's teaching.

The extended legacy of a theologian's life and his or her work lies not only in the free-standing and now-completely-separated-from-its–author abstraction of the written word. The legacy lies not only in the readily-visible or accessible surface of the work. The legacy lies in the deconstructed layers and nuances of the embodied life as it interacted with the creative aspects of his or her work.

Any major work of cultural importance not only shapes the present moment of its existence within culture. It also shapes the future. Just perhaps the latter is a more powerful legacy than the former.

Reading John Howard Yoder's Intellectual Legacy

k) My friend Gene Miller, an early reader of this chapter, wrote, "I have another question that seems more important to me. I would ask my question somewhat differently than you do yours. My question for you to think about is this: *knowing what I now know about the presence of sexual violence and abuse of women in Yoder's life, how now do I read him?"*

This is, I think, the very clearest statement of the hermeneutical problem faced by the Mennonite Church, the Mennonite religious Academy, Believer's Church evangelicals, and individual readers of Yoder's work. *Knowing what we do factually know (or can know if we seek out that information) about John Howard Yoder's lived-life and the factual reality that he repetitively engaged in what appear to be obsessive re-enactments of intrusive, abusive and sexually violent behavior towards women - how do we now read his theological legacy and work?*

When any form of violence gets covered over, remains hidden and denied the subsequent cultural development of amnesia and cultural blinders hide

factual social realities from view. The social reality of cultural amnesia becomes implicated in future events of similar forms of violence. Silence about today's realities guarantees that future events of violence will occur. Until any given cycle of violence is broken by human choices, its power goes unchecked.

Knowing that this is so, then it becomes urgent to uncover and undercut the presence and legitimization of such hidden and denied rationalizations and support in our shared present moment. If an individual act of sexual violence is deeply embedded within the socio-cultural context of the perpetrator's shared communal life, the context of that life and its work must be closely examined. Such work is essential work when we wish to change the culture of violence in which so many women work, live and raise their children. It is vital work when we wish to prevent the emergence of future episodes of individual or communal violence against women.

When we take John Howard Yoder's life (and its known factual events of sexual misconduct, violence and interpersonal abuse of women) as a hermeneutical framework, such a methodological approach allows us to ask different questions than have been asked to date. How did such a life trajectory become possible for a brilliant thinker and an eloquent writer in ethics and nonviolence studies? *With his passionate career-long engagement with a theology of non-resistant love as essential Christian praxis and discipleship, how is it possible that he conceived, manifested and defended to himself his repeated violations of multiple women, women whom he encountered in his ordinary day-to-day life inside the Christian community for more than twenty years?*

Concluding Comments

> *It is one trait of the 'visibility' of the church that it is not possible to distinguish Christian morality from belief. 'Discipleship' was a major dimension of the Anabaptist understanding of what faith means; there is no faith and no church without following Christ in one's life."*
>
> John Howard Yoder

In reading several of Yoder's early CONCERN era essays, it is clear that the early Yoder correlated faithful embodied discipleship and action with

the presence and reality of faith and belief as distinguishing marks of the human church. *What went wrong in his life that allowed him to deny in practice that which he cognitively knew very early in his life? Can we find, in a close reading of his published and unpublished work, clues about this drastic change in his lived-life ecclesiology?*

Juan Luis Segundo (1976b) notes that authentic theological enquiry begins with a pre-theological commitment to change the world. In order to do this, he says, we must understand the ideological mechanisms which support the status quo. Theologians must, therefore, determine that theology, itself, must support a social praxis that functions to liberate the oppressed that live inside the oppressive structures present inside malignant and abusive forms of human culture.

For theologians to do this work, the cultural world view that supports the status quo must be critically examined. In such an examination, the theologian must seek to understand the socio-cultural, socio-psychological, socio-political and socio-economic realities which normally operate below the level of human consciousness.

It is inside the subterranean manifestations of human consciousness and culture that individually and collectively we find foundations and buttresses for violence and violation; for oppression and repression. If the goal of the religious community is to create a more just, humane and compassionate community or world (the public sign of the reign of God) then individual and communal consciousness must be brought from its subterranean shelters of secrecy into the sunshine of factual truth where it can be interrogated to discover the roots of violence initiated by one individual or one group against another individual or group.

To do this work of consciousness-exhumation and examination, the theologian turns to the social sciences for help. Once our knowledge of oppressive socio-psycho-historical-cultural realities has opened our awareness, Segundo writes, only then do we return to our studies of scripture and tradition. We bring new questions to these traditional resources of faith and communal life. With new questions and new answers about what it means to be fully and completely human and to live faithfully in the present situation, we are then freed to act in non-oppressive and non-violent ways. We become freed to change the oppressive, violent trajectory of our previously shared socio-theological and cultural history.

Segundo (and other Latin American theologians) are clear: God's work in the world is not dependent upon human work. In our human seeking, however, to understand God's intentionality for human life, our socio-psycho-historical-cultural analysis prepares us to be co-participants with God in creating a more just, more humane and more compassionate community. In short, in our truthful awareness of our participation in the structures of evil, we are more able to pre-figure the reign of God because we understand the world as it actually is.

In this essay, questions about the meaning of religious professional sexual abuse have been identified. Since this is written from within an Anabaptist-Mennonite cultural context, the questions raised within this chapter have focused upon the life and work of Anabaptist-Mennonite theologian and ethicist John Howard Yoder.

This interpenetrating group of questions has been located inside one larger and more encompassing question: d*oes a life as actually lived inside human history make a difference in how we Anabaptist-Mennonites or we Evangelicals or we Believer's Church Christians understand and appropriate the academic legacies of that life?*

To date, vis-à-vis the theological and ethical legacy of John Howard Yoder, the answer to this question seems to include the social reality that publicly raising such questions endangers a young theologian's or a young ethicist's hoped-for-career-trajectory inside the Mennonite Church's religious academy. In addition, the Mennonite Church's management of John Howard Yoder included a faulty notion of accountability based upon institutional absolution and a collective declaration of forgiveness received in a situation where the acts of violence were multiple and interpersonal. It also becomes visible in the historical narrative, as written to date, that the denomination's message is that theological orthodoxy is more important than embodied orthopraxis. Finally, we see the religious academy's decision that an individual's intellectual work can be split from life and remain faithful to the church's call to be a healing and transformative social reality in a world of violence.

When we began our hermeneutical investigations into the questions of Yoder's theological faith and embodied life behaviors, we found ourselves in the situation of needing to ask previously unasked questions about the context and content of his theology. We found that we must face the

importance and meaning of sexual misconduct to our understanding of his theology.

When, in addition, we begin with the theological precondition that the ideological world (and its roots in individual and collective consciousness) must be (1) understood and (2) changed in order to stop the current epidemic of sexual violence against women, one component of which is clergy abuse, then it becomes evident that a serious examination of Yoder's ecclesial theology must begin in order to identify the seeds of violence in his own life and their fruited manifestation in his mature theological constructions. This task is urgent if we wish to avoid being the carrier of sexual abuse and violence into the future.

Footnotes

[1] See Tom Price, July 12, 2012

[2] Alice Miller, 1983, p. 64.

[3] In the summer of 2012, Pennsylvania State University's football program made international news when it was revealed that one of its assistant football coaches, Jerry Sandusky, had repeatedly abused post-pubertal but pre-majority boys on University property and that some Penn State officials had been informed about his abusive sexual actions and had chosen not to act.

[4] See Associated Press. (*Arizona Daily Star,* August 28, 2010). Parents sue priest taped having sex with daughter, p. A-18.

[5] During the summer of 2012, a Philadelphia County (PA) prosecuting attorney successfully documented sexual abuse and sexual abuse cover-ups in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Philadelphia. During this trial, the Diocese's priest personnel supervisor, Monsignor Lynn, never himself accused of sexual misconduct, was charged with and subsequently convicted of child endangerment. Sentenced to prison, his attorneys have stated they plan to appeal his conviction and the terms of his sentencing.

[6] See Thomas P. Doyle, July 13, 2008 and December 31, 2008

[7] See Anonymous, by a friend of Bill W. (ud). See also A. W. R. Sipe, January 23, 2007.

[8]See Peter Rutter, 1989 and Herbert C. Kelman and V. Lee Hamilton, 1989 for their extended discussions about social and cultural responses to whistle-blowing.

[9] Quoted by Juan Luis Segundo, 1976, p. 45.

[10] See www.ruthkrall.com to access volume one.

[11] 2002. Assessing the theological legacy of John Howard Yoder: A conference at the University of Notre Dame and 2007, Inheriting John Howard Yoder: A new generation explores his theology sponsored by the t Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre.

[12] For a different perspective, see Ted Grimsrud, 2010, 2011.

[13] See Chapter 3 for further information

[14] See Robert Rhodes, (April 2, 2002).

[15] Conversation with Keith Graber Miller, 1997.

[16] These articles have been reproduced in the Appendices section (G through L) with the permission of the *Elkhart Truth* editorial team.

[17] Thomas P. Doyle, 2006; A. W. R. Sipe, March 5, 2010; and Thomas Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, 2006.

[18] In October, 1993, *Christian Century* (p. 7) *published* Stanley Hauerwas' comments regarding Yoder's legacy, as saying, *he* [Yoder} *works as a theologian in subordination to a church pledged to witness to the nonviolent politics of the gospel. (The fact that he has submitted to his church's discipline process regarding sexual misconduct is but a testimony to his commitment to nonviolence as the community's form of behavior).* Retrieve from http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=100.

[19] Dr. Hauerwas, in a later article, however, wrote the following. *Yoder does not understand himself as a "Mennonite thinker." Indeed, if there is anything that makes him testy, it is being so pigeonholed. Those that so designate him often mean to honor him as representing a position that is necessary for reminding us of our sinfulness. But Yoder is not trying to be a reminder. He is trying to force us to recognize that in spite of what appears to be orthodox Christological affirmation; we are embedded in social practices that deny that Jesus' life, death and resurrection make any difference* (2000a, 4).

[20] James W. McClendon, 1998..

[21] Mark Nation, 2006.

[22] Earl Zimmerman, 2007.

[23] In the March-April (1998) issue of *Sojourners* (Vol. 27) readers were advised that i*ncidents of sexual impropriety two decades ago brought Yoder estrangement from the Mennonite Church and dismissal from AMBS. More recently, he went through a formal process of restitution that included apologies to all of the women involved, after which he was reinstated to the ministry of his church* (p. 8).

[24] See Stanley Hauerwas' 2010 discussion of a collegial intervention with Yoder done by James McClendon, Glenn Stassen, and Hauerwas in the late spring or early summer of 1992.

[25] Personal conversations with individuals close to the ASG work.

[26] In his series of *Elkhart Truth* articles, Tom Price reports that Yoder had agreed to stop all ongoing (one assumes extramarital) relationships. The strong implication of this comment is that in addition to non-consenting relationships, there were consenting ones.

[27] See John Howard Yoder (1995). *You Have it Coming. Good Punishment. The Legitimate Social Function of Punitive Behavior.* Retrieve from Retrieve from: http://theology.nd.edu/people/research/yoder-john-yoder For another brief reference to this unpublished book, see the John Howard Yoder citation at the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia.*

[28] See Carolyn H. Heggen and Ted Koontz (undated, ca 1992) Rough Draft of Paper: *John Howard Yoder and Church Discipline*

[29] For discussions regarding Yoder's repentance and apologies (or the absence thereof), see John Howard Yoder memorandum to George R. Brunk, lll (January 14, 1997) and Eastern Mennonite College's student newspaper's coverage of Yoder's 1997 speaking engagement at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in which he asserted that the church had forbidden him to apologize (Eshleman, *The Weathervane* 42 (10), pp. 1 and 6).

[30] Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Dunlap, IN: Reverend Chilton Knudsen consultation, 1985. For a brief summary of this consultation, see Appendix N.

[31] In his eulogy (1997, pp. 105-107) at Yoder's funeral, Erland Waltner, a former president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, commented that there was unfinished work to do, implying that the successfully concluded processes of church discipline did not accomplish all the needed actions to permanently resolve questions of Yoder's legacy.

[32] Another reality, however, was visible inside the Mennonite community in Northern Indiana during the time that Yoder met with members of the ASG. He was often, insiders reported, resistant to the conversations, the required therapeutic process and he remained recalcitrant about his personal belief system and its rationalizations of his behavior.

[33] See Chapter 15, Volume One for a more extended theoretical discussion of forgiveness. Retrieve from www.ruthkrall.com. See also Chapter 8 of this current volume for a discussion of forgiveness and accountability.

[34] Ibid.

[35] In particular, individuals who disagree with their denominational church's intolerant doctrinal and polity stance towards individuals with a partnered and consenting homosexual identity is compared with the denomination's tolerant treatment of Yoder.

[36] See Appendix F.

[37] Juan Luis Segundo, 1976, p. 98.

[38] Social psychologists explain this cultural response of blaming victims for the act of victimization they endured in terms of just world thinking. For an early explanation of just world thinking, see M. J. Lerner and C. H. Simons, 1958.

[39] Quoted by John Richardson, 2007c.

[40] See Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea's 2007 book for its discussion of incidence: 1 in 3 girls and women and 1 in 4 boys and men report being sexually assaulted and abused. Much of this abuse is reported as having occurred before the age of 18.

[41] See Elizabeth Janeway, 1981.

[42] Knowing about the sexual complexity of Paul Tillich's life and relationships with many different women affects both our contemporary reading of his theological work and our assessment of Tillich's position among the theological greats of his century. His reputation has been tarnished, to some degree at least, by the 1970's posthumous revelations of Hannah Tillich about the nature and numbers of his infidelities. His biographers, Pauck and Pauck in 1976 revealed that by the end of his life, Tillich was concerned about the potential impact of public knowledge about his life's behaviors upon the reception and utilization of his intellectual body of work.

- 5 -

Interrogating the Dead

> *My basic stance here is that we must not bury the issue in silence. We must call things by their right names and stop pretending that we are doing things for one set of reasons when the actual reasons are quite different.*
>
> Juan Luis Segundo[1]

When we examine the lives of now-dead individuals who were interpersonally violent and sexually abusive during their lifetimes, it is very easy to demonize them as *totally other, totally evil.* When we do this, it is easy to exclude them in our minds from their full share of a common humanity with us. It is very easy to polarize our goodness [or even our life status as their victim] with their evil nature (or life status as our victimizer).

However, when we seek only to blame rather than to understand, we remain tied to them. As family systems theorist and therapist Virginia Satir (1972) has so cogently pointed out, chronic or obsessive blaming of others for our own suffering is one symptom of our continuing enmeshment with them. If we have been victimized by this particular person, our continuing anger and blaming behavior after his death remind us (and others) that we remain bound to this individual, if only in our obsessive cognitive ruminations that the past *should have been* something other than what it factually was.

In the midst of our struggling attempts to understand what went astray in the trajectory of another's life (especially as his life trajectory intersected with ours), condemnatory personal judgment seems to us as the logical place for us to begin. Asking a victimizer to remove the arrows from our own heart – the arrows which he shot – ties us to the victimizer and asks him to become our rescuer. This is the logic of victim and victimization. It is, in my personal opinion, a misguided attempt to gain freedom by blaming and accusing others for our personal suffering. In terms of our long term health and psychological freedom, it is essential to move beyond this

internal psychic reality. I differentiate, therefore, between truthful story telling (which is essential to healing) and addictive or obsessive ruminations and blaming behaviors (which occur automatically) whenever an abuser's name is mentioned or his face is sighted in a crowd.

Clinicians are learning that victims of violence often have trouble recalling and then sequentially narrating the factual events of what happened to them. The journey to healing includes, therefore, a victim's re-creation of a truthful sequential fact-narrative. This can be painstaking therapeutic work and usually involves coming to full awareness of exactly what one has lost in personal encounters with abusers. In therapeutic processes of reclaiming their personal life history, traumatized individuals are encouraged to give up a personal identity as only victims. They are assisted to do any necessary grief and anger work.[2] They are encouraged to take back their own lives in as many ways as possible – including the ability to manage unruly obsessive thoughts and memories each time these emerge.[3]

The wailing inner cry of an abused self, w*hy did he choose me* is probably unanswerable. Equally indecipherable is a victim's inner sense of being responsible, or blameworthy, in some way, for the acts of victimization – these actions which so plundered her body, spirit and soul: *what did I do to deserve this? Since he abused me, I must have done something to deserve his violence. What did I do wrong? How could I have so misjudged this other person? I must have been at fault for him to do this to me. What was or is wrong with me?*[4]

By continuing to recycle in the present moment the ancient wounds of the historical past as if they were occurring in present time, the knots which the abusive dead individual tied in our lives continue to get tighter. With each mental recycling of our wrongs at his or her hands; with each recycling of our unanswerable questions, we have less personal freedom to move about the present world in trust and confidence. The prior wounds of betrayal and violation become compounded by the wounds we, today, inflict on ourselves as we re-play and re-dialogue our inner narrative about the evil things another person did to us. Understandable as they may be, our fantasies of revenge and our post-abuse mental obsessions about the need for retribution and victimizer change continue to tie us to the abuser.[5]

It is one thing to properly name events in our life history. This claiming of a truthful life history is needed work for anyone victimized by any form of

violence. It is one thing to learn the lessons of our abuse at the hands of someone who has now died. It is altogether a different matter to keep picking our wounds raw in our obsessive demand that the dead victimizer account (from the grave) for his actions as a requirement for our personal identity to re-solidify and healing to occur.

This is not to say abused individuals and members of their communities of reference cannot or should not know and discern abusive behaviors as wrong-minded, violent, or even evil. Nevertheless, judging the victimizing individual as totally other and thus unlike any other human beings we know is, I believe, a blind alley.

When we, as students of such violence, wish to stand back from the fray of accusations in order to study a perpetrator's life and when we seek to understand that life, we must try to locate this specific victimizer's personal life dilemmas. Never excusing his abusive behavior, we need to seek to understand hiss personal efforts to answer his unique life koans (*Why am I here? What should I do with my life? Who are all of these other people? How am I related to them? How do I handle such human diversity*? *How do I manage my life history and its experiences of suffering and trauma?*). It is important, if we can do so, to discern what went wrong in his life to create the internal fault lines which he later manifested in his abusive behavior? When we seek to prevent victimizations, it is essential to understand the life cycle of victimization as it occurred in human time and space.

Every time we engage another's life in dialogue with our own, we must seek to be as respectful as possible of the issues the abusive victimizer faced in the journey he made from the innocence of early childhood to become the sexually abusive adult he actually was. We may never be able to understand his own life as he understood it, but as we engage him in our questions – even after his death – the skeletal structures of his life and the actual artifacts which he left behind him can serve us as topographic maps to his inner life.

A certain practical realism is necessary: none of us can ever totally understand the life and motivations of another. We probably will never even totally understand our own lives. The fault lines in a personality, their origins, and their motivations can be described but the meaning of those fault lines to the now-dead individual and to those personal friends and

intimates who knew him well are often obscured by death *and* by the fragility of memory.

As we try to understand abuse perpetrators, it is important to hold them fully accountable, even in death, for their decisions to abuse others. Understanding, therefore, is not the same reality as excusing. Holding an abusive person (or institution) accountable, in public, for his (its) behavior, is not the same as blaming. Seeking to understand what went wrong is not the same as punishment, revenge or retaliation.

The Roots of Compassion

I am the twelve-year-old-girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate.

And I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

Thich Nhat Hanh[6]

If the goal of our study is not to punish, blame or to excuse a particular individual (in this series of essays, John Howard Yoder) for his own choices and behaviors, then it is important to think through what our goal is. In this manuscript, one goal is to understand what we can about the past in order to learn how to work at preventive actions in the present. Seeking to understand the trajectory of Yoder's life as lived within the religious confines of the Christian community, we need to document, as best as we know how to do so, what factually happened in the duration of his adult life that he so lost touch with himself and with outer social realities. As we work our way through the factual structures of his life, we ask: what went wrong in his external culture *and* in his internal life that he was facilitated in committing social acts of violence? What internal moral rudder was ill-shaped or broken so that he became a person who was willing to violate and betray his personal and professional responsibilities to himself, his family, his colleagues, his students, and the collective whole? As we begin to uncover and recognize the organizing and factual contours of his life,

then we and others can begin to ask what happened in the course of his life that allowed him or enabled him to abuse those who sought his help, who sought his mentoring, who sought his friendship, who sought his wisdom and advice, who sought to be his colleagues in the world of work, and those who shared his intimate daily life?

However and wherever we began our questioning of his life, eventually we come to an un-crossable river. Intuitively, at first, we sense the river's presence in some inchoate way: as we continue to work, we begin to intuit that we share a modicum of responsibility with him. This is not a mystical revelation. Neither is it a form of negative transference in which we identify with him.

The awareness of our responsibilities begins as very quiet questions that surface in the middle of our private ruminations about his life. It is not, we know, that we are personally accountable for his deeds. Yet we find ourselves not only questioning his life. We find ourselves questioning our own. We not only question his communities of reference. We question our own. Slowly we begin to see our shared abusive culture – our shared human experiences – as the sea that birthed his abusive wave. None of us can totally disengage and separate ourselves from the ocean of our shared human experience, culture, and consciousness. No one can be a wave without an ocean. There is, therefore, no separation of wave and ocean.

When we insist that we do not belong to this particular ocean, it now seems to me, we risk the presence of (1) denial or (2) judgmental and punitive attitudes. We risk losing or destroying our own inner capacity for compassion; our inner capacity for discernment. We risk self-righteousness. Over the past several years, I have come to understand that, for me at least, the question is not one of judging Yoder or the Mennonite Church. The question, instead, is one of discernment – of learning all we can from the troubled past in order to inform the present. By doing this work carefully, we can change the predictable trajectory into the future into a transformed one.

Nhat Hanh ends his haunting poem with the following stanzas.

> *Please call me by my true names,*
> *so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,*
> *so I can see that my joy and pain are one.*

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up
and open the door of my heart,
the door of compassion (ibid).

Nhat Hanh's poem fragment above states it so well: as students of sexual abuse and sexual violence we each have much in common with each participant in the story of abuse. Each of us has our own personal stash of *true names.* We can locate when we go in search of it, in Jungian terms, the archetype of our inner victim. We can find and name, often with great precision, our inner wounds. We each, perhaps, have our own reliquary of individuals who have harmed us during our life to date. We keep this reliquary on the private altar of consciousness. Each memorialized bone fragment contained within it participates in shaping our behavior in each present moment.

While it is perhaps harder (because we resist the process more defiantly) to identify those commonalities we share with the perpetrators of such abuse. If and when we search for them, we find that they too are present. According to archetypal reasoning, most of us will have an inner victimizer as well as an inner victim. Quiet enough and attentive enough, we can sense our personal shadow. If we think carefully about our life and its history, we recognize we too have harmed other people by our behavior and attitudes. Our actions, while perhaps not the actions of a sexual abuser, have nevertheless damaged the social web of our friendships, families, and communities. We also have a reliquary of personal and communal guilt and shame. These ancient and venerated bones from our past also shape our identity and behavior.

When we seek to understand a sexual abuse perpetrator, we must begin to converse with our inner victim and our inner perpetrator. What we discover in moments of honest self-examination is that we are at one with the young refugee girl who killed herself as a direct consequence of rape *and* that we are at one with the sea pirate who raped her – setting in motion her suicide. Our identities are complex and multiple rather than singular.[7] Each of our historical legacies are multiple rather than unitary.

In the Yoder-Mennonite Church situation, all of us who lived through that era of Mennonite life shared a socio-cultural life situation in which his

victimization and sexual harassment of women was an accepted part of the Mennonite Church's underground institutional life. As collective members of the people, we had socio-theological responsibilities to the victimized women. We also had socio-theological responsibilities to Yoder, their victimizer. Finally, we had socio-theological responsibilities to denominational institutions and the community at large. In looking back, it is clear there were many individual failures of response as well as many collective ones.

In the Yoder-Church affair Yoder's church also represents multiple identities and multiple legacies. It too has an institutional shadow. In addition to his victims, in a certain sense he also abused his church. This reality has been obscured and generally remains hidden from discussion. If we look closely enough, we can see traces of the residual wounds. We can see them whenever institutional defensiveness and secretiveness continue to manifest themselves in today's conversations about Yoder. We can see them in hidden and buried institutional files. We can see them in conversational obfuscations or outright lying. We can see them in residual and unaddressed victim questions.

In another sense of the matter, his church also became a secondary perpetrator of his abuse. The Yoder-Mennonite Church administrator - Yoder waltz was choreographed and performed with self-righteous perfection – by both partners. This perfection haunts me now when I think about it. Each partner in the intricate dance of secrecy felt victimized by their respective dance partners. Yet none of the institutional dancers, it appears, recognized they became complicit partners in the dance and thus were secondary victimizers of Yoder's victims and potential victims.

Yoder's immediate victims and the church's immediate victims were the women Yoder offended. For decades, they were isolated, ostracized and kept away from any realistic opportunity to stop the dance. Other women who sought to help Yoder's victims became pariahs. Like the offended women, they were equally excluded from questioning and stopping the dance. Their warnings, too, were ignored as unimportant. The narrative of real victims and their repeated warnings to their denominational church remains untold.

Only when we are willing to do such a candid culture and self-examination are we sufficiently freed of enmeshment in the story to ask: *what can I learn*

and what can the collective we learn about what went wrong? This means truthful naming, to the best of our ability, and the refusal to silence any part of the story in secretive maneuvers. We can refuse to deny the dance's obscene historical power and socio-cultural authority over our individual and collective lives. Only by such an examination can we move from reactive defensiveness into proactive awareness.

It is impossible, in my opinion, to work towards preventing violence-prone cultures and individuals if we have no clue about what happed to create and then perpetuate them in the first place. We need both facts and accurate language in order to understand history. No longer burying things in silence, we can begin to break open the obfuscating and secretive silences of the story and name things by their right and true names.[8]

The Multiple Bridges of Violence Perpetuation

> *What kind of exorcism would it take to free our minds and spirits from the spell imposed on us by our parents and our culture? How do we overcome the wounds that have been inflicted upon us in our youth so that we do not perpetuate an endless cycle of revenge and retaliation? In what measure can we ever be free of our past?*
>
> Sam Keen[9]

By invoking a family systems model and a public health model for understanding such episodes of violation and violence, the commitment is clear. We need to understand as completely as possible what happened culturally (systemically) as well as personally (emotionally and socio-psychologically) to enable clergy and other religious professionals to become unchallenged serial abusers or sexual predators. This kind of understanding is needed so that we can develop communities and families in which such individual and cultural fault lines do not continue to appear and reappear in future generations. Only in each present moment, therefore, can we collectively work together to change violence-prone cultures into violence-resistant ones.

The visual metaphor of a bridge illumines this for me. Each one of us forms a socially and genetically strutted bridge from the historical forever gone past to the not-yet-here future. This bridge of our lives, however, is not a

pre-existing one. Inside our ordinary and daily lives we engage ourselves in creating and forming and buttressing the bridge. Thus, we are continuously building our individual life bridge in each present moment of our lives. We, along with our generational cohorts in space and time, are creating, in each moment, the communal bridge that determines the collective pathway of our specific religious community into the future. If we want a different future for our descendants, then exists in this present moment and each succeeding present moment, we must make other decisions than we (and others before us) made in the past. We must, therefore, make conscious that which is so often unconscious. We must make visible that which is invisible, deliberately obfuscated or unconsciously obscured from awareness. We must make aware that which is unaware. We must make the decision to end our personal and cultural silence, denial, and complicity with violence.

As I have worked with the material in this chapter I have grown clearer about what I think regarding sexually abusive professional relationships. Given the particular circumstances of any lifetime (and were I to replicate that lifetime of circumstances in my own) I too might have known an inner obsessive urgency to deliberately abuse and violate others. Like everyone else, I too carry my culture's well-planted and culturally nurtured seeds of violence as well as the seeds of peace within me. I cannot exorcise the seeds of violence. They form the living potentiality that is me. What I can do, however, is to become aware of their presence and avoid fertilizing them by my daily thoughts and actions.

This awareness rescues me from a need to obsessively blame the object of my study and inquiry as *totally other* or as *totally evil*. It serves me as a reminder of our shared common humanity and educates me about the need for humility in my questioning. It reminds me of the need to develop compassionate awareness of human suffering in its many guises.

The Suffering of Abusers and Perpetrators

During the past six years I have become acutely aware of a growing opinion that initially totally disoriented and disconcerted me. I have had active arguments with it every time awareness of it emerged. That opinion is simple. The argument is much less so.

The opinion can be stated this way: individuals who abuse and cause suffering to other individuals themselves suffer – whether or not they (or others) know they are suffering. Thus, sexual abuse perpetrators suffer. If they did not suffer, they would not choose to inflict suffereing.

The argument is more complex. It involves complex personal discourses on the nature of victimization as actively *causing rather than merely passively reflecting suffering; about victimizers as the causational beginning-point of suffering rather than only the end-point transmitters of it.* Looking deeper into the situation of abusive violation, however, eventually a bit of wisdom becomes visible. It includes complex ideas about the activation of victim and victimizer archetypes inside human relationships.

I am indebted to California physician and body-mind mental health theorist Emmett E. Miller for helping me think about these kinds of questions in depth. In an appointment with him he talked about the need for clinicians to think compassionately about the cycles of abuse (and all participants) they hear about in their clinical practices. Judgmental attitudes about any partner in the victimization dance in a clinician are rarely (perhaps never) helpful to the victims of violence as they seek to regain their lives. They are, however, subtly endemic within the healing professions. Agreeing, no matter how covertly and silently, with one's clients that the abuser of their stories is a total moral sleaze – not deserving to live - and is the sole cause of their agonized suffering does not provide clients with the skills to divest themselves of their internalized abuser one memory at a time. In fact, the therapist, in a form of negative counter-transference becomes enmeshed with the abuser and his actions.[10]

Suppose, for example (and this example is mine), a woman in therapy describes repeated incidents of paternal incest during early childhood. Her outrage and desire to blame, and ours as clinicians, is directed towards the abusive father. Suppose that the father enters the office conversation. He reveals that he was severely and repeatedly beaten during early childhood by his father. The young woman's grandfather next appears. He reveals that he was sexually molested as a pre-pubertal child by an ordained clergy person. In his turn, the clergy man appears. He reveals that he too was sexually molested as a teenager by a trusted man of the cloth, a man who later became a bishop. When the bishop appears, we learn that his mother died in childhood, his father disappeared, and he was left to fend for himself on the streets of a major city. He initially supported himself by

prostitution but was *rescued* from the streets by a reformer priest who fostered his entrance into a religious order, and simultaneously groomed him to be a discrete sexual partner.

In hearing such an abbreviated and overly simplistic narrative, clinical awareness of the long intransigent history of abusive violence becomes apparent. In such an abstracted life history of violence, seven or more generations of individuals suffered the events and consequences of violence and by their subsequent actions passed that violence and suffering on to their descendents. Each individual, in turn, passed on the violence they experienced to new generations.

A professional colleague told me a story many years ago. We had been talking abstractly about domestic violence inside our mutual faith community. In adult life my friend and his father, who was rapidly approaching death, had a conversation about child discipline. My colleague told me that his father opened the conversation by reminiscing about the cruel paternal violence he had endured as a small child and adolescent. My friend said to me, *I asked him why he didn't do to us the things his father had done to him*. His father's reply stunned him. It was, my friend told me, breathtakingly simple. In answering his middle-aged son's question, the old man said, *when your mother and I married, we made a vow to each other that we would not harm our children by the kind of violent paternal discipline I had grown up with. We made a deliberate decision to stop that kind of violence with us. Throughout our marriage, we held each other to that vow.*

As my friend and I talked about the implications of this in his extended system of siblings, children and grandchildren, several things became apparent to both of us. Family violence directed at children is a choice parents make. Decisions to deliberately break the generational cycle of family violence are also a choice.

When there is a history of family violence, the tendency is for that history to continue to repeat itself in future generations. This is particularly true where the generations collude to deny awareness about the nature and form of a truthful family history. None of this experienced personal history, however, excuses the violent individual from responsibility for his own decisions to pass the experienced historical lineage of violence on into another's life. What this kind of simple narrative tells us is that each individual in the chain

of violence has an opportunity to pass it on or to be the person who breaks the chain.

Clergy and religious leader sexual violence and abuse of others is also a choice. It has long generational and personal taproots.

One evening, some weeks later, as I reflected on Miller's teaching story and my colleague's personal story, I understood both stories in light of each other.

The task of our work together as clinicians and healers, as theologians and ethicists, is not judgment and punishment. The task is full awareness, full consciousness, full discernment, and full accountability. Our goal then becomes breaking the cycle of violence in our own lives even as we seek to help others do the same. As we move into transparency and honesty, only then can we begin to heal and subsequently end the chain of violence. For this to happen, we must understand the relationship of violence to suffering. And we must also understand the relationship between suffering confronted and long-term healing of the wounds of violence.

To break the chain or inherited legacy of violence in which we as individuals are caught or in which we as communities are caught, we need to decide not to pass the violence on into future generations. This means we must become aware. It means we must take responsibility to monitor our personal actions. It means we must learn how to identify and speak the truth about our inherited life histories. It means we must take action for a new way, a different way, a non-violent way.

The Abuser as One Who Suffers

> *One may say that such intellectual ability is a gift, like any other inborn ability or talent, and therefore does not occasion distinctly* ***moral*** *(emphasis his) approbation. A quality that is a sheer gift, like beauty, strength, or brains, may occasion other kinds of praise. But morality has to do with choice and the character that is built out of choices made in freedom. But a moral question does then immediately arise. What does this person, this moral agent, choose to do with the gift?*
>
> *William Lee Miller*[11]

Because of the nature of his deeply personal and intimate self suffering, the abusive individual, in an unexamined and largely unconscious or unawakened mental and emotional life, chooses by his behavior to betray and abuse others. A recipient of wounds and violence, he becomes a victimizer and the inflictor of wounds. A recipient of other's betrayal of his authentic self, he becomes one who betrays others. He chooses, therefore, to pass his suffering on to others by creating pain and betrayal in their lives.

He does not only betray others however. Because of the intensity of his suffering, he betrays his own authentic Self. He continues to perpetuate the work of violence begun by others in his life. In the service of violence, he betrays his work in the world. His abuse of targeted others, as a methodology to ease his own suffering, is therefore the visible cap of a huge iceberg of generational and personal suffering. Some of his suffering, in the beginning, he inherited from others within his important communities of reference. This is the ocean. Much of it, by adult life is self-created. This is the wave. Neither the ocean nor the wave can be separated from each other. Both need each other to exist. Both need to be examined.

Addicted or Obsessive Consciousness

Such a communal awareness of their suffering does not excuse sexual abusers of others from the social need to be accountable for the amount and forms of suffering they cause others. Parenthetically, however, the more the individual develops the personality structure of a sexual abuser, the less likely it is that he can do realistic self-examination and the less likely he can voluntarily stop his behavior. Somewhere along his life trajectory, the capacity to empathize with the sufferings of others becomes numbed or muted or even dead. His accountability to himself and to others will eventually need to be rooted in awareness of his addicted powerlessness to end his violence, his inability to control his own life and his choices of behavior. What he cannot do for himself (stop his behavior) will need to be done for him by others. Containment of his violence towards others necessitates the work of others from his surrounding community or communities.

The healing which he needs to experience is similar to the healing of other obsessively addicted individuals. Part of that healing will be to do an honest self-inventory in which he finally recognizes how he has damaged the lives of others.[12] As a result of his interior spiritual work, he will begin to apprehend and then to understand the need of ask forgiveness and to make amends in whatever way he can do so.[13] He will understand, perhaps at first only intellectually, that he must stop the behaviors of abuse towards others as the first step in rescuing his life from himself. This kind of intellectual understanding, alone, however does not have the power to transform his life.

Choosing to understand his personal suffering can change him. Rather than obsessively venerating or reinventing his personal suffering as an unconscious rationale for passing pain and suffering on to others, compassionate and rigorous self-examination can become the window to empathy and compassion for the suffering he has caused to others. This is akin to conversion and transformation. It is akin to enlightenment.

Every human individual suffers. Personal suffering, per se, therefore, is not an excuse for causing harm and suffering to others. Our suffering, individually and collectively serves as the semaphore that alerts us to pay attention to our culture and to the life bridge we are constructing. When we take personal responsibility to recognize our personal share of human suffering in the context of the universal nature of suffering, we become response-able. We become aware of the need to manage our personal and collective behavior in ways which seek to end suffering in this present moment rather than to extend it indefinitely into the future.

In addition, each one of us is so much more than our suffering. Our authentic Selves are so much bigger than our continuously constellating binary inner victimizers and inner victims.

My hypothetical awareness of Yoder's intense suffering does not, therefore, compromise my personal awareness of the intense suffering of the women he offended and abused. It has helped, however, to temper my judgment of his life. Just as their suffering needed and deserved to be recognized, validated, and healed, so too, I finally came to realize, did his.

By not recognizing Yoder's suffering and by not recognizing the women's suffering their shared faith community failed in its collective spiritual task of

brining healing to them. No message of critique and no message of transformation changed the dysfunctional and harmful relationship between them.

A Buddhist Parable

There is an ancient Buddhist story whose origins I no longer remember. A woman lost her only child, a young son, to illness and death. Holding her dead son in her arms, she went to the Buddha and asked him to restore life to her son. He agreed but gave her one task to do first. She was to re-enter her village and gather a single grain of rice from each household which held no history of death, grief and suffering. The woman eagerly set off on her assigned task. The sooner she brought the grains of rice to the Buddha, the sooner her son would be restored to life. A day later she returned to the Buddha with the information that there was no household in her village that had not been touched with death, grief and suffering. She had not even one grain of rice to give him. In her new awareness of others and their personal encounters with death, grief and suffering, the grieving mother's life was transformed. She was now willing to bury her dead son, mourn his premature absence from her life, and move forward into her ongoing future life without her son's living presence.

One way to interpret this parable is to see that the woman's own suffering in the context of her transformed awareness of others' suffering began the process of accepting the permanent nature of her son's death, which in turn freed her to fully grieve her loss. Developing a rudimentary compassion for others and their suffering allowed her to develop compassion for her self. Awareness of and empathy for the suffering of others became the key to understanding the true nature of her personal suffering.

Our task as humans is not to avoid suffering – for this is impossible. Our task is to learn compassion and, in so doing, to learn ways to manage our wounds, our losses, our grief, and our suffering so it does not destroy us or give us permission to harm and destroy others. Realistic and empathic self-other awareness (not self-righteousness and its concomitant judgmental criticism of others) is the first step in learning to be compassionate towards others. It is also the first step in changing the on-going and recurrent spiral of interpersonal violence.

The way I first stumbled across intimations of this awareness troubled me for weeks. One morning I woke in tears – not for Yoder's victims but for Yoder himself. How he had wasted and misused his magnificent gifts, I thought, by choosing to use those gifts in the service of his own suffering. How he had abused his own magnificent gifts by allowing his anger to activate a will to destroy others' well-being. How he had betrayed his family of origin. How he had betrayed his marital family. How he had betrayed his church! How he had betrayed himself! Preaching an ethic of non-violent service rather than an ethic of conquering, heroic and redemptive violence his adult life, nevertheless, embodied authoritarianism and acts of interpersonal violence. His own life bridge, created moment by moment, was one, I thought, which passed on whatever violence and suffering he, himself, had experienced forward into the lives of multiple individuals and their families.

What, I wondered, in his life history had so destroyed his ability to feel compassion and to demonstrate empathy with the pain and suffering of his victims? What in his own life history had seeded and then accented his needs to destroy others – and in the process – destroy a part of himself? What was the taproot of the suffering he so casually and unthinkingly passed on by his life choices? What caused him to be so defensive when others sought to inform him about the suffering he was causing to others?

Somewhere, in that morning of tears, I felt certain there had been a primal narcissistic wound or a series of primal wounds which left him vulnerable and tied to his rage at his personal share of human suffering. His intellectual brilliance, a gift from the inherited genetic past, had not managed to inform his inner emotional and spiritual life about the need for self-other forgiveness. Somehow he had not learned to make the journey to self-other acceptance and self-other compassion. Ignoring and denying his own needs for spiritual and emotional healing, he had not participated with the life force in transforming his own suffering into strength of character. His protests against the social violence of war had not led him into self-examination and processes of conversion to see where he carried the seeds of war within himself.

As an onlooker to his life it is as if he externalized and projected his inner life conflicts and wounds into the shared social space without ever

interrogating and understanding them, without ever seeking to use them as his teacher about the all pervasive nature of violence inside violence-prone cultures. Somehow or other, it seemed to me that morning, he had separated himself away from ordinary humanity by seeing himself as special and, therefore, as deserving of the right to harm others. It seemed to me on that morning that in his denial of his own share of personal sinfulness, he was condemned by his life history to pass his suffering on to others. He became one more human host for transferring human violence and suffering from one generation into the next.

In addition, it seemed to me that his religious tradition had obviously failed him. It too had not intuited his suffering nor had it guided him through his suffering and its consequent sense of entitlement into the freedom of self-awareness, empathy for others and genuine compassion. Instead his life history, however complex or simple it may have been, led him onto paths of doing violence to others – paths on which he increasingly felt enabled, because of who he was, to betray and to destroy others and to leave behind him a complex legacy of interpersonal abuse and sexual harassment.

Inside Yoder's denomination, his ethnic faith community, his intellectual brilliance became his short-hand identity. His intellectual brilliance elevated him above mere mortals with more ordinary intellectual abilities. He learned - somewhere – that intimidation of others was an effective tool or weapon to use when seeking to manipulate them. As I think about this elevation and separation from the perspective of other extraordinarily gifted individuals and celebrities, it seems to me that Yoder inevitably – over time – became isolated from ordinary friendships. Being special (or seeing one's self as special and outside the norm) helps create the reality that others either avoid one from a sense of personal inferiority or seek to exploit the specialness for their own purposes. The specialness of great ability and great fame often create a situation in which relationships are strained by the differences of aptitudes and abilities. Establishing and maintaining easy friendships become almost impossible. If, in addition, one has a complex, introverted and scholarly personality, (which Yoder most assuredly demonstrated in his lifetime) easy social chit-chat both eludes and bores one. Eventually, it seems to me, such an individual loses an easy ability to repeatedly transcend human loneliness by human friendships.

One man, a former UND student but never one of Yoder's advisees, told me about an encounter he had with Yoder. Upon discovering a broken car in his garage, the student phoned Yoder at his home and asked if he could ride along with him to and from the South Bend campus. As we talked, the former student thought out loud and reflected on his impression at the time that Yoder seemed eager for the possibility to be actively helpful to him. My friend said that Yoder seemed intensely grateful for the very ordinariness of the encounter.

In reflecting on the story several years after I first heard it, I became aware that the story contained great loneliness – the loneliness of a brilliant individual who was primarily seen by his communities of reference in terms of his great intellect – of being something other than the ordinary or the usual or the normal. The easy giving and receiving of unrestricted chatter and concrete practical help which characterizes friendship gets lost under the steady pressures of celebrity and specialness.

On the morning of my spontaneous tears, and on subsequent mornings, I thought about and actively grieved for my church. As a cultural institution it mismanaged women's allegations about John's sexual harassment. Therefore, it mismanaged Yoder. It had missed, therefore, the opportunity to create a different, less violent internal culture. It had abandoned the embodiment of its historical calling as a peace church, as a church committed to dealing with violence in a way that brought healing to individuals and various world communities. Casting its behavioral vote for silence, secrecy and victim abandonment, it endangered, perhaps even permanently damaged, its own historical witness as a peace church.

Was 1950's Europe and Algeria the root cause?

I was never Yoder's peer in any sense of that phrase. Thirteen years younger, I had no knowledge of his early life. I had no knowledge of his inner life at all – except what his written work revealed. While we knew each other as colleagues, we never became friends. When our paths crossed, we did not engage in social chit-chat. When, several years ago, I asked one of his CONCERN colleagues if he thought maybe Yoder's work in post-war Europe and post-earthquake Algeria left Yoder with unrecognized, and therefore untreated, PTSD and a desensitized ability to feel empathy and compassion for others, my question was taken seriously

but was discounted as highly unlikely. I had to trust the wisdom of his cohort peers. They knew a Europe I never visited. They knew a college student and young adult I could only meet in my imagination. They remembered an eighteen or a twenty-five year old Yoder I never met. They knew a shared life context that I never saw: the immediate aftermath of war's suffering, the physical devastation of natural and man-made disasters. In his friend's estimation, Europe's and Algeria's physical and social destruction was not the root cause of Yoder's sexual abuse of women in mid-life and early aging.

Whatever its roots, John's rage and its expressed disdain against women were so substantial that he was willing to endanger his career, his professional identity and his intellectual legacy as a committed Christian ethicist and theologian. His suffering was so intense that he was willing to forego personal trustworthiness in the service of self-medicating his suffering by carrying out deliberate abusive acts towards others. In his inept management of his life and its suffering, he gradually, perhaps un-self-consciously, assumed his socio-cultural identity as an anti-social deviant. Seeking to manage his personal and social suffering by causing others to suffer most certainly brought him no relief.

It is a therapeutic truism that repeated events after repeated events of a specific non-functional or maladaptive behavior pattern represent a frantic attempt of the personality to heal itself by using the same methodologies that created the wounds and the suffering. But, never changing behavior meant that each repetition yielded more suffering – for the self as well as for others. An individual's addiction to recidivist maladaptive behavior serves students of the individual's life as a topographic map for understanding his suffering.

Might not John's Intellectual Genius Be the Root, Not Suffering?

Yoder's chief apologist, American ethicist S. Hauerwas (2010), has written about John's austere interpersonal nature as if it were, perhaps, a side effect of his intellectual brilliance. Social scientist J. Budziszewski (2006) comments upon his prickly nature and compares it to other renowned men with great intellects. Theologian and Yoder admirer T. Grimsrud (2010, 2011) has raised the question of John's sexual harassment behaviors and

general social awkwardness as demonstrating a form of mental disordering such as the genetic autistic disorder Asperger's Syndrome.

Since there are a wide variety of other reports about Yoder's behavior which indicate that he could be friendly, hospitable, and chatty at times,[14] that he welcomed collegial conversations with others,[15] and that he often inspired others, first in France and then in the United States, to re-double their efforts to be good Christians,[16] something else seems to be at work than the inherited "prickly and austere big mind" of an intellectual genius or the more menacing bio-genetic consequences of autism.

For every story I have heard about Yoder's rude social behavior or episodes of antagonistic professional behavior with his intellectual peers, I have heard or read another story about his ability in professional committees to listen, reflect, and respond appropriately. In his archival files, I saw first hand a wide variety of correspondence from individuals who clearly admired him and saw him as a role model. After reading some of this correspondence, it was clear to me that there was clearly a pastoral side to John's personality.

In addition, when I do a close reading of stories told by women whom he offended, what I hear is complex. In their stories of being groomed by Yoder, women report that he flattered them, he networked with them, he mentored them, he introduced them to others who could help them in some way towards a common goal, and he assured them that they were special in some manner or another. While his written work about sexuality and singleness focuses on *the sexual and intimacy neediness of the female single state,* an array of interpersonal grooming behaviors focused on a given woman's strengths and her uniqueness or specialness. It is also important to note that not all women whom he approached and offended were single women. Some, a significant subgroup, were married women – wives of his colleagues and peers.

Causing an intended victim to feel special and unique is a common grooming technique for sexual abusers to use. Acts of grooming build a climate of interpersonal trust which brings the intended victim into striking range. These grooming behaviors are often intricately planned and efficiently carried out. Over time a style of grooming behaviors becomes an abusive individual's unique signature or style. Repeated over and over with successive victims, the behavior becomes more and more entrained with

the personality and it matures as a personal style or technique of victimization.

These reports of diverse behavior patterns tell us much. These narratives inform us, that when Yoder saw it as professionally necessary or socially useful to his personal goals, he was capable of a certain kind of conversational charm. This intermittently applied charm allowed others to trust him and to confide in him. His decisions to be approachable were, it seems now, a kind of self-chosen behavior - apparently turned on and off as Yoder deemed it to be desirable. Sometimes it appears as it his behavior was elicited by external situational variables. This kind of selective approachability and engagement with others in conversation is not possible for a savant or autistic individual, bound inside genetic distortions of the personality.[17] It is, however, possible for a brilliant individual with anti-social tendencies.

After offenses took place another set of behaviors reportedly emerged. Offended individuals report that confrontations with him, after the events of victimization were concluded, indicated no evidence of empathy, repentance, remorse, or intention to make amends. Instead, he often refused to reply to confrontational correspondence from offended women or from their husbands. Or, in the case of offending correspondence, when directly asked to stop his offending behavior, he continued it. More offending letters or electronic messages arrived.

There is, in addition, a question about whether or not Yoder stalked at least a few of his victims. He seemed to know when husbands or housemates would be away from women's living quarters. He showed up only when women were alone. The women I talked with about this remained unsure. They were unwilling to label his behavior as stalking. Perhaps his visits when they were alone were coincidental. One woman, however, told me after the car accident which put Yoder on crutches for the rest of his life, *I am somewhat relieved that John is on crutches. Now, if he comes to my home when my husband is gone, I know I can outrun him. I feel safer somehow.*

I would, therefore, raise the question of John's very difficult and often interpersonally aggressive behaviors differently than do Hauerwas (2010), Budziszewski (2006), Grimsrud (2011), Nation (2006), Zimmerman (2007), and others. I wonder about the role of internalized rage about old slights,

old self-doubts, irrational jealousies, unresolved ancient grief, and overwhelming personal encounters with guilt and shame. I wonder whether his behavior was a form of complex transference in which his harassing actions towards one group of women in his adult life were in the service of anger created by other women early in his life whom he (1) felt unable to control or (2) who had interpersonally wounded him in some manner or another. Was his adult behavior, therefore a form of obscured and transferred rage from earlier years of his life? I wonder whether his renowned (and in some odd way, collegially celebrated) inapproachability was a side effect of an addictive and self-destructive "need" to repeat abusive behavior – behavior which he could no longer control but which his Christian inheritance and brilliance told him was unacceptable to all of the religious *and* secular communities which he inhabited on a daily basis.

Was it possible, I wondered, that he saw less gifted others as fools? Seeing others as fools who made inexcusable demands on his time, was it possible that he had no appreciation for and no ability to tolerate their admiring, perhaps even fawning, presence near him? Did he feel demeaned by those left-gifted ones who admired his work? Perceiving their demands on his life as excessive, did he seek to drive them away by the choice of rude and passive-aggressive social behaviors? Did he, perhaps, feel ignored by or even abused by men who were his intellectual peers?

Seen in the light of these kinds of clinical questions, his social awkwardness seems to represent self-destructive behaviors, self-isolation, and social immolation. Testing others by inept social responses was, perhaps, one way in which he rescued himself from boredom, tedium or even aggressive urges to strike out and abuse.

Obviously my ruminations do not answer his observers' questions about the roots of John's reported anti-social behavior with selected women. But they do, for me at least, provide hypothetical clues about the social behaviors that Yoder's supporters, friends, and apologists all acknowledge were troublesome in his relationships with others.

While I do not (and indeed cannot), know the exact taproots of Yoder's rude and anti-social behaviors, I do believe they are significant ones. The only hypothesis that makes any clinical sense to me is that his addictive and well-rationalized sexualized and abusive behavior, in one way or

another, was rooted in intense personal suffering and that his behavior became an obscured manifestation of the angry rages he, himself, did not understand.

Denominational Distraction

In an era when his denominational church was often conflicted and confused about its beliefs in modernity and post-modernity, Yoder chose a behavioral path which distracted his church from mature theologizing. Several individuals have suggested to me that he was bored by church attendance and that he actually disdained the intellectual competency of many of the leaders of his denominational church. There is some external confirmation of this possibility. Stories are told of denominational church leaders swearing (inside the protected sanctuary of their families) about Yoder's refusals (perceived as rude and demeaning) to listen and compromise on points of theological interpretation and application.

Other stories, on the other hand, mostly from his early years in Europe, talk about his impressive leadership of the European Mennonite Church in assisting that community to regain its historical Anabaptist peace church identity. Stories are told about his ecumenical leadership acumen inside the World Council of Churches on issues of peace. In ecumenical and European contexts he apparently evidenced, therefore, much more patience and much more willingness to listen and to be guided by local realities. Somewhere, and I have lost the reference, he stated that he was half French. Since his genes were North American ones, the French half came later. None of the extant written accounts which I found about his European ecumenical work document any concern at all with rudeness or social awkwardness. Indeed, the casual reader is left with an impression that Europe, most especially France, became his home, a place of happy memories, and that he was always warmly welcomed there.

Why did Yoder choose, therefore, by his behaviors to abdicate positions of institutional leadership inside the American Mennonite Church? How do we, as the collective church which outlived him, understand his demonstrated addiction to abusive behaviors directed at very specific targets: bright and personally empowered church women? Was his attraction (and intentional behavior) to brilliant and gifted women sexual?

Was it erotic? Did it contain the fantasized hope of finding someone who might both understand and love him?

Or was it intentionally destructive? Were his behaviors a deliberate attempt to destroy the lives and careers of student women who were headed into church careers or, perhaps, to subvert the already established careers of women colleagues who were engaged in the beginning moments of a church career as administrators, academicians, preachers, theologians, ethicists, counselors, musicians, conflict negotiators, etc.

Targets of Victimization

In the past six years I have heard John's supporters and friends repeatedly state, *he only approached women he saw as his peers*. In my perspective, that is not quite true. An undergraduate or graduate student, no matter how brilliant, is never a peer to her faculty mentor. An untenured junior colleague, an instructor or assistant professor, newly hired, is never a peer to a tenured, full professor, in an endowed chair. An administrative assistant is never a peer to her work supervisors. The spouse or daughter of a male academic or professional colleague is never a peer. A woman who has just had her first juried article published is never a peer to a world-renowned consultant, writer, and lecturer. A woman in the third world who is enrolled in a graduate program is never the peer of the brilliant, internationally esteemed, multi-lingual first world professor who comes to lecture and consult. In each of these situations, there are immense power differentials. There are immense position and authority differentials.

In addition, to the above types of realities, the other social and religious reality was that Yoder was married. He and his wife were raising children together. He was a member of a denomination which saw adultery as sinful. In particular, ordained ministers and seminary professors were abjured from adultery as unacceptable social behavior.

A more accurate phrasing, therefore, might be that Yoder only approached and groomed women whom he saw as threatening potential peers. That allows for the possibility, that he used sexual abuse as his methodology for deliberately attempting to disempower brilliant and gifted women.[18]

In looking at the women I know who were offended by Yoder's propositions and behaviors, I can find no single common physical characteristic (as is common with some types of offenders) although I have been present in multiple conversations where offended women speculated about this. But when I look at the women I know personally, what is most apparent to me is their (1) intellectual ability, (2) their overall physical attractiveness, (3) their multi-talented and multi-faceted abilities or skills, (4) their connections (in one way or another) to institutional or family and clan power, and (5) their strong motivations to succeed in whatever they try to do. Obviously I do not know every offended woman. But the patterns I have observed are striking enough for me to believe that it was not, for example, an hourglass figure that was the trigger of Yoder's offending behavior. The trigger - in perhaps indescribable ways – had, in my opinion, to do with feminine aspects of power.

Such a theoretical formulation allows us to ask other questions of his abuse: was he threatened in some way or another by brilliant, professional women who sought careers in their denomination? Was his abusive harassment a complex form of socio-cultural transference from early life experiences with other powerful women in his life – women he could not for a variety of reasons abuse? Was he expressing his anger or jealousy at the denomination's other brilliant male scholars and powerful leaders by transgressing against their wives and adult daughters? While rationalizing his interests and behavior as a matter of churchly or even fatherly concern, did he seek, perhaps unconsciously, to de-fang women who challenged his personal and institutional authority, his dominance and his intellectual superiority in an unconscious effort to drive them away. Or, were, his behaviors after 1973 a form of indirect reprisals against the academic leaders of his denomination for their abrupt termination of the GBS seminary presidency?

Other Questions Emerge

As I repeatedly pondered the strange reality of waking in tears about a dead man whose behavior had, much earlier enraged me, whose behavior I had previously harshly judged, I wondered if any of his many supporters and professional colleagues had ever wept for John's abdication of his authentic Self for the non-authentic identity of victimizer and harasser. I wondered if his disciples and apologists ever wept for the ongoing legacy of

the multiple betrayals which John left behind him in death. I wondered if any festschrift contributors ever thought at all about the wounded, victimized and offended women John's behavior left behind him at death. Did anyone ever, I asked myself, think analytically about the second legacy – the legacy of abuse? Did anyone even acknowledge that there was an important second legacy – a legacy as complex and important as his academic legacy?

While I would hazard a totally uninformed guess that members of his birth and marital families have mourned John's behavior and its lasting impact on their individual and collective lives, I wondered on that tearful morning about whether any one else really cared enough about John as a human being to identify, acknowledge and confront his suffering with him during his lifetime. Did anyone ever push, during the years of his abusive behavior, below the rationalizations to ask him about his spiritual alienation from his authentic self? Did anyone directly confront him about his rude professional behaviors? Or was everyone in John's network of acquaintances and professional colleagues too intimidated by his brilliance and his well-known aggressive and defensive verbal abilities to look behind the persona to see the intense loneliness of "being special"?

Having read several of the books about Yoder's academic legacy which have emerged since his death, what I see instead of grief and mourning in response to his living behavior is a consistent refusal to feel sorrow regarding his professional lifetime of abusive and harassing behavior towards women. Even though I look for it, I see no evidence at all of realistic or compassion awareness for the suffering Yoder's behavior caused. What I do see is an intense desire to preserve Yoder's intellectual legacy as an intellectual gyroscope for the future church and its ethical teachings about non-violence.

Abuse Studies

Some things are known and recognized in the field of abuse studies. The majority of adult individuals do not become sexual abusers of others. A majority of clergy and other religious professionals live honorable lives. A majority of university and seminary professors treat their students with courtesy and respect. Many, perhaps even the majority, religious leaders are honest, sincere, and routinely demonstrate personal integrity.

Grounding ourselves in this awareness assists us in our determination to remain hopeful about human cultures and human beings – in general and in particular. Desiring to trust others, it is imperative to focus on that which normally sustains us in human relationships – a belief that healthy adults do not betray others in obsessive acts of sexual abuse and violence. It is true that probably all of us, at one time or other have betrayed others and have harmed others. Yet, inside healthy communities, these social actions can usually be repaired by humility, by remorse and by forgiveness. Reconciliation can only be found or created when both individuals seek it honestly.

In situations of repeated abuse, however, the wounds of victimization are more severe and more lasting. Forgiveness and reconciliation may be impossible. This is the impasse that eventually can destroy individual lives and entire communities.

Decision Intersections

The violence of sexual abuse can encompass many aspects of a victim's life: the physical body, the emotional response system, the psycho-neuro-immunologic systems, complex arousal patterns, cognitive patterns of making sense, complex memory systems, etc. The communal nature of social life conditions deeply personal spiritual or religious responses. One of the most profound aftermaths of these betrayals by religious leaders is the victim's damaged sense of self and her sense that the world of others is unsafe and that others are never to be trusted. Another includes multiple forms of religious and spiritual alienation from the religious community and from God.

Seeking to heal the world and change the trajectory towards the future, therefore, individuals and communities need to identify places – those places which Carroll (2001) calls decision intersections – where the actual history of the past might have been different if different human choices had been made. These choices according to Carroll are both ideological and behavioral. It is, of course, impossible to change the factual realities of the historical past. But, it is possible, in the present moment, to learn from it.

It is essential to the works of violence prevention and active peace-building in the present moment that we understand what when wrong in the past. As we begin to interrogate the dead, we can and should look for these kinds of ideological and behavioral decision intersections. They not only illuminate an abusive individual's life choices. They also provide us with intuitional hypotheses about cultural forms that are active below the surfaces of ordinary human consciousness. When we understand, however imperfectly, historical decision intersections then we can set ourselves the task of preventing future violations of a similar kind in new generations.

Interrogating the Dead

When we begin to interrogate the dead we find ourselves confronted by questions of interpretation and meaning. When we look closely at these matters we find that we must acknowledge our complex and multi-layered individual and communal relationships with the dead one. We need to understand the source of our questions in our individual and collective life's experience. What is there in our personal and collective life histories that draw us to such an interrogation? What is it that we want or need to know from or about the dead one?

When we query the dead about their lives and their choices in light of the consequence of those choices for future generations, we do so always inside the context of our own particular life and its particular history. Our questions of the dead are always contextualized by personal or communal ideologies and life experiences.

Five people looking at the same type of abusive behavior in an individual's lifetime will have five different perspectives. They will be like the five blind men who encountered an elephant.[19] They will read the situation in different ways and their own pre-existing beliefs, values, and attitudes will shape what they can see and understand. They will create different interpretations of the same narrative of abuse. Our understanding of another's life is rooted in our individual and collective life histories and in our understandings of ourselves. It is rooted in our personal understanding of our shared cultural heritages. It cannot be otherwise. There is no objective rock out there on which to stand.

This is, however, not to say that there are no culturally-shared perceptions. Common issues, for example, of morality arise inside shared cultural systems where people have made (consciously or unconsciously) common agreements with each other about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable behavior.

This is also not to say that there is no objective morality. Any human behavior which deliberately harms or actively seeks to harm another is a form of interpersonal violence. Most, perhaps all, of the world's religious and philosophic traditions recognize moral issues which are raised by violent or interpersonally offensive human choices in the socio-cultural arena of interpersonal relationships. Choosing to harm someone else, moral responsibility and personal accountability for that violent and destructive action lodge with the individual who has chosen to do it.

Therefore, all is not relative. If we lived in a culture where marriages of brothers and sisters were common, we would not look on incest in the same way we North Americans look at it. We live, however, in a culture which sees incest as genetically, physically, emotionally and spiritually harmful. We look askance at all incestuous relationships. In our shared world-view, we believe, as individuals and as an entire culture, that these kinds of relationships should be proscribed inside the common agreements about sexual morality. We see incestuous relationships as a form of interpersonal violence and violation of the weaker by the stronger. We have created spiritual teachings and civil laws against incestuous relationships. Therefore, when incestuous relationships happen, we make social judgments and we intervene. We attempt to protect the individual we perceive to be the vulnerable one. We prosecute the one whom we see as responsible.

When we describe and discuss sexual harassment and sexual abuse done by professional members of the religious establishment towards members of the laity or other subordinated persons, it becomes necessary, therefore, to consider the interpretive framework within which we question the predatory dead individual about his decisions while alive. Inevitably, our work engages us with tangled and obscure questions of interpretation, questions of meaning and questions of significance.

Concluding Remarks

Theory by its nature is an abstraction. It can teach us a certain vocabulary. It can provide us with information. But, in any particular situation, all abstractions must be tested against actual facts.

Theological discourse, ethical discourse, and clinical discourse, in a similar manner, are abstractions. Each, however, can teach us about the human condition. Each allows us to interrogate our own choices and the choices of others in light of the needs of the human community for trustworthiness and faithfulness.

Yet, it is in the living of life, that moral or immoral choices are made. The consequences of these choices and behaviors are witnessed in the external social world and can, therefore, be examined.

No one theoretical framework can explain all situations of clergy sexual abuse. Likewise no one theory can explain all situations of religious institution clericalism. No individual's questions exhaust all questioning. In order to begin to understand these kinds of situations, we need multiple lenses and multiple languages. We need conversations.

But, in my opinion, before lenses, languages, vocabularies, conversations and theories we need to develop a spirituality of humility and compassion. Within a compassionate spirit we are freed to question without fear, to describe with honesty, and to grow increasingly comfortable with the phenomena of ambiguity and not-knowing. We can hold with a light and open hand all of our narratives of factual truths. We can choose to honor the wisdom that teaches us that all knowledge is tentative and subject to correction and revision.

When our questions are honest ones we do not need to fear their answers. We can, as the Protestant minister William Sloane Coffin so often reminded his readers and listeners, learn during our lifetimes how to live into our questions and, thus, allow life to teach us.[20]

Footnotes

[1] Juan Luis Segundo, 1976b, p. 109.

[2] Clinical psychologist Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea (February 23, 2012), comments that the work of mourning for survivors of clergy sexual assaults includes the need to *mourn the youth that is forever gone, the faith that may be shattered, the self that did not develop as it might have.* Then (and perhaps only then) can the experiences of being abused take their place in the victim's consciousness as a *past* experience (p. 19).

[3] Members of the Harvard trauma research faculty have recently published an excellent book in which this issue of reclaiming factual, time-sequential memory is thoroughly discussed. See M. Mendelshohn, et. al., 2011.

[4] See Burgess and Holmstrom (1979) and their excellent discussion of victim self-blaming as an adaptive strategy after an event of rape.

[5] In her very perceptive speech Frawley O'Dea (op. cit.) addressed the therapeutic issue of seeking revenge in financial settlements. *No matter the amount of the ensuing settlement*, *however, a residue of emptiness and lost hope often persists. At the core of the survivor's being, the worst has happened once again, she or he has been paid to go away while life goes on relatively unscathed for the perpetrator.* O'Dea goes on to comment that recent law suits in the United States court system have provided an opening for social justice, the only effective one to date. She continues, *from a healing perspective, however, law suits can impede mourning and thus healing by keeping the survivor stalled in anger and/or the fantasy that a substantial settlement will somehow make it all better. We have seen too many suicides take place the night before or the day a suit is filed, or when the checks are cut and mailed, not to be concerned about the potential harmful effects on some survivors who deny mourning in order to sue* (pp. 18-19).

[6] Thich Nhat Hanh, 1993, a poem fragment from *Call Me by My True Names,* p. 107.

[7] For an excellent discussion of multiple personal and social identities in contemporary culture, see Kenneth J. Gergen's *The Saturated Self,* 1991.

[8] In 2002, editors of the World Health Organization publication, *Summary: World Report on Violence and Health* wrote*: raising awareness of the fact*

that violence can be prevented is, however, only the first step in shaping the response to it. Violence is an extremely sensitive topic. Many people have difficulty in confronting it in their professional lives because it raises uncomfortable questions about their personal lives. Talking about violence means touching upon complex matters of morality, ideology and culture. There is, thus, often resistance at official as well as personal levels to open discussion of the topic (p. 1).

[9] Sam Keen (1994), p. 24.

[10] Two important resources, both written by faculty members from Harvard University's trauma research groups discuss the concept of negative or traumatic counter-transference: J. L. Herman, 1997 and M. Mendelsohn, et. al., 2011.

[11] William Lee Miller, 2008, p. 41.

[12] Consult the story of Katherine Ann Power in Lamb and Murphy (2002, pp. 231-262) for a riveting story about a perpetrator's experience of remorse and the growth of empathy for those harmed by her actions.

[13] By beginning to see sexual abuse as addictive behavior, we can begin to apply the wisdom of addiction self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous. A useful resource about learning to understand addictive behavior from the inside out is Rabbi Rami Shapiro's book *Recovery, the Sacred Art,* 2012.

[14] See, for example, David Weiss, January 27, 1998.

[15] Retired AMBS faculty recall social events on the campus in which Yoder and Gordon Kaufman, another well-regarded and influential Mennonite theologian from Yoder's age cohort, sat together and both were fully engaged with the conversation.

[16] See Mark Nation's (2006) discussion of Yoder's ecumenical work during his early years in Europe.

[17] Many individuals with various forms of autism need to be coached to look other people in the eyes or to shake hands when introduced. In addition, there is an interpersonal rigidity in autism that resists changes in the

external world. Changes in physical space or in daily routines often create anxiety and often violent or unpredictable behavioral outbursts.

[18] Stanley Hauerwas (2010) uses the phrase *weighty women* to describe the "power aspects" of the women in Yoder's sexual *experiments* with church women and students.

[19] The first blind man encountered the tail; the second, the water-spouting trunk; the third, a back leg; the fourth the tusks; and the fifth the wide side body. When asked to describe the nature of the elephant, each man responded in terms of that which his own hands had occurred. They, therefore, argued amongst themselves about the true nature of the elephant – never once having comprehended the whole.

[20] William Sloane Coffin, 2005.

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John Howard Yoder, D. Theol.
1927-1997

Believer's Church Theologian and Ordained Mennonite Clergyman

Introductory Comments

> *Repeated sexual abuse … by men who have been trained, supported by, and participate in clerical culture has the power to destroy lives and the life of the church as well. Understanding the causes and combating this threat poses daunting challenges.*
>
> A. W. Richard Sipe[1]

Mention John Howard Yoder's name inside Mennonite academic circles and you are equally as likely to hear extended rants about his behavior and the repeated failures of his denominational church in managing him as you are to hear praise for his theology, ethical concerns, missiology, and ecumenical peace work of behalf of his denomination. These differences of opinion about Yoder and his relationship to Mennonite Church institutions deeply divide today's Mennonite Church academics, religious professionals and the women Yoder victimized. At the end of my study, it is now my personal opinion that If all interested parties could agree that (1) Yoder was not St. John (or even a theologically reincarnated St. Augustine) of the twentieth-century Anabaptist-Mennonites, (2) unsociable, un-charming, and what we might today call socially clueless, (3) autistic, or (4) totally depraved, a less projected, less polemical, and factually more realistic or accurate view of Yoder and his life might emerge. In light of his importance to today's Mennonite Church and ecumenical evangelical churches, a factual and much more nuanced and complex interrogation of his life and work is needed than we have in January, 2013 as this is being written.

A less polarized reality is that Yoder was a brilliant scholar. Gifted with exceptional intellectual abilities, his body of scholarship is extensive and spans several academic disciplines. Fluent in German, Spanish and French as well as English, his impact on evangelical Christian thinking reaches

around the world. In reading about his broad intellectual vision for a non-violent human faith community, we want to trust him as a wise spiritual teacher.

He was also a very fallible human being. For reasons that at this time are obscure, Yoder reportedly became a very ordinary sexual harasser of his students, female faculty colleagues, other men's wives, and single church women he met while lecturing, preaching, consulting, and teaching. In learning about his interpersonally inappropriate and sometimes violent treatment of women, we come to distrust both him and his teaching.

Both legacies in his life are interpenetrated. Both began to be visible to his denominational religious community when he was in his forties and fifties. Both remained visible during the rest of his lifetime.

Various women have reported that in Yoder's personal share of human sinfulness he deliberately and repeatedly did some interpersonally harmful things to them. In their reports, he lived a personal life that was contrary to his published teaching. Perhaps Yoder was obliquely referring to such matters in his September 16, 1974 letter to Miriam Sieber Lind (wife of faculty colleague Millard Lind at AMBS). Her correspondence to Yoder is not attached but it is clear from his reply that she had earlier commented on and questioned or perhaps even criticized Yoder about his opinions regarding single adults and their needs for affection and intimacy. In his reply Yoder wrote:

> *Another fringe is the ethical issue of how we can deal with genital sexual issues without seeking our own self-affirmation through them. I do not think that in dealing with this issue I am rejecting my own decision to marry, but it is more important to me that I should deal with the issue for its own sake than that I should shelter my past rightness. There are many who should not have married, and many more who should not have married when they did, or whom they did, or for the reasons they did. These marriages are still real and thought* (sic) *by the assumptions (in reference to Millard) that if there were any standards by which his life is not perfect, he should not write about them. If I had been a soldier or an embezzler, I would hope that my need to "cover" my own past would not keep me from being honest with the Gospel in those points. Likewise if marriage were "second best" (which it is in general but not for me, since all things*

are not equal), I would hope for the grace to be honest with Jesus and Paul anyway (September 16, 1974, 2).

For more than twenty five years (1965--1992) while preaching the need for a voluntary community of Christian believers (disciples) to be accountable to each other for misbehavior and sin, a wide variety of women reported that Yoder sexually harassed and offended them.[2] During these years many Mennonites inside the religious professional world believed he was not voluntarily willing to be morally accountable for his behaviors to his victims (women he called in his writings, sisters-in-the-faith) or to the institutional church in which he held membership. Only in 1992, in light of his ordination credentials, when he was coerced to do so by the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, did he enter into a lengthy process of psychological evaluation, psychotherapy and denominational accountability work.[3]

A Methodology for Proceeding

To assist me in my own understanding of Yoder's life and its legacies, I created a partial time line of his life.[4] In doing this (influenced by Erik Erikson's methodology of psycho-history or psycho-biography),[5] I treated Yoder's life as if I was taking a psycho-social history. I sought to situate Yoder's geographical location in proximity to several other factors. The *first* factor was his professional employment. The *second* was his major published work and relevant unpublished manuscripts (his academic legacy). The *third* relates to a trail of complaints about his personal life (the personal legacy of sexual misconduct).

In addition, I sought to uncover what I could about institutional responses to women's complaints regarding Yoder's behavior towards them (the institutional Mennonite Church's legacy of clericalism). Only well into this process of research and writing did I discover that most institutional records vis-à-vis Yoder's life are permanently sealed and unavailable to contemporary researchers. Thus, my understanding of these years depends on my memories and my utilization of any publicly available records.

This timeline provides the skeletal structure *and* documentation for this essay's comments about Yoder's life and his relationships with the

Mennonite Church and other Christian organizations. Documentation of resources is provided with the timeline.

For information about Yoder's early life history (childhood, adolescence and early adulthood), readers are referred to Mark Thiessen Nation's (2006) and Earl Zimmerman's (2007) books. Both of these authors provide fairly basic information about Yoder's early life and his ancestral family history and identity. Each discusses early life events which later influenced Yoder's thinking about a wide range of social and ecclesial issues.

In writing this essay, I have relied upon a variety of resource materials. Included is information from the Mennonite Church press, the ecumenical American religious press, and the nation's secular press. I reviewed the content of boxes 200 and 215 in Yoder's archival materials.[6] I consulted 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). In addition, I utilized *The Mennonite Yearbook* which historically was published on an annual (now a semi-annual) schedule by the Mennonite Church in America.[7]

To gain a working sense of what other scholars see as his major contributions to theology, 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 once more to hear Yoder's voice, I listened to his ordination sermon from 1973[8]. I listened to a forum presentation on the topic of homosexuality given at AMBS in 1979.[9] I re-read a number of his CONCERN Movement essays. I re-read *The Politics of Jesus* and then for the first time read *Body Politics.* I accessed the Yoder faculty pages on the UND website and perused a variety of unpublished materials which his family or literary estate executors have provided to that site. In addition, I listened to the eulogies at his funeral[10] and later read their edited transcripts in the *Conrad Grebel Review* (1998).[11]

In addition, I relied on my personal memories of the years from 1976 until Yoder's death in 1997.

Inasmuch as most of the institutional memory about Yoder's abusive behavior towards women between 1965 and 1997 is locked inside legal agreements about confidentiality, stored in lawyers' vaults, and deliberately concealed in archival boxes with instructions not to open, it is impossible to consult those records. Any future scholar-writer-biographer who seeks to write a psychologically perceptive, behaviorally nuanced, historically accurate and comprehensive biography of Yoder will need to gain access to this restricted material.

It is important to note, in this respect, that the historical Christian Church, to date, has never been well served by hagiography wherever and whenever it occurs. The church needs factually honest and analytically thoughtful biographies of its leaders so that those who follow them in time and history can utilize their strengths while avoiding their excesses. In Yoder's situation, for this to happen, biographers must (1) gain access to hidden files or (2) do extensive personal interviews while individuals who knew Yoder are still alive.[12] In some cases, factual truth is best served by multiple biographies which each examine aspects of an individual's life and work in light of particular historical situations.[13]

Because of the nature of my sources and the resource materials unavailable to me, some details in my accounting of Yoder's life and alleged abuse behaviors (and the institutional church's response to them) may be incorrectly dated, recounted and interpreted. Public correction of any factual errors in this document by individuals with access to restricted material will go a long way towards helping the ecumenical church and its people to learn from the Mennonite Church's encounters with Yoder regarding accusations about his personal acts of sexual misconduct with women. Institutional transparency about these matters in the present can help the future church to respond more appropriately to events of clergy or religious leader sexual misconduct.

Such institutional transparency will also go a long way towards healing the complex wounds of Yoder's individual victims, some of whom continue to believe that the Mennonite church and its educational academy engaged in prolonged cover-up activities to protect Yoder and these religious institutions at their expense. They are not alone in this belief.[14]

Finally, institutional openness and transparency about what really happened inside church agencies during the years Yoder was their

employee will help to heal the residual, often acrimonious, and deeply hidden or subterranean intra-denominational conflict about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the Mennonite Church's actions regarding his sexual misconduct.

Personal Encounters: 1978-1981

> *Only when our sense of justice is offended do we react with rage and this reaction by no means necessarily reflects personal injury.*
>
> Hannah Arendt[15]

During this era of Yoder's life his primary employment was at the University of Notre Dame (UND) in South Bend, IN. in its department of theology. He worked part-time for the combined Mennonite Seminaries (AMBS) in Elkhart, IN. He continued his consulting roles with the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBS) in Elkhart, IN and with the Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Peace Section. He consulted with and unofficially represented the Mennonite Church peace stance to the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Inside these many roles he had an active international consulting and teaching role where he represented the Mennonite Church – either officially or unofficially.

At the beginning of my first semester as an AMBS student, a female student approached me in the seminary hallway and asked, y*ou are a new student here, aren't you*? I replied that I was very part-time but indeed had just begun to take courses at AMBS. She then advised me: do*n't ever be alone with John Howard Yoder behind a closed door – not in his office, not in a conference room, and not even in a classroom. It is not safe for women to be alone with him.* I thanked her and we talked a bit about the issues behind her advice.

I was not as astonished as I might have been or as another beginning woman student might have been. In my professional life as a trained clinician and faculty member working on the Goshen College (GC) undergraduate campus, I had already heard a Mennonite professional woman's story about Yoder's unwanted sexual attention and a repetitive pattern of uninvited visits to her home when she was alone. In addition, on the GC campus, I had begun to hear other troubling rumors about his

behavior toward women colleagues and students on the AMBS and Notre Dame campuses.

A year or two later, sometime during the late 1970's, I audited an AMBS course with Yoder. I found him to be authoritarian and dogmatic as a classroom teacher. I witnessed what I perceived to be patronizing arrogance towards less gifted or theologically naïve students. A few gifted students, usually male, asked Yoder more intellectually interesting and challenging questions. In my opinion, he often dealt rudely with these obviously bright, older, self-secure male students. As I watched Yoder's responses to them, I often witnessed what appeared to be automatic response behaviors. His answers were often, although not always, combative, contentious and argumentative. They were often judgmental and controlling. There definitely was a right way and a wrong way to ask questions. There was a right and wrong way to answer them. Watching these argumentative conversations in a classroom setting was metaphorically like watching male elk butt heads during rut. It was as if, I speculated, psychologically Yoder needed to intimidate and dominate these bright male students. While a few students clearly enjoyed the opportunity for intellectual combat with him, the majority of my classmates seemed intimidated and just watched from the sidelines.

His impatience with questions he thought irrelevant was thin. He would forcefully say, t*hat is the wrong question to ask*. Then he told the now-chastened student what the correct question was supposed to have been. After this he proceeded to answer his own question in both detail and depth. The student's original question remained unaddressed and unanswered.

As a mid-life learner with a secure sense of myself as a capable professional person, my personal response to this type of classroom atmosphere was a very guarded watchfulness and silence. Eventually, I dropped out of the class because I felt the learning environment was toxic.

Thirty years later, in reading Budziszewski (2006), I realized that Yoder was well-known in his professional guilds for his confrontational writing, teaching and lecturing style. In his essay about Yoder's written legacy, Budziszewski comments that readers encounter two Yoders.

According to Budziszewski, one Yoder *wrote clearly and straightforwardly*. The second Yoder was *polemical and looking for a fight*. In this latter mode, Yoder created *straw men only to attack them*. He *blamed others for thinking what he, himself, appeared to think* (89).

In this essay the author noted that some gifted men have a prickly human nature and then he went on to comment that the tendentious, blaming, attacking polemical side of Yoder was not a reason to avoid Yoder's work. However, he advised his readers that *informed caution* in any reading of Yoder's intellectual work was necessary.

There is, Budziszewski claims, a reasonable Yoder who writes and thinks *like an angel of clarity* while the polemical blaming Yoder seeks to dominate the discourse (89). Somewhat later, he commented on the *Jekyll and Hyde* character of Yoder's written materials (111-112).

In conversations about Yoder's instructional style over the 30 years since I abandoned his classroom, some of his former students told me that they now believe (when they look back in time) that Yoder was shy and socially incompetent. They told me that in retrospect they thought he simply didn't know how to connect with and converse easily with ordinary and less brilliant human beings. One man, an admirer of Yoder, told me that after two separated-in-time efforts to engage Yoder in an office hours' discussion about classroom materials, he stopped trying. It was he said, *too painful to continue trying to connect.*

However, other student acquaintances of Yoder recall UND and AMBS social events in which he appeared at ease with others and able to chat away on a variety of topics.[16] *He could chow down just like regular people,* one former UND student laughingly recalled.

Whatever the level of social discomfort experienced by Yoder in the classroom or in social gatherings, he was an effective teacher and program builder at UND. He was a consummate multi-tasker and networker.[17] His contacts ranged across the ecumenical world-wide Christian Church as he consulted with and worked for organizations such as the American Society for Christian Ethics, the Mennonite Central Committee, the *Mennonite Quarterly* Review, the World Council of Churches and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. His leadership style helped to facilitate the founding of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies on the UND

campus (where he later became one of its resident fellows). His linguistic abilities facilitated his lecture schedule. Yoder regularly lectured and wrote professionally in four languages (Zimmerman, 2007). He collected devoted disciples and powerful apologists. His influence has been especially notable inside Christian evangelical reform movements such as the evangelical Sojourners Community in Washington, DC or the Mennonite Reba Place Community in Evanston, IL.

In various archival file folders, correspondence exists that show individuals trustingly consulted him about issues as personal as plans for his marrying them or as sensitive as how to deal with church agency administrators regarding an individual's homosexual orientation and identity. In these kinds of correspondence, he was respectful (indeed pastoral) of the individuals and their issues. In none of it did he appear to me to be demeaning, patronizing, or controlling.

Superficial social chit-chat may have bored or infuriated him enough to allow him the opportunity for rude social interactions but when he needed or wanted to communicate professionally or socially with friends and colleagues, he was quite capable of doing so. I saw this when I worked with him (1977-1981) in various church-wide committees. He was capable of great patience when ideas were being examined or programs were being developed. He stated his own opinions and he listened to others and their opinions. At the end of listening, he often took apart people's arguments but I would not have called his behavior contentious, cantankerous, aggressive or rude. He wanted language to be precise and he wanted it to communicate clearly. In those settings, I did not see the shyness and social awkwardness which Zimmerman and Nation note. When he was in command of a professional conversation, he seemed to me to be behaviorally and socially conventional even as his ideas were often unconventional. No necktie was ever anyplace but around his neck. Shoes, shirts and suits were neither the height of male fashion nor nerdy, unkempt and weird. In a collegial role, social awkwardness was not a word I used about him then. Brilliant, intellectually intimidating, iconoclastic, sometimes hostile, occasionally interpersonally demeaning, and intellectually arrogant came more often to mind. In my professional experiences of him then, there was no interpersonal creepiness or interpersonal abusiveness visible to me.

My intuition about John Howard is that his internal intellectual life was far more real and important to him than many of his ordinary interpersonal encounters in the outer world. Encounters that bored, irritated, or annoyed him, elicited disagreeable behavior. So too did honest intellectual differences of opinion in which his own work was questioned. Certain kinds of intellectual or ideological disagreements elicited contentious argumentative behavior or even professional name-calling.[18]

People, in various professional settings, who knew him well during the mature years of his academic career, talk about how he often sat in the back of the room, silently listening and taking notes. His archival files reveal that committee meetings or academic conferences triggered almost immediate analytic and summarizing correspondence to co-workers and colleagues. Some of this correspondence includes a pointed critique and offers suggestions about next steps. His clarity of thought and his respect for collegial group process are both evident. He was as gifted in written professional communication as he was sometimes inflexible and obtuse in face-to-face social conversation.

As I think about reports of Yoder's behavior – at a great distance in time - he fits, in my opinion, a certain introverted personality profile[19] in which written communication is preferred to face-to-face interactive communication. In individuals with this particular form of interpersonal shyness, written rather than spoken conversations allow for a certain interpersonal distance between people even as the written message simultaneously builds understanding and communication in the relationship. Emotional immediacy or interpersonal intimacy is transmitted by means of the written medium, which mutes interpersonal emotional intensity to levels perceived by the personality to be both safe and controllable. A fax message, a memorandum, a letter, an email message, a hand-written note are preferred means of communicating – especially about interpersonal relationship issues. One consequence of this personal style is that Yoder left a vast paper trail behind him that reveals his inner thinking – if one is diligent enough to find it and then track it.

Gaining a Contextual Foothold: Conversations about Yoder and Sexual Misconduct Allegations

In his introduction to *A Mind Patient and Untamed,* Yoder's friend and apologist Stanley Hauerwas writes: *I often thought there was an appropriate correspondence between John's personality and his account of Christian nonviolence. Personally and intellectually Yoder took and continues to take some getting used to. John often seemed as personally austere as his prose. He was never tempted to win an argument by being "charming." You had to and have to work to understand him* (11). No where, perhaps, is this comment more pertinent than in dealing with Yoder's ideas about sexuality and his ideas about appropriate personal behaviors with female students and church women. Yoder's ability to use his intellectual brilliance and linguistic abilities mean that none of his written material about sexuality, for example, can be taken at face value to mean exactly what it appears to mean on the surface of things. At a first reading, sentences appear to say one thing but with a tenth or fifteenth reading, other possible and more self-revealing meanings surface. Since Yoder is not here to interrogate in person, it seems to me as if a self-consciously deliberate re-reading of his intellectual work needs to be done in light of his behavior. To exclude his behavior as a hermeneutical lens for understanding his thought means, I think, that at least some of his less-acceptable ideas and intentions remain hidden behind his exquisite and painstaking manipulation of language.

Mennonite Code Language

Nation (2006) describes victim accusations of Yoder's sexual violence by the phrase *inappropriate sexual conduct* (25). Zimmerman (2007) uses these phrases (1) *not having the best social* skills (42), (2) *awkward encounters* with others (62), (3) *shy and socially clumsy* (62), and (4) *strange and unwanted patterns of sexual language and behavior (62).* It was, in this kind of thinking, Yoder's social awkwardness that was responsible for his inability to recognize that there were culturally appropriate sexual boundaries between men and women. According to Zimmerman, who talked with Yoder's friends, Yoder *was also caring and deeply sorry when he had caused harm* (62).

In this view point Yoder *never actively and deliberately intended to harm others. His behavior primarily consisted of opportunistic behaviors. There was no deliberate pre-planning of harassing and abusive behavior* (summary statement and emphasis mine). In such a conceptual model, Yoder's violent and harassing behavior towards adult women was not a deliberately thought through plan of action but an accidental by-product of his being ill-at-ease-socially. He didn't, in such a model, intend his behavior to harm anyone.

In conversations about this chapter, Legal Advocacy Coordinator Katie Boyts notes that *abusers rarely, if ever, report seeing their behavior as abusive. A recent study…found that most abusers had the perception [that] more violence against women takes place than it actually does, indicating that (these) men think violence is normal.*[20]

It is, therefore, important to note, therefore, that shyness, poor social skills, social clumsiness, social awkwardness, and even social rudeness are not synonyms for sexual abusiveness and gender-based sexual harassment. In my opinion they are code words that participate in a denial of uncomfortable truths. Such a use of code language to describe one form of behavior (in Yoder's case, gender harassment and sexual abusiveness) in the disguising language of another form (social clumsiness) denies factual realities.

Influences on Yoder's Life and Ethical Theology

> *One does not need to look far to find people who have been seriously impacted by the forces of violence. Directly, or indirectly, our entire world is steeped in a culture of violence and exploitation. Aggression, when it does not actually destroy its victim, all too often serves to embolden the victim to pass it on, like a cold virus, to some other unsuspecting or vulnerable soul. This is why violence has been, and remains, a public health problem.*
>
> Joseph F. Foderaro[21]

Books and essays about Yoder's life and theology (Hauerwas, et al., 1999; Ollenberger and Koontz, 2004; Nation, 2006; Zimmerman, 2007) note the influence of Yoder's cumulative life experience on his mature intellectual

work: his family of origin, his Anabaptist-Amish-Mennonite ancestral heritage, the Oak Grove congregation (church of his childhood) in Smithville, Ohio, his service work in Europe after World War Two, his relief work in post-earthquake Algeria, his theological teachers and early mentors, and his ecumenical world church encounters. What is missing in all of these discussions of the foundations of Yoder's intellectual legacy is the influence of his sexual attitudes, values, and beliefs on his theology and his behavior. Also missing is an analysis of the impact of his sexual misconduct upon his intellectual work.

It has been my clinical-theological opinion for more than thirty years that Yoder's theology and his style of personal behavior constitute a seamless legacy that must be studied whole. Almost fifteen years after Yoder's death in December, 1997, it is time for this singular legacy to be examined. Not only the lenses of his early ethnic upbringing, his education, his years of service and education in post-war Europe or the influence of his theological teachers and mentors are important. Also important are the lenses of his victim's stories about his personal life history in which multiple women accused him of gender-based sexual violence and sexual harassment.

To do this type of demanding work, historians and religious scholars need access to the facts of his life and to facts regarding the Mennonite Church's institutional response to his life. This chapter is a beginning attempt to draw the Anabaptist-Mennonite and Believer's Church scholarship communities into an open, intentional, and respectful conversation about these matters.

The two co-mingled legacies from Yoder's life (his academic-intellectual legacy and women's allegations regarding multiple instances of sexual misconduct legacy) form a unified whole. Each legacy needs to be examined in light of the other. I do not believe either aspect of his life can be understood without an examination of both.

If the Mennonite or Evangelical Church is to continue to use Yoder's theology as its canon on many issues of church polity and nonviolent peace work, then neither legacy can be excluded and ignored. Because this needed work has not even begun, the church continues to utilize his theology in ways that may be both unwise and unsafe for people in the pews. To fail to do this work gives an implicit message to the present and future church that sexual violence and gender harassment against women inside the community of faith is acceptable – at least when the perpetrator

is ordained, brilliant, powerful, and well-connected to the institutional power structures of the church.

I was never afraid of him

One sometimes hears the comment in casual conversations among some of the Mennonite professional women who worked with or for Yoder that *I was never personally afraid of him.* This comment has fascinated me for a long time. It matches my personal experience as well. I was neither attracted to him as a person (or to his scholarly work as a theologian) nor particularly intimidated or frightened by him in our professional and collegial relationships. I recognized his brilliance but I not intimidated by it. I was quite certain that I knew things he did not know about a wide variety of human topics, including human sexuality.

However I did know women who were actively afraid of him. I believed them. I did not seek to deny the importance of his behavior by filtering it through my personal experience of non-intimidation as a way of buttressing my self-image….or his.

Only as I've been writing and then copy-editing this chapter has it dawned on me that the sentence, *I was never afraid of him,* is a Mennonite female mantra of personal superiority. This mantra – gendered and applicable to women only - participates in the Mennonite religious academy's collective denial. It subtly asserts a personal sense of superiority towards victimized Mennonite women who, during his lifetime, were actively afraid of Yoder. These kinds of comments by Mennonite professional women allow the Mennonite Church and its male academics to continue use Yoder's work without engaging in critical analysis based on his abusive behavior to women. If this woman – or that woman – was not afraid of Yoder, such male gendered reasoning goes, then no woman needed to be afraid of him.

I was not afraid of him is, however, not a victimized woman's response. In their February, 1992 statement to Mennonite Church bureaucrats at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, eight women requested that their identities be kept private because *they remained afraid of Yoder.*[22]

The explanation vis-à-vis the church's use or an individual's use of Yoder's writings that *I was never personally afraid of him* is a comment which appears to be a short hand or codified form of saying *I personally and we*

collectively do not have to deal with the complexities of the situation in which the Mennonite Church finds itself regarding its continued exaltation of Yoder and the utilization of his work as the primary peace teachings of the church. Such a self-buttressing comment allows the speaker (and her listeners) to remain unaware or, if aware, to turn away from an informed knowledge of the suffering that Yoder's behavior has reportedly caused to individuals and their families during the years from 1970 until his death. I believe that these kinds of comments, uncontextualized and uncommented upon (or non-exegeted) participate in the religious academy's and the Mennonite Church's ongoing silencing of Yoder's victims' voices by downplaying their frightening and very personal experiences of harassment and abuse.[23]

Why me? and Why not me?

Since Yoder's death I have been present in a number of discussions with offended Mennonite women as they sought to sort out their personal response to the question, W*hy me?* In light of Yoder's death in 1997, such a question is permanently not-answerable. Victims need, therefore, in my historical perspective on this topic, to simply allow the unanswerable question about Yoder's motivation to be what it is – non-answerable.

In addition I have been present in multiple social conversational groupings in which Mennonite women of a certain age and professional status have sought to understand, *Why not me?* At times these conversations include revelations about correspondence or telephone calls they received from John In these conversations, women review how they knew John and in what circumstances they worked with him. They describe the context of their interactions with him. They may even talk about how old they were when Yoder correspond or interacted with them in some manner. They may discuss their perception of the church's management of his sexual harassment of other women. In some of these conversations women ruefully have reported that they too received a letter inviting them to correspond with Yoder about female sexuality. Occasional women report that they did not take the letter seriously and just trashed it without responding to it. In some conversations women have asserted: *I should have kept that letter instead of shredding it. Then I could have told/showed the church what he was doing*. As in many aspects of life, hindsight is more prescient than the wisdom of the actual historical moment.

In part because I was aware of the underground stream of rumors regarding John's personal behaviors, my professional correspondence with him about Mennonite Church agency issues was carefully managed by having an institutional secretary review and initial all of my outgoing mail and by having this same individual open all of my professional mail. I did not want to give, even unintentionally, any invitation to personal correspondence. Although we lived only fifteen miles from each other, there were no occasions when I saw him or interacted with him outside of formal Mennonite Church institutional events.

Why me? and *Why not me? B*oth are unanswerable questions in light of Yoder's death and his pre-death defensive silence about his behavioral choices. As far as I can tell at this distance in time, Yoder never personally discussed his reasons for initiating harassing behavior with his victims or with victim advocates who challenged him directly. There was an arbitrary aspect to his "social" behavior with women in that mutuality does not appear to have been present in his efforts to think about or to connect with women. Such an absence of consenting mutuality is one marker of authoritarian and controlling interpersonal behavior.

These types of comments and questions – to the extent that they remain alive in our collective and individual Mennonite consciousness – tend to divert individuals and the collective church away from any serious study of John's life and its influence upon his work. What is important is what did factually happen rather than what might have happened but did not. It is now important to acknowledge the repetitive nature of such conversations inside some Mennonite social groups. It is, in my opinion, time to stop this kind of gossipy ethnic chitchat and begin a serious denominational conversation about what did factually happen.

Theology Growing Straight

Natalie Goldberg's[24] insight that Buddhist teachings and a Buddhist spiritual life (the Dharma) can not grow straight in the presence of a teacher's sexual abuse of students and disciples is an important cautionary warning to us as we begin. Christian scholars and church leaders should take heed.

An early reader of this chapter in its first rough draft form, United States Mennonite sociologist Cal Redekop, suggested that this issue of Yoder's abusive and violent relationships with others (when viewed within the context of his preached ethic about the centrality of nonviolence and Christian discipleship in religious communities) illustrates a necessary question: *how perfect must the embodied life of God's messenger be if his message is to be persuasively presented to others and then received by them as a truthful and faithful witness?*

Like Goldberg's insight, Redekop's comment faces scholars of Yoder's life and writings with a hermeneutical dilemma. How is it possible to understand and utilize the intellectual work of an individual who apparently did not live by the standards he proclaimed to be essential ones for others?

To begin to address such a question, Anabaptist-Mennonite scholars and theologians need to re-visit the corpus of Yoder's ethical, ecclesial, missional, and theological work to see if, where and how his theology has been stunted, twisted, misshapen, or other wise damaged by his long-term management of his personal life. To do this work, scholars need to revisit his personal life in the decades in which he was creating his mature body of work in theology, ethics, ecclesiology, missiology, political science, and biblical studies.

In order to place Yoder's intellectual legacy in perspective, students of Yoder's life and theology need to consider (1) the church-confirmed factual reality of his gendered abuse of adult women, (2) his creation of theological and ethical rationalizations to promote and defend his harassment of women, (3) his aggressive verbal counterattacks against those who confronted him about the inappropriateness and harmfulness of his behavior (4) his defensive system of rationalizations that supported his behavior (5) his church's absolution and (6) the long-term consequences of his restoration to denominational and theological credibility.

The brilliant theological genius, with an impressive – perhaps even impeccable - Anabaptist-Mennonite ancestral history, constructed an internationally recognized ethically credible Christian apology for non-violence or disciplined revolutionary insubordination to the political powers. He created theologically credible arguments for communally embodied Christian discipleship as the mark of a faithful church.

This same man was also accused of repetitive act of gender harassment and sexual abuse of women during more than twenty years of his adult life. During his most prolific academic years, he was repeatedly confronted by both men and women about the social and moral inappropriateness of his personal behavior towards church women and his students. None of these confrontations stopped his behavior. It appears, from this distance in time, that Yoder considered his own personal life style behaviors to be above communal critique and correction.

As we begin to interrogate Yoder (and his denominational church), it is important to note that not all influences in a person's life are positive ones. Yoder's early encounters with acrimonious intra-denominational fights about polity (Oak Grove-Ohio Conference),[25] powerful, dominating and authoritarian mentors (Bender, McKenzie),[26] a major world class graduate professor who lived a non-conventional family life (Barth),[27] a sexually permissive climate among American Protestant theologians after World War Two (Tillich),[28] and Yoder's long-standing professional home in the theology department at UND where a prestigious priest faculty colleague with an international reputation (Burtchaell)[29] was discharged from his tenured position because of allegations that he sexually abused male students the University had placed in his spiritual care: these each seem to me to be relevant relationships for scholars and Yoder's future biographers to explore.

As Yoder matured as a scholar, he apparently also matured as a sexual abuser. Journalist Tom Price (1992) reported that there was a complaint about Yoder's sexual misconduct in the early 1970s. By the time of Yoder's death in 1997, Price reported there had been dozens of such complaints.

Family, Clan and Culture: The Early Years[30]

Biography begins with parents and ancestors.

Attributed to John Howard Yoder

As Yoder's friend and apologist Stanley Hauerwas (1997, 1998) has noted, John Howard Yoder was intellectually precocious.[31] His intellectual brilliance demonstrated itself early and continued to manifest itself until his sudden and unexpected death in 1997.

Yoder was born in 1927 as a first child. He had two younger siblings: a brother Charles who died on March 31, 1932 when Yoder was 4 years old and a sister Mary Ellen who was born later, some time after Charles's death. When he was 8 years old, the family moved to Wooster, Ohio so that John might have more challenging classrooms and educational opportunities. During his high school years, Yoder was often the only Mennonite in his classrooms. Late in his high school matriculation, he began to take college courses at the Presbyterian College of Wooster.

At some point in time he was influenced by Rev. William Detweiler, an early Mennonite radio evangelist from Ohio. Yoder was baptized into the Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio. Later in his life, he reflected that he grew gradually, without coercion, to accept Mennonite faith and that this decision to be baptized had not been an intellectual struggle for him. Here he commented, he had a sense of belonging in the overlapping worlds of church and community (Nation, 2006, 9).

While Yoder's own late adolescent preference was not to attend Goshen College, he deferred to his parents' wishes that he do so. During his two years at Goshen College he met several faculty members who became his mentors: H. S. Bender and Guy F. Hershberger. According to Zimmerman (2007) during these undergraduate years he took a variety of graduate seminary courses. Graduating two years later (1947, age 19), he returned to Ohio and worked in his family's greenhouse business.

About these years Zimmerman (2007) writes:

> *As a student at Goshen, Yoder loved breaking dress conventions. He would wear a necktie with a T-shirt or use his necktie as a belt. He was always reading a book, even in the lunch line or walking across campus. He soon had a reputation for not having the best social skills: he obviously lived in his own world. This reputation would follow him all his life. He did not always recognize when social and sexual boundaries had been crossed, leading to situations that caused great pain later in his life* (42).[32]

The intellectually precocious college student (whose intellectual abilities apparently outran his social ones) sounds very much like an adolescent deliberately setting out to tweak the boring or predictable conventionality of

his classmates and professors. In later correspondence with Bender,[33] Yoder complained that his two years at Goshen College had prolonged his intellectual adolescence by five years.

Many intellectually precocious children and adolescents do not mature equally in intellectual and social skills. This is not a mark of pathology. It is not even a mark of social awkwardness per se. The individual Body-Self needs developmental time for all aspects of the personality to catch up with his or her precocious intellectual maturity.

In 1949, at the age of 21, Yoder left the United States to work under the aegis of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in post-war Europe where he coordinated relief and service activities for orphans and war-displaced children. Here he met Annie Guth. They were married on June 12, 1952. Between the years 1953 and 1969, the couple had seven children (five daughters and two sons), the second of whom (a daughter) died in infancy.

During these European years, Yoder also coordinated relief activities in post-earthquake Algeria. In addition, he pursued his D. Theol. in historical theology at the University of Basel in Switzerland. His dissertation, guided by Swiss theologian Karl Barth focused on the disputations of 16th century Anabaptists (European ancestors of Mennonite, Amish, and Amish-Mennonite religious communities in the USA and Canada).

While in Europe he participated in the beginnings of the CONCERN Movement.[34] This small group of male American Mennonite graduate students and post-war relief and service workers in Europe called the North American Mennonite Church to spiritual renewal at a congregational level and non-violent Christian discipleship. As a result of Yoder's writings during this era, tensions arose between him and his North American mentor and friend, H. S. Bender.[35]

According to Zimmerman (2007) Bender and Yoder clashed on issues of church polity. Reflecting his early years inside the congregation at Oak Grove, Yoder held to a *pervasively congregational* understanding of the church. In such an understanding, the congregation (rather than a national denomination) was the center of decision-making for Christian disciples. This was in marked contrast to Bender's attempts to solidify a more centrally governed bureaucratic church with a professionalized ministry.

Returning to the United States with his family, Yoder again worked for a while in his family's greenhouse business in Ohio. In 1958-1959 he moved his family to Indiana where he taught a sabbatical replacement year for John C. Wenger (Goshen College Biblical Seminary, GCBS) on the GC campus. Following this year he began to work for the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Only after H. S. Bender death in 1962 did Yoder permanently join the GCBS seminary faculty. He began to teach courses in Anabaptist-Mennonite and Reformation history, missiology and biblical theology. He developed and taught a course on war and the theology of Anabaptist non-resistance.

Based upon Al Keim's H. S. Bender biography (1998), William Klassen's eulogy at Yoder's funeral (1998) and Zimmerman's book (2007), it appears that Yoder was highly ambivalent about teaching under Bender's supervision and that issues of Bender's authoritarian style and their consequent mutual mistrust were the major factors present in this ambivalence. Bender's death in 1962 opened, therefore, the door to Yoder's full-time (GCBS) seminary teaching which began in 1963.

When GCBS morphed into GBS, Yoder moved along with the rest of the faculty to a brand new campus in Elkhart (IN) the seminary shared with MBS. A new entity, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS), was created. AMBS represented a long-planned seminary coalition of two Mennonite denominations: the (Old) Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church. These two groups of American Mennonites had slightly different ancestral cultures, world views, and belief systems. These would, at times, create tensions inside both sponsoring churches.

In 1967, Yoder began to teach occasional courses at the University of Notre Dame (UND) in a post-Vatican Two Roman Catholic effort at collegiality and ecumenicity. His faculty mentor at Notre Dame was Father John (Jack) McKenzie, a brusque, brilliant, iconoclastic, often contentious, and well-respected Catholic scholar.

As Yoder noted above, one's individual biography begins within a community and within one's family's ancestral history. This is perhaps particularly true in small ethnic groups such as the American Mennonite

and Amish descendents of Europe's 16th century Anabaptists. In such small religious ethnic communities, the ancestral story is part of a community's ongoing identity. Being born into such a community, the ancestral story becomes, as if by osmosis, part of an individual's history and socio-religious identity.

Yoder's ancestral history was deeply rooted in Amish-Mennonite[36] and Mennonite traditions, belief systems, and cultural practices. His great-grandparents and grandparents were politically and religiously active inside their respective churches and communities. In this ancestral lineage were ordained ministers, bishops, and individuals who refused to fight in the Civil War. The family supported progressive social changes in Mennonite life: the establishment of Goshen College (IN); the establishment of a Mennonite Church Mission Board (IN); the establishment of the Mennonite Central Committee (PA); the establishment of Sunday schools for education of children and adults (OH); the development of anti-war curricula for Mennonite congregations; circuit-riding evangelism; and denomination-wide publication of church-related literature.

As sociologist Fred Kniss (1997) notes, Amish-Mennonite and Mennonite communities were often deeply divided in the 19th and 20th centuries by arguments about progressive change movements. In-fighting, at times, was quite contentious. Progressive and conservative groups in these conflicted debates often believed and acrimoniously claimed that they alone properly understood God's will regarding what ever issue was in contention.

Oak Grove Congregation (Smithville, OH, Yoder's home congregation) had a strong independent identity. There were frequent episodes of tension between Oak Grove and Ohio Mennonite Conference during the years that Yoder was a teenager and young adult. Zimmerman (2007) notes that Yoder witnessed religious authoritarianism first hand during these years.

One of the issues which surfaced at Oak Grove was the question of congregational decision-making. Unlike many of its Ohio Conference Mennonite Church neighbor congregations (operating under a centralized bureaucratic conference model) the Oak Grove congregation supported keeping the locus of decisions at a congregational level. Individual members and leaders of the congregation were not eager to yield to religious authority, power and control to a centralized regional conference

or a national denominational church in decisions regarding issues such as ordination of ministers.

Nation (2006) notes that *for their decisions regarding specific behaviors appropriate to the convictions they shared with the [Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church] were to be discerned by the local church* (8). Events such as ordination were at times conflicted and contentious realities between centralized conference officers and the Oak Grove congregation. Zimmerman (2007) writes that a particularly acrimonious debate in the wake of a specific ordination by Oak Grove got the congregation thrown out of Ohio Conference in 1947 At the time, John Howard Yoder was 19 years old (65).

Nation (2006) comments that that Howard C. Yoder's (John's father) conflict management and negotiating skills often helped his congregational community to weather these kinds of intense disagreements with the community intact. Howard's young intellectually precocious son John Howard witnessed first-hand and up-close these repeated and conflict-infused efforts by one group of Ohio Conference Mennonites to control another's religious beliefs and cultural practices.[37]

The Years from 1970 to 1997

> *Memories of the past as it really happened must be rediscovered, the stories, events and emotions forgotten and repressed these long generations retold. In these remembrances of the way it really was, a clearer image [emerges].*
>
> Edward W. Wood[38]

In 1970, Yoder (age 43) was appointed the first president of the re-organized and newly incorporated Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS) which shared a campus with the Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) in Elkhart (IN). During this era of his life, he did missions consulting work for the Mennonite Board of Missions (Elkhart, IN) and peace and non-violence consulting work for the Mennonite Central Committee (Akron, PA).

Instead of immediately moving into the Elkhart GBS campus president's office Yoder spent the 1970-1971 year in South America fulfilling prior-

agreed-upon teaching engagements. While in South America he did some supervisory personnel work for the Mennonite Board of Missions.

On July, 13, 1992, as part of a series of articles written about Yoder's misconduct, investigative journalist Tom Price in *The Elkhart Truth*[39] reported that just before the presidency began or during it a complaint about the presence of sexual misconduct in Yoder's life was lodged with a non-identified representative of the Mennonite Church. The precise nature of this accusation (and its source) was not identified by Price.

During the 1971-72 academic year Yoder embroiled GBS in what rapidly became an acrimonious conflict with Goshen College administrators about the appropriate location for the H. S. Bender library (which at that time was physically located on the Goshen College Campus). Eventually, the conflict was settled with money changing hands and the Bender library became the core of what is now the prestigious Mennonite Historical Library.

During Yoder's presidency and later tenure as a faculty member, stories circulated inside the Mennonite academy about his arrogant, abrasive and verbally combative behavior.[40] Stories circulated about his argumentative contentiousness in professional and personal relationships with the seminary's faculty and staff. Seminary insiders joked (outside his hearing) that Yoder believed he alone knew what the *one, true, pure and holy church* looked like.

At the end of the 1972-1973 academic year Yoder precipitously left the presidency of GBS and returned to full-time teaching. At the time there was no church-wide publicity about his vacating the presidency. He taught for one academic year before taking two sequential one year leaves of absence. At the time of Yoder's death in 1997, Mennonite historian Theron Schlabach wrote that the Yoder presidency had been *disastrous*.[41]

In 1974-1975, Yoder and his family lived in Strasbourg where he had a visiting faculty appointment at its Protestant seminary. For the 1975-1976 academic year he and his family lived in Jerusalem while he taught at the Ecumenical Institute – Tantur.

Price (July 13, 1992) reported that during these years (1974-1976) of Yoder's life outside the United States, several North American women received sexually explicit correspondence from Yoder in which he asked

them to respond to his private mail box. In their February, 1992 conversations with the John Howard Yoder Task Force at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, some of the women clarified that offensive correspondence had arrived from both nations.[42]

Marlin Miller, a systematic theologian, was brought to the GBS – AMBS campus as a faculty member for the 1973-74 academic year. During this year, he was appointed president of GBS and took office in the 1974-1975 academic year.

In conversations with women victims and their supporters in the mid-1980s, and again a year or so before his death in 1994, Miller commented that during his presidency he received the first complaint about Yoder's sexual misconduct behavior in 1976 - soon after Yoder and his family returned from Jerusalem to the United States. In these conversations Miller did not clarify whether this initial allegation of misconduct involved consenting adultery or whether the complaint was about unwanted, abusive, and harassing behavior. Nor did Miller volunteer information about how he managed these early complaints.

During this time Yoder began to write papers (which he often called memoranda) about adultery, marriage, singleness, and what he called *affectional relationships* between married men and single women.[43]

Reflecting some self-consciousness about his interest in this area, he wrote to seminary president Marlin Miller and seminary dean Ross Bender (his AMBS seminary supervisors) to open a set of conversations and feedback from them (April 19, 1977). In its introductory paragraphs his memo notes that both Bender and Miller had previously been critical of some of his ideas regarding these matters.

> *The second focus is the single person, the moral propriety for some of being single as a whole human being and a Christian, and the special needs, problems, and concerns of singles. The most debatable part of that thinking, though it is not original with me, is that single Christians have a right to have certain kinds of emotional-social needs met which for married persons may be met in marriage: - knowing someone will take time for them, freedom for confidential sharing, emotional interdependence, physical affection, and that a Christian community should provide for the propriety of such*

resources in a non-genital way, i.e., in a context of interpretations and criteria which ward off any genital interpretation ,implications, or abuse.

Then, he identifies the issue of other's responses to his work. He notes there are four likely objections to his work on this topic:

- *The notions are new and unacceptable*. He then adds a most interesting comment. *I am accustomed to dealing responsibly with ideas which are unacceptable to many*
- *Dealing openly with these ideas at a place such as AMBS would be seen as scandalous*
- *The notion proposed of "non-genital" or "non-erotic" or "familiar" sexuality is morally unacceptable and psychologically harmful*
- Others, he notes, may see his interest in this area as *an extension of my own "problems." They may well be, without necessarily meaning that the ideas I have come to are false. This is why your critical concern should be brotherly as well as theoretical.*

Patterns of Victimization

To put it more starkly: what individuals believed – or did not believe – about God mattered very little. What mattered was not belief but action or practice.

Barbara J. King[44]

When one listens to women's stories about their encounters with Yoder, several patterns emerge. Some of these have been identified in the *Elkhart Truth* (Price, September 13, 1992) articles as three women (identified by pseudonyms), "Colleen", "Clara", and "Tina" described their personal experiences with Yoder. In addition to their own individual stories, they described additional stories from other women they personally knew.

Colleen (Price, July 13, B-1) described Yoder's visit to her home during the years when her children were small. During part of this visit, her husband was gone. One evening as she returned from putting her children to bed, she sat down on a sofa next to Yoder. He moved closer to her and pushed her over. She told Price, *He lay down on me. I was very afraid. He began*

to shake violently…When I pushed him away and confronted him he denied there was anything sexual about it. Colleen and her husband later wrote to Yoder and confronted him about the inappropriateness of his behavior. She told Price that Yoder never responded to their letter.

Clara (Price, July 13, B-!) knew Yoder as a faculty member during her days as a seminary student. In her encounters with Yoder, there were inappropriate hugs inside his seminary office. She let him know this behavior was unwanted. She and other seminary women avoided meeting Yoder alone. When Yoder taught in Jerusalem (1975-1976) he sent her sexually explicit mail asking her to respond to a private post office box. Upon Yoder's return to Elkhart, he began to make uninvited visits to her apartment. She told him to stop these visits and to stop making contact with her. *I remember literally pushing him away from me at one point [telling him] "this is not appropriate. Do not touch me."*

Tina (Price, July 13, B-1) reports that she met Yoder at a conference. Yoder initiated correspondence between her and her husband. After some of this correspondence went back and forth, Yoder wrote to her and began a more personal form of correspondence asking her to respond to a private Osceola mail box somewhat distant from his home town. In one letter Yoder suggested to her that they meet at conferences. He urged her to bring her newborn baby along so that he could watch her breast feed. The letter was filled with graphic fantasized details about her naked breasts. She showed the letter to her husband and then wrote to Yoder telling him never to write to her again.

Below is a list of behaviors which a variety of women reported to administrators of the institutional church:[45]

- Yoder used his intellectual work as a method of seduction. One woman wrote to me: *It is important to mention his use of intellectual seduction. [He asked us] to read his papers and to make comments and corrections and to enter into dialogue with him. In its own way, this was seductive. I think he knew exactly what he was doing.* As I have listened to several women describe this behavior pattern, the metaphor that consistently comes to mind is that of *trolling* for victims. His intellectual work in Christian theology and ethics, most especially his work regarding female singleness and female sexuality, and his

requests to women for their personal and professional opinions were the bait.

- In discussing Yoder's behavior, some women reported that he showed up at their at their work offices where he engaged them in professional conversations about women's roles in the church, singleness and sexuality. In several situations I know about, he later showed up unannounced at the woman's home. During these uninvited visits he touched them inappropriately and/or sexually propositioned them.
- When he traveled he would (1) write to a woman ahead of time asking to visit her or (2) show up at her door uninvited and unannounced. After having a meal together somewhere, he might proposition her to spend the night in bed with him.
- There are accounts of Yoder picking women up off their feet, hugging them close to his body, dropping them back to the ground and kissing them on the neck or on the mouth. There are other accounts of him pulling women – usually students - down on his lap and kissing them. Some women have described these un-elicited behaviors as "threatening, overwhelming, unwanted, frightening, infuriating, and unnerving."
- Other women reported more violent contacts with him. These included abusive and intimidating phone calls to their home or office. In other situations I know about women reported feeling physically intimidated or threatened by aggressive, demeaning verbal behavior and/or physically threatening gestures.
- In some situations, Yoder invited women to meet him at professional conferences. Tina, above, notes that these were never Mennonite conferences. However, other women have reported being asked to meet him at Mennonite meetings. Some women agreed to his invitation only to discover his sexual intentions after they'd arrived at the conference site.
- In some situations, Yoder complained that *the seminary was creating trouble for him,* At times he would complain, *I am being falsely accused*.
- In academic student-teacher situations, a few student women had questions about whether or not an academic grade reflected John's sexual interest in them. Some women wondered whether or not their grade had been lowered because of a prior personal boundary-setting response to Yoder's sexual harassment behaviors.

- With some women he attempted to discuss their menstrual and sexual histories.
- He reportedly belittled and disparaged women who refused to agree to physical contact with him or who protested his intrusive behaviors with them.
- He mailed sexually explicit letters and tapes to women discussing his fantasies about their intimate body parts.
- In reading Yoder's singleness, adultery, marriage, divorce, remarriage and sexuality papers in the light of his behavior, it is apparent that Yoder was concerned with female singleness in his arguments that married men and single women could have close, intimate, loving relationships - relationships in which a married men's touch represented a way for single women to meet their skin hunger needs for physical affection and emotional intimacy. It becomes quite apparent to the close reader of these papers that his argued concern is not with meeting the *affectional needs (his term)* of unpartnered heterosexual or homosexual men.[46] [47]
- In reading the 1976 Regents material in his archival files (Box 200), it is also clear that in an AMBS student initiated and student taught course about topics of women's ordination and issues for women in church leadership roles, Yoder subverted the topic of women's encounters with male dominant power structures and religious resistance to women's ordination in order to focus the group's attention on women's issues of singleness and sexuality.[48]
- Credible estimates about the numbers of victims vary. In the early 1980s Marlin Miller reported he knew of 38.[49] In 1992, Price reported nearly 40.[50] In general, clinicians and criminologists believe that for every victim of sexual abuse who reports the abuse to authorities, there are several more victimized individuals who do not.

My personal opinion, therefore, is that no one ever knew or knows today how many women Yoder offended against. His offenses at times (according to women's stories) seemed pre-planned and included a grooming period. In other situations his offenses seemed opportunistic and spontaneous. Because of the complexity of the reports which surface and then re-surface about Yoder's specific types of behavior during these years it is quite likely that Yoder did not remember the numbers of his offended *sisters-in-the-faith.*

Journalist Tom Price (July 15, 1992, B-4) in an article entitled, *Yoder's actions framed in writings* reported that Yoder's written papers about sexuality and female singleness as well as about marriage and adultery rationalized his behavior. He commented further that these academic papers were well-known in the academic worlds of AMBS and UND where Yoder taught. In his report he quotes Tina as saying:

> *One of the lines he used on a number of women I've met is that "We are cutting edge. We are developing some new models for the church. We're part of this grand scale, noble experiment. The Christian Church will be indebted to us for years to come." He maintains that it is even appropriate for two people who may have been married to other people to be in bed together as long as they don't have sexual intercourse (B-4).*

In his own words Yoder provides us with a glimpse into his own thinking about these matters. In July, 1974 Yoder drafted a memorandum which was later transcribed on August 3, 1974. It was addressed to women he called his sisters-in-faith and was entitled *A Call for Aid*[51]*.* In this memorandum, he mentioned in passing that conversations with three women created an opening in his own thinking about issues of singleness and sexuality. He wrote:

> *What I am responding to here is the reaction of…a few sisters whose feedback to me had a quality of freshness, concreteness, and trust which I had seldom experienced before, and which I took as a gift of grace.* He goes on to request help. *Therefore, I think it very promising – if you consent – to call on you as part of my "hermeneutic community" on these subjects* (with delicate themes). *If I am right in reading the fact that three sisters have shared with me a gift of grace, then such an ongoing conversation may have great promise* (1).
>
> *The one deep question which my papers on singleness and marriage consciously avoid is what the single person should do with his/her sexuality…If I say that church, society, institutions, and families should support singles, what support do they need? Should we help the single woman repress or sublimate her sexuality? Is it a force needing to be leashed and tamed, since its normal expression is marital? Or is it strength only to be channeled?*

Utilizing a familial model in which intercourse is described as genital sexuality which belongs only in a marital context, he continues:

> *A single woman who will have no husband and likely no son must then decide whether to shrivel the expression of her womanliness, or whether she can redistribute it by sharing it with other men (uncle, brother, colleague, nephew, teacher, pupil). I favor the latter, but then it must be further defined. Must it be under the fear of "being misunderstood" or "going too far," or can it be free, wholesome, and joyful? This is the point where my two papers do help. If, as my marriage paper suggests, marriage is indissolubly monogamous and is publically (sic) celebrated and institutionally reinforced, -- and if as my singleness paper pleads, singleness can be mutually chosen and publicly celebrated, than any two people of the two sexes, who have openly graduated from the age of courtship, whether by marriage or into singleness, know where they stand and are free, as led by need, opportunity and counsel, to relate for whatever interaction of womanliness/manliness is needed, with the clearly drawn line, publicly recognized that excludes the genital* (1-2).
>
> *But it does not exclude familiarity. It does not exclude needing one another. It does not exclude deep trust and confidentiality. It does not exclude irrational selectivity, as irrational as the married woman's choice of just one man to accept totally – though not as narrow nor as permanent. It does not exclude working, traveling, counseling, struggling together in real intimacy. It does not exclude very specific covenanting. It may include caress, embrace, as a celebration of caring and dependency with no fear that the natural hormonal response of the body, God's good gift also to the single, need work destructively. It may include periods of preoccupation and concern that come and go - a kind of falling in and out of love. It may include long-range bonds, especially to the extent to which the single person sees her singleness as longrange (sic) leading from God, and finds a brother/uncle/or nephew whose support one finds especially unrestrained and helpful. It may include task-filled sharing, like what we are doing together if you answer this note willingly* (2).

In reading this long memorandum, I wondered if it, or some variation, was used to locate vulnerable women. It is, at this distance, impossible to know.

Former UND students (all male) tell me that there are papers about sexuality and marriage which Yoder privately shared only with individual male students. It well may be, therefore, that there are additional marriage, adultery, and the sexuality of singleness papers buried in Yoder's files or lodged in the files of his former students and colleagues. While I have heard rumors from several men (who studied in different eras at UND during Yoder's tenure there) that these kinds of papers exist, I have not seen them. If there are, for example, written defenses or rationalizations for Christian polygamy as some readers of this manuscript have suggested, this would perhaps explain why Yoder did not believe his sexualized behavior toward young and mid-life adult women was forbidden to him (or was even divinely expected of him) as a respected and powerful Christian ecumenicist, theologian and ethicist. Some support for Yoder's openness to polygamy as a faithful lifestyle in certain cultural contexts can be found in a March 26, 1979 letter to Will Mowchan. In response to a letter from Mowchan Yoder clarifies some of his definitions and presuppositions about sexuality. In particular he restates his commitment to genital sexuality as belonging in life-long committed marital relationships. [*Genital affection]…belongs as far as I can tell only within marriage which is life-long and faithful, involving covenant and cohabitation and other less central moral obligations. Normally it should be monogamous but in other cultural circumstances it can conceivably be faithfully polygamous* (2).

Such a non-conventional belief system does not explain, however, his lack of compassion and remorse when confronted about his behavior by victimized women (and sometimes husbands) who were offended and frightened by his actions towards them. This does not explain his on-going refusal to acknowledge or reply to letters calling him to account. It does not explain situations in which he mocked women for being afraid or accused them of being just *too unsophisticated* or *too uneducated* or *too intellectually limited* to (1) understand and (2) comply with his requests and suggestions.[52]

Yoder's tenacious commitment to his core theological, ethical, and ecclesial ideas about nonviolence and Christian discipleship remained consistent throughout his long academic career. It appears his ideas about human sexuality, female sexuality, singleness, and male domination of women did so as well.

Certainly the time of his most prolific, mature and influential scholarship in terms of publications (1970-1992) is almost a perfectly correlated overlay of the time when women's complaints about sexual harassment and transgression accumulated inside an AMBS Yoder fact file.

A close examination of Yoder's lifestyle from the early 1970s until 1992 (in the context of repeated instances of confrontation by others about the inappropriateness, the harmfulness, and, in Christian theology, the sinfulness of his behavior) reveals that all of these collective confrontations led to no changes in either his behavior or his deeply-held rationalizations. Victimized women (sometimes accompanied by their husbands) went to the church and reported their experiences. Non-victimized concerned churchwomen went to both Yoder and church administrators in an attempt to get his behavior stopped. AMBS administrators admonished him.

Harassment Complaints Accumulate

You cannot have peace if you forget the wrongs.

Stanley Hauerwas[53]

From 1976 until 1992, evidence accumulated inside the Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Seminaries in Elkhart, the theology department at UND, the Society of Christian Ethics, and the ecumenical church world-wide that Yoder was conducting his own personal sexual guerilla war against bright, gifted female students and institutionally-employed church women. Complaints about his behavior were lodged with the office of the president at AMBS, with Prairie Street Mennonite Church (his home congregation), with Mennonite Church agencies which utilized Yoder as a representative and traveling consultant, and with Mennonite Church denominational administrators. UND faculty and staff women told me in the late 1970s that several UND student women had lodged formal complaints with UND administrators.

In addition, complaints were lodged directly with Yoder himself. During this era of Yoder's life, women victims (and occasionally their husbands) confronted him about the inappropriateness and harmfulness of his misbehavior.[54] Churchwomen from various church agency boards personally confronted him about the inappropriate nature of his

relationships with and behavior towards women. Only in 2010, after a close examination of the years from 1976 until 1984 has it become clear to me that GBS/AMBS President Marlin Miller, various GBS/AMBS academic deans, and the GBS/AMBS oversight boards had a long history of privately confronting Yoder as they sought (unsuccessfully as it turned out) to persuade him to change his behavior.[55]

None of these behind the scenes and private confrontation efforts changed his behavior. Indeed, his behavior seemed to escalate in both number of incidents and the offensiveness of individual incidents. Not only sexually explicit correspondence arrived in women's mail boxes, not only was sexually suggestive language spoken directly to women: unwanted physical touch violations became prevalent.[56] Price (June 29, 1992) reported behaviors that today might be defined as attempted rape[57] and stalking[58] as well as sexual harassment.[59]

Not only Mennonite women

During this era (1978-1984) Mennonite women from the Goshen College campus and the AMBS campus in Elkhart occasionally talked with Roman Catholic women from St. Mary's College (SMC) and UND in South Bend. In the course of these conversations, it became clear Yoder's sexual boundary violations had a repetitive, obsessive quality to them. Utilizing shared information, UND faculty and staff women attempted to work with Notre Dame's administrators just as Mennonite women attempted to work with AMBS and Mennonite Church elective officers and staff administrators.

Eventually (1981-1984) a coalition of Yoder's victims, female therapists, Goshen College female faculty, female faculty and staff colleagues at AMBS and UND, and concerned church women from Mennonite institutional governance boards met in a variety of settings to discuss strategies for getting Yoder's behavior contained and stopped. In addition to lodging complaints at UND and AMBS, some Mennonite women confronted a variety of Mennonite Church administrators about the inappropriateness of utilizing Yoder as a church institution sponsored teacher, lecturer, writer, editor, and consultant. In some situations, they talked about Yoder's ongoing danger to additional, uninformed women.

When I began graduate studies in Southern California in 1981, I soon learned that rumors regarding Yoder's behavior were also known inside the ecumenical American religious academy. After I wrote a paper about Yoder's sexuality, singleness and marriage papers in the context of Mennonite women and their experiences with Yoder, two of my ethics professors talked with me at length about what they knew about Yoder's social reputation inside the professional world of Christian theology and ethics.[60] Both professors individually advised me against working with Yoder or his intellectual work as any aspect of my graduate program of theological studies.

By the late 1980s and early 1990's rumors regarding Yoder's behavior were an open secret inside Mennonite professional and academic circles. 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. As part of a discussion regarding her utilization of Yoder's theology, she wrote, [t]*here 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).

By the fall of 1991-92, the Mennonite academic world and the American Mennonite Church were faced with the threat of widespread publicity regarding Yoder's continued utilization as a peace and nonviolence expert in official church functions. A John Howard Yoder Task Force formed at Prairie Street Mennonite Church to investigate the factual basis for church-wide rumors regarding women's allegations of sexual harassment. In April, 1992 *Elkhart Truth* journalist Tom Price began a three month-long process of investigating these rumors.[61]

The Power and the Right to Inflict Harm

> *Having the power to inflict havoc upon…others is a reality that is readily conceded. This is one of the ways in which an individual's sense of power is readily acknowledged. However, once the presence of this power has been recognized, the discussion turns to whether or not a person has the right to exercise this power in destructive ways.*
>
> Joseph F. Foderaro[62]

Recognizing the common clinical wisdom of the twentieth-century that today's abusers were frequently victims of some form of violence and violation in their early years, the bridge from today's acts of violence into future generations becomes clearer. Violence in most (or all) of its forms is highly contagious. It functions as a cultural virus-like meme which needs a human host in order to perpetuate itself. Experienced violence creates trauma. Trauma creates personality fault lines. Individuals with traumatic fault lines in their personality are vulnerable to becoming future hosts or carriers for the violence that they, in their own turn, do to others.

The fault lines in Yoder's personality were in all probability not present at his birth. They originated in his life history and in the sense he made of his life experiences. Likewise, his theology was born out of a similar complex mix of experience, reflection, and interpretation.

To date Yoder's apologists, biographers and essayists have denied, ignored, trivialized, or explained away the complex issue of sexual violence in his personal and professional repertoire. To my knowledge, no one in the Mennonite Church Academy or the Believer's Church Academy has attempted to unearth, understand or credibly explain the origins of Yoder's violence against the women he knew inside the shared community of Christian faith.

His behavior (and his writing), however serve as road maps to his inner consciousness. In order for him to do such damage to other's lives, his inner life was marked by experiences or fantasies of violence. I cannot prove this is so for I have not attempted to look at his early life nor was I ever a personal confidante about his inner life. But my clinical intuition informs me this is likely so. A close study of his writings, therefore, will most likely shed light on his decisions to violate others.

In addition to the damage and wounds he created in abuse victims, his behavior also stressed Mennonite Church administrators. Whatever damage Yoder did to the institutional Mennonite Church, its structures and its people has yet to be identified, studied, and addressed.[63] The damage caused by his behavior to the church's historical teachings about living in harmonious relationships with ones fellow believers inside the community of faith similarly has not been examined. [64]

Concluding Comments

Whether or not Yoder's teaching has fundamentally, negatively and unnecessarily polarized the Mennonite Church's peace theology as well as its ecclesiology of community is a question for future scholars to ascertain. His life, as it was lived, however has polarized a certain segment of today's Mennonite church. Individuals seeking to understand the factual details of his life are sometimes told that his personal life does not matter to the church and its religious academy. *It is his teachings, not what he did, that are important for the church to remember. It is his teachings, not his life that matters.*[65] When their questioners disagree with this perception, church theologians and ethicists simply out-shout them or use the authority and power of their academic position to mute or stop the discussion.

Our psychological principle to understand such a bi-furcated legacy is simple: complex patterns of human behavior can serve the individual's creative and life-giving impulses and they can also serve life-destructive ones. According to Jungian theory the light and the shadow co-exist within each human personality. Their relationship to each other is always unstable and each is continuously in a process of constellating. Each mature individual is responsible, therefore, to understand and to manage both aspects of the personality in ways which do not harm themselves or others. As Gugenbuhl-Craig (1999) and Rutter (1989) have commented, this is especially true for individuals whose position involves having positional authority, power, and control over the lives of others.[66]

Utilizing Erik Erikson's biography of Martin *Luther*, Johnson (1997) comments:

> *Luther's passionate quest for a gracious God was driven both by the psychic disorders of his personal life and the ideological disorders of medieval religiosity* (17).

Therefore, according to Johnson, if today we seek to understand Luther's personal pathology (and its influence upon his theological contributions) we need to examine and understand the pathological ideologies and social disorders of his medieval period in history.

A similar statement can be made about Yoder. To understand Yoder's personal life and his theology, questions need to be asked about his

developmental journey. Questions need to be raised about his personal communities of reference. To date, these kinds of questions have not been raised in discussions about the origins of his theology and the origins of his behavior. As Erikson noted about important socio-theological issues in the life of Luther, it is essential in Yoder's situation to identify and study Anabaptist-Mennonite and American ideological and praxis disorders that were contemporary with Yoder's life and that subsequently embedded themselves within his intellectual preoccupations and writings.

Footnotes

[1] Sipe, A. W. R. (January 8, 2006, p. 1). Retrieve from http://www.richardsipe.com

[2] See Tom Price articles in *The Elkhart Truth,* June and July, 1992.

[3] See *The Gospel Evangel* press release regarding suspension of Yoder's ordination credentials by Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, September, 1992

[4] Consult Appendix F

[5] See Chapter 2 for more information about Erikson's methodology

[6] Yoder's archival materials are located in the Mennonite Church Archives on the Goshen College Campus in Goshen, Indiana.

[7] These catalogues and yearbooks are located in the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College campus

[8] Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, AMBS campus, Elkhart, IN

[9] Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies

[10] Available from the Mennonite Church Archives

[11] The funeral service eulogies were later printed in the Spring, 1998 issue of the *Conrad Grebel Review,*

[12] W. Pauck and M. Pauck, in their 1976 biography of Paul Tillich represent one model of the latter.

[13] As Thomas Merton's private journals have been released by his literary executors, a series of biographies by a variety of authors has begun to appear. The complexities of his late-in-life love affair with a young student nurse have begun to re-shape contemporary understandings of Merton's life and teachings in the context of his emotional, psychological and spiritual neediness. These books do not detract from the contributions Merton made to understanding the monastic spiritual life. Rather, they enrich it. The same is true of the autobiographical and biographical works regarding the life of Roman Catholic priest and spiritual writer Henri Nouwen. The variety of biographical materials now available demonstrates his spiritual journey in ways which provide contemporary readers with many insights about the nature of the spiritual dilemmas faced by contemporary priests and ministers. Biographical truthfulness, in my opinion, better serves the future faith community simply because it is honest. As seminaries of the future prepare new generations of priests and minister, biographical studies can assist individuals in their own spiritual formation activities. Merton's and Nouwen's in-life decisions not to permanently sequester or destroy records and journals mean that we have a much more accurate sense of the life they actually lived – with all of the complexities of a real life as opposed to a purged, falsely sanctified and purified one. Because they are not falsely idealized in the factual historical record, scholars and readers are more able to discern that which was life-affirming in their work and that which reflected the shadow aspects of their personalities – aspects which are perhaps less admirable and less useful to emulate.

[14] See the January 23, 1997 issue of *The Weather Vane* (the campus newspaper for Eastern Mennonite University Harrisonburg, VA for its coverage of Yoder's visit to campus as a visiting lecturer. At that time EMU faculty member Barbra Graber commented to the Weather Vane reporter that the Mennonite Church had covered up Yoder's misconduct for some twenty years. She went on to state *[t]his is not just about John Howard Yoder. It is about a deep affliction in the church body (p. 6).*

[15] Hannah Arendt, 1969b, p. 63

[16] See D. Weiss (January 27, 1998) for one of these accounts by one of Yoder's graduate students at UND.

[17] Father Burrell's eulogy at Yoder's memorial service is but one example of these kinds of reports about Yoder.

[18] E. Zimmerman cites a June 12, 1956 letter from Yoder to J. Lawrence Burkholder that chastises him for being taken in by Reinhold Niebuhr's and Paul Tillich's abstractions. Yoder wrote, *I'd rather discuss how many angels can stand on a pinhead with a man who thinks that matters than discuss ontology with a pinhead who thinks that by defining a quality makes it* ***be****.* If I am not mistaken in my reading of this small paragraph, in addition to Niebuhr and Tillich, Yoder by association has called Burkholder a pinhead. This kind of attacking verbal behavior was offensive to many of its targets. It certainly was not designed to build a relationship of cordial collegiality.

[19] I am referring to *introvert* in the sense of the Meyers-Brigg Personality Preference Model.

[20] Correspondence, Katie Boyts (Undated, ca August 13, 2010).

[21] J. F. Foderaro, 2001

[22] Statement of Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force, February, 1992.

[23] See T. West, 1999 (pp. 377-382) regarding the emotional damages to victims of experienced sexual or gender harassment

[24] See N. Goldberg (2004) for additional information about Zen Master Dainin Katagiri, the spiritual leader of the Minneapolis Zen Center.

[25] F. Kniss, (1997).

[26] A. Keim, (1998).

[27]See K. Sondregger, (September 8, 1999, pp. 1-3).

[28] See W. Pauck and M. Pauck, (1976).

[29] (1) P. Windsor (December 6, 199, pp. 1ff) Notre Dame's Burtchaell to resign, sources say, *National Catholic Reporter,* Retrieve from Htt//:www.ncronline.org/crisis/120691.htm
(2) 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.html?res-9DOC4D8173CF930A35751CIA96795
(3) See also J. M. Vore. Investigate Hidden Sexual Scandals at Notre Dame, *Viewpoint-Observer, online), 37 (29), October 7, 2002.* http://www.nd.edu/-observer/1007/2002/viewpoint/2.html

[30] In the short summary of Yoder's life between 1927 and 1970 I rely on M. T. Nation's 2006 biography of Yoder, *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite patience, evangelical witness, and Catholic convictions* and E. Zimmerman's 2007 book, *Preaching the Politics of Jesus: The origin and significance of John Howard Yoder's social ethics*.

[31] S. Hauerwas writes in his foreword to *A Mind Patient and Untamed (Ollenburger and Koontz, Eds.)* that Wittgenstein and Yoder were both *"big-brained people." They simply possessed extraordinary intellectual powers. Yet, their intellectual powers were not what made Wittgenstein and Yoder different. More important was their equal determination to focus their lives and their work on the "important stuff." They were "severe" refusing to be distracted by issues they thought less than serious. As a result, anyone encountering them now cannot help but find the clarity of their thought frightening just to the extent they force us to challenge our cherished sentiments and convictions. Wittgenstein has been dead for fifty years, but the significance of his work is just beginning to be received. I suspect it will take that long to understand what John Howard Yoder has to teach us* (p. 13).

[32] E. Zimmerman (2007) adds commentary about Yoder's abusive sexual behaviors towards adult women. He adds: *Later in Yoder's life various women accused him of strange and unwelcome patterns of sexual language and behavior* (64). In a later footnote (211) he adds that loyal friends of Yoder who knew him best believed that Yoder *cared deeply and was genuinely sorry when he hurt others* (p. 211).

[33] See E. Zimmerman, footnote 60, pp. 66-67.

[34] See N. Hershberger's 2012 essay, *The Concern Movement.*

[35] See Mennonite historian Al Keim's 1998 biography of H. S. Bender for his discussion of these tensions.

[36] Jacob Amman and his followers separated themselves from the Mennonite tradition in Europe. In the United States his faith descendents are known either as Old Order Amish or as the more progressive denomination known as Amish-Mennonite (Thiessen Nation, 2006, p. 3, footnote 9). Yoder's childhood congregation Oak Grove was a progressive congregation with Amish-Mennonite roots. Amish-Mennonite is, therefore, a descriptive term for those Anabaptists who followed Ammann out of the Mennonite Church in 17th century Europe only to return to full fellowship with Mennonites in 20th century America. In discussing Yoder's ancestral history, Amish-Mennonite is, therefore, both a denomination and an ethnic descriptive category.

[H] S. Hauerwas in his Introduction to *A Mind Patient and Untamed notes that John Howard Yoder cannot be understood without the background of his faithful witness of his Anabaptist forbears* (p. 17).

[38] E. W. Wood, 2006, p. 72

[39] See the following series of articles regarding Yoder, his behavior, and the church's response to him: (1) Price, Tom, Theologian cited in sex inquiry, *The Elkhart Truth* (June 29, B-1 ff); (2) Price, Tom, Theologian's future faces a 'litmus test: Yoder's response to allegations could determine standing in field," *The Elkhart Truth* (July 12, 1992), B-1 ff: (3) Price, Tom, Theologian accused: Women report instances of inappropriate conduct, *The Elkhart Truth* (July 13, 1992), B-1 ff; (4) Price, Tom, A known secret: Church slow to explore rumors against a leader, *The Elkhart Truth* (July 14, 1992), B-1 ff; (5) Price, Tom: Yoder actions framed in writings, *The Elkhart Truth* (July 15, 1992), B-1 ff; (6) Price, Tom, Teachings tested: Forgiveness, reconciliation in discipline, *The Elkhart Truth* (July 16, 2007), B-1 ff. Copies of these papers can be found in the Appendices.

[40] E. Zimmerman (2007) writes, [Yoder] *occasionally used his powerful intellect as a weapon that could devastate other people. Such failures in*

interpersonal relationships caused great pain to himself, to his family, his students, and his colleagues (p. 203).

[41] T. Schlabach, (1992). *JHY Funeral Service* (Goshen, IN. Copy of electronic message to John E. Sharp). Mennonite Church Archives, Hist. Mss. 1-48:01/5.

[42] Statement of Eight Women to Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force

[43] See the bibliography section for a listing of these papers as collected in the Yoder archives.

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[44] B. J. King (2007).

[45] One list of Yoder's specific behaviors is found in the July 13, 1992 article by Tom Price. A shorter list is found in the July 12, 1992 article by Price. A third is found in the *Statement of Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force.* A much shorter review of troublesome behaviors can be found in Heggen and Koontz (undated). In addition, I have been in conversation with several victims who report similar behaviors. I have grouped behaviors from these various statements into the collected textual list above.

[46] See Folder 1, Box 215, Mennonite Church Archives.

[47]In July, 1974 Yoder drafted a memorandum which was transcribed on August 3, 1974. It was addressed to women he called his sisters-in-faith and was entitled *A Call for Aid* (Mennonite Church Archives, Yoder, Box 200, File #1).

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[48] See Yoder, Box 215, Mennonite Church Archives

[49] Marlin Miller's conversations with women activists who confronted him about what they perceived to be the seminary's inaction regarding complaints about Yoder's behavior.

[50] T. Price (July 13, 1992). Theologian accused: Women report instances of inappropriate conduct. *Elkhart Truth*, B-1 ff.

[51] Mennonite Church Archives, Yoder, Box 200, File #1).

[52] C. H. Heggen and T. Koontz, (undated, p. 2).

[53] S. Hauerwas (2000)

[54] On February 21 and 22, 1992, a group of eight women talked to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force. In these meetings they presented a written document which states, *A number of us either by letter or in face-to-face contacts have already confronted John (two including spouses as well). In all cases following confrontation and our refusal to respond to additional letters or contacts, John ceased the behaviors. However, John has continued the behaviors to the present with other women. And in no cases in relation to us has John admitted moral responsibility for his behavior. In one case he failed to acknowledge the confrontive letter.*

[55] See the Yoder Timeline (Appendix F).

[56] See Price, *Elkhart Truth* articles from June and July, 1992;

[57] See Colleen's story.

[58] See Clara's story.

[59] See Tina's story.

[60] Conversations with John C. Bennett and Dan Rhoades, 1981-1982.

[61] See July 12, 1992 edition of the *Elkhart Truth*

[62] J. F. Foderaro, 2001

[63] More than one person in conversations (2007-2010) has raised various questions about whether there is any correlation between Yoder's behavior and recalcitrant attitudes to Marlin's Miller's sudden and premature death in 1994. I most certainly do not know the answer to this question. Many of us who knew Miller during his life time do understand, however, that his

professional relationship with Yoder was personally challenging, stress-filled and painful.

[64] In the congregation into which I was baptized, I was asked twice a year, a*re you willing to live in harmony with the church and its teachings?* Included in this self-report to the bishop, ministers and congregation was the idea that I was willing to live peaceably with other members of the congregation even if I had different ideas about what behavior was expected of them or me. If one answered these questions in the negative, then participation the Lord's Supper was denied until the conflict was resolved.

[65] Correspondence from Katie Boyts about how Yoder's theology was presented by two members of the professional Mennonite Academy, Portland Oregon Mennonite Church, winter, 2010.

[66] See Guggenbuhl-Craig (1999/1971).

- 7 -

Bearing Witness

Where all are guilty, no one is. Corporate confessions of guilt are the best way to avoid discovery of specific culprits.

Hannah Arendt[1]

Introductory Comments

When I review the literature available to readers in the church press and when I consult my personal memories of the years between 1976 and 1992, it seems to me as if there were at least four waves of Mennonite insider activism on behalf of denominational transparency. Each wave sought to bring about institutional accountability. In each wave, male led church institutions were criticized for protecting Yoder from an activist-perceived need for him to demonstrate remorse, become accountable to the church and his accusers, repent, and make lasting behavioral changes. The belief of these activists, most of them Mennonite church women and a few of them women whom Yoder had offended, was three-fold: (1) the institutional church and its agencies (knowing allegations and accusations about his behavior) were remiss in not acting promptly to suspend Yoder from church-wide activities in which he represented the denomination, (2) church institutions and their administrators subsequently and deliberately covered-up his behavior and their lack of action in order to protect his privileged status in the church and their own positions, authority, and power, (3) by their inaction and secrecy, church administrators knowingly or unknowingly created a situation in which additional vulnerable women could be and were victimized.

Because there is no publicly visible and reliable information about a rumored complaint referred to in Price (July 13, 1992) just before or during his GBS presidency (1970-1973, I have excluded it from my analysis below.

The First Wave
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries: 1978-1984

The *first wave* of complaints resulted in the termination of Yoder's adjunct professor role at AMBS in 1984.[2] From 1976 until 1984 complaints accumulated at AMBS. At some point in time seminary administrators began to compile a list (President Miller called this a *fact file*) of individuals who told him or other AMBS administrators about their own victimization or about the victimization of other women. Church women also informed Miller about their confrontations with Yoder (where they told Yoder that he needed to stop his sexual misconduct and sexual harassment). At some point in time before December, 1983 Miller was informed about UND-based allegations. Consequently, Miller (and his denominational and administrative supervisors) was aware that Yoder's sexual misconduct was not only a Mennonite problem. Late in life conversations with Miller also revealed that he had learned during the early years of his seminary presidency that Yoder's sexual misbehavior in this era was not limited to the United States.

From 1978 until 1984, church women inside the Mennonite Church, Indiana-Michigan Conference and Mennonite Church educational institutions were far from silent in their critique of AMBS and the Mennonite Church and institutional inaction. In 1980, in response to women's complaints, a major confrontation happened between AMBS top administrators and Yoder.[3] Yoder's behavior to all visible appearances did not change.

In December, 1983, Yoder was informed that his contract to teach at AMBS would not be renewed. No church-wide release of information followed this internal decision. Students were told only that Yoder planned to teach full time at Notre Dame. Inside the Mennonite academic world, information later surfaced that only tenured faculty and seminary board members were informed at the time about the factual reasons behind Yoder's future absence at the seminary. Mennonite graduate students who wanted to study with Yoder now were told that they needed to study with him on the UND campus.

The Second Wave Begins
Bethel College: February, 1992

The *second wave* began to gather momentum at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas in 1992. Yoder was scheduled to keynote a spring, 1992 conference on non-violence in American life. Several individuals from the church-wide Mennonite community and several of Yoder's victims made it quite clear to Bethel College's President Zehr that if Yoder spoke, they were prepared to non-violently disrupt the proceedings and talk about their individual encounters with Yoder. President Zehr consulted with President Miller at AMBS and Yoder was subsequently disinvited from speaking.[4]

The student newspaper at Bethel College, *The Bethel Collegian*, broke the story of the allegations of sexual misconduct that lay behind Yoder's disinvtiation. The Mennonite Church press followed a week later. Regional press in northern Indiana carried the story in June and July of 1992. National and ecumenical religious press reports followed in August, 1992.

The consequences of this presidential action were two-fold. (1) Yoder, for the first time in his illustrious public career, was disinvited as a speaker specifically because of allegations regarding his sexual misconduct behaviors, and (2) publicity about Bethel's decision was covered by regional, national and ecumenical world-wide press and this coverage included information regarding allegations of sexual misconduct. Other institutions soon followed Bethel's example as they too disinvited Yoder from participation in previously scheduled events on his lecture calendar.[5]

Looking back, it is clear that the courage of a variety of individuals (some victimized by Yoder, some marital partners of victims, and some concerned members of the Mennonite Church and its religious academy) in confronting Bethel College conference planners and administrators altered the ongoing trajectory of the institutional church's response to rumors about Yoder's behavior. This pivotal moment needs to be further explored when church documents become unsealed and unrestricted.

After Yoder's death, two colleagues (Heggen and Koontz, undated manuscript, 4) wrote that Yoder felt betrayed by such a public revelation of the disinvitation and subsequent press publicity about the allegations of sexual misconduct. Since reading Heggen and Koontz, I have pondered the meaning of Yoder's reputed sense of betrayal. I gradually realized that

it was during the Bethel College incident where he lost control of the secrecy process, something which had not happened to him before. The secrecy and confidentiality maintained by his Mennonite employers had shielded Yoder from public criticism due to reports of misbehavior for nearly twenty years. Now a church institution by means of a presidential decision exposed him and revealed long-standing accusations about his behavior to the public. He was no longer shielded and protected from an informed public awareness, scrutiny and judgment.

Whereas previous efforts to hold him accountable for his behavior had been both private and secret, a public controversy about his behavior and its implications for consultation and speaking work inside the church were now openly visible. For the first time in his personal life and in his professional life he was held to be publicly accountable to the church he so often had previously criticized for its unfaithfulness in matters of discipleship. He was sixty five years old.

From his vantage point, it must have seemed that the church owed him the professional courtesy of personnel confidentiality. Heggen and Koonz (ud) comment that church-wide and international publicity caused Yoder to doubt the intentionality of the church to be reconciled with him (4). It is noteworthy, in retrospect, that his concern was Yoder-church reconciliation not Yoder-victim reconciliation.

From his victims' perspective, church confidentiality and institutional secrecy had allowed his behavior to continue unchallenged and unchanged for too long. Years later, in talking with one of the women who had discussed her concerns with Zehr in the winter of 1991-92, she reflected that she had thought then that it was time to end the social contract of secrecy between Yoder and Mennonite Church institutional administrators. They, she told me, had already had ample opportunity in the preceding twenty years to fix the problem and they had failed to do so. It was time for victims and those who supported them to do something that shattered the contract and made his behavior publicly visible. Threatening to nonviolently disrupt a nationally advertised academic conference on nonviolence in America became the methodology for grabbing the Mennonite Church educational academy's attention.

The *Bethel Collegian* articles describe the campus reality that some students, faculty, and community members did not agree with President

Zehr's decision to keep Yoder away from the Bethel campus. Today, reading the *Collegian's* articles and letters to the editor, the 1992 furor on the Bethel campus remains clear.[6] Some individuals felt that Yoder needed to speak and that due process in the face of unproven allegations had been ignored. Others on campus felt that in light of the allegations made against him, he should not be allowed to speak.

The Bethel conflict and disagreements are almost a prototype for the disagreement which erupted ten years later when individuals at the first Yoder legacy conference (UND, 2002) disagreed about the propriety of discussing Yoder's second legacy (sexual abuse of women) along with his academic legacy (of scholarship, teaching and publishing). In that setting, when the topic of the meaning and continuing implication of his behavior was raised, a small group of conference participants walked out in protest.[7]

Today, this disagreement remains unsolved. Yoder's victims (and individuals in solidarity with them) and Yoder's apologists (in solidarity with him and each other) disagree on which aspects of Yoder's legacy need to be reported, studied, discussed and utilized by the church in its internal self-regulation. In general, contemporary published works about Yoder' life and theology include the briefest possible mention of Yoder's behavior while saying that his behavior is not (and does not need to be) a factor in how his theology and ethics are read, interpreted, and received by the overlapping worlds of nonviolence scholarship and religious ecclesiology.

For example, in his 2006 Yoder biography, Yoder scholar and apologist Mark Thiessen Nation wrote:

> *It is unnecessary within this book to discuss any of the specifics of the allegations - regarding inappropriate sexual activity on Yoder's part. What is most relevant here is to mention that Yoder submitted to a very painful discipline process by his church for four years. His submission indicated his willingness to live consistently with his own views on church discipline, as articulated in several essays. This discipline process was successfully concluded in the early summer of 1996, with the church encouraging Yoder and the church "to use his gifts in writing and teaching" (25).*[8]

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The hermeneutical issue[9] at hand in these kinds of living cultural situations seems to be this: when information is revealed in public about accusations

of sexual abuse of women or children, insiders, witnesses, and casual observers line up on two sides of a vast interpretive chasm. This is especially true for an individual who is a powerful and well-regarded culture critic and cultural change instigator. It is also true when the abusive individual has a large network of powerful friends and family members. This chasm is created in part, by individual disagreements about the type and seriousness of the offense, the identity of the offender, outcomes of church discipline processes, and belief structures or personal values about forgiveness and reconciliation.

Some individuals feel perpetrator confidentiality and institutional secrecy should be maintained (with no public information, consequences or accountability) for the good of the institutional church while others believe the revelation of sexual misconduct demands institutional transparency, disclosure, *and* full accountability (including remorse, appropriate apologies and restitution) for the good of the church. How an individual reads the abusive situation (and its aftermaths) becomes a deciding factor in which side of the dispute he or she takes.

The ***Second Wave Continues to Build***
Goshen College: May, 1992

A spring, 1992, Believers' Church conference on the topic of church discipline (based on Mathew 18:15-16 as its central text[10]) was planned for the Goshen College campus. Pre-planning correspondence indicates denominational and campus administrator's awareness of concerns about Yoder's sexual impropriety.[11]

Looking back on this conference, it was as if powerful and important Mennonite churchmen thought that intellectually persuading Yoder of the importance of church discipline would somehow or other magically solve the problem of his unacceptable social behavior with women. In some of this correspondence, the concept is floated that the 1992 Mennonite Church urgently needed Yoder's theology and so extraordinary church efforts to reclaim the situation and restore him to denominational trust were needed.[12]

This second wave included three women theologians who spoke at the 1992 Believer's Church Conference.[13] In these addresses, they talked

about clergy and professional sexual abuse and the reality of clericalism (although they did not use this word) inside so-called Believers' Churches. Each woman, in her own way, challenged the use of Matthew 18:15-16 as an appropriate textual foundation in church polity for working with repeated sexual offenders inside the church. Collectively, they talked about the failure of authority and power models for church leadership in the face of sexual misconduct.

In recent conversations with one of these three women, she told me that she had been well aware of women's allegations regarding Yoder's misconduct and that her presentation was a direct attempt to address the conference group about the inappropriateness of such behavior inside the Believer's Church community. Her perception (both at that time and now years later) she told me, was that during her presentation Yoder's nonverbal behavior was deliberately and provocatively offensive. Looking back in time, she commented that *by his choice of nonverbal behaviors in the session I led he had deliberately attempted to intimidate me.*

The Third Wave
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries: 1991
Prairie Street Mennonite Church: 1991-1992

The *third wave, with some residual energy from the second wave,* began to build from the summer and fall of 1991 until the summer of 1992. Prairie Street Mennonite Church established a John Howard Yoder Task Force to investigate the widespread rumors and allegations about sexual misconduct in Yoder's personal life. The task force met five times with Yoder upon his return from a European academic sabbatical (Price, 1992).

During a 1991 Peace Theology and Violence against Women Conference on the AMBS campus, several of Yoder's victims met for the first time. As they talked, they began to discuss the need to protect other women and to heal the residual wounds of their violation.

Somewhat later they approached AMBS President Marlin Miller about the seminary's *Yoder allegations fact file* and asked him to send a letter written by them to every woman whose name and story he knew. The purpose of the letter was to invite Yoder's victims to form a support group oriented around healing their own wounds and protecting other women.

Very reluctantly (and only after consulting with the seminary's legal counsel), did Miller send the women's letter.[14] After receiving this letter, a number of women responded that they would attend such a meeting.

In February, 1992, a group of victimized women met in Elkhart County for the first time. They talked together about what they individually and collectively had experienced in their relationships with Yoder and with church institutions. They talked about the specifics of what they knew about Yoder's behavior in the lives of additional victimized women.

From within this larger group, eight women arranged to talk officially with the John Howard Yoder Task Force at Prairie Street Mennonite Church (Yoder's home congregation). Included in this meeting were institutional officers of the national Mennonite Church, representatives from Prairie Street Congregation, and officers of Indiana-Michigan Conference (the holder of Yoder's ordination credentials).

A four page printed but untitled document was presented to the assembled group of church administrators.[15] The document identified a list of things the women requested. I have abstracted information below:

- That Indiana-Michigan Conference Immediately suspend Yoder's ministerial credentials
- That all Mennonite Church high schools, colleges, seminaries, and institutions be informed that John is not appropriate to use as a resource person until further notice. They also suggested conversations with Notre Dame.
- That Yoder should not be given the specific names of the eight women. They added that they were afraid of him and consequently wanted no further personal contact with him.
- That the Yoder Task Force and other Mennonite Church administrators take responsibility to make sure that John's behaviors stop.
- That the Yoder Task Force inform women in the broader church about the existence of a victim support network and, in addition, serve as a conduit for channeling those individuals to the network.
- That the Yoder Task Force should keep the women's support network informed about the progress of their work and process with Yoder.
- If Indiana-Michigan Conference and its ministerial credentialing committee suspend Yoder's ministerial credentials, they requested

that the committee issue a statement to the Mennonite Church Press indicating the nature of the charges against him.

Three women from the group of eight subsequently talked with journalist Tom Price of the Elkhart Truth. In their conversations with Price,[16] they stated that as a group they represented at least 30 other women by name and story.

By the summer of 1992, therefore, not only Mennonite insiders knew about Yoder's behavior. Religious journalists reported that Yoder was credibly accused of sexual harassment (*Christian Century, August 12-19, 1992)*. Readers of the *New York Times* (Steinfels, August 22, 1992) were also informed. The so-called well-known Mennonite denominational insider secret was no longer secret.

Because the location of Yoder's ordination credentials was unclear, Indiana-Michigan Conference officers consulted with Ohio Conference officers. In light of Yoder's membership at Prairie Street Mennonite Church (Elkhart, IN), conference officials agreed that Indiana-Michigan Conference would assume responsibility for Yoder's ordination credentials. Consequently, Indiana-Michigan's Church Life Commission in consultation with Indiana-Michigan's Conference Minister assumed full responsibility for the church's discipline process with Yoder. In this manner, the Conference's Church-Life Commission took on the responsibility for managing the long-term consequences of public revelations regarding Yoder's decades-long pattern of sexual misconduct.

Since Mennonite Church polity lodges responsibility for supervising ordination credentials at the conference level, even while congregations have the responsibility to hire, supervise, and fire ministers, a certain reality comes into focus.[17] Yoder's ordination was not as a pastor of a congregation. At the urging of GBS professor J. C. Wenger, he was ordained in 1973 at Oak Grove Congregation in Ohio (his parental home congregation) in light of his employment by the seminary as its resident theologian.[18] He never served a congregation. Leaving his AMBS employment in 1984, the question of his ordination credentials did not appear to arise at that time. Since in 1992 no denominational official knew for certain where Yoder's ordination credentials were lodged, it is very likely that no individual church administrator felt denominationally, legally, or

morally responsible for supervising Yoder and holding him accountable to the denomination in which he was ordained.

Looking back at this era, hindsight awareness emerges that after Yoder's coerced resignation from AMBS in 1983, no denominational agency or individual was institutionally in charge of keeping track of his behavior. From 1984 until 1991, as far as I know, no denominational officer at any level (congregational, conference, or national) raised the issue of his ongoing- status as ordained clergy as a factor to consider in the church's management of sexual misconduct allegations and rumors. Yoder's episodic acts of professional sexual misconduct, in this view, were now Notre Dame's responsibility to manage.

This wave of activism ended with the suspension of Yoder's ordination credentials and his subsequent engagement in a process of church discipline that included mandated psychological evaluation, psychotherapy and regular participation in an Accountability and Support Group.[19]

In 1997 (January 14, dated 1996) Yoder sent a fax to Eastern Mennonite Seminary Dean George R. Brunk III. In this memo Yoder stated that the by then concluded disciplinary process had been five years in length. One assumes that Yoder knew. Therefore, in his opinion, the disciplinary process began in July, 1991 with the formation of the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force and concluded in 1996 with his denominational restoration to full credibility.

What finally created a situation in which both Yoder and the larger Mennonite Church had to respond was publicity generated by the February, 1992 Bethel College disinvitation, the testimony of 8 women to the Prairie Street John Howard Yoder Task Force and other representatives of the Mennonite Church and Indiana-Michigan Conference, the summer, 1992 *Elkhart Truth* articles written by investigative reporter Tom Price and the August, 1992 *New York Times* coverage (Steinfels).

The Fourth Wave
Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary:
December, 1996 and January, 1997

A year before Yoder's death in 1997, a *final wave* of activism vis-à-vis Yoder's history of sexual misconduct occurred on the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) campus in Harrisonburg, Virginia after Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) invited Yoder to speak on their shared campus. When advertising publicity about the conference was published in 1996, the invitation immediately became controversial. The student paper, *The Weather Vane,* covered both the controversy and Yoder's campus visit.[20]

After learning of Yoder's invitation to address the EMS community during its annual January Leadership Training Event on the topic of *Peace Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* in January, 1997, EMU Associate Professor of Theater Barbra Graber protested his proposed appearance on the campus and urged seminary administrators to reconsider their invitation. Taking issue with the public church discipline summary document released to the church press in late summer, 1992 by Indiana-Michigan Conference (regarding the end of its disciplinary process with Yoder), Graber noted that the official statement included no public acknowledgment of wrong-doing or statement of confession. The campus newspaper, the *Weather Vane,* later reported the following:

> *Graber believes that a focus on forgiveness rather than confession in matters of sexual abuse behaviors hinders the process of healing for both victims and the offender* (Eshleman, 1).

After several on-campus committee meetings of representative faculty and administrators, EMU administrators made the decision to keep the invitation open. In a press release (undated) to the campus community, EMU Vice President and EMS Dean George R. Brunk the third and EMS Seminary faculty member Duane Sider wrote:

> [Yoder's] *invitation in no way condones Yoder's sexually offensive statements and behavior but rather respects the official discernment process of the church in this matter and provides opportunity for Dr. Yoder to acknowledge the wrongs of the past, renounce them and discuss their bearing on his peace theology as a whole (1).*

Regarding this decision, Brunk later commented to a student *Weather Vane* reporter:

> *We thought our inviting [Yoder] to speak might be helpful for his movement back into ministry In Mennonite settings* (Eshleman, 1).

Assistant Dean of EMS Sara Wenger Shenk added her own commentary about the decision made by campus administrators.

> *There is clearly some discomfort when someone has so clearly violated what we would expect of a church leader, but we also are the church and hope that we can work with people for repentance and forgiveness* (Eshleman, 6).

During his seminar presentation, despite Sider's, Brunk's, and Wenger Shenk's optimism about providing a window of opportunity in which Yoder might *acknowledge, renounce and discuss* past events of sexual abuse, Yoder did not comment upon or address the sexual violence issues in his past nor did he address questions of how his sexual misconduct influenced his theology or how his theology critiqued his life behavior. No statement of remorse or repentance was issued.

In the question and answer part of his presentation a woman from the audience asked a direct question about these matters. According to the *Weather Vane's* coverage of his lecture, Yoder responded in terms of forgiveness.

> *There isn't anyone I've hurt that I haven't wanted to apologize to and I am grateful for those who have forgiven me* (Eshleman, 6).

In the background context of this meeting, the student writer notes an on-campus rumor that Indiana-Michigan Conference (Church Life Commission) for its own, but unknown reasons, as part of its negotiated legal agreements with Yoder about reconciliation and restoration, specifically counseled him to make no public statements of confession and repentance (Eshleman, 6).

Comparing his comment in response to a question from the audience to a pre-conference fax correspondence with Brunk is helpful to get a sense of Yoder's management of the issue of his past behavior. In that faxed memo

he summarized agreements the two men had reached in an earlier telephone conversation and then provided Brunk with a prepared statement to give to individuals who directly questioned and protested his appearance on campus.

> *I am grateful for the resources of forgiveness in the Christian Gospel and in the Christian community. I have thanked the individuals to whom I did wrong in the past, whether by failing to respect borders or otherwise, who have been willing to respond with pardon to my testimony of repentance, and I have addressed the same request to others.*
>
> *I am grateful as well to the Prairie Street congregation and other agencies which have affirmed their acceptance. I regret the institutional decisions which have permitted the persistence of the misperception that I had not repented and apologized. Over the past four years an intensive process of fraternal group study and two series of professional analysis have reinforced the credibility of my resolve that this kind of offense will not recur.*[21]

Reading these words in 2010 – separated from the heat of the moment – it is clear that Yoder does not acknowledge the specific nature of the accusations made against him and confirmed by the church. He confesses nothing. He makes no personal testimony to remorse. Instead he settled on the issue of forgiveness received as an appropriate response to questions of his personal accountability (and indirectly, the church's accountability).

In this response to a public question of accountability, a formulaic response regarding his gratitude for forgiveness is utilized to defuse the moment. In this kind of generic statement about forgiveness, he could be reporting forgiveness for all kinds of personal flaws and imperfections in the past as well as for specific sexual misconduct behaviors.

In such a carefully prepared statement Yoder never admitted to any form of misconduct. He expressed no remorse for his actions. He expressed no repentance. He never apologized for past behaviors. He didn't seek to make amends. He did not address wide-spread victim alienation from both Yoder and the Church.

The Mennonite Church's Official Administrative Process of Investigation

> *When church leaders deny, hide or cover over abuse rather than probe into and reveal it, the church itself becomes an unsafe place.*
>
> Laurie Hersch Meyer[22]

To get a sense of church process, it is necessary to use the *Elkhart Truth* articles from June and July, 1992, Mennonite church press articles, and the shorter official announcements of the September, 1992 and July/August, 1996 *Gospel Evangel* (a periodical of Indiana-Michigan conference) and other Mennonite church newspapers (*The Gospel Herald* June 14, 1992), *The Mennonite Reporter* (March 3, 1992, March 23, 1992, July 13, 1992). In addition, two student newspapers on Mennonite College and University campuses covered aspects of this story. The *Bethel Collegian* (Bethel College, KS) on March 5, 1992 and again on April 9, 1992 covered Yoder's disinvitation. The January 23, 1997 issue of the *Weather Vane* (EMU) covered a campus controversy about disinviting or not disinviting Yoder.

A reconstruction of the process is necessary but because of sealed institutional records, there are inevitable gaps of information. Some factual information about the church's process is simply unavailable to the observer, scholar and writer.

Sometime early in 1991, an individual or group of individuals (in light of Yoder's ordination credentials) went to Prairie Street Mennonite Church and lodged formal complaints about Yoder's sexual misconduct. Two separate church panels subsequently investigated these allegations. One was lodged at Prairie Street Mennonite Church and one was lodged within the structures of the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church. After an eleven month investigation, these two panels issued a June, 1992 press release that summarized their findings. *Elkhart Truth* investigative journalist Tom Price subsequently published a series of six articles in June and July, 1992.

The Prairie Street task force commented, t*he charges brought by the women are accurate, and John has violated sexual boundaries. John has acknowledged the truth of the charges and has expressed deep regret for the hurt that his actions have caused for the women.* The task force

continued, *John has recognized the deep rifts of integrity and trust that have developed between himself and the church and its institutions. John has agreed to yield to the will of the church regarding standards of conduct between men and women. He has committed himself to begin no new sexually intimate relationships* (plural theirs)*, and has already acted to cut off ongoing relationships (plural theirs) which violate church standards.* The task force report continued, *Yoder will prepare a statement for the eight women who brought allegations. He is also preparing a statement to the church community as an initial step in his desire to follow a path that acknowledges wrongs committed* (Price, June 29, 1992, B-1).

Indiana-Michigan Conference Church Life Commission (Chair, David Helmuth) recommended to conference leaders that Yoder's ordination credentials be temporarily suspended rather than terminated. The conference's leadership team (Sherman Kauffman, Chair and Willis Breckbill, Conference Minister) then acted to suspend Yoder's ordination credentials in June of 1992. Conference administrators also mandated that Yoder work with a local accountability committee, be psychologically evaluated, enter therapy, and complete a course of restitution.

The church's press (Reimer, July 13, 1992; Rempel, March 23, 1992; Schrag, March 23, 1992) provided coverage for Mennonite Church members. Christian periodicals followed suit (*Christian Century,* August 12-19, 1992). Because of Yoder's national and international prominence as an evangelical Christian theologian, the *New York Times* also covered the story (Steinfels, August, 22, 1992).

In noting that two decades of rumors and allegations were not dealt with, James Lapp (General Secretary of the Mennonite Church General Board) told Price (July 14, 1992, B-1). *The church has been seriously charged with complicity in a cover-up. That must end. The church must be on the side of healing, of reconciliation, and hope for victims, and not participate in their further victimization by silence.*

One apparent consequence of these years of rumors, allegations and verified complaints is that Indiana-Michigan Conference in 1996 updated its credentials handbook for ministers. Edited by Everett Thomas, and published during the Yoder discipline process, the book is clear and quite specific about prohibited clergy sexual behaviors and the consequences of clergy abuse. If the church actually uses this guidebook as it deals with

clergy, leader and religious leader professional abuse, then major progress in denominational politics has been made in the wake of the Yoder affair.

Coerced into a four-year process of therapy and accountability conversations, Yoder was resentful of the process. In an April, 14, 1994[23] memorandum to Mennonite historians, he states his perception that the ministerial team at Prairie Street Mennonite Church is causing church publishing agencies to shun his written work. His anger at this denominational limit is palpable.

Individuals close to the denomination's work with Yoder reported that he was recalcitrant, resistant, and often hostile to the church's efforts to challenge and to curtail his behavior. His intellectual brilliance was used in the service of defensiveness and denial. He held on, during much of the discipline process, to those theological and ethical rationalizations which supported his prior behavior.[24]

The 1996 *Gospel Evangel* announcement of the revocation of Yoder's ministerial credentials did not state that Indian-Michigan Conference had offered to reinstate Yoder's ordination credentials and that he declined.[25] The announcement cryptically and enigmatically stated that John had learned something about forgiveness but it did not say what this was. It did not say anything about remorse or accountability. It did not say anything about repentance. It did not say anything about restitution. The *Evangel* continued with the recommendation that Yoder's teaching and writing ministries be restored.

Knowing that the Indiana-Michigan Conference Church Life Commission made its recommendations in December, 1991 to the Conference's Executive Committee to complete the disciplinary process; that Yoder identifies May, 1996 as the termination date for the discipline process; and that the *Gospel Evangel* public *a*nnouncement appeared in their September, 1992 issue, it is very difficult to avoid making an assumption that Yoder, Yoder's legal advisors, Indiana-Michigan Conference and its legal counsel hammered out the precise wording of this brief two paragraph statement. It seems clear that the wording of *forgiveness received* is the language which Yoder and Conference officials agreed to use in all public statements, discussions or replies to questions. Heggen and Koontz (undated, 3) comment that *legal considerations seem to have been one significant consideration pushing in the direction of more cautious wording*

[in the Indiana-Michigan press release announcing John's restoration by the denomination].

In the Indiana-Michigan Conference statement, no one seemed to understand victim's needs for respectful, open and honest communication with them. Indeed, in this statement, the factual presence of real life victims is totally ignored. In addition, no one appeared to consider the needs for the denominational church to deal honestly with the world (that had watched Yoder's name and accusations of misconduct splayed across the news media) for a truthful accounting.

In his fax correspondence with EMS Dean George Brunk the third Yoder clearly stated he had previously (in 1992 and again in 1996) wanted to apologize to those he hurt. It is clear from my (2007-2010) conversations with several women whom he victimized that, in their particular life situations, he made no private apology, made no church-mediated apology, expressed no remorse, and made no formal amends.

After his somewhat cryptic public admission of guilt (Price, July 13, 1992),[1] Yoder maintained a public silence about remorse, repentance, personal responsibility, accountability, and restitution. As far as I have been able to ascertain, he never again talked in public about his twenty some year history of abusive behavior. By his prepared statement that he was *prevented by the church* in carrying out his personal desires to apologize, he shifted blame to Mennonite church institutional administrators for his public and private silence and for his apparent unwillingness or refusal to make personal amends where he could.

It is important to note, however, that a small group of women may have been consulted by Indiana Michigan Conference prior to its formal public announcement in the summer of 1996 regarding Yoder's post-discipline restoration to his denominational church. After the 2002 UND legacy conference, a female colleague of mine asked me if the rumor was true that *the women who made allegations against Yoder had signed off on Yoder's reinstatement*. Since I had not heard this rumor, I had no factual reply to give her. During the course of research for this book, I have again heard the rumor - this time from a different woman. I still do not know if it is true.[1] Yoder's comments that he is grateful to those who have forgiven him, however, suggest that church mediated-apologies and forgiveness conversations may well have happened between Yoder, the Accountability

and Support Group, the institutional church, and a selective number of his victims.

If this is the case, only a symbolic or token group of Yoder's victims were consulted. This is because (1) several victimized women I know (some of whom were known to the Accountability and Support Group and some of whom were not) told me during the summer of 2010 that they never received such an apology; (2) a number of Mennonite women never discussed their victimization with church officials; (3) some victimized women were totally unconnected to the third and fourth waves of activism because they had moved away from the Goshen-Elkhart area and in some cases had transferred church membership to another denomination; (4) some early North American victims lived abroad in the 1980s and 1990s, (5) It is unlikely that Mennonite bureaucrats knew the identities of victims at UND; (6) it is equally unlikely that American Mennonites knew the names of victimized ecumenical church women in the USA and abroad; (7) it is highly unlikely that any women with whom he may have had had consenting relationships identified themselves to church officials and talked about their experiences.

One woman has reported to me that several Mennonite Church institutional administrators offered her a private apology for their management of Yoder and for their slowness to act. None, as far as I know, has ever offered public apologies to the church at large. Likewise, to my knowledge, they offered no amends to any victim.

As one studies the large body of theoretical materials about recidivism in situations of sexual abuse, it is clear that most repetitive abusers, despite therapy and promises to change, eventually return to abusive actions. Individuals may, in their cognitive inner life, have good intentions to change. However, permanent change is rare.

Yoder, in his January 14, 1997 fax message to Brunk, stated: O*ver the past four years an intensive process of fraternal group study and two series of professional analysis have reinforced the credibility of my resolve that this kind of offense will not recur*. As a clinician I find this statement fascinating. Yoder and his wife met 31 times in four years with a Mennonite Church mandated Support and Accountability Group guided by four church-appointed representatives. It was not exactly a fraternal group study. It was a process of confrontation in which the group (representing Indiana-

Michigan Conference) attempted to hold Yoder accountable for his previous behavior. In addition, he met church demands for psychological evaluation and therapy. It was not a process of study and small case analysis. The presence of two treatment cycles most likely indicate that some offense occurred during the disciplinary process after completion of the first treatment cycle and the Support and Accountability Group sent him back for round two.

To me, at this distance in time, this verbal re-framing or slanting of the factual data is troublesome. Yoder reports factual truth to Brunk (and the EMS community) but he does so in such a manner that he obscures or actively and deliberately obfuscates the disciplinary reality of what actually occurred. It seems to me to be another, perhaps more subtle, form of denial and rationalization about the seriousness of the complaints lodged against him. The memo trivializes and discounts the likely possibility that continuing therapeutic work and continuing accountability work are needed to prevent recidivism.

The 1996 July/August *Evangel* notes the hope of Indiana-Michigan Conference and its Church Life Committee that Yoder will continue to be accountable to the church for his behavior.[26] However, there did not appear to be a formal mandatory process in place for this to occur. There was no statement about how the institutional church, or even its individual members, would be able to hold Yoder accountable for future sexual misconduct. No denominational hotline to report clergy and church professional sexual abuse was announced. The institutional church may have been unaware of the likelihood of recidivism. However, a 1985 Mennonite Church sponsored consultation with clergy abuse expert, the Reverend Chilton Knudsen (Episcopal Diocese of Chicago) focused on the seriousness of this issue of recidivism for the individual and for the denomination. The 1996 absence, therefore, of a visible, formal and publicly announced plan for Yoder's continuing accountability to the institutional church more likely, therefore, represents a form of church-wide institutional denial about the seriousness of the complaints that a wide variety of women had lodged against Yoder.

This is a fascinating announcement. It is deliberately enigmatic. It lacks detail about the offenses. It reads like lawyer-speak. With close reading, what it doesn't say becomes visible. It is also of interest because of the

institutional church's apparent trust that Yoder would now continue to live honorably with the church and with women.

By recommending that he resume his teaching and public lecture schedule, the church opened the door for potential abuse to re-occur. There is a certain reality present in Yoder's extensive travel schedule before 1992. His frequent travels served as an opaque screen for the amount of sexual abusive and gender-based violence he was carrying out. Yet, in 1996, the church's administrative officers re-opened the door to such unrestricted denominational travel and lecturing with no visible safety precautions in view. These were the very activities that allowed his abuse to both happen and to remain hidden during the previous two decades.

In this *Evangel* announcement there was no mention of denominational legal counsel. None of the legal agreements which Yoder and the church made are addressed.

The church's absolution, however, was not absolute. His ordination credentials were permanently revoked. Heggen and Koontz (undated, 3) note that Indiana-Michigan Conference proposed to reinstate his ordination credentials but that he refused their offer (4). His refusal is not surprising. The presence of ordination credentials was the key Yoder's victims used to unlock the doors of institutional secrecy about his behavior and the church's behavior. It is quite likely that had he not held Mennonite Church ordination credentials, Yoder's behavior, in the public mind, would have remained only an unsubstantiated rumor.

After the summer of 1996, no longer bound by ordination as a Mennonite Church employee, Yoder was free, once again, to represent the church in public speaking engagements. He was free to represent the denominational church in his travels. His theology was freed by denominational officers from any taint of sexual harassment and sexual violation. He had submitted and obeyed. Yoder had rescued his theological legacy among Mennonites and other evangelicals.

No visible efforts were made by him or by the institutional church to heal the deeply wounded relationships between him and the women he victimized. Inside the shroud of his death, therefore, he and at least some of his victims remain permanently un-reconciled. It is this reality that these women live with on a daily basis.[27]

In addition, the institutional church has not in visible ways attempted to deal with the alienation felt by some women who witnessed to the professional leaders of the institutional Mennonite Church about Yoder's behavior. Ostracized during Yoder's lifetime for their whistle-blowing activities, they too form a significant tear in the fabric of the church's communal structure.

Yoder died in December, 1997 without producing his promised public statements for the eight women or for the wider ecumenical Christian Church community. As noted above, he died before making formal apologies and amends to his victims. Yoder was, however, reconciled to the institutional Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church's religious academy and his home congregation at Prairie Street Mennonite Church.

Future Work in Yoder Scholarship

Conversations about the academic legacy of Yoder's lifetime that appear to deliberately ignore or trivialize and whitewash his sexual abuse legacy infuriate and further alienate some of Yoder's victims from their denominational church. In addition, these kinds of conversations infuriate some of the Mennonite women who bore witness to the church about Yoder's patterns of behavior with women. Yoder's unexpected sudden death has given no emotional relief from victim's and witnesses' anger at their treatment by representatives of the institutional church.[28]

To better understand the complexities of Yoder's intellectual work (and its consequences in his life), scholars need to seek to understand how such a brilliant human being could make such self-other destructive choices in his daily life. To do this, they need to seek the source of the fault lines in Yoder's personality and the fault lines in his communities of reference.

Academic and church bureaucrats also need to study the complex responses of Mennonite institutions to Yoder's behavior from the 1970s until 1992. This kind of study is essential if the church is to learn better ways of managing repetitive sexual violators by its clergy and professional leaders.

Just as biographers and students of Yoder's intellectual legacy have begun to contextualize some of the sources and roots of Yoder's theology, they now need to contextualize his sexual abuse of adult churchwomen and his

female students. Researchers seeking to understand the correlation of Yoder's life with his academic output would do well to place their scholarship in the context of the witness of Yoder's victims. In this now almost obliterated witness, women victimized by him testified to the church that Yoder used his intellectual abilities and his theology in addition to physically aggressive or violent behaviors to seduce and harass women. They also testified that when confronted about the inappropriate nature of his behavior, he subsequently used his brilliant intellect and his theological-ethical theories to rationalize his behavior as somehow appropriate, religiously desirable, and ethically justified.

Concluding Comments

> *A power structure that is accountable only to itself will always end up abusing the powerless.*
>
> James Carroll[29]

If, as American theologian Larry Rasmussen has commented (Price, July 16, 1992) there may be something systemic in Christian (or, I editorialize, Mennonite) communities and their respective theologies that predisposes its male theologians, ethicists and clergy to sexual violations, then enquiry into these kinds of situations and events is needed. A thoughtful and probing analysis of the situation is needed.

For such an analysis, theologians and ethicists need to be in conversation with historians, sociologists, psychologists and psychotherapeutic clinicians. Because of the communal or ethnic nature of Mennonite life, clinical family systems analysis may be particularly helpful within Mennonite contexts. To understand some of the more transpersonal aspects of the violence done by Yoder, thoughtful identification and analysis of historical and contemporary social and ideological Mennonite pathologies in Mennonite Life is also needed.

Many Mennonite institutional insiders know that over the past one hundred years there have been repeated episodes of clergy and religious professional sexual misconduct, harassing abuse and criminal sexual violence inside a wide variety of Mennonite Church structures and its academic institutions (in some cases involving police intervention, court

decisions or professional certification or licensure revocation). Insiders also know credible rumors about abusive institutional administrators. While there have been some exceptions to this general rule, most of these stories have been kept out of the public's awareness.

The long-standing nature of such abusive patterns of behavior inside the Mennonite community of faith raises questions about long-standing cultural buttresses for these forms of professional abuse. These questions need to be raised if the community as a whole is to work at creating a more violence-resistant religious culture. Such a culture can be measured by the physical and emotional safety of women and small children

Every theologian, ethicist and pastor who seeks to guide the church to a healthy and faithful socio-cultural pattern of worship and community life needs to be aware of these issues and to address them in her or his work. Congregations as well as denominational headquarters need to develop realistic and effective ways to address sexual violence problems when they surface inside specific communities of religious practice and faith.

The quantity of clergy, leader and professional abuse in Mennonite institutions is often only a whispered confidence between friends. Unlike the Roman Catholic tradition and its encounter with pedophile priests, no serious demographic or ethnographic studies about Mennonite clergy and professional leader sexual abuse exist. Accurate data may lodge (or more likely, does not exist at all) in denominational headquarters. All that lay members of the church have to guide their own thinking about these matters however is rumor. The Mennonite Church, in its continuing need to manage clergy abusers, needs routinely collected and scientifically analyzed data. Lay members of the community need access to the information. If collectively the church is to work for positive changes in managing clergy sexual abuse, a foundation of accurate demographic data is essential.

Once accurate data is readily available, issues of sexual misconduct and sexual abuse by religious professionals inside the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition of faith need to be carefully studied by Anabaptist-Mennonite clinicians, historians, social psychologists, and sociologists. The data need to be analyzed by public health specialists.

Once a public health model for positive change in moving violence-prone cultures towards becoming violence-resistant ones, has been understood and utilized, then the church can turn its attention fully to all aspects of prevention. Stopping the violence, healing the wounds of victims, and healing the wounds of the community become necessary stepping stones to making necessary cultural changes. In the long run, it is these cultural changes which will allow the seeds of prevention to grow.

Permanent changes in ideology and practice will be needed in order to permanently transform the Mennonite Church away from a violence-prone culture towards a violent-resistive one. As the World Health Organization's *World Report on Violence* notes, it is the need for ideological change which individuals and communities resist the most.

All of us who care about the already-launched trajectory of the church into the future need to begin an active and on-going conversation about these matters. Denial, trivialization, minimization, rationalization, and resistance to truth-telling all delay the movement of the redeemed community of faith away from its own internalized forms of rationalized violence towards genuine, lasting positive peace.

The work of the peacemaker in the world is to deliberately and repeatedly enter the social places where violence exists. To do this work in a way that permanently challenges the rationale for violence means that the peacemaker must deal with the cultural legacy of violence that she or he has inherited and now carries. The management of one's own personal shadow is perhaps more important than external efforts to get others to change.

It is not enough, therefore, to stop the presence of violence in the world that has already begun (although this certainly is important). It is not enough to heal the wounds of the victimized (although this too is certainly important). It is not even enough to heal the wounded community (also very important). Whenever possible, it is vital to prevent violence from beginning in the first place. While difficult, it is still easier to prevent violence from beginning than to heal the individual and collective wounds of violence after it has occurred.

For some individuals, wounds may scar over. For others, however, they may remain living realities which their carriers must manage every day.

When these wounds affect an entire community, their unattended half-life resolution may need decades or centuries for healing and transformation to occur. Without active attention and well-thought through interventions, residual wounds may fester for generations and continue to infect new generations and the all-encompassing social milieu.

One aspect of this healing work needs to be proactive prevention so that the cycle of violence can be severed at its root. Another is to continuously seek the path of open, authentic honesty in the face of new carriers of violence. Another aspect is telling the truth in spite of deep self-serving, self-protective inclinations or institutional pressures to avoid doing so.

As the World Health Organization noted in its *World Report on Violence (2002)* violence-altering and violence-transforming discussions of violence are difficult and often impossible because individuals and communities do not with to discuss their own participation in violence. They do not want to consider the role of deeply cherished beliefs, values, and ideologies in their individual and communal identities as causative factors in the transmission of violence from generation to generation.

Neither exaggeration nor denial about the reality and presence of violence inside religious organizations serves the religious community of faith in its healing and salvific mission to a world filled with many distinct forms of violence. Neither serves to set a protective barrier against a predictable reoccurrence of today's violence in future generations. Neither furthers the church's self-declared mission of redemptive healing for a broken world.

The World Health Organization is correct: the role of ideology in promulgating violence is the hardest conversation for individuals and communities to have. It is, however, also the most important conversation if we wish to end the cycles of violence in personal and collective experience.

Footnotes

[1] Hannah Arendt, 1969b, p. 65

[2] In 1992, AMBS President Marlin Miller commented that [T]h*e reasons that led to John's termination were the result of an extended process over long-*

standing issues. This was considered the best way to deal with those issues (Price, June 29, 1992, B-5).

[3] See Appendix F (the Yoder Timeline) for more information and documentation

[4] Marlin Miller. (1992). Correspondence with Tina Mast Burnett.

[5] See Tom Price (August, 1993) regarding Calvin College's exclusion of Yoder from a scheduled consultation.

[6] See *Bethel Collegian, (1)* Arbuckle, B. D. (April 9, 1992, 3); (2) Chapel, B. (March 2, 1992, 2,4); (3) Chastain, T. (March 5, 1992, 3),
(4) Cott, K. (March 5, 1982, 1, 6): (5) Dick, D. and Goering, W. (April, 9, 1992, 2); (6) Lemons, D., and (7) Leppert, N. (March 2, 1992, 3).

[7] Rhodes (April, 1992) reported that a small number of conference participants walked out of a session in which questions were raised about the meaning of Yoder's sexual misconduct legacy.

[8] The exact words of the statement from Indiana Michigan Church Life Committee are these: *While recommending the continuing use of an accountability plan, the CLC of the IN-MI Mennonite Conference encourages Yoder and the church to use his gifts of writing and teaching.* The complete statement can be found in Appendix M.

[9] See chapter 4 for a more comprehensive examination of this contentious issue of interpretation.

[10]Mathew 18: 14-16 (New International Version): *If your brother sins against you, go and show him his faulty 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.*

[11] Victor Stoltzfus. (ud, likely 1991). Correspondence with James Lapp, J. R. Burkholder, Arlene Mark, and Marlin Miller

[12] Ibid.

[13]See D. Friesen (1992), L. Hersch Meyer, (1992) and M. May (1992).

[14] Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries Office of the President. (October 23, 1991). Correspondence with women offended by JHY.

[15] For the purposes of this chapter, I have entitled this document *The Statement of Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church John Howard Yoder Task Force.* It is undated but the date is either February 21 or February 22, 1992.

[16] See July 13. 1992 article by Tom Price in the *Elkhart Truth*

[17] See the Appendix N for an extended discussion of Mennonite Church Polity regarding ordination credentials

[18] J. C. Wenger Correspondence, July 16, 1973 to the GBS Board of Overseers

[19] Indiana-Michigan Church Life Commission. (1996). Disciplinary process with John Howard Yoder draws to a close. *Gospel Evangel*. (July-August), 2; Church News. (1996). Disciplinary process with Yoder concludes. *Gospel Herald* 85 (28), July 14.

[20] See C. Eshleman's article in the January 23, 1997 issue of *The Weather Vane* 42 (10), pp. 1 and 6.

[21] The Church Life Commission of Indiana Michigan Conference and the Accountability and Support Group (ASG) released the following comments regarding forgiveness: *The ASG's final report stated that Yoder made significant changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to bring closure to the process. They also report that Yoder has gained greater awareness of and appreciation of forgiveness in the faith community. The Church Life Commission commends Yoder for participating in the process to its conclusion.*

[22] Laurie Hersch Meyer, 1992.

[23] Mennonite Church Archives, Box 34, File # 52.

[24] Professional conversations and consultation with Atlee Beechy, ca 1993 or 1994.

[25] B. Graber, (January 16, 1997). Memorandum: In the Case of the Mennonite Church's Invitation to Return John Howard Yoder to His Honored Place as a Teacher of Peace and Reconciliation Among Us, p.4.

[26] This statement reads, *while recommending the continuing use of an accountability plan, the Church Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Conference encourages Yoder and the church to use his gifts of writing and teaching.*

[27] C. H. Heggen and T. Koontz (undated) *A number of women and those close to them still suffer wounds from John and from the process* (5)

[28] See P. C. Blum (Fall, 2012) and L. Harder (Fall, 2012)

[29] J. Carroll, 2001. *Constantine's Sword*

- 8 -

Accountability and Forgiveness[1]
Religious Communities Confront individual and Institutional Abuse

Spiritual leaders should be held accountable. No double standards.

Sam Keen[2]

Introductory Comments

Morality – that is, the set of values that is internalized and to some degree at least, acted upon – is the glue holding social orders together. A morality cannot be seen as merely arbitrary, nor can it have any force in isolation. So, it is always embedded in a world view that both constructs it and justifies it.

Joel Kramer and Diana Alstad[3]

Near the end of Volume One of this series[4] I concluded that in thinking about forgiveness (in the context of the personal sins of clergy sexual abuse and the institutional sins of clericalism) some things had become clearer to me in my own theology of forgiveness.

1) No theology of forgiveness is adequate if it is not anchored in a factually truthful accounting about the violence done and an informed empathic awareness of the harm done. Such truth-telling needs to be as public as the acts of abuse were public. Since much sexual abuse is private, a modification of this principle needs to be in place. When the scandal of sexual abuse reaches into multiple communities and multiple nations, then truth needs to be as public as the reach of the scandal. When the victimizer is either unwilling or unable (as after death) to tell the truth, then the religious institution which supervised him and his work must step up and tell the truth to the best of its abilities. There are at least three reasons for this concern with factual truth. The *first* is to vindicate the victim in her claims of being abused (a) by removing all public doubt about the truthfulness of her claims and (b) by stopping character assassination of victims, and (c) by

resisting and refuting all processes of victim-blaming. The *second* is to create a social space which allows other victims to come forward. And *third*, given the nature of perpetrator recidivism even in situations of good intentions, this helps protect additional vulnerable individuals from new perpetrator acts of victimization by providing them with information.

2) No Christian theology of forgiveness is adequate if it legalistically exegetes and proof-texts only selected passages of the biblical text or utilizes selective forms of historical exegesis of those texts. If every biblical text in both testaments on the topic of forgiveness is examined, multiple models become evident. If one looks at a variety of Christian denominations, different interpretations of the need to forgive, the methods of achieving forgiveness, and the meaning of forgiveness to perpetrators and victims become evident. When one expands one's personal horizons to look at other world religions even more models and understandings emerge.

3) No theology of forgiveness is adequate if it does not include real and practical efforts to balance issues of justice and mercy for both persons in the victim-victimizer pair. If the abuser, for example, is managed with mercy and no demand for full accountability for his actions, then issues of justice for his victim(s) go unexamined and unaddressed. If, on the other hand, the victim is managed with mercy that is unaccompanied by a commitment to truth and justice, then no remote possibility exists for healing the breach that the perpetrator's act of abuse has created. As Chinnici (2010) and Knudsen (1985)[5] point out, the institutional church has pastoral care responsibilities to both parties. Both need to be appropriately accompanied and ministered to. None of the parties in the aftermath of sexual and clerical abuse accusations and adjudication processes should be abandoned.

In the twelve or fourteen months since the above was written, I have continued to think about the relationship of forgiveness to accountability. Some models of forgiveness and absolution provide unlimited mercy and grace to the abuser but provide little to no grace or mercy to victims or to the community's need for accountability and truth.

In looking slant at this issue for a moment, a different context and form of violence emerges. I live in Southern Arizona where two years ago a young man[6] attempted to assassinate a Representative to the United States Congress. While Representative Gabrielle Giffords lived through his assault, her life was irrevocably changed by the severity of her physical wounds. In addition, several other individuals died and additional individuals were seriously wounded. As the young man's case worked its way through the criminal justice system, there were (1) no victim demands for the death penalty to be applied and (2) no victim calls for unconditional forgiveness and release from all accountability for his crimes. Even though the young man's mental illness became visible immediately upon detention, he remained in legal custody of the state's criminal justice system. In the fall of 2012 the young man entered a guilty plea to the court for his actions. Consequently, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. One of his victims, declaring her Christian principles, told him at his sentencing hearing that she forgave him for her irrevocably changed and damaged life. But neither she nor anyone else suggested that he be released from a form of full accountability known as life imprisonment without any possibility of parole. I understood her statement to be one that told the young man that at least one victim refused to hate him and to seek revenge. I did not, however, understand her statement to deny his responsibility for the rest of his life to come to terms with his actions and their destructive meaning in the lives of these individuals – individuals whose lives he forever changed. Her forgiveness, therefore, was a not a blanket and unqualified form of forgiveness. It also did not imply victim forgetfulness.

In situations of (1) religious leader gender harassment or sexual abuse of others or (2) institutional complicity and cover-ups, victims' lives are irrevocably harmed. Victims need to know that their suffering has been heard, understood, and that efforts will be made to prevent future victimizations of the same kind. When they ask for a transparent process of full accountability their request does not mean they seek revenge and an eye for an eye form of punishment for their abusers. For their own healing and for the healing of their communities they know that they need factual truthfulness in order to understand what has happened to their lives in the wake of abuse.

Victims must engage, if they are to find the pathway to full healing, in long and often complex processes of interpretation and meaning creation. They,

like their victimizer, will inevitably carry historical memory about their particular story of abusive interactions until they die.

In another context altogether, I have heard oncologist-physician Rachel Naomi Remen describe her encounters with dying individuals. She repeatedly talked in conference settings about the way in which the dying revisit the important events of their lives – once more seeking to make meaning visible to themselves and to those who walk with them in the dying process.

In a similar fashion, it is inevitable that victims of sexual abuse and gender harassment will revisit this historical aspect of their lives many times as they seek to understand it within the differing developmental stages of their lives. As each individual developmentally matures, life events shape shift their meaning. This life review is, therefore, in my opinion, not a question of revenge-filled ruminations and the failure to forgive. Rather, it is the once-victimized personality's ongoing effort to integrate all of one's life experiences into a contextualized life history or personal narrative. Re-encountering the inner narrative of abusive events in one's life and reconsidering their meaning is inevitable as the individual crosses into and through a wide variety of developmental stages during her or his lifetime.

When the religious community fails to understand this, it may demand a victim's silence as a public way to demonstrate culturally or religiously demanded forgiveness about what happened in the victim's lifetime. Whether the community which demands victim silence is engaged in silent and passive denial or in aggressive and hostile counterattacks about what actually happened to this individual, by its demand for silence and forgiveness, she or he is prevented from doing essential psychological, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual grief work. In a certain sense at least, the victim's journey to full spiritual maturity is actively interfered with when her community demands silence as the price of social inclusion.

In all situations of community denial or aggressive counterattacks the community short-changes its own need to grieve over its own damaged collective self. These communities forfeit their opportunity to mature and become healing resources. When, for example, in emotional conflicts about how to interpret, understand and deal with episodes of clergy sexual violence, friend divides from friend, important human relationships can be, and often are destroyed. In these conflicted breakups both individuals can

feel betrayed by the other. These destroyed relationships leave behind them a legacy of anger, a sense of being personally or communally betrayed, and an embittered sense that this community is no longer a safe one in which to seek spiritual and emotional comfort during life's most difficult passages. Some individuals during these intense congregational conflicts, perhaps the most vulnerable ones, become stranded in emotional and spiritual exile.

If, as Christian tradition asserts, God worries about (enumerates) each sparrow that falls then Christian communities, in my opinion, are obliged by their faith tradition to worry about each individual who is exiled and stranded from the human faith community because of the presence of individual or communal abusiveness.[7] If the Good Shepherd worries over and searches for one lost sheep, then the communities which follow his teachings are obliged to worry over and actively search for ways to heal the human alienation or damages to another human being's life which their actions have created. Communal repentance is difficult to orchestrate. Yet it must be sought. When communities fail to heal the collective or communal wounds their actions have created, the repercussions are profound. In many cases these wounds become generational legacies that are passed forward into the future. The central witness of the Gospels about care for the human neighbor is abandoned.[8]

One aspect of communal accountability is, therefore, the attempt to make certain that no one is abandoned by the community as it seeks to heal the wounds of religious abuse by leaders or cover-up abuses by other leaders. Factual truthfulness and a determined refusal to engage in codified forms of subterfuge or vengeful counter-attacks are, therefore, essential.

Compassionate, non-judgmental approaches to others' efforts to heal their own wounds are essential. Patience, humility, respect, tolerance for diversity and most especially welcoming love are all needed. Learning how to put oneself in another's pair of hiking boots can assist individuals to remain flexible, compassionate and empathic with others who struggle against great odds to regain a secure footing in their life's journey to maturity.

Thus, requests for full accountability do not equate with (1) efforts to get revenge, (2) efforts to punish the offender in humiliating ways, or (3) efforts to express damaging hatred for or hostility against the institutional church.

It is essential in any future efforts to understand these complex forms of religious and spiritual abuse that individuals and communities are guided to understand the theological and ethical differences between shunning judgment and wise discernment; between vengeance, retaliation, or punishment and accountability; between forgiveness as an event of forgetting and as an act of victim decision-making in the face of great wounds; and between grace that cheapens the meaning of forgiveness by excusing perpetrators from accountability and a grace which is based on a foundation of full accountability.

Forgiving and Forgetting

> *But forgiveness is so difficult that it probably needs some help from the other person. I mean by this that the wrong, if not remembered by both parties – and remembered as a wrong – falls on the betrayed. The wider context within which the tragedy occurred would seem to call for parallel feeling from both parties. They are still both in a relationship, now as betrayed and betrayer. If only the betrayed sees a wrong, while the other passed it over with rationalizations, then the betrayal is still going on – even increased. This dodging of what has really happened is, of all the sores, the most galling to the betrayed. Forgiveness comes harder; resentment grows because the betrayer is not carrying his guilt and the act is not honestly conscious. Jung has said that the meaning of our sins is that we carry them which means we do not unload them unto others to carry for us. To carry one's sins, one first has to recognize them, and recognize their brutality.*
>
> James Hillman[9]

In the complex relationship between forgiveness and accountability it is totally unrealistic to think that an individual who has been betrayed by a religious professional or by a religious organization will forget that betrayal. Destroyed trust between individuals (or individuals and institutions) may never be able to be repaired. While some victimized individuals may be able to co-exist inside the same community with their victimizer(s) even when full reconciliation is impossible, others may need to separate from the common community and live elsewhere.

For individuals and communities to demand forgiveness by victims as the price of continuing inclusion in the community – especially in the absence of full accountability by their victimizers – is to participate in ongoing processes of abuse. The ability to forgive another is one of those evanescent realities in human lives. It has its own time table and manner of appearance. While it can be requested, it cannot be demanded or even commanded.

Given sufficient time and help, however, the victimized individual may be able to give up retaliation ruminations and revenge fantasies. Given sufficient time and help, the victimizer may find his or her own pathway to full accountability, remorse, repentance and self-forgiveness – even in the absence of another's unqualified forgiveness.

It is important to note, therefore, that the goal of spiritual maturation for victim or victimizer is never self-hate or self-abandonment. The goal is responsibility to the self and accountability to others in order to live with each other in ways that do not re-violate the self…or the other. In general, the Christian belief that self-community transformation and healing are reflective acts of God's mercy and God's compassion is the foundation for the Church's theology of forgiveness. Many of the world's Christians agree that human beings can never earn this divine act of mercy – in other words that God's mercy is always a gift. However, there is also almost universal agreement that sin must be acknowledged, repented and that a conscious turning away from the evil or harm that one has done to others is required.

When human betrayal involves a physical sexual assault or other forms of unwanted physical contact, complex human systems of memory (cognitive, kinesthetic, auditory, visual, physical, and emotional) will encode and continue to hold intact memories of abusive encounters.[10] In situations where an individual's memories of abuse are fragmented, distorted and dissociated, significant therapeutic help may be needed before the victim can begin to come to terms with what has happened to her or to him.[11] Recent clinical literature[12] suggests that one aspect of healing from sexual violence and its associated long-lasting trauma sequellae consists of therapist-supported reconstruction of historical memory. Insistence by a community that forgiveness must be instantaneous interferes with the individual's re-construction of narrative memory.

If the sexual predator's acts of sexual betrayal were followed by institutional and communal denial of factual truth or if the victim's faith community blamed the victim for her victimization, the violated and wounded individual will need, in some way or another, to learn how to reconstruct a trustworthy human community. Clinical literature about rape is quite clear. The first responses made by a family member, a friend, a police officer, or a medical emergency room team member, to a woman's account of rape immediately and directly affect the long-term outcome of her recovery and healing processes.[13] It is quite likely that the same kind of psychological responses are active in all forms of sexual victimization. The more she is disbelieved, blamed, or accused, the harder it will be for the victim to make the initial steps toward regaining self-control over her life. The more difficult it will be to trust others. The more difficult it will be for her to find a way to heal her woundedness.

Spiritual Exile

When personal betrayal is followed by the systemic betrayal of corrupt, negligent or inept human institutional systems, the abused and offended individual may find herself living in spiritual and religious exile. The spiritual or religious community which he or she trusted to minister to his or her religious and spiritual needs may no longer feel safe. Inevitable changes in social memberships caused by events of sexual violence and institutional corruption change the life trajectory for the victimized individual. There may be no path with integrity by which the individual can re-enter an abusive community and feel at home with his institutional abusers. He or she may need to exit the community in order to feel safe in the world once more.

When an individual has been sexually abused by a leader of the religious community and subsequently is systemically betrayed by that community as it fails to respond appropriately to his or her accusations about the abuser, the presence of both forms of abuse in her or his life may indicate to the victimized individual that the God she or he once believed in is also no longer trustworthy. Thus, this individual simultaneously loses the faith resources of belief in God and the socio-spiritual or socio-religious resources of belief in a loving community.

The dual experiences of spiritual alienation from God and social isolation from the religious community that results from traumatic experience and

inconclusive personal efforts to make sense of this experience may last a lifetime. For the individual to move back into health, she or he may need to find alternative forms of emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. This may be especially difficult for families and close friends to understand and to support. The individual may, therefore, also lose their support in the journey to find healing for her or his wounds.

Thus a victimized individual's search for healing may lead her into what I call an enchanted forest. Inside this dark, unlit, unkempt, and threatening forest – which many authors call the dark night of the soul – individuals will need to create the path to their own healing. No one else can do this for them. As part of this process, they will need to learn to trust themselves once again as the foundation for learning to trust others. They will learn they need to forgive themselves as the foundation for making decisions about forgiving others. They will learn that the memories stay with them always but can gradually be recollected and organized into a factually truthful life narrative – a life narrative which is manageable and which allows them to exit the forest. As they heal their wounds, they will learn not to pick at their scars. As they find their wounds taking less control of their personal responses to life, they will re-encounter other trust-worthy human beings with whom they can feel safe. Using some form of a bullshit detector similar to Keen's below, they both can and usually will emerge with wiser discernment about whom to trust and whom not to trust.

Liturgies of Healing?

Doyle (in Plainte and McChesney, 2011, pp. 171-182) points out that only offering prayer or even creating communal liturgies for the victims of violation provides a theologically and therapeutically insufficient approach to the needs of survivors and their families for psychological and spiritual healing. Something other than ritual and liturgy is needed for victim healing. I abstract and paraphrase Doyle's work below. Where I quote him directly, I use italicized formatting.

As part of the healing process after events of clergy abuse and institutional abuse:

- Victims need to re-examine prior belief systems, most particularly their views of ordained religious leaders. Victims need to gain insight

into any previous merging of God's face with their human assailant's face. The goal in such a spiritual intervention is to assist the victimized individual to move towards a mature adult spirituality in which dependency on the human priest is abandoned and the individual begins to take responsibility for his own healing and spiritual maturation (p. 179).

- Re-encountering a compassionate and loving divine higher power, the individual can release him or herself from toxic beliefs about sin, guilt, and punishment. One aspect of this spiritual journey is to release the emotional and cognitive self from the belief that God, in some special way, exists only within the sociological and physical boundaries of the institutional church (179-180).

- Victims need to acknowledge their justifiable anger at the church as well as at their victimizer. I will add to Doyle's comments that victims may also need to acknowledge their anger at God. In this process, individuals will need to work their way though the cognitive process of separating the human institutional church from God's presence in the world. Doyle writes: *The victim needs to know that the visible church is not the only pathway to God. The spiritual recovery process offers a unique opportunity for a spiritual maturity that provides the emotional security needed for whatever choices the victim makes about the place of religion or higher power in his or her life* (180).

- Victims need to comprehend that the institutional church's teaching that it is a perfect human society on earth and represents in some mystical way the perfected body of Christ has (1) made clergy abuse possible and (2) pre-conditioned victims to feel guilty for the act of abuse they experienced (180).

- The final stage of healing, according to Doyle, happens when victimized individuals recognize an authentic personal spirituality in which their relationships with God, the Higher Power, or an institutional church are not the sources of pain, fear and guilt. An authentic or healthy spirituality includes a sense of joy, a sense of balance, an interior sense of personal self-worth, and freedom to face into a hope-filled future (181).

When we look at the aftermaths of these complex wounds of assault and betrayal, it becomes clear that simplistic views of forgiveness do not serve the needs for healing experienced by victimized individuals, the community, or even the victimizing individual. Clinical literature is quite clear. Victims need repeated encounters with truth-telling and trust-worthy others as the foundational keystone of their healing.

Anecdotal evidence is equally clear. Victimizers need to tell the full and unscripted truth as one pre-condition for their social and emotional healing. They need to come to terms with their acts of violence towards others as the foundation for any attempts to reconcile with their communities.[14]

In a similar way, communities also need to encounter historical factual truth and trust-worthy leaders as their pathway way to restore leader and community credibility and trust. And it is important to note that any community, once burned by a sexually abusive leader, may need to create different structures of governance and accountability in order for the people to feel safe enough to begin re-trusting the church and its human governance systems.

Previously rescued by corrupt systems from personal and public accountability for abuse the victimizing individual remains tied to his personal obsessions, addictions, and suffering. Only by being held to sound administrative processes of adjudication and transparent accountability can he be freed. For this to happen, however, he must begin the often painful and difficult processes of self-examination. He, in some ways like the victim, must re-enter his life history in order to discover the roots of his addictive abuse of others. He will most likely be able to encounter and to engage with an open future only to the degree that he is capable of transparent accountability, the development of compassionate empathy for his victims, deep experiences of remorse, and a determined willingness to make such amends as he can make. For this perpetrating individual to demand other's forgiveness means that his therapeutic and spiritual work has not been appropriately and successfully finished. More spiritual, emotional, and cognitive work remains and needs to be done.

Spiritual and Religious Wounds of Institutions

If victimized and victimizing individuals need to seek physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual healing on their journey to personal freedom and wholeness, wounded or dysfunctional or corrupt institutions are also in need of healing. Since the boards, bricks, and mortar of social institutions are not the source of re-victimization, institutional healing is grounded in a theological notion of human as well as of corporate repentance. For institutional repentance to have any meaning at all it involves human beings acknowledging their actions – i.e., becoming transparently accountable to the victims of their malfeasance or incompetency - and to the encompassing community - for their actions. Repentance involves a personal recognition of corporate as well as personal wrong-doing. It equally involves public acknowledgment that one (and one's institutional organization) has either inadvertently harmed or has deliberately and actively intended to do harm to the offended one.

As an Anabaptist-Mennonite I am in dialogue with Father Doyle (Plante and McChesney, op. cit.), a Roman Catholic ordained priest. Our institutional denominations have somewhat different views of church polity, organizational structures and the role of religious leaders (whether ordained or lay). I am indebted to his description of changes which need to happen in his church's theology (1) of God, (2) the Church as people of God, (3) the role of the priest in mediating God to the people, (4) and the people's role as obedient receivers of spiritual instruction from the priestly class. What follows, therefore, is my Anabaptist-Mennonite conversation with or an adaptation of Doyle's important insights about human religious organizations and institutions.

- Religious or spiritual leaders must learn to refuse the seductive idolatry of conflating their human role and human theology with God's role as they assist others make the spiritual life journey from birth to death. The gathered community must likewise refuse to insist that their minister or priest represents God in a unique, super-human way.

- Human religious leaders must learn that their role in spiritual leadership is not to dictate to or to control the people who turn to them for spiritual guidance and support. Likewise the people must refuse to follow corrupt authoritarian leaders.

- Human leaders need to recognize that they, like the people they teach and guide, are caught in systemic structures that contain the potential for evil and sinfulness as well as for good and transformation. Consequently, they too carry the human disease of alienation from God as part of their inheritance. They are, therefore, wounded healers and must learn to manage their personal wounds and personality fault lines in such a way that they remain visible and available as trustworthy guides and healers in their relationships with others.

- When human leaders of religious institutions become repentantly aware of any form of harm they have done to others – either deliberately or ineptly – they are obliged by the nature of their spiritual calling as religious leaders to be fully and transparently accountable to their people for their individual and collective failures.

- Institutional religious leaders should not confuse symbolic gestures or liturgical rituals with genuine healing. This is essential for the people to realize as well. While I personally believe in the power of collective liturgies to carry a healing power, this is true only when the individuals who carry the burdensome wounds of violence are consulted about the planned ritual – both its intentionality and its methodology.[15]

- Religious leaders who seek authentic healing for (1) victimized individuals and their families, (2) victimizers and their families, (3) the communally organized people of God as a whole, and (4) leaders of corrupted institutional structures and dysfunctional patterns of organization need to know the pathway involves rigorous self-institution examination and what ancient authors called conversion (a deliberate turning away from evil).[16] They need to recognize, in light of their spiritual heritage, that truthful processes of full accountability to those their actions have harmed are essential to their conversion. Acts of omission and acts of commission must both be accounted for. Inevitably, such a process will raise the question of seeking willingly to make necessary and appropriate amends.

- Religious leaders who seek genuine healing for themselves and for their institutions must become as little children – who have not yet forgotten the smallest child's insistent belief in fairness, truth,

compassion, empathy, genuine love for the other, and awe at the beauty of the other.

- Deep sorrow for the harm one has done, public acknowledgement of this harm, repentance, requests for forgiveness – without demand attached that the abused person must forgive - and demonstrated transformation (a refusal to sin again in the same way) are the traditional pathways to healing for leaders who have abused their powers in the service of corrupted and corrupting goals.

Accountability: Considerations in Light of Abusive Leaders

Keen (1994, pp. 110-117) constructed a theoretical construct which he called a *spiritual bullshit detector.* For many years as a contributing editor to the magazine *Psychology Today,* Keen covered the emerging spirituality movements of the mid and late 20th century. Of this era in his life, Keen writes:

> *In my journeys around the new frontier, I saw many examples of destructive spirituality, false mystification, gross abuse of power, hidden tyrannies, and cultic fanaticism. Uncritical belief, misplaced faith, and excessive loyalty to guru and group were rampant. Personality cults formed in which loyal disciples overlooked or excused obvious sexual and financial misconduct, drunkenness, and tyrannical behavior* (112).

This is the shadow side of organized religious institutional life. As contemporary Roman Catholic scholars[17] have repeatedly demonstrated in the 20th and 21st centuries, organized Christian religious bodies and their leaders are not immune from a wide variety of theological and social disorders. Religious leaders' abuse of their followers and the failures of the institutional church or its institutions to promptly and appropriately adjudicate complaints about such abuse inevitably affect the integrity of the religious institution, its theology and its praxis.

As Elizabeth Lesser (July-August, 2012) has documented, no contemporary religious institution can consider itself to be immune from situations of leader abuses of power, sex, and money. This means that no

religious institution can isolate itself above the need to appropriately manage abusers and predators.

Keen (1994, pp. 113-115) offers a set of warning principles that can serve to guide individuals as well as entire religious communities. I abstract and summarize these. Where I have italicized an item, this is a direct quotation.

- Be cautious with charismatic leaders, authorities who are unquestioned by their peers and followers, folks who claim to have the only, one pure, holy, divinely revealed and infallible pathway to truth.

- Be wary of individuals who fascinate, captivate and overwhelm others.

- Be suspicious of any leader who insists that he (or his people) have the only understanding of truth or faithfulness.

- Avoid those who demand obedience to themselves and their teachings as the sign of faithfulness and loyalty.

- *Look carefully at a spiritual leader's personal life. Does he or she deal with money, power, and sex in an open and admirable manner* (p. 115)*?*

- *Check to see if a spiritual leader has friends, peer relationships, and a community of equals – or only disciples. I distrust anyone who claims to have achieved universal compassion but lacks the capacity for simple friendship. Friends keep us honest. When a leader has only disciples and devotees, he or she gets very little honest feedback or criticism. The ability to deal with others as equals is a necessary element in any authentic spirituality* (p. 115).

- Notice if the expression of differences in opinion is fostered and encouraged. Can individuals who are "in charge" publicly acknowledge that they don't know absolute and infallible truth?

- Be careful of any individual or group that demands absolute loyalty and behavioral obedience to a cause, a specific formula for truth, a person, or a community.

- Look out for an absence of humor – humorlessness is a sign of personal and community rigidity – a sign of implicit emotional and psychological tyranny.

Judging and Discerning

Two distinct yet inter-related individual and communal temptations in the face of religious leaders who are sexual predators are (1) to deny and exonerate the victimizer and (2) to judge and blame the victim. This reality is also true in situations of managerial malfeasance and supervisory ineptness within organizations.

Victims may be blamed for the abuse which they encountered. Individuals who support victimized individuals may be attacked as divisive institution haters. Communities may break apart over complex questions of responsibility. Individuals and entire communities may enter equally complex processes of memory distortion and collective forgetting.

If we distinguish, however, between judging and discerning, then it becomes possible to find a way through the dark thickets of anger, confusion, dismay, anxiety, and denial which surround individual acts of abuse by religious professionals and institutional acts of betrayal by institution mangers. Freed from the inner demand to (1) ignore and deny or (2) create elaborate blame structures, individuals and communities can move into orderly organizational processes of helping abusers become accountable to their victims, the surrounding community, their families, their professional associates, and others who may have been harmed by their decisions and actions.

Freedom from the communal need to create elaborate judging and blaming structures allows individuals to remain accessible to victims who are seeking to heal the inevitable wounds of victimization. Coming to recognize and to acknowledge the factual isness of any given abusive encounter, allows communities to stay focused and centered on the issues of appropriately managing abusers and the complex aftermaths of abuse.

Becoming a discerning community – as opposed to being a judgmental one – often means that the religious community as a whole must be addressed directly and forthrightly about its own needs to grow in spiritual maturity.

Outside consultants or denominational supervisors may need to make a series of planned and evaluated interventions in the kinds of communal pathologies which result in the wake of clergy sexual abuse. Individuals who are skilled in conflict mediation can be very helpful to such processes of communal healing.

Another stage is managing gossip and false information. Here the best management tactic is full transparency and truth-telling. Where troublesome information needs to remain confidential, reasons for this confidentiality must be presented in ways which lay individuals can understand. Confidentiality agreements, however, must not be inappropriately utilized to cover-up individual and corporate wrong-doing. To do this further weakens the community's ability to trust its leaders. In the absence of trust, the community temptation will be to split and judge rather than to remain intact and discern.

Concluding Remarks

In these very rudimentary and very preliminary remarks about forgiveness and accountability; about wounds and healing, I hope to set in motion communal discussions among Mennonites about (1) prevention of future episodes of institutional ineptness or malfeasance in situations of religious leader sexual or gender harassment abuses and (2) theological discussions among the communal people about the nature, meaning, and complex relationship of accountability to forgiveness.

The Christian gospels (as is also true in the Jewish scriptures which antedate them) indicate two great commandments: (1) to love God and (2) to love the human other. One denoting characteristic of love is the desire to avoid harming the other by careless or deliberate actions of abuse. When harm occurs, especially when deliberate and malicious harm occurs, it is possible to uncover an absence of love.

During the past century, contemporary social scientists have come to understand that psychic numbing (a result of experienced violation, betrayal, and trauma) is often accompanied by a lack of empathy for the suffering of others and an inability to love. The inability to maturely love others in reciprocal and mutual ways most often has a foundation of self-other hate. In its turn, this hate is often grounded in experiences of violation

and abuse. Inasmuch as there is probably no human individual who reaches her or his majority without encountering destructive human relationships, this inability to appropriately manage the wounds of the self in spiritually mature ways is wide-spread and nearly universal. Part of the task of gaining emotional and spiritual maturity is coming to understand the self and its wounds. Once this process of self-other understanding is underway, another task is to learn how to manage these devastating wounds in such a way that they become empathic assets and stepping stones in the journey to love rather than barriers.

The spiritual task, therefore, of all religious institutions and organizations is to assist individuals to grow towards an ability to (1) love God and (2) to love each other in ways which do not destroy the inner authentic self. As Doyle, Keen, and Lesser suggest, there are means and methodologies for individual spiritual seekers to use in order to protect themselves from religious leader chicanery and institutional practices of criminal malfeasance. Wise spiritual teachers will assist individuals in their care to mature and to be able to make developmentally appropriate discernments about who to trust and who not to trust as spiritual leaders. Wise and mature spiritual seekers will not give away their powers of discernment regarding untrustworthy leaders.

It is the task, therefore, of any religious or spiritual community to protect the immature, the weak, the developmentally trusting, and the vulnerable from abuse. Another task of the religious community as well as of individuals is to seek spiritual maturity rather than control. Wise seekers will avoid the abandonment of a mature, responsible ability to discern between faithful and unfaithful spiritual leaders; between wise guides and malfeasant ones.

This is perhaps the most significant learning for me as I have written these essays about leader sexual abuse and institutional mismanagement of leader sexual abuse.

It is likely that the Christian Church – like many other religious establishments across the globe – will continue to experience the emergence of corrupted individuals who seek to gain power in order to manipulate and control others by sexual abuse dressed in theological language. Knowing this is likely; people in the pew need the skills of discernment as well as the attitudes of compassion and empathy for those

who suffer because of this internalized form of spiritual immaturity and corruption.

Another principle became visible to me in writing these essays. Individual Christians are ethically or morally responsible to discern the presence of individual or systemic evil. As Christians they are also responsible to the great texts of their scriptures which teach (1) love of God and (2) love of each other as the primary responses of faithfulness inside the collective community. This means, that individual Christians as individuals and as members of the collective, must learn how to recognize and to intervene (with compassion and humility) in all situations of systemic evil. There is, I have come to believe, no other pathway through the enchanted dark forest of sexual and physical violence to individual and collective healing.

Footnotes

[1] Readers are referred to Appendix B and Appendix D for word webs which explore dictionary definitions of the words *forgiveness* and *accountability.* As noted in the text above multiple meanings exist within religious denominations and within the clinical disciplines. Forgiveness, for example, can be operationally defined as an interpersonal act or as an internal state of consciousness. Some authors describe forgiveness as an emotional process while others describes it as an interpersonal transaction. Still other sources describe forgiveness as an intervention by a religious professional such as a priest who absolves the individual of his burden of sin by forgiving him.

[2] S. Keen, 1994, p. 114.

[3] J. Kramer and D. Alstad, 1993, p. 4.

[4] R. Krall (2012), pp. 405-406.

[5] For a summary of Rev. Knudsen's comments, see Appendix N.

[6] Jared Lougner

[7] See Bishop Thomas Gumbleton's (November 4, 2011) homily for his discussion of the failure of his church to reach out to those former Catholics who have exited their denominational church because of the sexual abuse scandals.

[8] See Luke 10: 28-34 for the parable of the Good Samaritan

[9] J. Hillman (1964/1975), p. 79.

[10] B. Rothschild (2000).

[11] See B. A. van der Kolk and O. V. D. van der Hart (1998, pp. 303-327) for their discussion of dissociated memory as an aftermath of trauma.

[12] See M. Mendelsohn, et.al. (2011).

[13] See R. Krall (1990) for a more extended discussion of the impact of first encounters after rape.

[14] See the story of Katherine Ann Power in Lamb and Murphey (2002, pp. 232-261)

[15] In one consultation I did with a regional Mennonite Church, conference program planners pre-panned a ritual of healing using candles. Asked by some victims not to do this because of post-traumatic flashbacks created by the use of candles during their events of abuse, conference planners needed to confront this issue head-on. Was it more important to carry out the ritual for the majority of attendees or was it more important to change the program to meet the requests of those who needed a different community environment if they were to participate in the planned conference events?

[16] For an incisive discussion of the Hebrew scripture's biblical theologies of conversion see D. E. Lipstatdt (1998).

[17] G. Robinson (2007).

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Where Might We Go from Here?

Violence, as we see it, is not limited to physical forms, though that is often its most blatant manifestation. It is any destructive desecration of the other person, or, of the self, whether by physical or nonphysical means. An unkind word, made jagged by contempt, can be as destructive as a physical assault.[1]

LeeRoy H. Aden

Introductory Comments

The first volume of this series of books began by introducing a public health model. Throughout this series to date, various applications of this model have been applied to situations of clergy sexual abuse and to situations of institutional clericalism or criminal malfeasance. In such a model there are three distinct components or concerns which - because we are dealing with human beings and human systems – have a certain tendency to overlap. These are (a) treatment of those already wounded by violence, (b) efforts to quarantine or contain episodes of violence already in progress so that the violence is restrained from spreading, and (c) prevention efforts to forestall episodes of violence from beginning.

Methodologies of treatment, containment and prevention are all necessary to prevent future events of personal victimization or collective victimization. Each form of violence needs to be understood in its causative factors. Each form may call for unique intervention approaches. The short-term goal of anti-violence work is the healing of individuals and communities. The long-term goal is the creation of violence-resistive cultures and individuals. In the opening pages of Volume One, I wrote:

The first and innermost circles of the public health typology, according to the WHO Summary Report authors, must include the individual level for both perpetrators and victims. It must consider biological and social or personal history factors. The second larger circle needs to examine close personal relationships and the way(s) in which these varied relationships

influence perpetrators and victims. The third and still larger concentric circle examines the community level and the larger social networks such as schools or churches and their influence on perpetrators and victims. The final, encompassing concentric circle is that of broad social forms and social climates. Here we find issues of shared social norms, attitudes and values, as these are concomitantly shaped by and manifested in individual behaviors. Of particular interest in sexual and gender-based violence, according to the WHO, are cultural ideologies and patterns which support male dominance of women and small children. Such ideologies serve as a psycho-social or spiritual-religious foundation for violence towards them (p. 9).

In these volumes I have attempted to keep these basic public health principles or concepts in mind. As I think about the Mennonite church's future – in contrast to its often troubled past – vis-à-vis various sexual abuse scandals and vis-à-vis a variety of perpetrators and systemic interventions, a question repeatedly surfaced in my thinking: what can we do as individuals and as communities to prevent further episodes of (a) sexual abuse by clergy and religious professionals and (a) inept, incompetent or deliberate and malfeasant management of sexual abusers by the various institutions of the Mennonite Church?

In this short chapter, I want to make some suggestions about ways to proceed.

The Need for Information

> *At some time during their lives, about one in two females and one in three males have been victims of one or more sexual acts. These acts include being exposed to, being sexually threatened, being touched on a sexual part of the body, and attempts to assault or being sexually assaulted.*
>
> The Canadian Council on Social Development
> The Church Council on Justice and Correction[2]

While we know that various forms of affinity or acquaintance violence are prevalent within Mennonite communities,[3] accurate demographic data about incidence is almost non-existent. One place to begin, therefore, is to

collect accurate data about the incidence of various forms of abuse. To avoid being disillusioned by non-action, we should, however, keep in mind the World Health Organization's cautionary note that r*aising awareness of the fact that violence can be prevented is, however, only the first step in shaping the response to it. Violence is an extremely sensitive topic. Many people have difficulty in confronting it in their professional lives because it raises uncomfortable questions about their personal lives. Talking about violence means touching upon complex matters of morality, ideology and culture. There is, thus, often resistance at official as well as personal levels to open discussion of the topic* (WHO *Summary Report* (p. 1).

Steps to the Future: Understanding the Epidemiology of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

- Good demographic and epidemiological information is needed regarding each specific form of affinity or acquaintance abuse as it occurs inside the Mennonite community.[4] Domestic or family violence demographic data needs to be gathered. Clergy and religious professional abuse and harassment demographic data need to be gathered. Data needs to be collected about sexual assaults.

Inasmuch as the Mennonite Church and its surrounding community has no Andrew Greeley (a Roman Catholic priest-sociologist who for decades gathered demographic data regarding a wide variety of sociological issues inside the Roman Catholic tradition – including clergy violence against the laity), young social science scholars and public health researchers can and should be encouraged to utilize the opportunity presented by theses and dissertations to gather data and to begin to analyze it. Decisions will need to be made about data dissemination and interpretation.

- A commonly agreed upon set of definitions should be devised to study these complex problems of affinity or acquaintance violations. One place to begin would be to utilize the federal government's definitions for sexual violence crimes. Another might be to utilize the definitions for clergy sexual misconduct contained in Appendix E of this manuscript.

- Analyses of demographic statistical data should include an awareness of the reluctance of communities to (1) recognize they have a problem and (2) to discuss the problem because of cultural or religious ideologies which buttress and support the problem's continuance in time and space.

Inasmuch as it is quite likely that church-run institutions may be unwilling to cooperate in data collection and in public dissemination of research findings, denomination-independent research is likely to be a more secure pathway to accurate data gathering and to thoughtful analysis. Mennonite scholars in secular institutions (similar to Greeley's teaching-research position at the University of Chicago) may need to break the cultural sound barrier so that these politically and personally sensitive topics begin to be researched without denominational demands for unquestioning loyalty, political or theological correctness and without the protective cover of denominational or institutional secrecy and confidentiality.

It is a truism that if you don't know what the problem is (or consists of), it will be impossible to address solving the problem. No where is this truism more accurate than when dealing with episodes of affinity violence within relatively closed socio-religious, socio-cultural and ethnic communities such as the Mennonite Church.

Steps to the Future: Becoming Aware

Abuse thrives in secrecy

SNAP Network[5]

- Religious institution leaders need to provide accurate and current information to all church members and employed subordinates about how, where, when and to whom to report sexual misconduct. Denominational, conference and congregational web pages can and should include information about Mennonite Church polity regarding sexual behavior expectations for all ordained clergy and religious professionals employed by the denomination. The most recent denominational standards should be clearly visible to all members of a conference, congregation or religious institution workplace. Since

not all members of the denomination are currently fluent with cyberspace, a printed copy should be placed in either or both of the following locations: the conference, church or other institution library and the central office. Every church employee needs to be informed about these standards. Behavioral expectations for every church employee and church volunteer need to be very clearly and very publicly stated.

- In the same way the denomination participates in world communion Sunday or Martin Luther King Day activities, perhaps there should be an annual sexual abuse awareness Sunday.

- The denomination and its religious institutions such as colleges, hospitals, and mission boards need to develop very clear reporting protocols so that sexual abuse is reported *and* properly adjudicated. In situations of criminal sexual abuse, the appropriate criminal justice system should also be utilized. This means, for example, that if a child or adolescent accuses a Sunday school teacher of sexually molesting him or her, not only the governing board of elders or overseers needs to be informed. Police and child protective service agencies also need to be notified about the accusation. This also means that if a church office secretary becomes aware of a large stash of child pornography on the minister's computer, the minister needs to be reported not only to the congregation's board of elders but also to Conference officials and to the local police. This means that if a student accuses a faculty member of rape, the denominational school's human resources officer must investigate the complaints and the student should be referred to either an emergency room or to qualified counselors in order to determine if she or he wishes to file criminal complaint charges with police.

- Continuing education events for congregational and denominational leaders about the prevalence of sexual abuse are needed. The biennium gatherings of Mennonites in the United States (at a national and at a conference level) could and perhaps should include a required (or at the least strongly recommended) continuing education program for all denominational conference moderators, conference ministers, and church-life commission members. The denomination already has clinicians who work with abused children, abused adults, and abuse perpetrators. These individuals could be utilized by the

church as consultants and teachers as the denomination seeks to bring every supervisor of clergy into full awareness about the complexity of clergy sexual abuse and its traumatic aftermath in the lives of individuals and congregations. One goal here is full compliance with denominational and conference standards and written policies.

- Some denominations and institutions have begun criminal sexual background checks for all employees and volunteers who work with children and adolescents.

Steps to the Future: Healing the Wounds

The first principle of treatment is empowerment of the survivor.

Judith L. Herman[6]

Clinical literature suggests that prompt interventions and treatment provide a better prognosis for healing.[7] Crisis intervention literature supports this clinical finding.[8]

- In my opinion, it would be wise for church administrators to think proactively and preventively, i.e., in advance of accusations about events of sexual violation by clergy or other religious professionals. One way to do this is to identify, in advance, evaluation and treatment professionals in local communities and to build collegial alliances with them so that individuals can be referred immediately for supportive and appropriate therapeutic interventions. What the Roman Catholic experience with clergy sexual abuse has taught us is that the Church qua institutional church cannot be allowed to control the therapeutic process for individuals after events of clergy sexual misconduct. The bureaucratic temptation to protect the institution from scandal is too great. The wounded individual or individuals need, therefore to be treated inside of a confidential process which allows individuals freedom from the church's institutional control and the suspicious view over the victim's shoulder.

- Since it is inevitable that there will be future occurrences of clergy abuse episodes, a denominational clergy sexual abuse trauma response team could be trained to respond quickly and appropriately to congregations where clergy sexual abuse has occurred. These teams could be activated by conference or congregational requests for help. This is a similar process now used when there are school yard shooting episodes in the United States.

Steps to the Future:
Spiritual formation

> Ecclesiogenic neurosis *manifests itself among clergy in underdeveloped consciences.*
>
> A. W. Richard Sipe[9]

As the American Roman Catholic Church began to realize the extent of its problems with clergy sexual abusers of children, adolescents, and adults, it commissioned a psychological study of priests' emotional, psychological, sexual and spiritual maturity.[10] In the findings of this ground-breaking 1974 study, it became evident that a significant number of priests were emotionally, socially, and sexually immature. In the decades since that study, a wide variety of Roman Catholic researchers, scholars and journalists have continued to comment upon the inadequate emotional and spiritual formation of today's ordained American Catholic priests in general and among clergy sexual abusers in particular. In the years since then, Roman Catholic priests, theologians, and social scientists continue to return to this topic.[11]

In the absence of any data, I hold the hypothesis that emotional, psychological, social and spiritual immaturity might also be found among clergy and religious professional sexual abusers from a wide variety of denominations – including Mennonites. This hypothesis remains untested. There is no data because the research has not been done.

When we look at the helping professions in general, however, such as medicine, law, clinical psychology, nursing, social work, and other forms of psychotherapy such as marriage and family counseling, what we find is that professional guilds and state licensure boards have begun to require all

practitioners to have a specified number of training and education hours in professional ethics. For already licensed practitioners, continuing education opportunities are readily available and a certain number of hours are required on an annual basis. These hours can be shaped by professional guild requirements but, in general, are regulated by state licensing boards. Practitioners if they wish to remain in practice will need to meet them.

- Given the prevalence of clergy sexual abuse,[12] it is past time for Mennonite seminary programs to include (a) well-taught and scientifically accurate human sexuality courses and (b) sexual ethics courses as part of their required curriculum for graduation. It is past time for denominational leaders to require that such a course be completed before ordination, licensure, or other forms of credentialing for ministry. Students preparing for ministry need to understand issues of transference and countertransference. They need to be helped to think about these issues before they are ever faced with them.

- In addition, some form of mandatory continuing education requirements vis-à-vis human sexuality and sexual ethics for already ordained clergy might be a very appropriate direction for denominations such as the Mennonite Church to pursue. One component of such requirements might be to require every ordained individual now in active ministry to take a course in sexual ethics. These courses could be developed in the denomination's seminaries. They could be provided at the biennial conferences of the national church and regional conferences. Congregations in the process of hiring a minister could ascertain the individual's compliance with this denominational standard.

- Clinical professions understand the principle of supervisory relationships for all therapists. It is perhaps past time for denominations to establish active and helpful supervisory relationships with young ministers – for perhaps their first two or three church or work assignments.

Steps to the Future:
Theological and Ideological Foundations

> *My question here is why male clergy, male theologians and male ethicists have had such an apparently difficult time abiding by the sexual norms that they themselves advocate…It may reveal deeper problems in the church…*
>
> Larry Rasmussen[13]

Twentieth-century Christian theologians; have begun raising questions about the theological roots of the Jewish holocaust (the Shoah) in Christian theologies of the cross and atonement (Carroll, 2001) and in Christian theologies of required obedience (Soelle, 1992 and 1998). In a similar manner two Roman Catholic priests (Berquist, 2010; Coyne, 2012) and a Roman Catholic bishop (Robinson, 2007) have begun to examine the theological foundations of (1) the current Roman Catholic priest pedophile scandal and (2) the resultant clericalism scandal in the world wide Catholic Church.

As the World Health Organization noted in 2002, individuals and communities have trouble confronting violence in their professional lives because such enquiries about causation and manifestation raise *uncomfortable questions about their personal lives…Talking about violence means touching upon complex matters of morality, ideology and culture. There is, thus, often resistance at official as well as personal levels to open discussion of the topic* (WHO *Summary Report* (1).

One of the most necessary tasks in prevention of future sexual abuse and clericalism events is to tackle the issue of cultural permissions for such abuse events to occur. One place to look for pathogenic theologies is lodged within the theological and ethical teachings and cultural practices of the Mennonite Church. As WHO notes, there is resistance to beginning and continuing such conversations in a wide variety of human organizations, professions, and communities.

- One place that the Mennonite Church could, if it chose to do so, begin such an internal self-examination is by taking seriously this manuscript's call to examine both legacies of John Howard Yoder: (1) his intellectual legacy and (2) his sexual harassment and abuse

legacy. Inasmuch as his life and work have affected and influenced the Mennonite Church's ecclesiology of polity, its strategies of missions, and its theology of non-violence, these are places for such an examination to begin. It may be that political sanctions will be too great for church-employed theologians, ethicists and clinicians to begin this work. Therefore, the church's clinicians, theologians, ethicists, political scientists, historians, missiologists, and ecclesiologists who are employed outside official Mennonite institutions may need to begin and carry through on such an undertaking.

- Another place to begin this work of critical study and analysis might be to create a Believer's Church Conference on the topic of *John Howard Yoder: The Believer's Church Confronts His Second Legacy.* Were such a conference to be initiated, the call for papers should be open and very widely disseminated. Publication of papers could be facilitated by the Institute of Mennonite Studies in Elkhart or a by the leadership team of the Toronto Theological Centre in Canada.

- A third place to begin this kind of exacting study might be for the Mennonite Church Press to commission a new biography of Yoder – one that takes seriously both legacies and interrogates both in order to understand the implications for his theological and ethical contributions. A publication date on the anniversary of his 100th birthday in 2027 would give a writer adequate time to research and write such a complex biography. By beginning now, an author could interview Yoder's still-living contemporaries, family members, friends, and colleagues.[14]

Concluding Remarks

It is, perhaps, not as important to decide exactly where the Mennonite Church begins to study its internal problems of affinity violence as it is important to begin somewhere. Systems theory teaches us that even small changes in a system affect the entire system.

My hope for these volumes of essays and chapters is that they will spur other scholars and researchers (particularly graduate students in a wide variety of academic disciplines) to begin to study these complex situations

and issues in order (1) to understand them and (2) to set in motion a process of successive interventions. I have believed for more than forty years that the presence of sexual violence, domestic violence and other affinity forms of violence such as social control, character assassinations, and verbal abuse inside thee Mennonite community forms a formidable challenge to its external peace witness in matters of war and other forms of apparently intractable social conflicts such as racism, heterosexism and class issues.

This is either an idiosyncratic view – which can be tested by talking to victims of these multiple forms of individual and systemic violence – or it is an accurate clinical and theological observation. The challenge of self-examination and community self-criticism in matters of personal violence towards others is, as the 2002 World Health Organization Summary Report notices lies in individual and communal resistance to examining personal manifestations of violence as symptomatic of cultural ideologies about what is and what ought to be. It is much easier to blame others for acts of violence (the wave) than it is to examine the cultural predispositions to support violence as a way of communal problem solving.

While the phenomenon of abused individuals, their families, and their friends making a silent exodus from the Mennonite community and the faith heritage of their childhood and baptismal vows is not yet as visible as the current exodus of Roman Catholic laity from the American Roman Catholic Church, the Mennonite exodus has begun. At least one issue in this slowly accelerating exodus is a perception that the institutional church has mismanaged the issue of religious professional sexual abuse (as well as other forms of authority, control and power abuses). The question for the Mennonite Community of faith, in light of this exodus, is quite simple: does anyone care at all?

Footnotes

[1] L. H. Aden, (2007, p. 252).

[2] *Family Violence in a Patriarchal Culture: A Challenge to our Way of Living,* September, 1988, p. 13.

[3] See L. Augsburger (June 9, 1992, pp. 1-2, 8);; L. Espenshade (July 12-16, 2004, *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal* series of investigative journalism articles about domestic violence in Lancaster County, PA; R. E. Krall (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995); E.G. Yoder (1992).

[4] Some forms of affinity violence include physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional spouse abuse, physical, sexual verbal and emotional child abuse, physical and sexual clergy sexual harassment, acquaintance rape and other forms of sexual assault. It is unlikely that any one epidemiological study will encompass all forms of affinity violence inside the Christian or Mennonite community. Therefore, great care needs to be taken to use common definitions for the behavior being studies. This will allow a number of scholars to work with multiple small research studies and simultaneously allow the institutional church to gain a more comprehensive view of the nature and scope of its problems with abusive clergy. Once a demographic baseline is established with a relatively secure foundation of reliability, then the community can begin to establish priorities about treatment, containment and prevention activities.

[5] www.Snapnnetwork.org, What to Do When Your Priest Is Accused of Abuse, p. 2, item 11.

[6] J. L. Herman, 1997. p. 131

[7] See B. A. van der Kolk and A. C. McFarlane, and L Weisaeth, Eds. (1996). See also M. E. Copeland and M. Harris (2000).

[8] See D. C. Aguillera and J. M. Messick (1974). See also R. E. Krall (1990).

[9] A. W. R. Sipe (October 24-25, 2003). P. 1

[10] E. C. Kennedy and V. Heckler (1972). The Catholic Priest in the United States: Psychological Investigations. Washington DC. U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops

[11]E. C. Kennedy, 2001; A. Greeley, 2004; A. W. R. Sipe, September 6, 2011

[12] The best estimates we have to date – from a wide variety of sources – indicates that approximately 10-12% of all clergy in all denominations will be clergy sexual misconduct or abuse offenders. These figures are quite similar to those of other professions such as medicine or law (P. Cooper-White, 1995; K. Labacqz and R. G. Barton, 1991; P. Rutter, 1989).

[13] American theologian Larry Rasmussen quoted in Tom Price (July 12, 1992, pp. B-1 ff). Theologian's future faces a "litmus" test: Yoder's response to allegations could determine standing in field.

[14] E. Erickson's 1969 biography of Gandhi or the W. Pauck and M. Pauck 1976 biography of Paul Tillich might provide models for how to proceed.

Afterword

A Letter in Three Parts: From the pew to the bench

February, 2012

> *Any form of peace or reconciliation that allows the sin of injustice and oppression to continue is a "false" peace and "counterfeit" reconciliation. This kind of "reconciliation" has nothing to do with the Christian faith.*
>
> *The Kairos Document* (South Africa)[1]

I have spent the past six years in reading and in corresponding with colleagues, friends and expert consultants about the topic of clergy and religious leader sexual abuse of the laity. As I read, I was also learning about a wide variety of religious institution administrators and personnel managers involved in institutional cover-ups of sexual abuse. These cover-ups were done to protect the denominational church's or religious institution's reputation from scandal *and* to protect its financial welfare. As I prepare to finish this current book, there are things I wish to say to my church and its leaders.

A Letter about the Past

> *When I was a child, I thought like a child, spoke like a child and acted like a child….*

During my Mennonite childhood in Lancaster County (PA), ministers were chosen from within the congregation. Once ordained, they were collectively referred to as *the bench.* Before being called to ministry, they were farmers, carpenters, and small town businessmen. They did not read Greek, Latin, Aramaic, or Hebrew. My hypothesis now is that they all spoke Pennsylvania German as their first language. They never studied higher criticism nor did they know much, if anything, about the sociology of religion. In fact, they were not college-educated at all. While they were adequate preachers and teachers, they were not gifted public orators. Their speech was simple, straightforward and represented what they actually

thought and believed. They thought of sin in behavioral terms rather than in the abstract philosophical sense of a human being's existential alienation from God. I doubt very much that they thought regularly about original sin. Their concerns were with the present. The historical Jesus and Paul were much more important to them than hypothetical discussions about Adam, Eve and a talking snake.

They were men known inside the community as having personal integrity. They were known as having leadership skills and financial acumen. They were known as kind men. They were known well by all members of the congregation who referred to them either by their first name or by the title of brother, as, for example, Brother Henry or Brother Frank. When I was a pre-school child they never winced, glared at me, nor reproved me when I unthinkingly called them by their first names. As I grew up, my parents taught me to be respectful of them and their role in my life. However, neither parent ever modeled being obsequious to them because they were ministers. Consequently I was allowed to make mistakes and accept their guidance without being afraid of them.

As a child and adolescent I both liked and trusted them. They never once abused that trust. I was an irrepressible and often noisy child who at times needed to be reminded that sitting still, being quiet and paying attention was appropriate behavior for children and teenagers during church services. But I was never scolded or attacked in any way for being a child and behaving childishly. As parents of children, each of these men personally understood something about the developmental uniqueness of a child. They did not demand that I be an adult while I was still a child.

In this letter to the past I want to name them by name: Bishop Henry Lutz, Ministers Henry Garber, Henry Frank, Amos Hess and Deacon George Lehman. As I call them into memory and name them, I am expressing my deep gratitude for their watchful care and kindness to me. They (and their wives) took care of the religious, spiritual and at times economic needs of a diverse small town congregation – a congregation in which several of us children had parents who represented membership in two religious denominations. Never once did they criticize me for thinking my own way through the spiritual dilemma – a theological koan if you will - of understanding the religiously bi-furcated marital pattern for organizing family life that had been presented to me fait accompli by my parents'

denominational choices. Never in my hearing did these men criticize my father's and mother's choices to me.

These men taught us the catechism. They baptized us. In two congregational counsel meetings each year they listened as respectfully to our affirmations as they did to those of the adults. They offered us communion. They married us. They visited us when we were sick. When we sinned they disciplined or excommunicated us. They buried our most beloved dead. They sought to make certain that we understood the pathway to salvation in the after life. In all of these life transitions, they watched over our journey with concern and care. After we left our parental homes for our adult lives somewhere else, they always welcomed us back. They expressed their joy in our successes and grieved with our parents about our failures. Even after we were midlife adults who were no longer in their care, they felt comfortable in admonishing us about life and behavior.

In short, I think now, in learning how to be our ministers, they also learned to love us.

The behavioral standards which they preached to us were the same standards by which they, themselves, lived. In looking back, I do not see hypocrisy, self-righteousness, or a strong desire to dominate others. There was no arbitrary and authoritarian wielding of power for power's sake. When discipline or excommunication for spiritual and personal failures took place, it was often administered with open tears. When forgiveness was sought, it was unconditionally offered.

When I look back upon those years, I realize that I saw these men and their families as my friends. Never once do I remember being afraid of any one of them.

Knowing what I now know about the damage done to children, adolescents and adults when clergy and religious leaders abuse their professional calling and institutional power by acts of sexual misconduct and authoritarian patterns of institutional abuse, I find such gratitude in my inner spirit for these men and their wives. They helped me establish my own unique pathway into and through life. And, in many cases, they did it with a gentle sense of humor as they offered me their stash of life's wisdom without once insisting that it needed to become mine.

When it was time to bury my Lutheran father, they chose to do an unheard of, indeed a most unorthodox, Lancaster County Mennonite act. They shared the funeral's pulpit with the town's local Lutheran pastor. My father was sent forth with Lutheran and Mennonite farewell hymns, liturgies, rituals and prayers. These ordained men collectively chose to understand that my father's family of origin would be uncomfortable with only the austerities of a Mennonite funeral service and that my mother would be uncomfortable with only the rich liturgies of a Lutheran one. Compassion took precedence over custom and church polity. One day later, one of these ministers addressed the Mennonite congregation in his sermon about death and religious faith and, in essence, taught the congregation the importance of what had transpired in my family's life the previous day. Perhaps the bench had been criticized for their unorthodox approach to my family's experience of grief and loss at our father's and brother's and spouse's death. If so, my family never knew about it. If so, the bench kept its collective counsel and only indirectly rebuked the criticism that Sunday morning while my entire family sat together with our mother and grandmother – also a direct and knowing violation of Lancaster County Mennonite social customs and religious tradition.

Not once do I remember witnessing and, therefore, needing to deal with a spirit of condescension or arrogance towards me or others. Never once was I shunned for my parent's decisions about maintaining a separate but equal Lutheran-Mennonite household. Only in adult life did I slowly come to understand that many Mennonites both disapproved of and distrusted my parent's shared denominational background and my bi-furcated religious heritage and identity. Only in adult life - in other Mennonite communities - did I learn to recognize and feel what being shunned meant for anyone who was socio-culturally different from the clan and its expectations.

Each man held a healthy humility about his calling and personal identity that was bone deep. His individuality was not hidden by his frock coat.

My gratitude now for their gentle honor and pervasive trustworthiness is profound. My adult spiritual life has been richer and deeper because of their presence in it when I was a child and still thought and acted like a child.

To my mind, now, these five men represented a form of ministry that had validity in its own era of history. That validity contributed to communal and individual spiritual maturity for a community of approximately 400 people. It was never a perfect form. Neither was it a violent one.

Each man's individuality remains strong in my memory. One man's sermons usually bored me and another's obscure Old Testament sermons totally confused me. Another shouted too much when he was nervous. But they introduced me to a larger world than Mt. Joy because our congregation's ministers were very active in foreign mission efforts around the globe. Returning missionaries and their travel stories were often riveting to me as a small child. I loved looking at the baskets, fabrics and other memorabilia missionaries brought home to show to us as a symbol of their work.

One of these men, my best friend's father, taught me to not take my self too seriously as he gently teased me in their home when I played and ate there. Out of the pulpit and the restraints of his frock coat he was an ordinary father – albeit a very funny one - like all of the other fathers of childhood's friends I knew.

In and out of the pulpit, each man's life taught me about basic self-other respect. Even today, after years of theological education, whenever I think about the people of God and communal faith, I see their faces and hear their voices. I learned much from them that has helped me in my adult life to date. In this short set of paragraphs and in light of the content of this book, I seek to honor them and to say a much belated *thank you.*

A Letter to the Present Church

When one is a pastor, one can never be a peer.

Chilton Knudsen[2]

In this series of books, I document the realities of clergy sexual abuse and institutional misconduct in managing abusers. In this extended study process, some things have grown very clear to me. The Mennonite Church is a long way distant from the time when its ministers were first of all members of the community which knew them (and any of their fault lines)

before it called them to serve as a minister. The Mennonite Church now has a professionalized ministry. All of the perils and possibilities of professionalization[3] are now present each time a congregational search committee seeks out, chooses and calls a new minister. They are present each time a conference chooses to ordain new ministers.

One of the perils of professionalism is that members of the calling congregation do not know the personal style and character of the minister who has been called. He is a stranger to them. Consequently, they have no intuitive or personal and familial sense of his integrity and sense of personal honor, his spirituality, his compassion for others, and his life's wisdom. Many times pastoral search committees focus primarily on the ability to preach and the ability to financially manage a congregation. Occasionally, but rarely, search committees may focus on the pastoral abilities of the individual to nurture faith, hope and courage among the people in times of crisis.

In such a situation, many different kinds of ministers may come to the attention of the search committee.

1) Some individuals will seek a ministerial career with the intent of harming small children, adolescents or adults. Thus, the problem of sexual misconduct continues to appear and reappear among religious professionals. Among individuals who enter the profession of ministry in order to dominate, control and sexually abuse vulnerable individuals, these character traits and personality malformations will likely continue to appear and reappear throughout the course of their ministry and denominational positions. The clinical terms for individuals with these patterns of behavior include character disorders, sociopathic disorders or narcissism disorders. Another relevant clinical term is recidivism.

2) Additional individuals will seek a ministerial career because it offers opportunities for power and status. They too can be seduced by opportunities to dominate and control other people in multiple ways – some of them sexual, some financial, some simple domineering over others. These character and personality motivations will also appear and reappear through the course of their ministry and denominational positions. The sociological and psychological term for these kinds of behavior is authoritarianism. Another relevant term is clericalism.

3) Other individuals, the majority, will enter religious leadership positions with the motivation to be helpful to others in the spiritual and ordinary life paths that individuals and congregations make throughout a lifetime. These individuals will walk with their people and seek to be helpful to them. They may or may not be gifted public speakers but they will come to be trusted allies and friends to laity in the pews. People will mature spiritually in their care. One religious term for these individuals is pastors. Another relevant, yet ancient, term is shepherd.

Denominational and congregational managers must be prepared to handle each of these types of ministers and their consequent behaviors in a professional manner. Written procedures for managing sexual misconduct and managerial misconduct must be in place. These procedures and protocols should, in addition, be immediately visible to any member of the congregation who seeks help in dealing with sexually violent members of the clergy or institutionally corrupted and dominating managers. Proactive teaching of denominational leaders and congregations about the need to manage ministerial misconduct appropriately, in its many forms, needs to be an ongoing practice in seminaries, in annual meetings and in search committees.

In working with the John Howard Yoder – Mennonite Church story, I learned many things which might have helped his church manage his misbehavior sooner, more effectively, and with more concern for the women he victimized. Some of these have been summarized in previous chapters. Here I want to reflect more personally.

*First, a*ny individual who is hired to work with small children and adolescents (or who volunteers time to do this) needs to have a criminal sexual background check performed using whatever civil information is available. This means that parochial schools, undergraduate colleges and the church's religious graduate academy search committees need to check resumes and references for sexual misconduct allegations and any prior adjudicated histories of such behavior in previous educational or work situations. In addition, they need to investigate any and all misconduct rumors which they hear.

*Secondly, a*ny individual who is accused in any way by any member of the congregation or church institution of sexual misconduct needs to have these complaints acknowledged, heard and then adjudicated promptly. If the church's managerial officers learn that the complaints are accurate and truthful ones, the offending individual must be appropriately managed so that additional potential victims are protected. Initially this usually means removing individuals from their institutional positions. This usually means providing public information about terminations and coerced resignations. Information about the offense must be made public in a manner which protects the privacy rights of victims but which encourages additional victims to come forward. In addition, reference letters to future employers need to contain accurate information – not encoded obfuscations.

*Third, c*hildren, adolescents, and young adults (perhaps older adults too) need age and development appropriate teaching about sexuality so that they can recognize inappropriate peer and adult behavior when it manifests itself in their presence. If public schools can teach small children about not allowing adults to touch them inappropriately, so too can the church's religious institutions do this. If individuals in these age groups are abused, then the hiring institution has an obligation to investigate and adjudicate their complaints, to believe them without blaming them, and to make certain they get the help they need to repair and heal the damages done to their psyche, body, and spirit by their abuser. With ordained ministers, this generally means that congregational leaders, church agency managers, and conference officers must act in conjunction with each other to remove the abusive person from ministry. Therapeutic and legal consultations and assistance may need to occur. But the principle is clear: transparency about what has occurred helps victims heal. In addition, it holds the victimizer fully accountable for his or her acts. Finally, it is the best method to prevent future acts of victimization done in the name of and under the supervision of the church.

Inasmuch as Mennonite culture continues to manage allegations of sexual misconduct and known sexual abusers in secretive ways and since rumors are often the primary form in which individuals learn about sexual misconduct violations, congregations, conferences and church institutions must begin a process of becoming more transparent. This is especially important in situations of recidivism – where multiple situations, deeds and victims are involved. Boards of overseers, conference managers, religious academy presidents, provosts, deans and other executive officers of the

denomination must make it clear to human resource officers that secrecy and cover-up behaviors are unacceptable forms of church management personnel practices with abusive individuals.

On July 7, 1992, as the Yoder story broke in regional, national and international news, *The Gospel Herald* published its newly formulated and formally adopted set of guidelines for Mennonite church press editors to use when they needed to make decisions about reporting sensitive news stories about sexual misconduct allegations and denominational actions. I discussed these earlier[4] and here will only summarize the denomination's position about institutional transparency at that time:

In the *first place,* stories about sexual misconduct were to be published only after an official action was taken (church board, police or court action, etc.). The working assumption here was that official action elsewhere guaranteed the accused due process. Another assumption was that the information would, in fact, be published.

The *second concern* dealt with the level of public accountability called for. With public responsibility comes the need for public accountability. *Accountability needs to be at least as broad as the offender's influence on the life of the church.*

I am aware, in 2013, of a number of rumored situations in which institutional management of sexual misconduct (in both senses of this word, adultery and sexual violence) has allowed offenders to transfer from church agency to church agency with absolutely no publicity and no accountability. Abusive individuals or individuals who violate church teachings about marital fidelity are simply removed from their position and no public announcement is made. In some cases, individuals have moved to another state or to another nation in a new church-related position. Some have changed conference identities. If the Mennonite rumor mill is accurate, then the recidivism (i.e. repeated abusive behavior) which occurred in a new location was both predictable and preventable. This practice of institutional and denominational secrecy makes church personnel managers into accomplices to the abuser's acts of misbehavior. In addition, they become enablers of bad behavior. In situations of secrecy, supervisory individuals accrue whether or not they know it, moral responsibility and personal accountability for their behavioral and administrative failure to protect additional vulnerable individuals from harm.

Third, there are churchly concerns for confession, repentance, restitution and reconciliation. The church press intends to report on these matters as well – in consultation with church leaders, the offender and the victims.

Fourth, concern for victim safety must be sensitive. In particular, questions of victim identity must be well-handled and need to directly respect the wishes of victims.

In light of this 1992 Meetinghouse policy, my recommendation here is simple but its implementation needs to be thought through in each situation. Where a church employee is arrested and successfully prosecuted for sexual misconduct in civil society, the church press has an obligation to report this fact. If the abusive employee's work situation is terminated as a result of criminal charges, the church press also needs to publish this fact. In addition, church agencies must be certain that personnel files and reference letters are accurate in reporting data about sexual misconduct and sexual abuse to other institutions who may be seeking to hire a previously abusive individual. Where full and public accountability is maintained, it may, indeed, be safely possible to hire such individuals for church service work if they are well-supervised and understand a zero tolerance for future acts of abuse. In the absence of full public accountability, it is never safe to hire such individuals.

A second recommendation is that every act of sexual misconduct that involves a minor must be reported to civil authorities for investigation and prosecution. Most state laws now mandate this in the United States. But the church should do this even in civil jurisdictions where reporting is not mandated. This means, for example, that child pornography on a minister's computer must be reported to civil authorities and it must be investigated and properly adjudicated. In such a situation, the congregation's or college's or mission board's personnel managers also need accurate information. Once adjudicated and prosecuted, the church press has an obligation to report the facts of this situation to both the congregation and to the denomination at large.

A final recommendation has to do with healing and restoration. After clergy or religious leader sexual abuse occurs, every person affected by the abuse needs pastoral and spiritual care. This includes victims of an abuser's actions, victim's parents, their children, spouses or close friends,

etc. It includes perpetrators and their social networks of intimates such as parents, spouses, children and friends. Since it is highly unlikely that any one individual can meet each of these individual's needs for support and healing, some kind of organized team approach is needed in which no individual (no very small son or daughter or very aged grandparent) is overlooked.

It is important to note, as well, that other ministers may feel betrayed and traumatized by the discovery of sexual misconduct among their peers or supervisors. Among Mennonites, the conference minister or church-life commission needs to play a supportive and healing role. When conference officials are traumatized by these kinds of complex betrayals, national church organizations may need to step in with supportive and healing pastoral work to the church's pastors.

Since the active presence of sexual abuse in a congregation has the potential to divide the congregation and to destroy the religious faith of many different individuals, entire congregations may need crisis intervention approaches. The denomination should, in my opinion, proactively identify individuals with skills in crisis intervention, marital and family therapy, sexual addictions therapy, and PTSD management therapy. One possibility might be for the denomination to put together a crisis team that could enter volatile institutions when sexual abuse has been uncovered, documented and adjudicated. These teams of skilled professional individuals could then be activated when needed.

In such a situation, the denomination at large can also offer consulting, therapy, interim ministerial support, and other resources which a particular congregation might not have accessible or even be able to afford. Local profession-certified pastoral counselors with special training and skills may also have resources to offer to individuals and their families.

In conclusion, issues of recidivism must be understood and acknowledged. It is certainly possible for an adult individual to make one mistake and never go on to offend again.[5] But a much more common pattern (perhaps for 10 – 12% of ordained clergy nationwide) is a pattern of repetition. In such a repetitive and addicted pattern of behavior, abusive individuals move from church to church or from church agency to church agency. Pleas for forgiveness and promises to do better litter this landscape. In each new setting new individuals are victimized. The temptation for church

managers and administrators is to confidentially terminate the individual's employment – often clearing the individual's personnel records in such a way that he or she can obtain new jobs without their personal personnel history following them.

A Short Note to the Future Church

> *The irony is that the Anabaptist-Mennonite community has been far more successful in challenging the legitimacy of power in the larger body politic than it has been in its own internal congregational life and in the domestic and economic spheres. It seems that it was much easier to define and limit the power of the "pagan" world than that of members of a congregation who live in intimate contexts. The heart of the problem for Anabaptists' (and Christians') use of power becomes not merely admitting the reality of power and its misuse societally and structurally, but focusing on how power is defined, distributed, and allocated; and above all, how it is monitored and disciplined on the personal, interpersonal, and congregational level.*
>
> Calvin W. Redekop[6]

During the twentieth-century, the Mennonite Church in North America – most especially in the United States - made the transition away from being primarily an ethnic and rural denomination with unique cultural restrictions on life and behavior. Confronting the issue of war during two world wars and several more regional conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Latin America, etc., the Mennonite critique of violence was directed at the socio-political-military violence of the state.

As Professor Redekop has stated above, the Mennonite Church in North America has not developed a theology or an ethical system which addresses intra-community violence. Child abuse and battering by parents or other family members is rarely addressed. Spouse abuse, battering, and rape are rarely acknowledged. Sexual violence inside the community is almost never spoken about. Clergy and religious leader abuse of the laity – in many different forms – is almost never openly critiqued and transparently adjudicated.

These are tasks which remain unfinished in the Anabaptist-Mennonite story of differentiating between legitimate and non-legitimate uses of authority and power. It has been my personal opinion for many years that the presence of hidden (and denied) violence inside Mennonite communities and families – whether that is the physical abuse of a battered small child or the sexual abuse of an adolescent or the beating of a spouse – invalidates the institutional church's witness against the state's violence in war, the death penalty, or other forms of organized state abuses of authority and power and acts of state-legitimated violence.

It is not that the witness of the Mennonite Church against the non-legitimate uses of power and authority exercised by the state are incorrect in my opinion. Rather, the presence of intra-denominational acts of individual affinity violence and intra-denominational structural acts of communal violence demonstrate themselves to the watching world as forms of religious or spiritual hypocrisy. Until they are addressed and changed, their denied and thus unchallenged presence inside the Anabaptist-Mennonite community of faith means that the witness against the state's institutionalized forms of violence can be discounted as naïve, unrealistic, and perhaps even irrational. It can be seen as a form of projected cowardice.

We can look to the current Roman Catholic Church in its world-wide contemporary struggle to address the sexual abuse of children, adolescents, and adults by ordained clergy as a teachable moment for Christianity at large. As scandal upon scandal explodes on the public stage of world opinion, the greatest harm to religious faith and spiritual maturity has not resulted from the perpetrator's actions but from the Catholic Church's denominational personnel management practices and their collective failure to deal with sexual violence perpetrators in a manner which protects the church's children and adolescents from future harm.

It will never be possible, in my opinion, to keep a denomination and all of its agencies free of all sexual abuse, physical violence, economic abuses, or other forms of malfeasant behavior. Neither will it be possible to keep all individuals safe from other forms of affinity violence inside the community of faith. The capacity to maliciously sin is a permanent and universal legacy of human evolution and development.

Nevertheless, it is possible to work at developing violence-resistant cultures. In 2002, the World Health Association in its first ever report on violence as a world public health problem commented:

> *Raising awareness of the fact that violence can be prevented is, however, only the first step in shaping the response to it. Violence is an extremely sensitive topic. Many people have difficulty in confronting it in their professional lives because it raises uncomfortable questions about their personal lives. Talking about violence means touching upon complex matters of morality, ideology and culture. There is, thus, often resistance at official as well as personal levels to open discussion of the topic* (WHO *Summary Report* (p. 1).

Therefore, the collective people of God need to learn to exercise discernment – being able to maturely confront abuse without demonizing the perpetrator and without blaming the victims; being able to listen to victims without entering into processes of denial; and being able to act as God's healing agents in the world.

Many years ago I heard a soft inner voice telling me that God does not call peacemakers to live and work in places of peace. God calls peacemakers to serve the people who live and work in places of violence. In the years since then I have expanded this awareness:

God does not call the people of peace to live and work in places of peace; Instead, God calls peacemakers to enter and work in places of violence.

God does not call healers to live where the people are well; God calls healers to live and work with people who are sick.

God does not call mediators to live where there is no conflict; God calls mediators to live and work where the people are fighting with each other.

God does not call preachers to bear witness to saints or to preach to the choir; God calls preachers to live among and serve sinners with vision, integrity, love and compassion.

A compassionate community (a peace-building and healing community) must, I now believer, learn effective and practical methodologies or

confrontation and action in order to deal with its own internal situations of sexual and structural violence in discerning, loving and effective ways. When the institutional and sociological church fails to do this, it becomes a hologram of the society in which it lives. It becomes part of the violence-creating and violence-tolerating social structures which surround it.

One of the ways that the Mennonite Church undergraduate and graduate academy could serve its church is to begin to study and write about these issues. Students could be encouraged to write study papers about them. Faculty members could write for the church press about these issues.

South Africa's former president Nelson Mandela was correct, I think, in the following words:

> *Less visible [than warfare], but even more widespread, is the legacy of day-to-day individual suffering. It is the pain of children who are abused by the people who should protect them, women injured or humiliated by violent partners, elderly people maltreated by their caregivers, youths who are bullied by other youths, and people of all ages who inflict violence on themselves. That suffering – and there are many more examples that I could give - is a legacy that reproduces itself, as new generations learn from the violence of generations past, as victims learn from victimizers, and as the social conditions that nurture violence are allowed to continue.*
>
> Nelson Mandela[7]

Personal actions of affinity violence – those forms of interpersonal violence done by people we know and previously trusted – are the most difficult forms of violence and violence sequellae to address. The psychological, emotional, cognitive, religious, and spiritual residues of these forms of violence if not addressed properly and healed, tend to last a lifetime. In fact, their half-life may continue for several generations. This is partially so because these forms of violence are embedded within our communities and are buttressed by the common ideologies (or theologies, ethics, and systems of communal morality) which we hold most sacred. This is also partially true because individuals captivated by a spirit of ambition to gain domination and power over others are often seen as leaders. Nevertheless, the emotional, spiritual, and physical harm which they do is as devastating to the human spirit as the harm done by armies in combat.

We know this because the two largest groups of individuals who suffer with the symptoms of the psychiatric diagnosis of PTSD are (1) individuals with combat experiences and (2) individuals with histories of experienced sexual or physical violence. The world-wide estimate is that 1 in 3 women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. Statistics for male children and adults are less well documented but a safe estimate is 1 in 4 or 5. Most of this sexual violence occurs in childhood, adolescence, and very early adult life. In many, probably most, situations, the violence perpetrator is personally known to the victims. The abuser is a trusted insider. In addition to the trauma of experienced violence, victims also experience the trauma of being betrayed by someone needed for their life survival and personal welfare. They experience the trauma of losing basic trust in someone they once trusted.

When the perpetrator is someone they know to be a spiritual or religious leader, the trauma involves profound damages to their religious beliefs as well as their spiritual nature – that which is commonly called soul. Individual's victimized by their church and religious community experience a distress that is long-lasting and sometimes intractable.

Late in the 20th century North American women began to speak out against violence directed at women. Rape crisis lines were established and domestic violence shelters were opened. In rapid succession, protests of adult victims of childhood violence began to surface. Scientifically credible data began to be collected and the broad incidence of these forms of violence became known. Theses and dissertations began to be written in the secular and religious academies about the root causes of such violence.

In terms of Christian faith organizations, the year 1984 represents the year in which adult individuals in the United States Roman Catholic Church began to speak out nationally against clergy sexual violence and clericalism. The courage of these previously victimized individuals, their families, and their steadfast advocates has created a broad cultural awareness in American society that these forms of abuse (clergy sexual abuse and institutional clericalism) are both (1) pervasive and (2) inter-religious in nature – many denominations are involved in hiding perpetrators inside religious language and the cloaks of institutional hypocrisy.

Social revolutions take time to work themselves out. It will be, I believe, the future church who will need to work at solving the spiritual conundrum of affinity violence inside the community of faith. It will be the future church which comes more fully to understand that the costs of sexual violence to individuals and entire communities are devastating.

One principle holds: prevention is so much more cost-effective in so many different ways than repair work.

Anabaptist-Mennonite communities of faith – with a historical theology regarding the legitimate use of authority and power – need, I believer, to get the sexual violence mote and the clericalism mote out of their collective communal eye. As the Anabaptist-Mennonite community begins to do this work, I believe it can learn much from the work already being done in other denominations about how to stop the deeply interrelated practices of clergy sexual abuse of the laity and the institutional practices of cover-up (or other forms of obfuscation) as an administrative methodology for keeping the denomination's internal abuse secrets from the laity.

The Anabaptist-Mennonite religious movement was born in a time of religious corruption and violence. Its critique of the state's and the medieval church's violence is now five centuries old. The Anabaptist-Mennonite faith movement has an opinion about these multiple public forms of corruption and violation in which violence is the central organizing human experience.

It is now time for the church's biblical scholars, peace and conflict management scholars and activists, mediators, theologians and ethicists to wrestle with this sociological and theological conundrum inside the heart of the contemporary community – the problem that Mennonite individuals and entire communities often misuse their positions of authority and power and, equally as often, are interpersonally violent in their relationships with others.

Accurate incidence data is needed. A willingness to listen to victims is needed. A willingness to appropriately discipline offenders and perpetrators is needed. Learning mature and compassionate practices of accountability to the community at large is needed. Theologies of repentance and conversion are needed. Conversations about healing are needed. But, perhaps most of all, an attentive, discerning, democratic, and compassionate organizational church praxis is needed.

Concluding Comment

I want to conclude this book by quoting the Roman Catholic activist and victim support group SNAP.

When wrongdoing is ignored, wrongdoing is repeated.

SNAP[8]

Footnotes

[1] W. Logan, 1985.

[2] See a summary of C. Knudsen's work with Mennonite Church officials in Appendix N

[3] See D. Kraybill (1981) for a beginning discussion of professionalization – its benefits and its perils.

[4] See Chapter 2

[5] See K. Labacqz and R, G, Burton (1991) for a discussion of various forms of sexual misconduct and recidivism

[6] C. Redekop, 2001, pp. 191-192

[7] Nelson Mandela. (2002). P. v

[8] SNAP (February 5, 2013). *SNAP February Newsletter*, p. 2.

Appendices

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M. Indiana-Michigan Conference *Gospel Evangel Announcements*
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O. Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Indiana
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P. Goshen Biblical Seminary
1970 Channels of Supervision
Q. Goshen Biblical Seminary
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R. Mennonite Seminary Re-configuration:
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Appendix A

Sexual Abuse Glossary

Adultery: Voluntary, consenting sexual relationships between an individual who is married with another individual who may be single or married but who is not his or her spouse. It provides the offended partner with legal grounds for divorce. In a few states, it is considered a crime against marriage. In the Roman Catholic tradition even a transient sexual relationship (for example, with a prostitute) is considered adultery.

Allegation: An assertion without proof, only a claim that must be proved, a statement asserting something without proof.

Assault: Unlawful physical attacks or the immediate threat of such attacks.

Betrayal: The violation of implicit or explicit trust.

Betrayal Trauma: Under certain conditions betrayals facilitates a "betrayal blindness" in which the betrayed person does not have conscious awareness, or memory of the betrayal.[1]

Clergy Malfeasance: The exploitation and abuse of a religious group's followers by trusted elites and leaders of their religion.[2]

Clergy Sexual Abuse: Unwanted sexual attention from an ordained individual, such as a pastor or priest; sexual relationships by a pastor or priest with members of his congregation. Sexual contact by a pastoral counselor or chaplain with church members; sexual contact between a confessor and the individual he is spiritually counseling. Includes the following kinds of behaviors:

- Flirtations, advances or propositions
- Sexual talk and innuendo
- Graphic and/or degrading comments about another's appearance, dress, or anatomy
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons

- Sexual jokes and offensive behaviors
- Sexually intrusive questions about another's personal life
- Explicit descriptions of the minister's own sexual life
- Abuse of familiarities or derivatives such as "honey, sweetie, sugar, dear, or baby."
- Unnecessary, unwanted, or prolonged physical touching such as kissing, hugging, petting, patting or pinching
- Whistles and catcalls
- Exposing genitals
- Physical or sexual assault, including rape
- Sexual intercourse with members of the parish or congregation
- Anal, oral or vaginal rape

Clericalism: An institutional clergy structure and practice that protects the clergy and church institutions at the expense of the laity.

Deviance, Primary: Situational deviant behavior which occurs once or several times – perhaps by accident – and does not become part of the actor's self-identity; behavior which is not amenable to sociological measurement or analysis;[3]

Deviance, Secondary: Involves a sequence of actions that go beyond any particular number of incidents. These actions influence and alter the actor's role network of interaction with other people as well as his or her lifestyle and his or her self-concept and it requires an audience.[4]

Elephant in the Living Room: (1) an idiom that applies to an obvious problem that is going unaddressed; (2) an obvious truth that is being ignored or goes unaddressed; (3) the terms refers to a question, problem, solution or controversial issue that is obvious but is ignored by a group of people out of embarrassment or taboo; (4) can imply a value judgment that the issue ought to be discussed openly; (5) can simply be an acknowledgment that the issue is there and is not going to go away by itself; (6) often refers to an emotionally charged issue where people who might have spoken up decide such a conversation is probably best avoided; (7) often used to describe an issue that involves a social taboo or culturally denied reality.[5]

Epheophilia: A lay term that describes sexual preoccupation or activity with an adolescent (usually 13-17 years old) by a person at least five years older than the victim.[6]

Iatrogenic Abuse: Putting people "in their place" under disingenuous verbiage of "serving God and the community."

Ideology: The deformation of truth for the sake of social interest [7]

Pedophile: A psychiatric diagnostic term that is limited to sexual preoccupation or involvement with a pre-pubertal child (usally under 13 years old) by a person who is five years older than the victim.[8]

Perpetrator: An individual who victimizes another. A serial perpetrator victimizes a number of individuals in sequence.

Predator: An Individual who preys on the vulnerabilities of others; an individual who victimizes others.

Professional Abuse: Unethical behaviors between a professional person (lawyer, teacher, physician, nurse, clergy, work supervisor, agency administrators, therapist, etc.) and the individual s/he supervises or serves. See clergy abuse for examples of unethical and inappropriate behaviors between a professional person and his or her clients.

Rape: A form of assault in which one individual coerces or forces sexual intercourse against that person's will. Oral, anal, and vaginal rape are included in the legal codes of most states. A few states, however, include all kinds of forced sexual activities in their legal definitions of rape. Also included in many states is the forced introduction of an object other than the penis – such as a finger, a tongue, a bottle, etc.[9]

Recidivism: Repeated offenses by the same perpetrator towards one victim or towards a series of victims.

Religious Abuse: What people suffer when the leaders of their faith communities – or others – punish, humiliate, or otherwise exploit them in the name of God.[10]

Religious Duress: Religious duress is a unique kind of threat and constraint experienced by some members of the Roman Catholic Church as a result of religious indoctrination and training. Fear, awe and respect for the clergy foster the development and acculturation of *religious duress*. This phenomenon can seriously impede a person's capacity to accurately perceive and evaluate abusive actions perpetrated on them by clergy. This constraint poses an impediment to emotional and spiritual development. Internalized religious duress confuses and psychologically overwhelms such individuals and renders them incapable of absorbing their sexual trauma. The consequent feelings of numbness and immobility distort an individual victim's perception of reality. It then becomes impossible for the individual to act in a manner that would protect and promote their emotional growth and well-being.[11]

Sexual Abuse: An action where an individual causes another person to engage in sexual activity by threatening actions or behaviors that place the second individual in fear. Sexual abuse may be defined by various states in slightly differing forms. Basically, however, it includes non-consenting sexual contact of any kind. The behaviors seen include:

- Physical, verbal or visual behaviors that are meant to intimidate and coerce sexual activity
- Non-consenting and unwelcome physical touch of the breast, buttocks, and genitals.
- Unwanted and unwelcome kissing, fondling, petting, genital contact or masturbation
- Exposing genitals to the other
- Use of force and coercion
- Conversation that implies the use of force or coercion to gain sexual contact.

Sexual Assault: Defined by law codes of various states. In general it involves any form of sexual contact in which force, coercion, or the threat of force and coercion is used to gain sexual access. Includes but it not limited to oral, anal or vaginal rape. Included are any forms of unwanted sexual contact or attempted contact between the victim and offender. Grabbing, fondling, kissing, hugging, are included. Also included in some states are verbal threats of sexual coercion.

Sexual Exploitation: **T**his is a term more often used by religious organizations than secular ones when dealing with adult victims. However, this term is also used to describe adult-child sexual behaviors. In describing adult-adult behavior, it involves sexual contact between church personnel and those who are the recipients of such services, as for example, a priest or minister and a congregant. It involves any form of sexual contact or any invitation to sexual contact initiated by a professional person in a position of power, authority, or trust towards a recipient of services. Sexual exploitation refers to a sexual act which takes advantage of another individual for personal gain. Behaviors can include:

- Unwanted, sexualized physical contact
- Vaginal, oral or anal intercourse
- Intrusive touching, tickling, wrestling, or other physical contact that causes discomfort in the recipient of the touch
- Inappropriate gifts
- Prolonged hugs in situations where short hugs may be appropriate
- Kissing on the mouth when check or air kisses may be appropriate
- Showing sexually provocative printed materials or objects such as pornography
- Sexual talk and innuendo
- Sexual propositions
- Inappropriate commentary on body parts such as breasts, genitals, buttocks
- Unwelcome and inappropriate touching of body parts:

Sexual Harassment: Offensive behaviors based on age, gender or sexual orientation. It involves engaging in behaviors which are known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It has the effect of coercing, undermining, intimidating or demeaning an individual. The term has legal implications because civil and criminal codes describe it. Quid pro quo sexual harassment may include implicit or explicit propositions that include a condition of continued employment, promotion, or better grades (as in the case of teacher-student relationships). In addition, it involves the creation of hostile environments based on gender or sexuality. Sexual harassment behaviors can include, therefore, one or more of the following:

- Verbal abuse or threats
- Unwelcome remarks about one's body or sexual organs

- Circulating unwanted and offensive sexual material in print, photocopies, or cartoon forms
- Discussion by mail, fax, phone or other electronic media of material of an offensive sexual nature
- Displaying sexually offensive materials in public spaces
- Making unwelcome sexual invitations
- Making sexually suggestive remarks
- Leering or making offensive sexual gestures
- Unwanted and unnecessary physical contact such as hugging, kissing, fondling, petting, patting, or pinching
- Making unwelcome sexual propositions
- Retaliation against individuals who refuse to engage in sexual activities with the harasser

Sexual Misconduct: Adult sexual contact that is immoral, unprofessional or unethical behavior. In general, this phrase is used more often in the religious press and where it can include sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, or sexual assault. Used euphemistically to cover-up a situation of sodomy-rape, for example, the term serves as a code word to hide the specific nature of the misdeeds from the public.

Sexual Predator: Describes an individual with repeated sexual violations or offenses with one individual over time or with multiple individuals; see predator above.

Stalking: A pattern of repeated and unwanted attention and contact. It usually involves following and watching the victim in an unwanted manner. As a pattern of behavior it can include:

- Willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassment. The pursuit of the victim by the perpetrator is experienced as frightening and threatening.
- Repeated, unwanted, intrusive and frightening communication from the perpetrator by mail, phone, email, or in person
- Repeatedly showing up in the victims personal space when she is unprotected and alone
- Repeatedly sending unwanted gifts

- The consequences of stalking include fear, anxiety, terror, nervousness, a sense of overt vulnerability, hyper-vigilance, sleep problems, feelings of isolation, and acute stress symptoms

Statutory Rape: This is legally defined rape. In some states it may include consenting sexual relationships between minors. However, in most situations, it is defined as sexual relationships between an adult and a person who has not reached the statutory age of consent. It also includes sexual relationships with adults who are deemed incapable of giving consent. Force and coercion are not needed for conviction in statutory rape cases.

Victim: The recipient of a criminal act or unwanted sexual contact. Victims may be individuals or a category of individuals such as such as a group.

Footnotes

[1] Jennifer J. Fried, (1996). *Betrayal Trauma: The Logic of Forgetting Childhood Abuse.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 9

[2] Anson Shupe (Ed.). (2000). *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1.

[3] Anson Shupe (2008). *Rogue Clerics: The Social Problems of Clergy Deviance.* Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publications, 11.

[4] Anson Shupe. (2008). 11.

[5] Retrieved April 12, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant-in-the-room

[6] A. W., Richard Sipe, May 3, 2010, 1.

[7] Gregory Baum (2007). *Religion and Alienation.* New York, NY: Orbis, 76.

[8] A. W. Richard Sipe, May 4, 2010, 1.

[9] On January 6, 2012, United States Attorney General Eric Holder announced the first change in the federal definition of rape since 1929 (*The carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will).* The 2012 definition of rape is: *the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the person.* This new wording will assist police in criminal investigations and prosecution. It will also affect the collection of demographic crime data. Finally, it will affect the summary reports of American Crime which are published annually in the *Uniform Crime Reports.* For additional information, see the Department of Justice webpage, www.justice.gov.

[10] Mikele Rauch. (2009). Healing *the Soul after Religious Abuse: The Dark Heaven of Recovery.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

[11] Marianne Benkert and Thomas P. Doyle. (November 2, 2008) Manuscript: *Religious Duress and Its Impact on Victims of Clergy Sexual Abuse*. 2.

Appendix B

A Word Web: The Language of Accountability[1]

Account: (1) to give a reckoning to or for, (2) to give reasons [for], (3) a report, (4) a narrative of events, (5) an explanation, (6) a report [of],

Account, to hold to: (1) to hold accountable, (2) to blame, (3) to reprimand, (4) to ask for an explanation, (5) to hold responsible, (6) to hold culpable

Accountable: (1) subject to obligation to repent, (2) subject to an obligation to explain, (3) subject to an obligation to justify, (4) responsible, (5) answerable

A**ccountability:** (1) responsible, (2) liable, (3) being answerable

Account for: (1) to make a reckoning report, (2) to give a reason, (3) to explain, (4) to be answerable [for]

Amend: (1) to correct, (2) to emend, (3) to improve, (4) to change, (5) to revise, (6) to change one's conduct

Amends: (1) payment made for injury, (2) Satisfaction given for injury.

Answer: (1) reply to a question, (2) a solution to a problem (3) to reply to (4) a spoken or written reply to a question, (5) to discharge a responsibility, (6) to atone for, (7) to make amends for

Answerable: (1) to be responsible, (2) to be asked to give an accounting

Compact: (1) an agreement, (2) a covenant

Contract: (1) an agreement between two or more parties, (2) a written agreement enforceable by law; (3) a legal agreement

Contractual: (1) having the nature of a contract

Control: (1) to regulate, (2) to exercise authority over, (3) to restrain, (4) power to direct or regulate, (4) to check

Correct: (1) to make right, (2) to point out the errors of, (3) to scold, (4) to punish

Covenant: (1) a binding agreement, (2) a compact

Culpable: (1) guilty, (2) blameworthy

Culprit: (1) a person charged with a crime, (2) a person found guilty of a crime

Deceit: (1) deception, (2) a trick, (3) the practice of deceiving, (4) concealment, (5) distortion, (6) misleading, (7) duplicity (8) cheating, (9) fraud, (10) an action intended to deceive, (11) an action intended to trick, (12) a quality of being duplicitous, (13) false, (14) guile, (15) trickery, (15) dissimulation

Deceive: (1) to delude, (2) to mislead

Deception: (1) the use of deceit, (2) the fact or state of being deceived

Deceptive: (1) perceptually misleading, (2) fallacious, (3) delusive, (4) specious

Depend: (1) to have trust, (2) to rely [on] for support or assistance, (3) to place trust

Dependable: (1) trustworthy, (2) reliable, (3) faithful, (4) responsible

Discipline: (1) training that develops self-control; (2) strict control to enforce obedience, (3) self-control, (4) a system of rules – as for a church, (5) treatment that corrects or punishes, (6) to train, (7) to control, (8) to punish

Dissemble: (1) to conceal the truth, (2) to conceal one's feelings, (3) to conceal ones motives

Dissimulate: (1) to dissemble

Drawback: (1) a disadvantage

Duplicity: (1) deceitful in speech or conduct, (2) acting in two different ways concerning the same matter, (3) deception, (4) dissimulation

Honest: (1) truthful, (2) trustworthy, (3) sincere, (4) fair, (5) something being what it seems to be, (6) frank and open, (7) not deceptive, (8) honorable, (9) upright, (10) fair, (11) credible, (12) just, (13) incorruptible, (14) respectable, (15) straight forward

Honesty: (1) freedom from deceit

Hypocrite: (1) a person who pretends to have virtues, mortal principles, or religious beliefs she does not possess, (2) pretense of possessing qualities of sincerity, goodness or devotion, (3) given to deceiving, (4) deceitful, (5) a person whose actions belie his stated beliefs

Hypocrisy: (1) the feigning of beliefs, values, or feelings one does not hold, (2) a practice of pretending to have a train or character one does not actually possess

Integrity: (1) adherence to a code of values, (2) soundness, (3) completeness, (4) adherence to moral or ethical principles, (5) soundness of personal character, (6) a state of being whole

Liability: (1) the state of being liable, (2) a debt owed, (3) something that works to one's disadvantage, (4) anything for which one is liable, (5) a drawback

Liable: (1) legally bound, (2) legally responsible; (3) legally obligated

Obligate: (1) to bind by a promise, (2) to bind by a sense of duty, (3) to oblige morally or legally

Obligation: (1) a binding contract, (2) a binding promise, (3) a sense of responsibility, (4) the binding power of a contract, (5) being indebted for a favor, (6) the act of binding oneself by a social, legal or moral tie, (7) a favor, service, or benefit for which gratitude is due, (8) responsibility, (9) covenant

Reliable: (1) that which can be relied upon, (2) dependable

Reliability: (1) of being reliable

Rely: (1) to trust, (2) to depend [on or upon] (3) to trust confidently

Reprimand: (1) a severe rebuke, (2) a formal rebuke,

Reprove: (1) to express disapproval for something done or said

Responsible: (1) obliged or expected to account, (2) involving obligations or duties, (3) that which is the cause of something, (4) able to distinguish between right and wrong, (5) dependable, (6) reliable, (7) involving the ability or authority to act on one's own, (8) reliable, (9) accountable, (10) answerable

Responsibility: (1) obligation, (2) something one is responsible for, (3) a human being one is responsible for

Sincere: (1) truthful, (2) genuine, (3) honest, (4) not hypocritical

Social: (1) having to do with human beings in their relationships with each other, (2) having to do with society, (3) living in groups, (4)

True: (1) in accordance with facts; (2) consistent with facts; (3) correct; (4) genuine; (5) faithful

Trust: (1) firm belief in the honesty of another, (2) firm belief in the reliability of another; (3) faith [in], (4) a confident expectation or hope, (5) something entrusted to one; (6) to have confidence [in], (7) to commit something to another's care, (8) to allow someone to do something without misgivings, (9) to believe, (10) to entrust something to another's care, (10) firm reliance, (11) confident belief, (12) to hope, (13) to depend, (14) to expect, (15) to assume, (16) to believe, (16)

Trustworthy: (1) maintained in trust

Truth: (1) a condition of being true, (2) sincerity, (3) honesty, (4) conformed to facts, (5) reality, (6) actual existence [of}, (7) correctness, (8) accuracy,

(9) an established fact; (10) conforming to knowledge, (11) conforming to fact, (12) reality, (13) integrity

Truthful: (1) telling the truth, (2) corresponding with fact or reality

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Explanatory Footnote

[1] A word web examines the meanings of the words used in a particular context – it looks at all meanings given within a dictionary and the word web is complete when the synonyms begin to circle around each other. In this particular word web, I looked at verbs as well as nouns and I looked at the continuum of human responses to deliberate, malicious harm done to others. Word webs can help us to better conceptualize our theory creation because we have looked at what our common, ordinary, daily language teaches us about meaning. In the academic disciplines of theology, sociology, history, and psychology, the ordinary language is given technical meanings but by necessity these technical meanings build upon the ordinary meanings of words in their daily use. For example, some Christian denominations have a whole theology of works accountability and *grace.* This system of theological analysis, however, does not wonder too far from the ordinary American dictionary meanings of these two concepts.

In compiling this word web, I consulted *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 2007; T*he Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, New York, NY: Random House, 1987; and the *Webster's New World Dictionary*, New York, NY; Pocket Books.

Appendix C

The Language of Punishment[1]

Castigate: (1) to rebuke severely, especially by public criticism (2) public criticism

Chastise: (1) to punish**,** especially by beating, (2) to scold sharply

Correct: (1) to make right, (2) to point out or mark errors, (3) to scold, (4) to punish, (5) to cure or remove a fault

Disapprove: (1) to have or express an unfavorable opinion, (2) to refuse to approve

Discipline: (1) treatment that corrects or punishes, (2) strict control to enforce obedience, (3) self-control, (4) a system of rules, as in a church, (6) to train, (7) to control, (8) to punish

Forfeit: (1) a penalty or a fine, (2) to surrender as a forfeit

Lex talionis: (1) Punishment should compare in degree and kind to offender's wrongdoing, (2) an eye for an eye; (3) to equal the social balance or scales of justice after wrongdoing, injustice or harm – whether intentional or accidental

Penalize: (1) to punish, (2) to impose a penalty [on], (3) to declare [an action] punishable by law or rule, (4) to put under a disadvantage or penalty

Penalty: (1) a punishment, (2) the handicap imposed on an offender; (3) a punishment for a crime, (4) a disadvantage, (5) a punishment imposed for a violation of a law or rule, (6) something [such as money or a trophy] that is forfeited because of a rule violation, (7) consequence, (8) disadvantage

Punish: (1) to impose a penalty for an offense, (2) to cause to undergo pain or loss for a crime, (3) to subject to a penalty for an offense, (4) to inflict a penalty for an offense, (5) to subject to pain, loss, confinement or death for some offense or transgression or fault, (6) to inflict penalty for offense or fault, (7) to inflict punishment, (8) chastise, (9) castigate, (10) correct, (11) discipline, (12) making explicit private and/or public

displeasure of violations of law or refusal to obey rules or regulations, (13) to inflict pain or retribution for misdeeds with little or not expectation of correction or improvement, (14) to reprove

Punishment: (1) a penalty imposed [for an offense or crime]

Rebuke: (1) to scold in a sharp way, (2) to reprimand

Reprimand: (1) a severe or formal rebuke, (2) to rebuke severely, (3) to rebuke formally

Reproof: (1) a reproving rebuke

Reprove: (1) to rebuke, (2) to express disapproval of something said or done

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Explanatory Footnote

[1] A word web examines the meanings of the words used in a particular context – it looks at all meanings and the word web is complete when the synonyms begin to circle around each other. In this particular word web, I looked at verbs as well as nouns and I looked at the continuum of human responses to deliberate, malicious harm done to them. Word webs can help us to better conceptualize our theory creation because we have looked at what our common, ordinary, daily language teaches us about meaning. In the academic disciplines of theology, sociology, history, and psychology, the ordinary language is given technical meanings but by necessity these technical meanings build upon the ordinary meanings of the words in their daily use. For example, some denominations have a whole theology of *grace.* This system of theological analysis, however, does not wonder too far from the ordinary American dictionary meanings. In compiling this word web, I consulted *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 2007, T*he Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, NY, NY: Random House, 1987, and *Webster's New World Dictionary,* New York, NY; Pocket Books.

Appendix D

A Word Web: The Languages of Forgiveness[1]

Absolve: (1) To give up all claim on a debt owed, (2) to cease to feel resentment against one's enemies, (3) to pardon offense(s), (4) to cancel indebtedness.

Absolution: (1) To clear of blame or guilt, (2) To grant forgiveness of sins, (3) in the Roman Catholic Church during the sacrament of penance, the priest removes the anticipated divine punishment for sin after confession. This is believed to be done in the authority granted to the church by Jesus (see Matthew 18:18); (4) Some Protestant churches' clergy liturgically announce the forgiveness of sin to penitent believers at the conclusion of a collective confession.

Accountability (to account for): (1) Make a reckoning; (2) report, (3) to give the reason for, (4) to explain, (5) to be answerable for something, (6) to be responsible for, (7) to justify.

Amend: (1) to change for the better, (2) to remove or correct faults, (3) to rectify, (4) to become better by reforming oneself.

Amends: (1) Reparation, (2) compensation for loss, damage, injury.

Amnesty: (1) A general pardon, especially for political offenses, (2) act of forgiveness for past offenses, often to a group or a class of people, (3) forgetting or overlooking past offense.

Apologize: (1) to offer an apology or an excuse for some fault, insult, failure or injury.

Apology: (1) Written or spoken e expression of remorse or sorrow fro having insulted, failed, injured or wronged another.

Atone: (1) Make amends or reparation for an offense or crime, (2) to expiate.

Atonement: (1) Satisfaction or reparation for a wrong, (2) Amends, (3) Doctrine of reconciliation between God and humanity.

Avenge: (1) Vengeance, (2) to act in revenge, (3) to inflict pain or harm in return for pain or harm received, (4) retribution, (5) retaliation for previous wrongs.

Blacklist: (1) a list of those who are censured, (2) a list of those who are denied employment.

Clemency: (1) Merciful, (2) quality of being lenient, (3) disposition to show forbearance, compassion, forgiveness.

Condone: (1) Disregard, (2) overlook something usually illegal or immoral, (3) give tacit approval, (4) pardon an offense, (5) forgive an offense, (6) excuse.

Confession: (1) Disclose a misdeed or faulty, (2) concede the truth, (3) to declare openly, (4) acknowledgment of sin or sinfulness, (5) profess a belief.

Confirm: (11) To verify, (2) establish the truth, (3) corroborate.

Confirmation: (1) to make firm, (2) something (such as a receipt) that confirms.

Contrite: (1) Repentant.

Contrition: (1) Sincere and complete remorse, (2) regret with a sense of guilt, (3) Sincere penitence, (40 repentant for sin with intention to amend, (5) fully expressing sorrow and pain for one's sins or offenses.

Convert/Conversion: (1) To change into another form, (2) to transform, (3) to persuade or be persuaded to adopt another religion, (4) to adapt, (5) to transmute.

Discipline: (1) training to act in accordance with rules, (2) punishment inflicted by way of training or correction, (3) the practice of the church as distinguished from its doctrine, (4) to bring to a state of order, (5) to control.

Excuse: (1) Forgive; (2) overlook; (3) free from an obligation; (4) pardon; (5) indulgence; (6) release from obligation.

Forbearance: (1) Self-control in situations of provocation, (2) the act of self-restraint.

Forget: (1) Cease to remember, (2) fail to remember, (3) fail to think of, (4) take no note of.

Forgive: (1) Excuse for a fault or offense, (2) absolve, (3) give up all claims on account of, (4) remit a debt owed, (5) remit obligation, (6) cancel indebtedness, (7) cease to feel resentment.

Grace: (1) Mercy, (2) clemency, (3) compassion, (4) kind forbearance to offenders, (5) benevolence, (6) divine love and protection.

Just: (1) Honorable, (2) fair, (3) equitable, (4) merited, (5) legitimate, (5) fitting, (6) guided by truth, reason, fairness, justice, (7) In keeping with truth or fact, (8) rewards or punishment rightly deserved, (9) suitable, (10) behavior that is righteous.

Justice: (1) Moral rightness, (2) fairness, (3) righteousness, (4) to act in fairness toward others, (5) to treat fairly, (6) equitable, (7) administering deserved reward or punishment, (8) a moral principle determining behavior.

Justify: (1) To demonstrate to be just, right or valid, (2) to warrant, (3) to defend, (4) show a claim to be right, (5) show satisfactory reason.

Lex talionis: (1) Punishment should compare in degree and kind to offender's wrongdoing, (2) an eye for an eye; (3) to equal the social balance or scales of justice after wrongdoing, injustice or harm – whether intentional or accidental.

Mercy: (1) Kindness, (2) compassion, (3) pity, (4) discretionary power of a judge to pardon someone.

Ostracize: (1) Exclude by general consent, (2) shun, (3) blacklist, (4) exclude from society, friendship, conversation, and ordinary communal privileges.

Pardon: (1) kind indulgence as in forgiveness, (2) excuse, (3) release from penalty of offense, (4) forgiveness of serious offense, (5) absolution, (6) remission, (7) cancellation of punishment, (8) acquit, (9) clear, (8) release from penalty of offense, (9() papal indulgence.

Penance: (1) Punishment undergone as tokens of penitence, (2) discipline imposed by church authority, (3) the religious sacrament of confession of sin made with sorrow and remorse accompanied with the intention of amendment followed by forgiveness.

Penitence: (1) regret for one's wrongdoing or sin.

Penitent: (1) feeling and expressing sorrow for sin or wrong-doing, (2) disposed to atonement or amendment, (3) in the Roman Catholic tradition, a person who confesses his sin and subjects himself to punishment, (4) conscience-stricken, to feel sorrow for sin or wrong-doing with an intention or inclination to change.

Quid pro quo: An equal or fair exchange.

Reconciliation: (1) re-establish a friendship, (2) settle a dispute, (3) to be or to make resigned to, (4) make compatible, (5) win over to friendliness, (6) settle a quarrel, (7) restore person to communion.

Rectify: (1) Set right, (2) to correct.

Regret: (1) to feel sorry about (one's actions, an event), (2) remorse about one's actions of failure to act.

Redress: (1) Set right what is wrong, (2) remedy, (3) correct, (4) adjust evenly again, (5) to set right an unjust situation.

Remit: (1) Remedy, (2) pardon, (3) forgive, (5) diminish, (6) abate, (7) refrain from enforcing punishment, (8) excuse, (9) overlook.

Remorse: (1) Anguish for past misdeeds, (2) bitter regret, 3) deep, lasting and painful regret for wrongdoing.

Reparation: (1) Act of making amends, (2) something done or paid to make amends for wrongdoing or injustice.

Repent: (1) To feel sorry for past conduct, (2) conscience-stricken, (3) to feel sorrow and inclined to change, (4) to be contrite.

Repentance: (1) **F**eelings of regret for what one has done or has failed to do, (2) feeling sorry, (3) feeling self-reproach, (4) conscience-stricken, (5) to be penitent, (6) to change behavior, (7) contrition for past sin or wrong-doing.

Restitution: (1) Compensation for loss, damage, or injury, (2) the return of something to its rightful owner, (3) equivalent compensation for loss, damage, or injury, (4) making amends, (5) return to former state.

Restore: (1) Bring back into existence, (2) to bring back to a previous condition, (3) reinstate, (4) give back.

Retaliation: (1) To return like for like, especially evil.

Retribution: (1) Requital according to merits or desserts, especially for evil, (2) punishment.

Revenge: (1) Retaliate for real or perceived wrong, (2) to avenge, (3) to exact punishment in resentful, vengeful spirit, (4) to retaliate, (5) carrying out bitter desire to hurt another for a wrong done.

Severe Compassion:[2] **(1)** Attempting to compassionately understand each participant in a victimization account, (2) refusing to deny the oppressive harmfulness of sexual violence in the ongoing life of victims, severe compassion makes no excuses for wrong-doing, (3) nevertheless, severe compassion is a methodology that enables the witnesses to such violence in their attempts to understand how the unthinkable actually happens: by means of severe compassion, scholars attempt to understand the victimizer's perspective. In such a process of compassionate investigation, outsiders to the events of victimization attempt to determine a socio-cultural frame of reference or a pre-existing cultural form which legitimates such particular events of victimization and encourages them to happen. As I use the phrase here, it participates in the process anthropologist Clifford Geertz[3] calls thick description.

Shun: (1) To avoid deliberately and **consistently**, (2) Amish communities have a whole cultural practice (the ban) of shunning the baptized individual who strays from church dogma about social practices such as owning and driving a motorized vehicle.

Sorrow: (1) Mental suffering caused by loss, disappointment, grief, (2) that which causes sorrow.

Transform: (1) To change the form of, (2) to change the appearance of, (3) to change the condition, nature or function of.

Transgress: (1) To break a law of commandment, (2) to sin, (3) to go beyond a limit.

Transmute: (1) To change from one form, nature or substance into another.

Vengeance: (1) Retaliation, (2) retribution, (3) inflicting punishment on another in return for an offense or injury, (4) withholding benefits and kindness in return for offense or injury.

Vengefulness: (1) The urge to retaliate.

Wrongdoing: (1) A wrong act or behavior

Explanatory Footnotes

[1] A word web examines the meanings of the words used in a particular context – it looks at all meanings and the word web is complete when the synonyms begin to circle around each other. In this particular word web, I looked at verbs as well as nouns and I looked at the continuum of human responses to deliberate, malicious harm done to them. Word webs can help us to better conceptualize our theory creation because we have looked at what our common, ordinary, daily language teaches us about meaning. In the academic disciplines of theology, sociology, history, and psychology, the ordinary language is given technical meanings but by necessity these technical meanings build upon the ordinary meanings of the words in their daily use. For example, some denominations have a whole theology of *grace.* This system of theological analysis, however,

does not wonder too far from the ordinary American dictionary meanings. I In compiling this word web, I consulted *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 2007 and T*he Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, NY, NY: Random House, 1987

[2] According to Jim Frederick in his foreword to Sue Dias' book *Minefields of the Heart* (2010, xiii) Norman Mailer coined the phrase "severe compassion." I have borrowed the term and have adapted it for situations of clergy sexual abuse of the laity and clergy involvement in the institutional practices of oppressive and criminal clericalism.

[3] Clifford Geertz, (1980, 103-104)

Appendix E

A Working Typology of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

Introductory Comments[1]

As this manuscript uses these terms, sexual misconduct and sexual abuse are forms of interpersonal behaviors. In terms of twenty—first century Christian theology, sexual misconduct and sexual abuse are both considered to be sins. Sexual misconduct as a general category, however, may include consenting adult sexual behavior while, by definition, sexual abuse does not. While not all forms of sexual abuse or sexual harassment are criminal behaviors, many are.

Sexual misconduct and sexual abuse may both be opportunistic. An opportunity presents itself and the initiating individual responds spontaneously to that opportunity. Most clergy and religious professional sexual misconduct, however, is planned behavior – whether this is to initiate a seduction or a rape.

In addition, events of sexual misconduct may occur between two individuals who are complete strangers. Statistically, however, most sexual misconduct fits the category of affinity violations or acquaintance violations. Affinity or acquaintance violations, therefore, occur in situations where offending individuals and victims know each other. Therefore, in addition to the experienced trauma of physical, emotional, psychological or verbal violation, victims experience the traumatic aftermaths of interpersonal betrayal. Clergy and religious professional sexual abuse violations are, in most situations, acquaintance or affinity violations.

Most clergy or religious professional sexual abuse therefore is (1) an interpersonal offense (2) that involves two (or more) individuals who know each other (3) and is most often perceived as violence by its victims. One significance consequence is a sense of being betrayed by someone who once was trusted. A long-lasting and common sequel to abuse is, therefore, a damaged ability to trust others. Because clergy abuse occurs within religious organizations, another sequel may be an inability to trust God.

A final caveat is needed. Some forms of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment and sexual abuse are criminal behaviors. In addition to the religious community's definition of these as sinful behaviors, secular society considers them criminal. In situations where criminal sexual behavior is engaged in by religious professionals and ordained clergy persons, not only the church is involved. Civil government is as well. An example of this form of behavior is religious professional sexual abuse of pre-pubertal children of either gender. Another example is sending or electronically collecting and sending obscene and pornographic mail – particularly of minors.

- **Adultery:** Voluntary, consenting sexual relationships between an adult individual who is married with another adult individual who may be single or married but who is not his or her spouse. It provides the offended partner with legal grounds for divorce. In a few states, it is considered a crime against marriage. In the Roman Catholic tradition even a transient sexual relationship (for example, with a prostitute) is considered adultery. Christian churches often use sexual misconduct as a code word for any sexual behavior which is deemed to be unacceptable to the denomination. This typology, however, limits the use of this term to adultery or to consenting sexual behavior between two unmarried adults (usually called fornication). The central defining issue is the reality that both individuals are (1) consenting adults and (2) that both agree to the sexual relationship and behavior.

- **Sexual Assault:** Defined by law codes of various states. In general it involves any form of sexual contact in which force, coercion, or the threat of force and coercion is used to gain sexual access. Includes but it not limited to oral, anal or vaginal rape. Included are any forms of unwanted coerced sexual contact or attempted contact between the victim and offender. Coerced grabbing, fondling, kissing, hugging, are included. Also included in some states are verbal threats of sexual coercion.[2] In addition, some states include sexual behavior directed against individuals who are unable to give informed consent – even if they are adults – as, for example, a priest who takes advantage of an inebriated individual or a mentally challenged individual. This category also includes sexual behavior of adults with individuals who are deemed, by age, as unable to give informed consent. Individual states may determine various ages of sexual

adulthood. In general, however, adolescents below the age of 16 are not seen as able to give informed consent to sexual intercourse.

- **Sexual Harassment Contact Violations:** Contact harassment violations include unwanted physical touch such as fanny patting, hugging, mouth kisses, stroking and caressing, tickling, wrestling, or any other form of unwanted physical touch.

- **Sexual Harassment Non-contact Violations.** Non-contact harassment violations include obscene phone calls, stalking, sending sexually explicit electronic or postal service mail, displaying sexually provocative material or any other form of unwanted sexual communication which does not involve physical touch. This category can include making offensive jokes or other forms of public and private speech. It can include making lewd or otherwise intrusive commentary about the body or sexual organs of another. It can include sending unwanted sexual gifts such as lingerie. Finally, it can include sexual propositions.

- **Hostile Climate Harassment Violations:** Hostile climate violations occur when one individual behaves in such a manner as to threaten the well-being of another individual. An example is a religious priest or minister who repeatedly propositions a lay person in the confessional. Since making a confession is a religious requirement for personal salvation, the individual who is making a confession is obligated, in matters of faith and practice, to be in the confessional booth. Another example is a college professor of religious studies who implies or even tells a student that she will get an A in his course if she sleeps with him. This latter example is a *quid pro quo* form of harassment. If you do (or don't do) X behavior, then Y consequences will accrue. Another example is when a seminary professor pulls students down on his lap during academic advising appointments. A hostile environment is any environment in which a subordinated individual is threatened by an individual who holds institutional positional authority to grade, evaluate, financially reward, or promote that individual in any way.

Footnotes

[1] See Appendix A (Sexual Misconduct Glossary) for a more comprehensive set of definitions

[2] On January 6, 2012, United States Attorney General Eric Holder announced the first change in the federal definition of rape since 1929 (*The carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will).* The 2012 definition of rape is: *the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the person.* This new wording will assist police in criminal investigations and prosecution. It will also affect the collection of demographic crime data. Finally, it will affect the summary reports of American crime which are published annually in the *Uniform Crime Reports.* For additional information, see the Department of Justice webpage, www.justice.gov.

Appendix F

John Howard Yoder
An Annotated Timeline

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 Arendt[1]

A Methodology for Proceeding

In an attempt to observe and document John Howard Yoder's life from a distance of fifteen years after his death[2] I created this time line to help me locate the sequence of events in an orderly fashion. In its creation, I utilized a variety of primary and secondary resource materials. Included is information from:

- Mennonite Church press in Canada and the United States, the ecumenical American religious press, and the United States' secular press;[3]
- 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; [4]
- *The Mennonite Yearbook* published by the Mennonite Church Press in Scottdale, PA*;* [5]
- 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);[6]
- Published obituaries in a wide variety of publications;[7]
- 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 1992[8].
- 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.[9]
- 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.[10]
- James W. McClendon's published work about Yoder (1998)
- Ted Grimsrud's blog-published work about Yoder; (2010, 2011)
- 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.[11] I listened to a forum presentation on the topic of homosexuality given at AMBS in 1979.[12] 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).[13]
- 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.
- 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 Timeline[14]

1927

Birth date: John Howard Yoder was born on December 27, 1927

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.

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)[15]

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.[16]

1948-1949

Returned to Ohio where he attended the University of Akron.

1949

Mennonite Central Committee, Director of MCC-France: In 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.[17]

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.

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.[18] John was almost 30 years old at the time.

1958-1959

Interim Instructor in Theology (sabbatical replacement for J. C. Wenger), GCBS.[19]

Employed by the Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, IN[20] as the Administrative Assistant for Europe.

1960-1962

Instructor in Theology, Goshen College Biblical Seminary[21]

Dr. Theol, University of Basel, 1962. *Dissertation title: Anabaptism and Reformation in Switzerland.*[22]

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.[23]

- **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 the Mennonite Board of Missions. 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, GCBS[24]

- **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.[25] 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.[26] His mentor and theological elder at Notre Dame was a noted Roman Catholic scholar, John (Jack) McKenzie.

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.[27]

He was in the middle of an eighteen year term as a board member for the Mennonite Historical Society. This term ended in 1986.[28]

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.[29]

- **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, GCBS[30]

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.[31] 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.[32] 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 GBS[33]

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.[34] While living in South America he did some sensitive mission personnel supervision and consultation work for the Elkhart-based Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

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 GCBS library collection which included the H.S. Bender collection.[35] 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).[36]

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.[37] 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*.[38]

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.[39] 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.[40] 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.[41] 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.[42] 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. [43]

At UND, as a part-time faculty member he began to chair its program in nonviolence studies. [44]

- **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.[45]

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.[46] In 1976 in his lectures at Regent University in Vancouver, British Columbia,[47] 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.)

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.[48]

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.[49]

- **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.[50]

"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, or outright sexual harassment.[51]

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.[52]

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.[53]

- **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.[54] 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.[55] 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.[56]

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.

In this year Yoder joined the Board of Editors for the *Journal of Religious Ethics.*[57]

- **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.[58] 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:[59] and (2) *Sexuality.* Audiotape of a lecture presented at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, Canada.[60]

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. 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*.[61]

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.

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.[62] 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.[63] 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.

- **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 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.[64]

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.[65] Some student women later wondered if their academic grade had been affected by their specific responses to Yoder's inappropriate behavior.[66] Several Goshen College faculty and staff women proactively obtained unlisted telephone numbers.

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 with Indiana-Michigan Conference and with Prairie St. Mennonite Church.

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 members[67] 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.[68] 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.

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:[69] 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.[70] 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).[71]

- **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.[72] 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 form 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.*[73] 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.*

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*.[74]

- **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).

1985-1986; 1986-1987

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.[75] 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 his home congregation, Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart (IN). 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 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.[76]

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

At some time during the mid 1980s, Yoder was barred by GC administrators from teaching, preaching, or lecturing on the GC campus. He was not barred from entering either the Mennonite Historical Library or the Mennonite Church Archives, both of which were located on the campus. 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.

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, th*ere 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.

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.[77] 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. 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

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

During the spring semester of 1992, Yoder was disinvited as a speaker at Bethel College in North Newton, KS.[78] 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 Steinfels. 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.[79]

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.[80] 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.[81] Without utilizing the word *clericalism* they critiqued the church's inappropriate use of the Mathew 18 text[82] 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.[83] 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.[84] 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.[85] As part of their Statement to Prairie Street, the eight women reported that they knew first-hand and by name, *an additional 30 women*.[86]

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.[87] By the end of his life he knew more first hand stories and his estimate of numbers had increased significantly. [88]

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

Collegial Intervention Staged

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. 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.[89] 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.

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.

Inter-conference Agreement

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.[90]

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, 2992),

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.[91] 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.[92]

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.[93]

Hauerwas reports that ecumenical *friends of Yoder* placed on-hold their ten-years-old decision to publish a festschrift to honor Yoder.[94] 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).[95] 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.[96] 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.

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.

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.[97]

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.[98] 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 violations[99] 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.*[100]

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.[101] 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.*"[102] 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)[103], 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.[104] 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."[105]

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.[106]

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

A Brief Lifeline Commentary

From information publicly available, it appears as if Yoder 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 know 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.

Yoder's Posthumous Legacy

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.[107]

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.

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.

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.

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.[108]

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.

The Mennonite Quarterly Review (July, 2003) and The Conrad Grebel Review (Spring, 1999) both published issues devoted to Yoder's intellectual legacy and influence.

Collections of Yoder's work continue to appear. The most recent of these in March, 2012 is Marten's and Howell's collection of Yoder's "essential spiritual writings" for Orbis Press.

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*.

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 future church will come to terms with his second legacy – sexual abuse of women rationalized in some of his writings as a needed practice.

Footnotes

[1] Hannah Arendt, 1969a, 6.

[2] Yoder died in 1997. I am writing these words in 2012.

[3] 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.

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

[5] 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.

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

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

[8] 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

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

[10] Available from the Mennonite Church Archives located on the Goshen College campus.

[11] Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, AMBS campus, Elkhart, IN

[12] Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

[13] 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.

[14] 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 co*nversation* 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).

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

[16] F. Kniss (1997).

[17] Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue Supplement, 1963-1964

[18] Erland Waltner's eulogy at Yoder's January, 1998 memorial service

[19] Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue, 1958-1960

[20] Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue Supplement, 1963-1964

[21] Goshen College Biblical Seminary Catalogue, 1960-1962

[22] Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[23] 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.

[24] Goshen College Biblical Seminary Bulletin and Catalogue, 1964-1966

[25] 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).

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

[27] See Mark Thiessen Nation biographical essay in *The Wisdom of the Cross,* pp. 1-23.

[28] 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.

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

[30] See Goshen College Yearbook. Available in the Mennonite Historical Library on the Goshen College Campus

[31] See March 24, 1979 *Gospel Herald*

[32] See Stanley Hauerwas webpage resume, Duke University

[33] See GBS Catalogue

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

[35] See Appendix R

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

[37] See Appendix G for more information.

[38] 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.

[39] GBS 1973-1974 course catalogues, Mennonite Historical Library,

[40] 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.

[41] 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.

[42] 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.

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

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

[45] Tom Price, July 13, 1992

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

[47] Mennonite Church Archives, Goshen College campus, Yoder Collection, Box 200.

[48]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).

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

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

[51] 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.

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

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

[54] 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.

[55] 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.

[56] 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.

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

[58] 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.

[59] Available from the Institute of Mennonite Studies on the AMBS campus

[60] Available from the Mennonite Church Archives on the Goshen College Campus

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

[62] 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.

[63] 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.

[64] Reported in a meeting of faculty women from AMBS, GC, IUSB, and UND

[65] 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.*

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

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

[68] 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.

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

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

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

[72] Personal conversation with one of these women

[73] 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.

[74] In his autobiography, *Hannah's Child,* ethicist Stanley Hauerwas comments about John's literalist belief that the Matthew18: 15-20 teaching meant that *he should be allowed to confront his accusers* (244). *S*ince 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.

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

[76] 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.

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

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

[79] One wonders whether Yoder had his perception of the Bethel College betrayal of 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).

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

[81] 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.

[82] 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*

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

[84] *Statement by Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church Yoder Task Force*

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

[86] *Statement by Eight Women to the Prairie Street Mennonite Church Yoder Task Force*

[87] 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.

[88] Marlin Miller, personal conversation, AMBS.

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

[90] 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.

[91] 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

[92] See http://www.BishopAccountability.org; Mouton, Doyle, Peterson, 1985; Doyle and Rubino, 2003).

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

[94] See S. Hauerwas introduction in *The Wisdom of the Cross, p.x.*

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

[96] Personal conversations with Marlin Miller, ca 1991-1993; Personal conversations with Atlee Beechy, ca 1992-1993.

[96] 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.

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

[97] 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.

[98] Conference minutes and brief consultation with Indiana-Michigan staff member

[99] See Volume One, Chapter 15 for definitions of the various forms of sexual harassment, pp. 369-372.

[100] *Sojourners Magazine* (March-April, 19980, p. 8.

[101] See C. Eshleman, January 1997, pp. 1 and 6.

[102] *Wikipedia*: John Howard Yoder. Retrieve from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/johnhowardyoder

[103] J. Reimer, 6.

[104] C. Eshleman, (January 23, 1997) Seminary Features Yoder: Theologian's Return Raises Questions. *Weather Vane* (Eastern Mennonite University) 42 (10), pp. 1 and 6.

[105] Ibid.

[106] 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.

[107] http://theology.nd.edu/people/research/yoder-john-yoder/.

[108] J. Budziszewski, 2006.

Appendix G

Theologian cited in sex inquiry

Tom Price

The Elkhart Truth
June 29, 1992
B-1/B-5

Elkhart – The ministerial credentials of John Howard Yoder, regarded as one of this country's leading theologians and ethicists, were suspended Saturday by a regional Mennonite Church commission over allegations of sexual misconduct. Yoder, professor of Christian ethics at the University of Notre Dame and a former professor at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries here, has cooperated with an 11-month investigation by two Mennonite Church panels into allegations presented in testimony by eight women.

"The charges brought by the women are accurate, and John has violated sexual boundaries," according to a task force at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, at which Yoder is a member. "John has acknowledged the truth of the charges and has expressed deep regret for the hurt his actions have caused for the women."

Yoder has agreed to the course of restitution, including therapy, recommended by the Church Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, which took the action. The commission released attachment from both panels after informing Yoder of their decision Sunday.

Although both panels did not elaborate about the nature of the allegations, three of the eight women told *The Elkhart Truth* most of the incidents took place in the 1970s through the mid-1980s when Yoder was president and a professor of theology at Goshen Biblical Seminary here. Some allegations, they said, precede and follow his tenure at the Mennonite Church seminary affiliated with AMBS.

The women, who are in positions of national church leadership, said the allegations included improper hugging, use of sexual innuendo or overt sexual language, sexual harassment, kissing or attempting to kiss women, nudity and violent sexual behavior. Sexual intercourse was not among the allegations.

“It can range from suggesting, ‘sit on my lap,’ to actually pulling people down on his lap, inappropriate kissing and hugging,“ one of the women said. “It certainly violated the professor-student relationship. It certainly violates the marriage covenant and our understanding of that within the church.”

Yoder had told the two panels that the alleged misconduct is not taking place currently, sources said.

“They speak for me – not with perfect accuracy – but accurately enough that I don’t want to debate what they say,” Yoder said this morning, terming the task force’s statement as “less accurate” than that of the commission. “Both of them have the right to attribute things to me that they have attributed.”

Yoder declined further comment. “It’s in the hands of two church agencies, one in the district level and one in the congregation,” he said. “My acceptance of that structure makes it very hard to see on what grounds I should be going to the public.”

“I am not privy to the facts of the situation,” said Lawrence B. Cunningham, chairman of Notre Dame’s theology department. I am distressed to hear about the actions of the Mennonite Church. That is not to say that the university condones that kind of behavior.”

“The goal of the task force was to work for repentance, restoration and healing for all who have been hurt by John’s actions,” the statement said. “Our conversations were open, frank and sometimes filled with emotion.”

After five meetings with the task force, Yoder agreed to meet with an accountability group and to undergo therapy “to work thoroughly with … a high degree of rationalization and a denial of the problems associated with his sexual misconduct,” according to the task force’s statement.

Although the commission could have revoked Yoder's creentials, its suspension will allow him to seek restoration after a period that has yet to be determined, said David R. Helmuth, commission chairman and pastor of First Mennonite Church in Middlebury.

Yoder was ordained in 1973 but has never served in a pastoral role.

"John has recognized the deep rifts to integrity and trust which have developed between himself and the church and its institutions," the task force said. "furthermore, John has agreed to yield to the will of the church regarding standards of conduct between men and women. He has committed himself to begin no new sexually intimate relationships, and he has already acted to cut off ongoing relationships which violate church standards."

The task force said Yoder will prepare a statement for the eight women who brought the allegations. "He is also preparing a statement to the church community as an initial step in his desire to follow a path that acknowledges wrongs committed," it said.

This makes the third investigation into the allegations of Yoder's sexual misconduct since rumors first came to the attention of Mennonite Church officials in the 1970s, leading some to call for his resignation from the seminary. According to a source close to the investigation, Goshen Biblical Seminary examined similar allegations, but dropped the matter in 1984 when Yoder ended his seminary employment. Since then, he has taught Christian ethics at the University of Notre Dame, where he was an adjunct faculty member since 19777 on a part-time basis.

"The reasons that led to John's termination here were the result of an extended process over longer-standing issues," said Marlin Miller, who since 1975 had been president of Goshen Biblical Seminary. "This was considered the best way to deal with the issues.

On the advice of legal counsel Miller, now AMBS president declined further comment. Goshen Biblical Seminary and the General Conference Mennonite Church's Mennonite Biblical Seminary now share facilities, faculty and staff as the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

Yet another source said a mutual decision for Yoder to leave the seminary, “took the seminary off the hook for this complicated problem and enabled them to say they had no responsibility” for acting on allegations concerning a former employee.

With a couple of exceptions to speak to seminary classes as late as 1985, Yoder has not been invited to speak at the seminaries, Miller said.

A second investigation by Prairie Street elders in 1985-1986 never got off the ground because no woman would come forward for a face-to-face confrontation with Yoder, sources said.

Yoder, who was overseas for much of the latter half of 1991 wasn’t informed of the current process until August, and didn’t meet formally with the task force until March 14 when he was presented with the allegations.

Appendix H

Theologian's future faces a "litmus" test
Yoder's response to allegations could determine standing in field

By Tom Price

The Elkhart Truth
July 12, 1992
B-1/B-3

This is the first of a series that examines allegations of sexual misconduct against noted theologian John Howard Yoder and the impact of the Mennonite Church's suspension of his credentials. Reporter Tom Price conducted interviews over a three-month period with church leaders, theologians, and three of the eight women who brought the allegations to a church panel.

How theologian John Howard Yoder responds to the Mennonite Church's suspension of his credentials over sexual misconduct allegations could become a "litmus" test for how history judges his work.

The action by a regional church committee against Yoder, professor of Christian ethics at the University of Notre Dame came June 27 after allegations were brought forward by eight women in positions of national church leadership.

The women said the allegations range from overt sexual language to forcible sexual behavior and took place primarily in the 1970s through mid-1980s when Yoder was president and a professor of theology at Goshen Biblical Seminary here.

Even though his ministerial status in the church remains in question, Yoder, even his critics acknowledge deserves a prominent place in 20th-century American theology. The debate centers on just how significant that place will be.

"He's possibly the most original Christian theologian at work in America today," said James William McClendon, distinguished scholar-in-residence

at the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. “We may have to go 100 years, 200 years down the road (to learn) whether that possibility is ‘actually.’”

“I think he should be recognized as one of a dozen great theologians of this century (internationally),” said Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lexington, Ky.

Yet a critic sees Yoder’s influence as limited to “the left wing of the Reformation, which includes the Mennonite tradition and a penumbra around that.

“By and large, his views don’t shape mainline Protestant thinking. They impact it. They cause us to think twice,” said Gabriel Fackre, Abbot Professor of Christian theology at the mainline Andover Newton Theological School in Union Center, Mass. “There are around the world in Europe, Asia and Africa people of far greater status and influence that John Howard Yoder.”

Just as there is disagreement on the extent of Yoder’s theological impact, theologians disagree on the impact on his theological contributions of the action by the Church Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

“Of course it is going to hurt,” said Stanley Hauerwas professor of theological ethics at Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N.C., noting that Yoder would not want to separate his actions from what he has taught. “many people are just waiting to find an excuse not to take him seriously.”

Yet Fackre is “of two minds” on whether the decision will impact Yoder’s work. “Even people whose character is morally dubious can be instruments of God’s purposes. Whatever is good and true in Yoder’s teaching is not going to be disqualified by his moral failures and shouldn’t be,” he said. “on the other hand, you can’t separate personal from theological issues.”

Citing the ongoing debate between views of the church as a community of saints or a haven of sinners, Fackre said the “perfectionist ethics” represented by Yoder are not sufficiently self-critical about moral or spiritual life.

McClendon, a Baptist, said Yoder's historical work "is not going to be lost to sight because of these sad events."

There may be a way in which man and work merge together in our minds, especially in theology," he said. "How John Howard Yoder is viewed as a human being…depends upon the blessed and obedient-to-God outcome of the whole process."

Yoder represents the major challenge of Christian pacifism to proponents of the Just War tradition, represented by Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), who urged Christians to consider the political consequences of their actions.

"(Yoder) is one of the figures that students would have to read in theology or Christian ethics," said Broke Hollifield, Candler Professor of American Church History at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. Hollifield is writing the first history of American theology, due out by the year 2000.

"If you wanted to pick two people for debating the morally legitimate use of deadly force…the two people you'd probably pick are Reinhold Niebuhr and John Howard Yoder," said Larry Rasmussen, the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York. "I would call him (Yoder) the most articulate apologist for Christian pacifism.

Yet the church action, according to Rasmussen, "casts a pall" over Yoder's contributions to ethics, theology and pacifism.

"Much of what John's contribution has been and is stands on its own terms. At the same time, this is a case where what he's involved in personally is very intimately tied to what he advocates as a professional and in his writings. "There is a credibility issue," said Rasmussen, a Lutheran. "To me, the test for John Yoder is the degree to which he himself places himself into the very process of accountability that he advocates in his writings."

Rasmussen said such actions would include Yoder seeking forgiveness from both the women and God.

“This becomes a kind of litmus test for what he has been advocating, namely the church as the community of moral accountability which then both forms its members and hold them as a community of disciples to accountability when they – as we all do – transgress the morality of the community,” said Rasmussen.

Yoder, a 1947 Goshen College graduate, did his doctoral work in historical theology from 1950 to 1957 at the University of Basel in Switzerland. He was a pupil of Karl Barth, the famous Swiss-Reformed theologian who was the main force behind the Barmen Declaration, which critiqued the Nazi regime.

“As Barth was to the German Christians in terms of challenging their loyalty to Hitler, so John has been to American Christians (in challenging their loyalty to the state),” said Hauerwas, a Methodist who became a pacifist because of Yoder’s work.

Following World War Two, Niebuhr’s “Christian realism” had discredited pacifism among theologians Yoder’s definition of non-violence as centered in the person and work of Christ and his messianic community “decisively turned the tide” for Christian pacifists, said Hauerwas, a former chairman of Notre Dame’s theology department.

Yet Yoder’s interpretation of Christianity “has never been a majority view in the church, said Fackre, a member of the United Church of Christ. “(Yoder’s) influence was never as wide as the devotees of Yoder and Hauerwas would like to believe.”

“What he does is predictable,” he said.

“Too often potential readers believe they can dispose of Yoder without having read him, because they know the Mennonites are wrong-minded about non-violence But Yoder cannot be dismissed so easily,” Hauerwas said. John’s work needs to be put squarely in the center of the Christian mainstream.”

Yet, despite questions of whether Yoder will conform to the long-term discipline process of his church, Rasmussen notes that there are larger issues involved.

“My question here is why male clergy, male theologians and male ethicists have had such an apparently difficult time abiding by the sexual norms that they themselves advocate,” Rasmussen said. “It may reveal deeper problems in the church, as well as John’s own personal problems.”

Theologians work is highly regarded

Elkhart – Despite the ongoing church discipline process involving him, theologian John Howard Yoder’s name will go into the theological history books for his accomplishments.

Although there is disagreement over the significance of his work beyond his Mennonite tradition, there are several points of agreement about Yoder’s:

- Magnum Opus, “’The Politics of Jesus’ which will go down as one of the great books of the 20th-century in theology,” said Stanley Hauerwas, professor of social ethics at the Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N.C.
- Reputation as “probably the best-known theologian coming out of the Mennonite world over the past two centuries,” according to Hauerwas, a former chairman of Notre Dame’s theology department. “There are two things most people know about Mennonites: There’s the Amish billboard and then the other billboard is Yoder,” said James William McClendon, distinguished scholar-in-residence at the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He’s tended to put the Mennonite community on the map in ways that ethnic Mennonitism doesn’t do it.”
- Support for a biblical foundation for social ethics, which often tends to be abstract,” said Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. “He has paved the way for into strong, biblical research to ground out Christian ethics.”
- “Rather significant impact on the church ecumenical,” said Larry Rasmussen, the Reinhold Niebuhr professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Yoder represented Mennonites in discussions organized by the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

Yoder, 64, directed the Mennonite Central Committee’s relief office from 1949 to 1854 in France, where in July, 1952 he married his wife Annie.

He moved to Elkhart to teach seminary classes in 1958-1959 before becoming the administrative assistant for overseas missions for the Elkhart-based Mennonite Board of Missions. In 1966, he became a professor of theology at Goshen Biblical Seminary in Elkhart and director of its Institute of Mennonite Studies.

While at the seminary, he assembled an impressive course of writings and also taught at several other institutions. In 1970, he was named president.

In 1973 as laudatory reviews came out for “The Politics of Jesus,” Yoder stepped down from his seminary posts. He also was ordained a minister that year by the Ohio District Conference of the Mennonite Church, although he never has served in a pastoral role.

After joining the Notre Dame faculty in 1977 in a part-time basis, and full-time when he left the AMBS faculty in 1984, Yoder served in 1985 as the president for the Society of Christian Ethics, a scholarly organization.

Appendix I

Theologian accused:
Women report instances of inappropriate conduct

Tom Price

The Elkhart Truth
July 13, 1992, B-1/B-5

This is the second of a series that examines the allegations of sexual misconduct against noted theologian John Howard Yoder and the impact of the Mennonite Church's suspension of his ministerial credentials. Religion writer Tom Price conducted interviews over a three-month period with church leaders, theologians, and three of the eight women who brought the allegations to a church panel.

Yoder declined to respond, John Howard Yoder has declined to respond at this time to the specific allegations raised in this article, saying, "This is not time – I'm not sure there would be a time – for this kind of thing."

Elkhart – The allegations of sexual misconduct that led a Mennonite panel to suspend theologian John Howard Yoder's ministerial credentials extend beyond the eight women who were willing to testify to a congregational task force.

The eight women's allegations that led to the June 27 church action against Yoder represent "just the tip of the iceberg," according to one of the women who spoke to a task force at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, one of two panels involved in the investigation.

The women said their group is aware of 30 other women with allegations of sexual misconduct against Yoder, professor of Christian ethics at the University of Notre Dame and a former professor at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries here.

“I know it has international dimensions,” said Clara who has a prominent position of leadership in a national Mennonite organization.

Three women contacted by *The Elkhart Truth* requested anonymity for varying reasons, including fear that Yoder would retaliate. They are identified as “Tina,” “Clara,” and “Colleen.” Although their identities are anonymous to readers, they are known to the task force. That group, however, has not told Yoder the identities of the eight women leaving him uncertain about who has made the allegations.

THE WOMEN SAID the misconduct, which took place primarily from the 1970s through the mid-1980s, included improper hugging, use of sexual innuendo or overt sexual language, sexual harassment, kissing or attempts to kiss women, and forcible sexual behavior. Sexual intercourse was not among the allegations.

Of all the allegations, the accusations made by Colleen, a congregational leader, are the most serious.

According to Colleen, Yoder was invited in October, 1977 to her home by her husband, “Joe,” who asked the theologian to speak at their church’s weekend meetings. They had known each other for several years.

Joe was away for most of the weekend leading the retreat and wasn’t expected back until Sunday afternoon. “I had no reason to distrust John,” said Colleen, who, then, had two small children. “After I put the kids to bed, I came down to the living room. John was sitting on the couch. He moved closer to me as we were sitting on the couch. He kept coming closer and closer to me and eventually pushed me over and lay on me. I was very afraid. I began to push him away. …He began to shake violently….When I pushed him away, he denied there was anything sexual about it.”

AFTER A SLEEPLESS night, Colleen invited a single female friend to spend the next night for her protection. “John was visibly upset when he saw her come in,” said Colleen, who tried to avoid him for the rest of the

weekend, at one point, hiding in a closet when she saw him coming. "He found me in there and made fun of my fear."

When her husband returned, Colleen told him what happened. The couple wrote Yoder a letter, expressing their outrage. "We wanted some explanation of his behavior," she said. He never wrote us back.

Although the couple had known Yoder for some time, they were then unaware that some students privately discussed questions about his behavior when they were part of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries community.

"There were a few of us (female students) at the seminary who were at that point experiencing what we called strange behavior," said "Clara" who first met Yoder in the early 1970s. "We talked about it with each other. That was the extent of it. We chalked it up (as) "This man is strange. He doesn't know how to relate. The best thing is to stay away from him."

Clara who did not have a close student-professor relationship with Yoder, said she initially experienced only "inappropriate hugs" from Yoder when he would close the door when she was in his office. "I would let him know I was not comfortable with that," she said.

But she became "very suspicious" about Yoder when in the mid-1970s she learned of his research on singleness. "He sent me a letter one time from Jerusalem when he was there and asked me some very explicit questions, wanting an explicit response from me about how I, as a single woman, dealt with my sexuality."

In his letter, Yoder told Clara to write to him at a private Jerusalem address, which she considered "really strange because I was good friends with his wife," she said.

Yoder's alleged sexual harassment escalated when he returned to the seminary in the fall of 1976, according to Clara. "At that point, he began to come uninvited to my apartment. I was a single woman at the time," she said. "While his behavior was not inappropriate, coming to my apartment was. I felt like he was infringing on my space. I had a very frank discussion with him and told him I did not want to come to my apartment, nor did I want him to have any other contact with me."

“I remember literally pushing him away from me at one point, (telling him), “This is not appropriate. Do not touch me,” she said. “He let me go at that point.”

Another “inappropriate hug” left a lasting impression with Tina, who first met Yoder at a conference and still remembers their parting conversation. “I reached out my hand to shake his hand, He said, ‘Give me a proper goodbye.’”

“John gave me this huge hug and held me against his body. It was too long and it was too much. (At first I didn’t think anything about it. What a strange old man. He’s out of touch with his body).”

Nevertheless, Yoder initiated a correspondence between them in the early 1980s. “I realize now that it was intellectual seduction, For a Mennonite woman to be taken seriously in the church doesn’t happen often,” she said. To have John Howard Yoder acting like my ideas were profound and significant – it was real heady stuff. He probably wrote me five times for every time I wrote him. He was a wonderful resource. He started networking me with women around the world. It was incredible to me that he knew women around the world.”

At first the letters were addressed to Tina and her husband. One day Tina said Yoder told her not to write to him either at his home or office. Instead he gave her a post-office box, P. O. Box 93, in Osceola – a number, Tina said, Yoder gave to other women as well.

Yoder frequently suggested that Tins meet him at conferences which she said she never did. “There were also frequent references to my body, she said. In one letter, Yoder suggested Tina meet him for her conference, bring her baby along and meet him in his hotel room when he finished his day.

“The he went into this bizarre, long, detailed description of what it would be like for him to sit in a chair and watch me sit on his bed, take off my clothes, and nurse my baby. He described in vivid detail my breasts and other body parts,” she said. When I read the letter, I felt I had been raped. The thought of this dirty old man fantasizing about my nude body was terrifying to me, and I felt extremely violated and angry. I’d never done anything to

communicate to him that I was interested in anything but a mentor-protégée relationship.

Tina told her husband about the alleged incident and the letter. Then she wrote Yoder, “told him how angry I was, how inappropriate” his actions were and asked him not to write to me again. But Yoder continued to write, saying she misunderstood what he meant, according to Tina.

Although Yoder continued to write, Tina responded only once, explaining the inappropriate nature of his actions. Tina has since destroyed Yoder’s letters, fearing her children would discover them and misinterpret her involvement in the relationship.

Tina said Yoder asked her frequently to meet him at scholarly conventions but never at Mennonite Church meetings, telling her he didn’t like big Mennonite gatherings.

“I understand now why he doesn’t. There must have been dozens of young women who felt they had this special mentor-protégé relationship with John and if they all gathered in one place it would be embarrassing for John.”

Appendix J

A known secret
Church slow to explore rumors against a leader

Tom Price

The Elkhart Truth
July 14, 1992
B-1

This is the third of a series that examines allegations that examines allegations of sexual misconduct against noted theologian John Howard Yoder and the impact of the Mennonite Church's suspension of his ministerial credentials. Religion writer Tom Price conducted interviews over a three-month period with church leaders, theologians and three of the eight women who brought the allegations to a church panel.

Elkhart – When scholars gathered in May for a conference on church discipline processes last month at Goshen College they perhaps didn't realize what lay beneath the surface of the discourse.

Theologian John Howard Yoder participated in planning the conference and attended many sessions, as did people involved in virtually all aspects of the on-going church-discipline process involving him.

Many participants will little note nor long remember what was said thee. But in retrospect they may never forget the nearly two decades of silence before the June 27 decision by a regional Mennonite Church commission to suspend Yoder's ministerial credentials over allegations of sexual misconduct.

HOW COULD RUMORS about allegations of sexual misconduct against a prominent church leader for so long that they became known for so long in Christian circles, but never publicly acknowledged?

"A lot has been learned in the past 10 to 12 years about how the allegations should be dealt with," said Clara, one of the eight women who

brought allegations against Yoder. "This assumption back then was you keep these things quiet and hope they will go away."

Increased public attention to sexual harassment and authority abuse within the last decade has prompted churches to find ways to address the concerns brought forward by victims, although many are still reluctant to publicly reveal allegations for fear of ruining an individual's reputation.

But concerns about false allegations do not outweigh concern for public considerations of allegations of authority abuse, according to James Lapp, general secretary of the Mennonite Church General Board. "The church has been more seriously charged in a cover-up. That must end," Lapp said in an interview before departing for overseas mission trip. "the church must be on the side of healing, reconciliation, and hope for victims, and not participate in their further victimization through silence."

THE WOMEN SAID church leaders were slow to address the allegations of misconduct against Yoder, not because they wanted to cover it up but because they feared a confrontation with their most prominent leader. And some of the women, such as Clara, told only close friends about their experience – making it difficult for any investigation. Clara only told someone outside her circle of intimates when approached in the late 1970s by Marlin Miller, then president of Goshen Biblical Seminary.

"The bigger they are, the harder it is to bring them into accountability," said Vaughn Moreno, co-chairman of a task force on domestic violence for two regional Mennonite bodies. "These things aren't dealt with publicly."

In addition, some of the women sought ordination from the church.

"None of these women were at a point eight years ago where they were willing to sit down publicly with John, fearing that it might affect the climate of their being ordained," said Tina, one of the eight women and a member of a national church board. "To confront Mr. Mennonite, a man of John's stature in the church is terrifying. When you're dealing with a lay woman in the church and John Howard Yoder, there is no way mediation will work because there is a gross imbalance of power."

ACCORDING TO THE WOMEN, Yoder used this to his advantage. "Ten to fifteen years ago, the church stood by John's demands that he meet

individually and alone with any of his accusers," said Colleen, a congregational leader.

The women also became co-conspirators in the silence because they feared the likely outpouring of anger – directed at them, rather than the source of the alleged misconduct.

I feel the anger and the repercussion which is sure to come," said Clara, who is in a prominent position in a national Mennonite institution. Even before the allegations of misconduct became public, she could hear the question, "How can you destroy John Howard Yoder?"

"I think he has done that to himself," she said. "We're speaking up and saying we won't tolerate it."

At a concert, "Joe," a husband of one of the women, dedicated a song to someone close to him who had been violated by a role model – a person that individual never suspected. After the concert a woman approached him, asking to speak with him privately about the song. "It's about your wife, isn't it?" Joe acknowledged that it was.

WITHIN A FEW MINUTES she said, "We're talking about John, aren't we?"

"John?" Joe replied.

"John Howard Yoder." Said the woman, who told Joe that she too was a victim of Yoder's alleged sexual misconduct.

"She became one of the many who were victims – many of whom were known to the church community, but these women were not willing to be as open as they needed to be for the church to expose him," Joe said, describing the situation as a painful, recurring litany.

Mennonites, whose Swiss-German origins tie many together as a family, have responded to allegations of sexual misconduct against their leaders much as a family would, according to Joe.

You weep in private, but on the outside we kind of deny it," he said. It hasn't been acknowledged. It is a known secret.

But more than a decade of silence about Yoder's allegations of misconduct could produce explosive results.

IF OTHER WOMEN come forward, as Tina believes they will, the women's desk at the Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, PA, will put them into contact with the support group formed by the eight women.

"I think it's going to be a real unsettling time for the church, because all the rules are changing," Tina said. "What this is going to say is, even if you the leading theologian in the church, there are certain standards of ethical behavior and morality you are expected to meet. If you cross over, you can no longer count on your victims being quiet."

Appendix K

Yoder's actions framed in writings

Tom Price

The Elkhart Truth
July 14, 1992
B-1

Yoder declined to respond, John Howard Yoder has declined to respond at this time to the specific allegations raised in this article, saying, "This is not time – I'm not sure there would be a time – for public exchange on this kind of thing."

This is the fourth of five articles that examine allegations of sexual misconduct against noted theologian John Howard Yoder and the impact of the Mennonite Church's suspension of his ministerial credentials. Religion writer Tom Price conducted interviews over a three-month period with church leaders, theologians and three of the eight women who brought the allegations to a church panel.

Elkhart – An unpublished essay by John Howard Yoder may confirm the contention of three women who say the past president of the Society of Christian Ethics constructed a biblical and ethical framework for his alleged sexual misconduct.

Yoder, a prominent theologian, justified "non-genital affective relationships" between two Christians - even those who are single or married to other spouses, according to three women with whom Yoder violated sexual boundaries, a Mennonite Church panel determined.

"As long as intercourse is not involved, it is not abusive or inappropriate behavior, "Tina said, describing what Yoder allegedly told her and other

women. “A sexual relationship is OK even if you’re married to someone else, as long as you don’t have intercourse.”

In interviews with *The Elkhart Truth,* three of the women who testified said the allegations included improper hugging, use of sexual innuendo or overt sexual language, kissing or attempts to kiss women, and forcible sexual behavior. Sexual intercourse was not among the allegations.

“He has certainly pushed the limits up to that very line,” Tina said. “As the church’s leading intellectual, he felt his job is to push the limits with these ideas.”

Yoder wrote a 1975 memo called, “What is Adultery of the Heart?” In it, he analyzed Jesus’ statement from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:28 –“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

“What then is this ‘adultery of the heart’ which Jesus condemns? It is failing to see in another woman one’s sister, seeing in her an object instead of a person,” Yoder wrote. “By forbidding ‘adultery of the heart,’ Jesus forbids the morality of fear and taboo, for it is that which degrades women.”

Yoder described the concept of “familial protection,” which comes into play when a man perceives a woman to belong to his tribe or family, such as a sister, a mother, a daughter. Because men consider these women under their protection, these women cease to be sexual objects for the men and become persons,” he wrote.

Yoder sought to extend that concept to a church whose membership traditionally has been described as “sisters and brothers.”

“’Family protection’ can extend as far as the faith,” he wrote. “instead of the violent circle in which taboos and anxiety dramatize and provoke erotic excitement, those relationships can be de-dramatized, calmed by familiarity.”

According to Yoder, this familiarity between brothers and sisters often has no need for physical expression. “But in cases of deeper sharing, especially if some particular trauma has been caused by taboos about the body, some corporal (bodily) expression – abrazo (an embrace) – can

celebrate and reinforce familial security, far from provoking guilt-producing erotic reactions."

That phrase can have an entirely innocent interpretation. For instance, a woman who becomes distraught after sexual abuse receives an affirming hug or a gentle touch on the hand from a man.

But like a half-finished jigsaw puzzle, the addition of other pieces can change the picture.

Colleen described in greater detail the conversation that took place between her and Yoder on that October, 1877 after he allegedly forced himself on top of her.

"When I pushed him away and confronted him, he denied there was anything sexual about it," she said.

According to Colleen, Yoder specified in graphic language that he did not intend to have intercourse with her, because that would be incest in their relationship as "brothers and sisters" in the church.

:After Colleen's experience, I reread some of the stuff and was quite shocked by what I found there," said Joe, her husband and a former student of Yoder's at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. "I really think that John was assuming that he had a right to experience, or demand or pursue acts of intimacy with other women that went way beyond the accepted boundaries. He clearly allowed himself this behavior because he had convinced himself this was a kind of intimacy permitted within the family of faith. That's what he tried to convince Colleen"

Joe said he tried to confront Yoder about his alleged behavior. "He has not been willing to acknowledge that he has violated our marriage covenant. He has invaded a covenantal relationship that was made within the Christian community to which he is committed," Joe said. "Anyone who is honest with himself knows what he is doing when he does this stuff."

According to Tina," Yoder's remarks sound familiar. One of the lines he used on a number of women I've met is, 'We are the cutting edge. We are developing some models for the church. We are part of this grand, noble experiment. The Christian Church will be indebted to us in years to come,"

she said. “He maintains that it is even appropriate for two people who may be married to other people, to be in bed nude together as long as they don’t have intercourse.”

Yoder had several unpublished papers which dealt with various themes related to sexuality. In addition, scholars routinely circulate drafts to test exploratory ideas against their colleague’s critiques.

“He would send us a manuscript on ‘singleness’ and ask us to respond and send it back to him,” said Clara, a student in the 1970s. “Frankly, I thought they were garbage. It wasn’t my understanding of singleness at all.”

Some of Yoder’s unpublished papers remain in the library at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Tina said the papers remain there for a reason.

“Nobody would publish them. He was so angry because he thought he was really on to something wonderful,” she said. “In a bizarre way, he’s a very ethical man. He’s got to have an ethical system that supports his behavior. I think he was trying to build an ethical system to justify his behavior, and it just didn’t float. There were holes all over the place.”

Appendix L

Teachings tested
Forgiveness, reconciliation in discipline

Tom Price

The Elkhart Truth
July 16, 1992
B-1/B-5

This is the conclusion of a five-part series of articles that examines allegations of sexual misconduct against noted theologian John Howard Yoder and the impact of the Mennonite Church's suspension of his ministerial credentials. Religion writer Tom Price conducted interviews over a three month period with church leaders, theologians, and three of the women who brought the allegations to a church panel.

For years, Mennonites have quietly discussed whether it is proper for them to use the writings of their most prominent pacifist and ethicist in light of allegations of forceful and unethical sexual misconduct.

With the June 27 suspension of theologian John Howard Yoder's ministerial credentials over allegations of sexual misconduct, these discussions about Yoder's theological future have become public.

But some of the eight women who made the allegations say although they personally feel uncomfortable with using Yoder's works, they don't necessarily think the church as a whole must stop using them.

"How do you teach anything related to peace and justice in a Mennonite institution by ignoring Yoder's works, except to look like an ignorant scholar?" said "Joe:, the husband of one of the women. The women insisted on anonymity but are identified by pseudonyms for clarity's sake.

I cannot use his writings at this point. (I) feel they are not credible," Clara said. "He does not live up to what he writes and what he speaks."

At the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, students and faculty have discussed what implications the church-discipline process could have toward their use of Yoder's writings, according to President Marlin Miller.

John's writings on peace, non-violence and related topics are very significant One cannot really address these issues without taking these writings into consideration," Miller said. "They sand on their own two feet regardless of the allegations that have surfaced I'm sure they will continue to be used."

Yet Clara drew a distinction between the appropriateness of Yoder's work for her personal use and its use by the wider Christian community. "The church needs to be honest and candid and raise questions about whether one can legitimately use his materials, knowing his behavior patterns," she said. His writings are legitimate, even if his behavior isn't."

Colleen can no longer read Yoder's works. "(Because of the public suspension of Yoder's credentials) maybe they can use the text with some integrity," Colleen said. "I really hope that all the work that he has done will not be destroyed by this."

"Whatever truth John has discovered existed quite apart from whatever sins he may have committed," said Joe who was one of Yoder's former students. "Whatever he managed to discover, we might as well use. Personally it will take me some time to know how to appreciate his writing again."

The pivotal issue, however, is not the significance of Yoder's work, according to a theologian who shares Yoder's theological vision.

"It doesn't stand on its own. It stands within the community that has made this kind of work possible," said Stanley Hauerwas, professor of theological ethics at Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N. C. "John wouldn't want to separate person and work that way….we don't say this work is good irrespective of the kind of person he is. He knew he must acknowledge any wrong and ask forgiveness."

Hauerwas stressed those themes in an April 18 commencement address at Goshen College. "Forgiveness is (not) simply a matter of being told God has forgiven us," he said. "Unless we are able to tell one another the truth

through the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, we are condemned to live in a world of violence and destruction."

The statement reflected Yoder's own views on reconciliation and church discipline. "That address was written with this in mind," Hauerwas said. "The kind of process about what it means to be forgiven is what John's undergoing."

"What's going on in Elkhart is one of the more important things that can happen....The fact that they can take their biggest guy and not try to protect him from possible wrongs he had done is, I think, one of the most extraordinary testimonies," Hauerwas said. "it is to the Mennonites great credit that they were able to engage in this kind of process."

"There's an enormous burden of the church to protect the heritage he is part of," said James William McClendon, distinguished scholar-in-residence at the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "If he is slandered, and defamed, and abused, that is going to hurt all of us who are grateful for the enormously important work he's done for half a century."

Yoder's writings have taught Mennonites and other Christians a lot about church discipline. But his most significant teaching could result from his willingness to submit to his church's disciplinary action against him.

"The church task force's initiative in working with John to solve the problem and John's humbling himself to participate in the process that the task force sets out is a remarkable witness to the very themes of the church as an alternative community, peace-making, reconciliation, Christian discipleship, and servanthood that his writings have taught so many of us," said Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "There has been a great deal of pain for many people in all of this. But I am truly impressed with the way they are working together in all of this. I wish my denomination could learn to be one-fourth as constructive in dealing with all of us sinners. It's a great witness to grace."

"John is the one who taught us that this is the way," Hauerwas said. "I think the way he has submitted to the church process is a testimony to John's life….After the shock wears off among many people who are receiving the news, this may well result in a strengthening of John Yoder's

influence….When all is said and done, its going to be enhanced not hurt, because he submitted to the process.

Appendix M

Indiana Michigan Conference Announcements
John Howard Yoder Ministerial Credentials

Church Life Commission suspends credentials

The Church Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Conference has taken action to suspend the ministerial credentials of John Howard Yoder, Elkhart, Indiana, on June 27, 1992. This action calls for restitution and a program of therapy after which restoration of credentials will be considered.

The action was based on the work of a task force (representative persons from the Mennonite Church community) appointed by the elders of Prairies Street Mennonite Church of Elkhart where John is a member.

The task force received reports from women across the Mennonite Church and has had interviews with a number of them. It also has had interviews with Yoder. From this work the task force concluded that the reports are true and that Yoder has violated sexual boundaries.

The task force "…recommended that John participate in therapy to work thoroughly with the issues involved and that he meet periodically with an accountability group to be assisted and monitored as he works for change." Yoder has agreed to these recommendations.

The Church Life Commission supports the recommendation of the task force and is in conversation with them in regard to their implementation. Indiana Michigan Conference, Gospel Evangel, September, 1992), p. 2

Disciplinary process with John Howard Yoder draws to a close

The Executive Committee and Church Life Commission (CLC) of Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference is concluding the disciplinary process with John Howard Yoder.

Yoder's credentials were suspended in 1992 after investigations that he abused appropriate sexual boundaries with a number of women were confirmed.

In the fall of 1992 an Accountability and support Group (ASG) was appointed by the CLC. This group met more than 30 times with Yoder and his wife Annie. These meetings were "marked by openness, mutual acceptance, respect, confrontation and, we believe, growing trust" according to the ASG.

They report further that Yoder has stated clearly that he is committed to not cross appropriate sexual boundaries in his future relationships with women.

After receiving reports of intensive work by the Accountability and Support Group, professional evaluators and, after conversation with Yoder, the Church Life Commission and Yoder mutually agreed that his ministerial credentials not be reinstated.

The ASG's final report stated that Yoder made significant changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to bring closure to the process. They also report that Yoder has gained greater awareness of and appreciation of forgiveness in the faith community. The Church Life Commission commends Yoder for participating in the process to its conclusion.

While recommending the continuing use of an accountability plan, the CLC of the IN-MI Mennonite Conference encourages Yoder and the church to use his gifts of writing and teaching.

Appendix N

Mennonite Church Polity Issues

Introductory Comments

> *Any form of peace or reconciliation that allows the sin of injustice and oppression to continue is a "false" peace and "counterfeit" reconciliation. This kind of "reconciliation" has nothing to do with the Christian faith.*
>
> *The Kairos Document* (South Africa)[1]

The years between 1950 and 2000 have been turbulent years for American denominational churches as episodes of religious professional and clergy sexual abuse surfaced in one denomination after another, in one community after another. Celebrity televangelists were revealed to be engaged in various forms of sexual and financial misconduct.[2] Ordained ministers and priests were uncovered as sexual abusers of members of the laity.[3] Missionaries and service workers abroad were alleged to have formed intimate and adulterous sexual relationships with the people they'd come to evangelize.[4] Students in denominational seminaries accused their professors of sexually harassing them.[5] Colleges and universities came under scrutiny for the sexual misconduct of faculty members and athletic coaches as well as for perceived administrative cover-ups.[6] Well-respected theologians and ethicists were accused of sexual improprieties.[7] Denominational primary and secondary schools terminated the employment of teachers and administrators for molestation, rape and attempted rape.[8] A wide variety of religious professionals maintained short or long term adulterous relationships – sometimes with their students, clients, or members of the laity for whom they were responsible in some way.[9] As increasing numbers of Roman Catholic adults accused priests, members of religious orders, bishops and cardinals of sexual misconduct with small children, a world wide scandal exploded that reached as high as the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI.[10]

North America's secular media began to pay attention and to report these violations.[11] Many victims lodged complaints and pursued justice in American courts.[12] Political jurisdictions initiated Grand Jury investigations

of criminal behavior after denominations failed to report child pornography addictions to civil authorities and sought to cover up or hide evidence regarding ordained ministers or members of religious orders who sexually assaulted pre-pubertal children and post-pubertal adolescents.[13] Executive members of the religious hierarchy were ordered to stand trial for cover-up activities.[14]

While much of American society was more tolerant towards various forms of consenting adult sexual behavior, there was increasingly less tolerance for abusive sexual behavior or public sexual misconduct. No longer could ministers (or coaches and politicians) count on society's silence regarding matters of their non-marital and sometimes abusive sexual behavior. Another change was that victims of sexual abuse were increasingly believed and thus empowered to act by American police and legal systems. Definitions of rape and other forms of physical and sexual violence were overhauled by the United States' police and public health Institutions.[15] Religious organizations were brought out of denial of their own personnel management responsibilities by the threat (and presence) of costly financial settlements with victims of organizational perpetrators of abuse.[16]

Institutional Church Responses and Documents

Prior to the 1980's m*oral turpitude* clauses in employment contracts usually referred to acts of consenting adultery or public criminal sexual behavior. In some ways, it seemed to me then, moral turpitude claims and subsequent institutional discipline of erring professionals referred to individuals who did coerced deviant sex acts, fully naked, on Main Street in front of the sheriff's office at high noon, with individuals who were not legally competent to consent.

In many religious institutions it was inconceivable to the laity that large numbers of clergy and religious administrators could be engaged in abusive sexual misconduct and repressive administrative cover-ups. The common perception was that these kinds of sexual violence situations represented deviant or pathological behavior of only a few isolated individuals. It was inconceivable that a small ethnic denomination, such as the Mennonite Church, might match the professional abuse demographic research statistics which began to emerge in larger denominations during the 1980s.

When one looks at Mennonite church polity booklets, in light of the complexities of clergy sexual abuse behaviors with women and children, the historical situation becomes quite clear. Individual abusers and their abusive behaviors occurred within denominational structures of accountability that were both pious and vague. Initially more concern was expressed for redeeming the perpetrator or offender than with healing the wounds of his victims. In the early statements, for example, there is no mention of victims. Specific behaviors and specific protocols for managing sexually abusive clergy were unclear. Identified consequences for sexual misconduct were unspecific, and usually, totally unclear about the differences between consenting adultery and non-consenting criminal sexual abuse.

1952: Mennonite Church Polity: A Statement of Practices in Church Government

For example, the 1952 Mennonite Church Polity Statement (Herald Press) identified a bishop's generic *breaches of conduct, trust and erroneous doctrine* and a minister's generic *breaches of conduct and unfaithful ministry*. Discipline in both cases usually involved removal from ministry or refusal of communion or excommunication (23). The pathway back (reconciliation) included confession, reinstatement to membership, congregational requests for reinstatement to ministry and the consent of the presiding bishop, district or conference.

1956: Mennonite Handbook for Indiana-Michigan Conference

In the 1956 *Mennonite Handbook for Indiana-Michigan Conference* the following paragraph summarizes *removal from office and/or services*.

> *When a member of the ministry is unsound in his teaching or disloyal to his ordination vows, or morally disqualified, it becomes the duty of the congregation to report its findings to conference, which in co-operation with the congregation shall make the final disposition of this matter. If the congregation fails to act, it becomes the duty of conference to take initiative* (33).

In addition the church is admonished to *avoid offenses, seek the good, reconcile the wrong, forgive the offender and be merciful to the offender*"

The church is to make efforts to restore and reconcile *by private and individual counsel before action may be taken by the Church* (46). The church is additionally called to make *prayerful efforts to restore offenders after a reasonable time given for reflection and repentance* (46).

1985: Mennonite Church Consultation with Rev. Chilton Knudsen

By 1985, the Mennonite Church as a denomination and Indiana-Michigan Conference as a regional governing body both knew they had a sexual abuse problem. In part, this stemmed from the denomination's awareness of the rumors regarding John Howard Yoder and his alleged sexual misconduct. In 1985 a *by-invitation-only* meeting took place at Sunnyside Mennonite Church in Dunlap, Indiana. Representatives of various church agencies were included. The invited consultant-speaker was the Rev. Chilton Knudsen from the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago (now retired Episcopal Bishop of Maine). In 1985, her role in the ecclesiastical structures of her denomination was to oversee the church's procedures regarding clergy sexual abuse. I have returned to my notes from this consultation to summarize what was learned by participants.

Knudsen began her work by exhorting us, *Begin with the vulnerable. It is the chrism of the Christian Community to care for the vulnerable*. Her text was the journey of the holy family into Egypt – where in a reversal of the Exodus story – Egypt provided safety to Joseph, Mary and Jesus. She reminded the working group of several realities:

- When power differentials are present, empower the vulnerable because true love is not possible between people who are not equals. The task is to multiply love (quoting Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru).

- True or genuine reconciliation is possible only between equals. This means that the church must deal with its use and misuse of power.

- The seducer takes account of the power differential and manipulates it. In his behavior towards the vulnerable one, he is not to be denied.

- Victims, therefore, must be empowered to leverage the power differential. They should be instructed to document all contacts with the individual who is acting in abusive ways towards them. This includes letters, phone calls, and personal contacts and contacts by electronic message systems. Victims need to be empowered to break open the silence that surrounds them and to consult with others about what is happening to them.

- The church needs to be safe. Unspoken hierarchical roles of increased power are more dangerous and more open to situations of abuse. She noted that predation occurs *not when a client is strong or when the relationship can be truly mutual, but with "woundedness" that invites violation*. It is important, Knudsen noted, that when one is a pastor, one can never be a peer.

- She noted types of offenders; (1) the *normal neurotic* in which high stress situations enable the individual to cross boundaries he (or she) ordinarily would not cross. This is the truthful story of *only one time.* Here the individual can take responsibility for the self and his actions and he can take responsibility for *felt guilt*. (2) The *wanderer* has established patterns of multiple abusive encounters. He feels guilt, however, and with skilled intervention can change. (3) Finally there is the *sociopath.* He is, by character formation, unable to accept responsibility for his actions and the harm he has done to others. There is, to date, no known way to change his behavior or his outlook.

Knudsen's advice to church leaders was so on the mark (from my vantage point as a clinician who had specialized in sexual violence) that I will summarize it below;

First, she advised the group to never settle for evil. Use real data from witnesses and from collateral witnesses. Establish, to the best of your ability, the truth of the matter.

Second, treat psychological assessment as a separate process from therapeutic treatment. Understand that assessment is not the same as

therapy. A therapist cannot proceed competently in this area without an adequate assessment protocol. Since individuals can decline to reveal assessment procedures, the administrative officer needs to say *the confidential report of the assessment will be shared with X, Y, and Z. You will begin this process immediately*. To protect the rights of the accused and the safety of the investigators, she recommended experienced and qualified out-of-state residential assessment teams. Since the press watches the public process, she acknowledged the need to utilize pseudonyms during the evaluation process to protect the accused. The goal of assessment is to gain a working differential diagnosis. When the diagnosis is sociopathic personality, the church should immediately de-credential the individual and inform future references about the reasons for his dismissal. In providing pastoral care to a sociopath, forgiving his actions does not mean keeping him in ministry. He can and should be supported in his transition out of the ministry into secular life. In this situation, good pastoral care involves justice and out-placement with socio-economic support for making the transition out of ministry.

The need to utilize skilled and experienced therapists is critical. Well-qualified specialists are essential. An understanding of the on-going, high potential for recidivism is essential. Agencies that may be excellent at assessment may be mediocre for treatment. Therefore church officials need to be informed about resources for both assessment and for treatment. The rationale for in-patient residential assessment and therapy is that the individual cannot organize or manipulate his supporters. Lying is undercut. Denial is undercut. Rationalization is undercut.

Assessment and treatment records belong to the conference which paid for the process. The accused minister or church administrator must agree to this by signing information release forms at the beginning of the process.

In Knudsen's assessment sex offender therapy is a specialized branch of psychiatry and basic treatment processes can last up to three years. Essential to the therapeutic package is a process of continuing aftercare to support the growth and change which happened during the in-patient residential treatment process. Although the cost may be considerable and insurance coverage only partial, in depth treatment is usually necessary for permanent change to occur.

One goal of such a process is to establish full accountability by the offender to the church and to his victim(s). Full accountability means knowing exactly what happened and to whom and for how long. A second related goal is to have the abusive individual take full responsibility for his behavior and to break through the well-internalized systems of personal denial and rationalizations that supported the behavior. In addition, another closely related goal is for the offender to come to self-awareness. Full accountability, therefore, means a willingness to cooperate with therapists in bringing about permanent behavioral change. It means a willingness to fully co-operate with ongoing oversight if and when the individual returns to full ministry. The individual can never, however, return to the prior life-situation of doing business as usual. The church has an obligation not to place the individual in situations where recidivism is likely. This means some kind of continuing oversight and active supervision. She noted the Episcopal experience regarding the individual clergy members who bailed out of the assessment and treatment process (in her estimate approximately 60-80% of the total population of abusers). When individuals bail out, the entire process of attempting reconciliation and re-credentialing the offender breaks down.

Third, it is necessary to separate disciplinary procedures from therapeutic interventions. Truth from supervisory or administrative investigations needs to be shared with the therapeutic team.

Finally, Knudsen addressed the issue of conversion of the offender from the lived-idolatry of their lives to date. Suggesting that the church's goal is such a conversion, she strongly suggested that a spiritual guide or a spiritual director be employed to assist the offender and the offender's family with emotional and spiritual issues related to the offender's sexual abuse of others.

She noted that families frequently relate to the offender in a bi-modal manner in which (1) they are shocked, hurt, and offended by the perpetrator's abuse of others. The family structure may fragment and shatter as members of the family seek to find ways to relate to each other and to the offender. (2) They become a dysfunctional family unit and an enabling protector of the offender. In this mode, they actively sabotage ways in which the offender might deal appropriately with his historical abuse of others. As they enable and protect the offender, members of the

family are in deep denial about what the offender has done to others and the damage he has done to other's lives.

Regarding the Episcopal Church's findings, accusers need to be believed and the church needs to investigate their accusations. Both steps are needed for the rights of accusers and the rights of the accused to be maintained. She noted the following types of profiles for accusers:

- Accusers are usually deeply connected to the life of the church. It is rare, she said, to find an accuser who wants *to take down the church.*

- Accusers make reports only after significant personal agony and inner wrestling with their decisions regarding silence and speech on these matters. Breaking the silence often involves a prolonged struggle to know what to do and to develop the inner courage needed to speak out.

- Once patterns of institutional silence are broken, individuals are more willing to tell what they know, From today's perspective on these matters, it has grown clear that when one victim speaks out and is treated as a credible human being, other victims are frequently empowered to speak out about their own experiences. In this way information about other situations of abuse often surface into awareness. If the church is, however, hostile and unbelieving towards the first individual (or even perceived to be so), other abused individuals will remain silent.

- Accusers must deal with accusations that they *have brought down one of God's chosen ones*. These accusations may surface in their own consciousness or they may be actual accusations from the exterior world around them. They may even be spoken by the abuser himself.

- Accusers struggle to know their own responsibility for what happened. Often they need to be reminded that the abuser is responsible for his choices and behaviors. Victim guilt needs to be addressed.

- One motivating factor for many victims who speak up is their concern that *no one else should be hurt*. When they have suspicions that

there are other victims, many victims are freed to speak out and to speak out more forthrightly.

- A second motivating factor, almost as potent as the one immediately above, is the belief that the offender needs to get help in order to stop his abusive patterns of behavior.

- A *third* motivating factor for accusers is their perception that they are responsible to take care of their own well-being. This includes their mental and emotional health, their physical health, and their spiritual health. It is often the case that this realization has happened during previous therapeutic encounters as victims sought to regain control over their own lives.

In the Episcopal Church's experience with these matters, Knudsen said that after investigation, 95-98% of allegations were accurate and credible ones.

As the church works with victims of abuse, one of the essential issues (as it is in cases of rape and battering) is to return as much personal power to the victims as soon as possible. This means honoring their desires not to be publicly identified. This means supporting them when the predator or a predator's supporter counter-attacks by saying things such as, y*ou know how crazy she is* or *everyone knows that she is mentally ill*. This means referring them to and supporting them in their encounters with police or legal authorities.

Since many survivors are deeply troubled by the presence of abuse in their life history, patience is needed. Awareness of the trauma syndrome response is critical.[17] Providing survivors of victimization whatever kind of emotional or spiritual support they ask for is essential. When survivors appear *overly needy* it becomes important that networks of support are established so that any one church administrator or counselor is not overwhelmed by the needy person's needs. Assistance to victims in finding competent therapists, pastoral counselors, or spiritual directors is also necessary. It is essential that the accuser tell the truth as she knows it – including any on-going relationship with the individual she has accused. When it can be done so appropriately, it is useful to victims to hear the church respond with concern, w*e are sorry for the pain or suffering you feel, for the distress you are experiencing*. When there is an initial situation

in which the church responded negligently or harmfully, it is very useful for the victim to have this acknowledged. *I apologize for the hurt you experienced in your encounter with the church. You were wronged*.

The church's task with victims and with perpetrators is quite simple in the final analysis. *First,* the denominational church needs to help the victims let go of their sense of false responsibility for what happened to them. *Secondly*, the denominational church needs to help perpetrators acknowledge factual responsibility for what they did to harm others. While simple to state, this is complex theological and therapeutic work.

As denominational churches gain skills in working with these issues of professional abuse and clergy abuse, two future-oriented goals emerge: (1) to prevent future episodes of abuse and (2) to promote the healing of individuals and the church community.

Some random issues surfaced throughout the consultation process. They seem important for the well-being of the church community at large:

- No one gets a church-related job without a sexual background check for the past five years;

.

- No one with a history of clergy or professional sexual abuse is sent to a future parish without full up-front disclosure of the past;

- For institutional hires, all gaps in data are verified and accounted for; do not only call listed references. Expand the reference pool;

- Local congregations must be informed and told about the factual truth;

- Adequate denominational records of the entire process must be kept. If new complaints emerge later, the process must begin all over again.

1993: Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials

In May, 1993, a re-organized and re-configured Mennonite Church of America published its *Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials, second edition.* The document begins with the statement that

Persons in roles and relationships of ministerial leadership within the community of faith commit themselves to be examples of the highest standards of personal and professional conduct (1). Primary responsibility for disciplining offenders is lodged within the conference structure and they may initiate disciplinary processes or respond to congregational requests or to accusations made by two or more individuals (Section I, 2). The document clarifies that one victim must have a credible witness with her rather than that two victims must be demonstrable before the church acts.

Section B notes the complexities of Mennonite polity: churches are responsible for hiring and firing ministers but area conference leadership is responsible for credentialing individuals for ministry. Embedded within a laundry list of potential ministerial offenses are two that relate to clergy abuse.

- Acts of physical, emotional or verbal abuse;

- Acts of sexual abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and deviation [a vague term: presumably they mean consenting adultery but it could include bestiality] from Christian norms regarding sexuality. Particularly onerous are those actions of inappropriate sexuality carried out with a parishioner, client, colleague, or with anyone in relationships involving the minister's professional roles and responsibilities (5).

Unlike the documents of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, this document details procedures for responding to specific complaints. I will summarize and paraphrase these:

- Accusations must be in writing; the accuser must be known by name to the committee who hears the complaint; and decisions about victim confidentiality will be made by the committee and the victim in consultation with each other. No totally anonymous complaints will be honored. The accuser may have a support person with her at all meetings with conference officials.
- The accused must be informed of the charges against him. Within ten days of this informational step, a meeting is to be held with the accused to review the accusations and to establish procedures. The accused may also bring a support person with him to all meetings with conference officials.

- Response to victims includes a pastoral call to offer support, accurate information about conference protocols, and to locate a competent victim's advocate. The overarching primary concern is to stop the abuse. The victim should be made aware of civil law and legal options available to her.

- Response to the accused includes the right to be fully heard and to have due process including a reasonable time to respond to the complaints made against him. When decisions are made about credentials, a reason for conference actions must be given. The desired goal is restoration to full fellowship but this is *not to be confused with restoration to ministerial leadership* (11).Possibilities include leaves of absence, clearance of charges, reproof and admonishment, suspension of credentials or termination of credentials.

- Response to congregations where clergy abuse has occurred includes the need for pastoral care of congregations.

What does all of this mean? When conference officers clear a minister of all charges, the burden of the conference and of the congregation is to restore the individual's good name. The individual continues in his ministry.

When the individual is reproved or reprimanded, he or she is usually *placed on probation*. These activities may be public or private. Time limits are set for a review of progress.

The *suspension of ministerial credentials* means that the individual is not in good standing and that before he can return to active ministry, significant changes must be demonstrated. The goal of suspension is to allow time for therapy to take place. During the time of the suspension, an accountability group needs to meet monthly. The accountability group consists of a representative of the credentialing body, a representative of the congregation, the one suspended and his advocate, and an advocate for the victims. The accountability group is responsible to monitor the suspension and the processes of restoration and to keep conference officials informed of progress towards repentance and reconciliation.

Withdrawal of ministerial credentials is a permanent revocation that terminates the ministerial credential. *The goal of withdrawal is to retain the person as a member of the church while recognizing that a leadership role is no longer appropriate* (14). Of particular note in this document is the attention paid to information releases. Just as ordination is a public event, so too are suspension and withdrawal of ministerial credentials public matters and the church at large needs to be notified. The document notes: *Public disclosure can either encourage or support the victim(s) or it can further victimize them. It can also empower other victims who have not come forward or it can further discourage and intimidate them from coming forward* (14-15).

Noteworthy to this document, is that pages 17 to 21 are devoted to sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The power dimensions of clergy abuse are well-documented. Procedural issues regarding prevention are addressed as well as ways to support individual victims in a process of reporting such violations. This section notes, in particular, the needs of the perpetrator's spouse and family for support and notes a common human tendency of family members to defend the perpetrator and to attack the "threatening action" which is coming against them (29).

In this document's summary of issues regarding the reinstatement or permanent withdrawal of credentials, the following items are noted:

- The individual perpetrator has appropriately acknowledged his sin or error;

- The individual has repented and altered patterns of behavior or beliefs;

- The individual has given evidence of concern for the persons wronged by making appropriate forms of restitution;

- The individual adheres to the safeguards deemed appropriate to preclude subsequent misconduct;

- The individual has co-operated with the committee in the process set forth;

- The individual is perceived as a person capable of effectively representing the Church and a gracious God who in Christ forgives and restores to newness of life (22)

1992/1993: Church-Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Conference Guidelines for dealing with alleged sexual harassment and/or abuse by persons with ministerial credentials recognized by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

In June, 1993, Indiana-Michigan reviewed the Mennonite Church of America document. Slight changes were made. The Church Life Commission of the Indiana-Michigan Conference recommended that allegations could be received from *individuals* (one assumes victims), the conference minister, congregations, or through concerned individuals (one assumes witnesses to victimization).

In addition, procedures are set in place when the alleged perpetrator does not *own* the behaviors he is accused of doing which adjudicators have learned that he has, in fact, done.

In their accompanying letter to the institutional church Dale Stoltzfus and Anne Stuckey (Ministers of Congregational Leadership, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries) advised church leaders that this document was written with and reviewed by legal counsel. *The word of wisdom that we have received is being voiced across all denominations today is twofold: 1) have guidelines in place for discipline issues and 2) make sure you closely and carefully follow these guidelines*. Noting the social changes in Canada and the United States, they continue: *Another word of counsel is to remind you that various states and provinces have their own laws, especially related to sexual abuse. You would be well-advised to learn the laws which are applicable in the states or provinces for which you are responsible. Assisting congregations in finding pastors and processing ministerial credentials has legal implications today. Liability insurance for your area conferences should be considered*.

1996: A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership: A Statement by the Joint Conference in Ministerial Leadership

It is noteworthy that in the wake of the John Howard Yoder situation (and several other high-profile professional or clergy abuse situations) and at least one lawsuit filed against a Mennonite conference, the Mennonite church revisited its doctrinal documents on qualifications for church ministry. In 1996 the document *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership: A Statement by the Joint Conference in Ministerial Leadership* (Everett Thomas, Ed.) was co-published by the General Conference Mennonite Faith and Life Press in Kansas and by the Mennonite Church's Herald Press in Pennsylvania.

Noting that ordination is ordinarily for life, the document locates ministerial accountability processes with the conference. The document comments, [*W]here cases of discipline and removal of credentials occur, the process is the responsibility of the area conference ministerial leadership committee in consultation with the congregation and the denomination* (30). Later the document continues, [I]n *very rare cases and for reason of discipline, the church discerns if it must take action to remove credentials or to silence an ordained person. Such an action is understood as a revocation of the ordination and the person is to be considered as no longer ordained* (37). Still later, it continues: *Termination of ordination [includes] formal revocation by the conference or congregation for ethical unfaithfulness or incompatibility with Mennonite Church doctrine and polity* (52).

Thus, the Mennonite Church's 1996 church polity statement includes the possibility for suspension while repentance and reconciliation is sought and termination when these processes are unsuccessful and the offending individual is recalcitrant or intransigent about making the needed changes for the church's restoration of individuals to full ministry.

The document concludes this section with biblical admonition:

> *The New Testament's Pastoral Epistles offer qualifications for the ministry. One must be above reproach, faithful to one's spouse, trustworthy, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, nor quarrelsome, nor a lover of money. A minister must care well for his/her own household because that is the foundation of being able to care pastorally for the church. A minister must not be a*

recent convert and must be well thought of by those outside the church. He/she must treat older women respectfully like a mother, younger women like sisters, younger men like brothers, and older men like fathers. These pastoral relationships are also to be characterized by courtesy, honor, respect and purity (100).

Concluding Comments

In looking at the progression of official church polity documents when matters regarding the ministerial credentials and the lived-life of ministers are raised, it becomes quite clear that the awareness of sexual abuse and professional abuse issues which emerged in the Mennonite Church during the years from 1970 until 2000 changed the organizational climate towards more sensitivity about these kinds of power and authority abuse issues.

Denominational policies were put in place, which if followed, will protect the church's laity from abuse and the institutional church from charges of secrecy and covering-up the behaviors of known perpetrators. They will also protect falsely accused individuals. In this sense, the three decades of women's activism regarding Mennonite clergy sexual abusers has had a positive effect on the organizational and spiritual life of the denomination. Procedures are now in place to protect individuals from predatory clergy. Basic information about professional abuse has been provided to all regional conferences and all church administrators.

Appendix O

Summary Report of the Work of the Task Force with JYH

To: Prairie Street Board of Church Elders,
In-MI Mennonite Conference Church Life Commission

From: John Howard Yoder Task Force

June 26, 1992

Subject: Summary Report of the Work of the Task Force with JHY

The task force met a number of times since July, 1991 to investigate persistent rumors of sexual misconduct by John Howard Yoder. The goal of the task force was to work for repentance, restoration, and healing for all who have been hurt by John's actions. We were deeply moved by the firsthand accounts of pain, fear, and violation from eight women.

In five meetings with John our conversations were open, confrontive, and sometimes filled with emotion. The investigation of the task force brought us to the following conclusions regarding John's behavior. The charges brought by the women are accurate, and John has violated sexual boundaries.

John has acknowledged the truth of the charges and has expressed deep regret for the hurt his actions have caused for the women. John has recognized the deep rifts in integrity and trust which have developed between himself and the church and its institutions. Furthermore, John has agreed to yield to the will of the church regarding standards of conduct between men and women. He has committed himself to begin no new sexually intimate relationships, and has since acted to cut off ongoing relationships which violate church standards.

At the same time, the task force has sensed in John a high degree of rationalization and a denial of the problems associated with his sexual misconduct. We have strongly recommended that John participate in therapy to work thoroughly with the issues involved and that he meet

periodically with an accountability group to be assisted and monitored as he works at change. He has agreed to these two recommendations.

John will prepare a statement for the women who have spoken directly to the task force of their pain. He is also preparing a statement to the church community as an initial step in his desire to follow a path that acknowledges wrongs committed.

Appendix P

Goshen Biblical Seminary[18]
1970 Supervisory Channels

Mennonite Board of Education

Al Meyer, Executive Director
Paul Bender
J. J. Hostetter

Goshen Biblical Seminary

Board of Overseers

Paul Conrad
Clayton Eigsti
James D. Kratz
Nelson Kaufman
Emerson McDonald
John H. Powell
Donald E. Yoder
Richard J. Yordy

Administrative Officers

John Howard Yoder, President
Ross Bender, Dean
Weyburn Groff, Student Affairs
Ed Stoltzfus, Student Field Work

Teaching Faculty

Ross Bender
Howard Charles
Weyburn Groff
Millard Lind
Paul Miller
J. C. Wenger
John Howard Yoder
Paul Mininger
Sanford A. Yoder, Emeritus

Footnotes

[1] W. Logan, 1985.

[2] For example, see R. Martinez at www.spiritwatch.org/swagfire1.htm

[3]T. P. Doyle, (July 13, 2008).

[4] P. O. Lehman (2002).
[5] A. W. R. Sipe, (September 6, 2011).

[6] B. W. Dziech and L. Weiner, (1990): Henneberger, (March 30-April 12).

[7] D. Windsor (December 1, 1991); *New York Times Online (December 3, 1991) and* T. Price, (June 29, 1992).

[8] J. Hawkes November 9, 2011): L. Terry, (February 15, 2012): E. J. Thomas (ud);

[9] M. M. Fortune, (1989): C. H. Heggen, (1993): K. Labacqz and R. G. Barton, (1991: Sellinger, 1998: and H. Tilliich, (1974).

[10] D. Yallop, (2010) and D. Yallop, D. (2007).

[11] Boston Globe Investigative Staff (2002) and P. Steinfels (2003).

[12] D. Price (2008): *Gospel Herald,* CHURCH NEWS (June 9, 1992), p. 9.

[13] Grand Jury Report (January 21, 2011), Court of Common Pleas, First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia County. Retrieve from http://www.phila.gov/districtattorney/grandjury clergy/abuse.htm

[14] Y. T. Abouhalkah, (April 5, 2012).

[15] Associated Press (January 7, 2012). US redefines rape, listing men and others as victims. *Arizona Daily Star, p. A*-20.

[16] Love and Norris, (2011).

[17] I would add, in 2012, that in addition to awareness of the trauma syndrome, awareness of the betrayal syndrome is also essential. See Freyd, 1996.

[18] Source: *Mennonite Yearbook*

Appendix Q

Goshen Biblical Seminary[1]
1973 Supervisory Channels

Mennonite Board of Education

Wilbert Shenk, President
Peter B. Wiebe, Vice President
Clifford P. Martin
Dean M. Brubaker
Victor Eash
Harold G. Eshleman
Orrin J. Smucker
A. Grace Wenger
Howard Hershberger

Al Meyer, Executive Secretary
Roy T. Hartzler, Assistant Executive Secretary

Goshen Biblical Seminary

Board of Overseers

Richard J. Yordy, Chair
John H. Powell, Secretary
Paul L. Conrad
Clayton Eigsti
Nelson Kauffmann
James D. Kratz
Donald E. Yoder

Administrative Officers

John Howard Yoder, President
Ross Bender, Dean
Weyburn Groff, Registrar
Joe Hertzler, Church Relations
Paul Miller, Field Work Supervisor

Teaching Faculty

Ross Bender
Howard Charles
Weyburn Groff
Millard Lind
Paul Miller
J. C. Wenger
John Howard Yoder

Footnotes

[1] Source: *Mennonite Yearbook*

Appendix R

GCBS, GBS, and AMBS Seminary Re-configuration and The Mennonite Historical Library (1972)

The Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS)[1] was a cooperative effort between Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) which was moving to a new campus in Elkhart, IN from the greater Chicago area and the Goshen College Biblical Seminary (GCBS) already located on the Goshen College (IN) campus. By this administrative arrangement, GCBS students and MBS students were offered an enriched and enlarged curricular program of courses.[2]

The Mennonite Historical Library (MHL) which was formed in 1906 by contributions from the GC Alumni Association was lodged on the GC campus. By 1959 when GCBS (still an academic division of GC) moved into its new on-campus facilities (now called Newcomer Center) the MHL collection moved into the Newcomer Center seminary office and classroom building from the campus' central but aging and cramped, Memorial library.

By the end of the 1960's, when both seminaries consolidated their geographical location in Elkhart, IN, GCBS officers continued to report to the Goshen College administrators and board of overseers. By 1969-1970, however, GBS (formerly GCBS) and MBS consolidated their administrative relations. By July 1, 1970, GBS no longer was a department of the GC academic program. Its administrative officers ceased to report formally to the GC president and they now reported to a self-governing board of seminary overseers and to the Mennonite Board of Education (MBE).

From Goshen College's administrative perspective, the MHL was an integral part of the GC library resources. When GC in 1968 completed a new campus library (the Good Library), the MHL moved into the Good Library's physical space from its previous location in the Newcomer Center office and classroom building. This seemed a natural progression of previous moves from Memorial Library to Newcomer Center to the Good library – *from the Goshen College perspective.*[3]

The AMBS perspective, however, was that the MHL collection had been created as a distinct "sub-identity" of the larger collection and had been funded by the GCBS budget during its previous years of existence on the GC campus. Therefore, they proposed that the MHL collection be resettled on the new AMBS campus. Thus, difficult inter-institution questions were raised about the location of the MHL. On which campus should it be located?

Eventually, the issue was resolved. The MHL remained housed on the GC campus. GC paid AMBS *the total of the amount expended from seminary budgets from 1958 to the time of agreement for MHL acquisitions* (1980). According to Joe Springer, curator of the current MHL collection, a more apt word than payment is *reimbursement* for former GCBS/GBS purchase allocations to the MHL. This agreement between GC and AMBS was coordinated by Al Meyer, MBE Executive Secretary.

Footnotes

[1] In May, 2012, AMBS announced its new name, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, signaling its current identity as one seminary rather than its previous identity as a coalition of two seminaries. In this manuscript, I continue to use the earlier name inasmuch as this was the official name of the seminaries during Yoder's lifetime.

[2] Correspondence (April 4, 2011) from MHL Curator Joe Springer, Mennonite Historical Library.

[3] Ibid.

Appendix S

Goshen Biblical Seminary[1]
1983-1984
Supervisory and Administrative Channels

Mennonite Board of Education

Charles Gautsche, President
Gerald L. Hughes, Vice President
H. Ralph Hernley, Treasurer
Benno Borg
Willard D. Conrad
Lowell Herr
Samuel Jackson
Lois Kanagy
Betty Livengood
Paul Schrock
Alfonso Vallliera
J. Glen Widmer

Albert J. Meyer, Executive Secretary

Goshen Biblical Seminary

Board of Overseers

Sheldon Burkhalter
Evelyn Shellenberger
Doug Widmer
Peter Wiebe
Daniel Yutzy
Lawrence Eby
Melvin Jantzi
Laban Peachey

Administrative Officers

Marlin Miller, President
Joseph Hertzler, Assistant to the President
Jacob Elias, Dean
Weyburn Groff, Registrar
James E. Metzler
Virgil Classen
Marcus Smucker
Thelma Groff

Teaching Faculty

David Augsburger
Ross Bender
Howard H. Charles
Leroy Friesen
Roelf Kuitse
Millard Lind
Willard Swartley
John C. Wenger
John Howard Yoder

Footnotes

[1] Source: *The Mennonite Yearbook*

Appendix T

1992

Mennonite Church Supervisory Structures[1]

Mennonite Church General Board

James M. Lapp, General Secretary

Indiana-Michigan Conference Officers

John C. Murray, President
Willie Miller, Vice President
Simon Gingerich, Secretary
Donna DeVito, Recording Secretary

James M. Buller	Garry Link
James Gerber	Richard Oswald
Samuel Hernandez	Bertha Plank
LaJane Yoder	

Sherman Kauffman, Executive Secretary
Willis L. Breckbill, Conference Minister
David Helmuth, Church Life Commission Chair

Prairie Street Mennonite Church

Harold J. Yoder, Co-pastor
Ruth Ann Yoder, Co-pastor

Footnotes

[1] Source, Mennonite Yearbook

Appendix U

Mennonite Church Supervisory Structures[1]
1996

Mennonite Church General Board

Owen Burkholder, President
Dwight McFadden, Vice President
Lavon Welty, Secretary

Miriam Book, Interim General Secretary
George Stoltzfus, General Secretary

Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries

Marcus Smucker, President
Nancy Good Sider, Vice President
Everett J. Thomas, Executive Secretary

Indiana – Michigan Conference

Oversight Committee

Jerry Albrecht
Ruby Bontrager
Jane Buller
James Gerber
Russell Leinbach
Joe Maust
LaJane Yoder
Olive Yutzy

Administrative Officers

Sherman Kauffman, Executive Secretary
Del Glick, Conference Minister
Charlotte Holsopple Glick, Conference Minister
Stanley Troyer, Conference Minister

Church Life Committee

Gerald Good, Chair
Mary Albrecht
Gordon Dyck
Evelyn Shellenberger
Ross Weber

Bondage and Delivery Committee

Harold Bauman, Chair

Prairie Street Mennonite Church

Harold J. Yoder, Pastor

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[1] Source: *The Mennonite Yearbook*

Appendix V

John Howard Yoder, 1917-1997
A Partial Listing of Eulogies, Obituaries, and Tributes

Burkholder, J. R. (April, 1998). John Howard Yoder, 1927-1997 (p. 116), *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 12 (2).

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I also thank my Mennonite colleagues – those individuals who read drafts (sometimes multiple drafts) of these chapters. In light of the professional problems which institutional Mennonite academics and church employed individuals face when confronted with the politically volatile issues which encircle today's questions about Yoder's career, I have chosen here to acknowledge them as a group – rather than as individuals. While none of them is responsible for the conclusions I have reached, their penetrating opinions, critiques and questions have strengthened this manuscript. My gratitude is profound. Individually and collectively, this small group of individuals has for more than five years supported my decision to work on understanding and then publishing my version of the Yoder story.

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During the process of writing and then publishing Volume One, Father Thomas P. Doyle, a Roman Catholic Dominican priest and canon lawyer befriended me and assisted me to look at the Roman Catholic Church and its theology and praxis from inside its own perspectives rather than those of my denominational heritage. In addition, his professional online bibliography led me to identify additional authors who could help me understand his church in its twenty-first century encounters with sexual abuse and clericalism. In studying his church's issues, I began to gain a framework and language for understanding my own church's encounters with clergy sexual abusers and institutional clericalism. While this current book in its entirety has not been read by Father Doyle, he graciously reviewed chapter 8 for me. His influence on my conceptual maps about these difficult issues has been profound. However, he is not responsible for any erroneous conclusions I have drawn from his work.

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1) Anonymous, Resources are Available

2) Espenshade, L. Tough Series to Write, A Tougher Subject to be Understood.

3) _____ Church Requires Contrition, not Necessarily Change.

4) _____Churches Take Steps to Address Abuse.

5) _____ Hidden in *Plain* Sight.

6) _____Fixing Broken Lives can be Frightening, Arduous.

7) _____Mental Illness Compounds Issue of *Plain* Abuse.

8) _____Predators Wear no Scarlet Letter.

9) _____Silenced by Shame.

10) _____ Some Leaders Willing to Lift the Shame and Consider Change

11) _____ Teaming Up with Outside Help is the key to Reform.

12) _____ The Tie that Binds Can Form the Noose.

13) _____ Tips for Victims of Abuse.

14) _____Ways to begin Healing.

15) _____ and Larry Alexander, Abused Wives Feel Abandoned by Church.

16) _____ and Alexander, L. Beliefs, Culture Can Perpetuate Abuse in Families, Churches.

17) _____ and Alexander, L. Children's Stories of Abuse Are Often Ignored.

18) _____ and Alexander, L. Leaders Silence the Whispers of the Littlest Victims.

19) _____ and Alexander, L. The Duty of Marriage.

20) _____and Alexander, L. Till Death Do You Part,

21) _____and Alexander, L. Where the Law Fits In: Mathew 5:24-26.

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Books

Note: These are the books in the background of Volume Three: *The Elephant in God's Living Room.* For a much more comprehensive list of Yoder's body of work, see Mark Thiessen Nation's bibliographic work. In Appendix F I try to locate some of Yoder's most important books in the historical order of their appearance.

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