ANABAPTIST AND MENNONITE STUDIES

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1. A. James Reimer, *Mennonites and Classical Theology: Dogmatic Foundations for Christian Ethics*

MENNONITES AND CLASSICAL THEOLOGY

Dogmatic Foundations for Christian Ethics

A. James Reimer

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THIRTY-ONE

God Is Love but Not a Pacifist*

This and the following essay should be read as two parts of a whole. The first, preached as a sermon at Rockway Mennonite Church on June 7, 1998, and later published in a slightly modified form in the Canadian Mennonite,[1] *is my initial attempt to lay the trinitarian groundwork for my personal coming to terms with the Mennonite peace witness. I have taught a course, "War and Peace in Christian Thought," for many years at Conrad Grebel College, Toronto School of Theology, and McMaster Divinity College. Gradually, what I would call my own "Mennonite theological peace position" has been evolving in dialogue and debate with students, colleagues, and other Christian traditions. I hold both viscerally and intellectually to the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite peace stance, and try to pass this conviction on to my own children and my students. I have come also, however, to recognize some of the problems (even contradictions) inherent in our own view – not the least of which is our hermeneutical avoidance of some biblical texts – and the compelling aspects of other traditions and other views.*

What follows is my preliminary effort at addressing some of these issues through a reconsideration of what I consider a classical trinitarian doctrine of

* Originally published as "God is not a Pacifist," *Canadian Mennonite* 3.15 (July 26, 1999): 8-9. The biblical texts for the sermon were Deut. 32:18-34 and Rom. 12:9-21. For notes on the text see the Notes section below.

God. What needs to be more fully explored is how the distinction between the "immanent Trinity" (the unity and distinctions within the divine being itself) and the "economic Trinity" (the unity and distinctions of the divine as they relate to God's creation) bear on social ethics. To say that "God is Love" is to say the most profound thing one can say about God, but it begs the question of the nature *of divine love and how that love expresses itself in relation to the world.*

What it must surely mean is that God has the good of the created order at heart and everything that God does and allows to happen is for the ultimate good of that creation. One might theologically spell this out further as follows: God is love in God's inner trinitarian relations – that is, following Augustine, God is the source of all love, God is the object of love, God is love itself; and the inner trinitarian life of love (immanent Trinity) is the foundation of the economic Trinity.

I do not agree that the two can be collapsed into one, as some contemporary theologians seem to be advocating, for the economic Trinity is the life of God as expressed outwardly and as experienced by us within the 'history of salvation.' There is a historicity to the economic Trinity that is not there in the immanent Trinity. Even in the context of the economic Trinity – God as the mysterious origin of the world, God as revealed to us in Christ the redeemer, and God as present to us in the Holy Spirit as the fulfiller – God works in ways that are frequently not entirely clear to us, even though the Christian church confesses that in Christ the very hidden nature and providence of God has in some mysterious way been revealed to us.

What I try to say below is that the nature and workings of God (in God's economic relations), despite this revelation in Christ, continue to have a hidden, mysterious quality to them. God cannot be said to be nonresistant and pacifist in any strict, univocal sense. I wrote the essay before I had read Miroslav Volf's Exclusion and Embrace, *in which he says some of the very things I am getting at here – namely, that God's wrath and judgment does not translate into a justification of our own use of violence. In fact, Volf rightly says, it is precisely because vengeance is transferred to the divine that we humans are free not to exercise it.[2] The reader should be reminded that this and the subsequent essays were occasional pieces and, as such, are loosely-stated, preliminary reflections. They are not tightly-argued, systematic treatises. As I re-read these articles in preparation for this volume, what struck me were two problem areas: one, the concept of God, in which God's "absolute freedom" is so strongly emphasized, seems now to be too voluntaristic a notion; and, two, my view of civil institutions (e.g., the state) is too one-sidedly negative. I think the second essay, "Christians, Policing, and the Civil Order," begins to espouse a more positive role for such institutions.*

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The Reality of Violence

I have for a long time thought that as Mennonites we don't quite get to the reality, root, and tenacity of violence and our complex involvement with it. Not a day goes by but that we encounter the reality of violence in ourselves, in our society, in nature.

Recently, I woke up to the shocking news of a local murder and suicide: a bright, ambitious young artist took the life of her child and then hanged herself. Which is the greater tragedy, the mother's violence toward herself or toward her "innocent" daughter? Tragic as it is for the mother, we could argue that *she* exercised her right of free choice; *the child* had all choices taken from her. But let's consider more closely the roots of violence in human actions like this mother's.

We know from history and the insights of modern psychology that our freedom is not nearly as unfettered as we like to think. There are hidden forces and motivations, genetically inherited personality traits, traumatic childhood experiences, moments of uncontrolled rage and fears that drive us to act in ways that free, rational beings normally don't act. The Old Testament, particularly the Psalms, gives powerful expression to the violent, irrational depths of the human and social psyche, as well as the dark forces of nature and the cosmos that determine us. Again and again, the Psalmist despairs in the face of these forces: "Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God" (Psalm 69:1-3).

The truth of the Calvinist teaching of predestination lies precisely in the recognition of this unexplainable, mysterious force behind all our actions. This is the insight that most forcefully came to me in reading John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. The "problem" in Irving's Calvinistic novel is that human freedom and choice are lost. Destiny! (The German word is *Schicksal*, being "sent."). We all have a "destiny." The word expresses the inter-relatedness of all things past and present. There is no such thing as an isolated moment or action. Innumerable variables led up to the mother's murder of her child. Her violent act in turn permanently affects (destines) her child, her family and friends, and all of us. Now comes the difficult question. If all things are interconnected, if we are destined, can we still meaningfully speak of free choice?

Freedom! What do freedom and responsibility for our actions mean amid our destiny? I have used the metaphor of the Scrabble game to describe how we might understand the paradox of destiny and freedom. Unlike the jigsaw puzzle (where everything is predetermined), the scrabble game

functions as a complex combination of predetermined factors: luck, skill, intelligence, memory, and interaction. While there are predetermined components, they do not absolutely predetermine the outcome of the game. The design and outcome emerge with the inter-relating of all the variables, not least of which is the freedom of choice of each player. We could say the destiny of the game emerges gradually and is fully clear only in retrospect. The non-believer might call this emergence of the destined end of the game of life as impersonal fate. The religious person believes that behind, beyond, or before this emerging end is a divine power which weaves all the variables together, a power in which we human beings participate.

To give this divine power a personal name is to declare that behind the game of life is not pure necessity but freedom. To say that we as human beings participate in this divine power is to say that we too have freedom. To say that we have freedom is to say that we are responsible for our actions amid our destiny. No matter how bad things are, no matter how deep the abyss, no matter what the genetic variables we have been given, we have freedom (limited though it is) to act responsibly. Therefore, we need to take responsibility for our actions and their consequences for others.

In the historical debate between the traditional Calvinists and their rather harsh view of predestination and Arminians (followers of Jacobus Arminius, a sixteenth-century Dutch theologian) and free will, Mennonites have been decisively on the side of the latter. We have stressed the free possibility of human beings to act lovingly and non-violently in this fallen world of evil. In doing so, however, we have never quite gotten at the root, irrationality, and tenacity of evil and violence. Our Mennonite peace theology, if it is not to deteriorate into a false romanticism, a kind of modern-day legacy of nineteenth-century liberalism, will need to deal seriously with these dark forces in the cosmos, in nature, and in our own psyches and communities.

Violence and the Christian Tradition

The Christian tradition has not been united in its understanding of violence within ourselves, within society and within the natural world. It is not simply a matter of disobedience or faithfulness to the teachings of Jesus—it has to do with serious differences about how to think of God, Jesus, human beings, and the world.

Christians have taken three different approaches: holy violence, justifiable violence, and non-violence—all supportable by the Bible. Central to the Mennonite understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the message of peace and non-violence. Also central to Mennonite belief is the primary authority of the Bible for all faith and action. What happens when these two conflict? We have had tremendous difficulty reconciling the many

stories of violence (even God-ordained violence) in the Old and New Testaments with our conviction about the basic non-violent character of Jesus and the kingdom of God. We have also had trouble dealing with the reality of violence in our fellowships and within ourselves.

We have in our history held to a minority position on the issue of violence and peace. First, we have for the most part rejected the view of *justifiable violence*. This position, held by the majority of Christians throughout history, is frequently referred to as the "just war" approach. But this is really a misnomer. Augustine, with whom this view originated, did not think violence was just, but he did believe that in our fallen and sinful world violence was sometimes justified as the tragic but lesser evil. Augustine had a keen sense of destiny and our involuntary connectedness with historical events. Most Anabaptists partly accepted the Augustinian view—the world was fallen and the sword was a tragic necessity for worldly people. Where they differed was in their view of the church. The Anabaptists believed that in the church—defined as Christians regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit—violence was no longer to be practised. Augustine had less faith in the possibility of Christians to extricate themselves from violence within a fallen and violent world.

Second, Mennonites have for the most part rejected the Puritan notion of *holy violence*. This view has its roots in the Old Testament passages that depict God as holy warrior, a God of wrath, vengeance, and righteousness who uses nations to punish the wicked and set up a kingdom of justice. The Hebrew Scriptures are full of stories where God ordains holy slaughter against the wicked, and the Psalmist frequently calls upon God to vindicate his people by punishing and even killing the enemy. The New Testament apocalyptic literature (especially Revelation), which speaks prophetically about the end time, judgment, hell, and eternal damnation, falls into this same genre of thinking about God. It was because of the seemingly vengeful nature of the Hebraic God that some early Christians (for example, Marcion and his followers in the second century) wanted to separate themselves completely from the God of the Old Testament. They claimed that the God of Jesus was a God of love and nonviolence, totally different than Yahweh, the violent God of the Old Testament. Fortunately, Marcion's view was rejected by the majority in the early church. The development of the biblical canon (holding together both the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures), as well as the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, was an unqualified confession by the Christian church that the God of the Jews and the God of the Christians was one and the same God.

The third characteristic of our minority position is that Mennonites, in our strong commitment to *non-resistance*, are always tempted by Marcionism, by separating the God of Jesus and the God of the Old Testament. One way

Mennonite scholars have gotten around this is to identify another stream of thought in the Old Testament, the "suffering servant" motif of Isaiah 53, but this does not solve the problem of the many references to the God who judges, punishes, kills, and orders his people to do so on God's behalf.

There was a tremendous diversity among sixteenth-century Anabaptists on the use of violence. There were those like Balthasar Hubmaier who leaned toward the justifiable use of violence under certain conditions. Thomas Müntzer and Jan van Leyden were in the holy violence tradition. But the view that became dominant was the rejection of all overt violence. What Mennonites could never escape, however, was the reality of violence in their own midst. The ban brought a new form of psychological and social "violence" into the community of believers. I'm not criticizing the ban; I'm making the point that the reality of violence and force is a fact, both outside and inside the Christian community and Mennonites have participated in their share of it.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus

So what are we to do? How can we take seriously both 1) the reality of violence in our lives and in our world, and 2) the Christian witness to peace and non-violence? How can we reconcile the apparent violence of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the non-violence of Jesus as found in his teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and his death on the cross?

This is where the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is so important. The trinitarian teaching of the early church can be applied to the issue of violence, especially as a challenge to Mennonite pacifists. Some Mennonite theologians have implied that if we take Jesus to be the full revelation of God, and if we understand the gospel of Jesus essentially as the rejection of all violence, then it follows that God is a pacifist. This, in my view, has dire consequences. It implies that all violence (such as the death of children or even the suicide of a distraught mother) is ultimately meaningless and outside the providence of God. It also suggests that evil will not be punished and judged.

The basic claim behind the trinitarian confession is that God the Creator, God the Son, and God the Spirit are one, yet distinct. God the Creator is the invisible, absolutely transcendent, unknowable, mysterious source of all that is, both being and non-being. This is the unknown God who destroyed all life in a flood, with the exception of Noah and those in the ark, spoke to Moses in the burning bush, drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea, commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, tested Job by destroying his family and property, the God to whom Jesus cried on the cross: "Why hast thou forsaken me?" This is the God of whom the author of Deuteronomy says: "See now that I, even I, am he; there is no god beside me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and

I heal; and no one can deliver from my hand" (32:39). This is the unknown God to whom the Athenians built an altar in Acts 17.

This God is no Mennonite pacifist. This God is beyond all human ethical systems, beyond our rules of good and bad. This is the God one meets not in the living room but on the boundary, at the abyss, at the point where one is faced with the threat of non-being. Does this mean God the Creator is arbitrary, like the Greek and Roman gods? No, the pagan divine arbitrariness is precisely what the Jews and the Christians rejected. God is not arbitrary—God is just, righteous, good, and loving, but in ways that are not fully transparent.

God's revelation through the Son in Jesus Christ is a revelation of this mystery—the mystery that despite the reality of violence and evil in the world there is a movement of divine redemption and reconciliation in the cosmos. God's justice and love will ultimately triumph even for the murderous mother and her child. The loving God is amid death and violence in ways that are not clear to us. The non-violent way of the cross, mediated to us in Jesus the Christ, reveals the hidden purposes of God. What this means for Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, is that we give ourselves over to the non-violent undercurrent of God's purposes, empowered by the dynamic power of God as Holy Spirit—the Spirit of reconciliation.Though God in his mysterious ways with the world may not be self-evidently "pacifist," we are called to be so.

God's means of achieving the ultimate reconciliation of all things are not immediately evident to us. God cannot be subjected to our interpretation of the non-violent way of Jesus. Our commitment to the way of the cross (reconciliation) is not premised on God's pacifism or non-pacifism. It is precisely because God has the prerogative to give and take life that we do not have that right. Vengeance we leave up to God. Anabaptists called this *Gelassenheit*—surrender to and trust in God. We do not avoid the reality of violence in ourselves and in our world, but we side with the dynamic power of peace and reconciliation which is mysteriously at work in the scrabble game of life, knowing that ultimately all things rest in God's providential and loving hands.

THIRTY-TWO

Christians, Policing, and the Civil Order*

The theological reflections below are an elaboration of my remarks made at a day-long symposium, "In Search of a Mennonite Response to Kosovo," held at Conrad Grebel College on June 22, 1999.[1] At the symposium I made the claim that whereas Anabaptists in the sixteenth century for the most part accepted some form of two-kingdom thinking, twentieth-century Mennonite thinking about church and society has tended to collapse the two kingdoms into one – the historical kingdom of peace and justice of which the church is a witness and the vanguard. I argued that we need to retrieve a form of two-kingdom thinking in which there is a distinction between church and world, the spiritual and temporal realms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ premised on a trinitarian doctrine of God.

The previous essay, "God is Love but not a Pacifist," makes the claim that God is absolutely free, beyond all human ethical systems, and is not a pacifist strictly speaking. In the following analysis I take this one step further, spelling out the consequences for the Christian's role in civil society. I make a distinction between "policing" and "warring." Although on occasions it may not be easy to identity

* Originally published as "Christians and the Civil Order" in *The Grebel Scholar* 2.1 (August 1999): 5-7 and in a shortened and modified form in *Canadian Mennonite* 3.17 (August 30, 1999): 6-7. For notes on the text see the Notes section below.

with precision when police-keeping shades into war-making, nevertheless these are two quite different ways of engaging force, premised on different assumptions, one to be theologically defended and the other rejected.

Policing, consistent with the biblical mandate for institutions of authority, ought to be devoted to the legitimate task of protecting good and restraining evil, always guided by the principle of "loving the enemy" – that is, respecting the dignity of the other as created in the image of God.

War, by its own inner logic, despite the rhetoric of nation states engaging in it, disregards the mandate to protect good and restrain evil, by in fact violating the good and itself using unrestrained evil (violence) to counter what it considers evil. The most recent, blatant example of this, is the unjustifed bombing of Kosovo.

Policing, on the other hand, as I am using the term in this article, is a metaphor for all forms of institutional life in civil society in which the exercise of power is necessary for maintaining disipline and order in domestic, municipal, provincial, and international levels. For pacifist-Mennonite intellectuals to argue against "policing" is a form of dishonesty.

John H. Yoder wrote a book called When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking, *in which he rightly presses those in the Just War tradition (most mainline Christians) to apply the criteria of Just War thinking consistently. Were they to do so, he argues, they would in virtually all cases join with pacifists in condemning war. I would propose another title: "When Policing is Just: Honesty in Pacifist Thinking," in which all Mennonites and others in the Historic Peace Church traditions are urged to overcome the dishonest disjunction between abstract theories of pacifism, on the one hand and their actual human life within civil society (i.e., calling 911 in an emergency) on the other.*

I am not recommending deriving an "ought" from an "is." I am, however, urging us not to use high-sounding theological rhetoric ideologically to distort the situation in which we actually find ourselves in our family, professional, business, political, civil, and church lives or to read the Bible selectively, thereby misreading the positive biblical mandate for institutional life. In short, we need a more honest theology of institutions and their function to help shape and keep life human.

A brief excursus following the essay is an elaboration of my thinking on how Mennonites might through research contribute to the police function of the state in a way that is consistent with our historic peace witness. It was a presentation given to the Conrad Grebel College Council on whether or not the College should accept funding from the Department of National Defence for human security research. I argued in favour of such funding under some very strict conditions, taking as my point of departure sixteenth-century Anabaptist Pilgram Marpeck's view of Christian involvement in civil institutions.

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Foundational to any Christian thinking about the role of the church in society is our doctrine of God as One and Three. The first article of the creed, "I believe in God almighty, creator of heaven and earth," has implicit within it three sub-doctrines: a) the doctrine of creation (God has created the world and everything in it, visible and invisible) – the created order is good and God loves it in its entirety despite its fallenness; b) the doctrine of preservation (God bears, carries, preserves, and sustains this world as a mother cares for her child) despite the world's fallenness; c) the doctrine of providence (God has a purpose [*telos*] for this world and turns evil [the result of the world's fallenness] into good in achieving the divine goal.

It is not immediately clear how God is moving the world toward the final end – this is what it means to speak about the *hiddenness* of God. God in this first sense (God as creator, provider, providence) is no pacifist in any obvious sense. God is absolutely free, beyond good and evil, not captive to human moral and ethical systems. God's ultimate purpose is reconciliation as revealed in Christ (as we shall see below) but because of the fallenness of the world God has instituted so-called social "orders" or, better, "mandates" of creation.[2] These are institutions of society like family, nation, state, worldly authority to preserve the good and restrain the evil (Rom. 13). My own view is more Augustinian than Thomistic in this regard. Augustine, influence by both Jewish-Christian and Platonic thought, had a less benign view of these institutions than did Thomas. Augustine thought that force, including the use of the sword, was tragically necessary in a fallen post-lapsarian world but they were not intrinsic to creation. Thomas, influenced by Aristotle at this point, had a more optimistic view of the role of these institutions of power and was inclined to identify them as created goods.

The second article of the creed, "I believe in 'His' only begotten son. . . ," is God as the Christ, the saviour and reconciler of the world through sacrificial love. Here God's will for the world is revealed in an immediate, direct way.[3] In Christ God is reconciling the world through self-sacrificial love, peace, and non-violence (the way of the cross). Here what is hidden in the first sense is made manifest. The problem is that what is made manifest in Christ as God's ultimate goal for the world continues to have a hidden quality within historical time in the larger world, as God deals with the fallen world in God's own way and time.

The framers of the Schleitheim Articles of 1527 (Swiss Anabaptists) understood this, and distinguished between the ways of God with the church "inside the perfection of Christ" and world "outside the perfection of Christ." The challenge for us is to unravel what it means to be "in the world" but not "of it." The question that interests me here is: What role does the Christian play in the realm designated as "outside the perfection of Christ," where God works through the orders, mandates, institutions of

power, and force to preserve [and further] the good and restrain/punish the wicked? The one task of the church is clear: to incarnate God's reconciling work in Christ (Rom. 12). What is not so clear is the role Christians have in being instruments of God's work to protect the good and restrain/punish the evil (Rom. 13) on the way toward the reconciliation of the world.

There are four basic possibilities:[4] Medieval Catholic, Augustinian-Lutheran, Anabaptist-Mennonite, Contemporary.

1. In the Medieval-Catholic view, the religious orders are called to a higher vocation – a few follow the call to live radical Christian lives of sacrificial love inside the perfection of Christ, while the majority follow a lesser standard, but also in obedience to God.

2. In the Augustinian-Lutheran view, the loving perfection of Christ tends to be spiritualized and internalized (it's a disposition premised on faith and the love of God), while the external world is characterized by force and power – that which is necessary for earthly justice, law, and order. Christians live in both worlds and have to decide situation by situation which norms apply: the rule of Christ's perfect love or the norm of law, force, and justice.

3. Generally speaking (although there were significant differences between them, ~~as I indicate in my essay below~~) Anabaptists, like Luther, distinguished between two kingdoms – the spiritual and the temporal. But for them, unlike for Luther, both were external-social realms demanding allegiance: the spiritual was identified with the church and the temporal with the world, and one had to choose between them. The dualism is most graphically presented in the Schleitheim Articles but is present to a greater or lesser degree in most Anabaptist tracts.

4. There has been a dramatic shift in twentieth-century Mennonite thought toward what I will call here "one kingdom" thinking. In this Mennonites are not alone, but reflect a change in mainline Christian theology in this century from various forms of dualisms to what is called "wholistic" thinking, but which upon closer examination is really a type of monism. It is a monism in which the kingdom of God is understood as a "historical" or temporal future which is "not yet" fully here but is "already" being realized in the historical-temporal present within the church as a society of Christians. Christians involved in relief work, non-violent protests, reconciliation between warring factions, mediation between conflictual parties, and so on, are helping to build and bring about within society in a preparatory way the kingdom of God.

Within this latter understanding there is little or no recognition of divine activity in those areas of social life which have no concrete, visible, or direct connection with the positive work of reconciliation but are related to the restraining of evil and protection of the good in a fallen world. There is also scant appreciation for the invisible, spiritual realm that unites all Christians, despite their differences on social issues. The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century had a much livelier sense of the strange, or "left-handed" work of God in the world through the institutions of authority.

In my view, some form of dualism, or better, trinitarianism, is a more adequate foundation for Christian social-political ethics, also for Mennonites, than an "already-not-yet" historical-temporal monism. The "already-not yet" schema readily dissolves into a one directional, linear, past-present-future historicism and progressivism that does not take seriously enough the distinctions, paradoxes, even antagonisms between dimensions of reality that the Bible and Classical-Patristic thought take for granted. Trinitarian thought, when understood properly, is able to combine both distinctions and unity in a way that neither monism nor dualism can do. This is why I argue throughout this volume for trinitarian foundations for Christian ethics. A few of the implications of a trinitarian theology for Christian social-ethics are as follows:

1. It is important to distinguish between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ. Ultimately, of course, these two are essentially one and will become actually one, but in the present the preservation and providence of the world is in the hands of God in ways that are hidden and that may appear to be in conflict with God's work in Christ. This has to do with the fallenness of the world. The sixteenth-century Anabaptists were right in talking about God being at work in the world outside the perfection of Christ before the *Basileia* when God's rule will be fully realized and there will no longer be any distinction between the two kingdoms – there will be only one kingdom.

2. The church as church has one primary task: to proclaim and incarnate the perfection of Christ within the fallen context of the world. The perfection of Christ is the work of restoration and reconciliation of that which is fallen and estranged as a result of the Fall. It does so through the transforming and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. It is this to which the third article of the creed speaks: "I believe in the Holy Spirit. . . ." Theologically and ethically for the church, the most important doctrine associated with the Holy Spirit is the Resurrection. The Spirit gives new life and the possibility of living the new life under the fallen and estranged conditions of time and history. Jesus's own resurrection is directly attributed to the Holy Spirit as is ours, beginning in the present and completed in the eschaton. To live "inside the perfection of Christ," to use Anabaptist terminology, can be misinterpreted as living perfectly according to some divinely revealed ethical system taught by Christ

which includes pacifism and non-violence. It might be better understood as "living in" or participating in the Spirit-empowered resurrection of Christ which entails the resurrecting of the world as a whole.

3. This, however, begs the question, given the church's primary role to proclaim and incarnate the so-called "perfection of Christ," of how it is involved, if at all, in the providential and preservative activity of God in a fallen world through the institutions of authority, power, and force identified above. I offer the following suggestions:

a) The church ought not to look upon such institutions of authority (the Principalities and the Powers) as by definition demonic, enemy territory but as having legitimate, divinely ordained tasks within a fallen world. The church ought to pray for and support the limited but nevertheless legitimate functions of these "orders" of authority, in which the restricted use of power and force are necessary. For want of a better metaphor, I call this the "policing" function of civil institutions. This policing, whether on the domestic (family), local, provincial, national, or international level, is most properly understood as protecting good and restraining evil with a minimum amount of force. It ought to be guided by one over-riding criterion: to respect the dignity of offended and offender alike as human beings created in the image of God whom it is our obligation to love. At the point where this criterion is transgressed, the Christian says, No.

b) The church acts as a prophetic watch-dog or gad-fly, critically watching and reminding institutions of authority not to overstep their limited mandate of restraining evil and protecting the good through power and force. War, for instance, is an over-stepping of the boundary, a moving beyond the peace-keeping activity of policing. It is to be unequivocally rejected.

c) This means that the church, although not directly involved itself, will support in prayer, wisdom, and guidance not only *direct* work of peace and reconciliation in the world but also *indirect* peacemaking activities by government-sponsored and non-governmentally sponsored work in areas of policing, prison work, social services, civil rights, peace-keeping, and so on. Support takes the form of helping groups and individuals within its ranks to discern whether they are called to be instruments of God's preserving and providential functions, and what it means to be faithful within limited parameters.

d) There are times of crisis when the church, to be faithful to its primary task, is called upon to "put a spoke in the wheel" (Bonhoeffer). On rare occasions, the church finds itself in a *status confessionis* (state of confession) when it separates itself dramatically from the given institutions of power and authority and goes underground, as did the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century and the Confessing Church in the Hitler period. But

this is not the normal state of affairs—it is an extreme situation where the divinely ordained powers have clearly become illegitimate, transgressing their limited mandates. It is through much careful deliberation, prayer, and discernment that such drastic steps are taken.

e) Within the church, there are a variety of callings, from vocations of direct peacemaking (Christian Peacemaker Teams) to less direct peacemaking through involvement in all levels of cultural and civil life. The church cannot compromise its unequivocal commitment to loving the enemy, but it can expect disagreement on how that principle is interpreted and applied in civil society—i.e., what form loving the enemy might take in diverse situations of everyday life as well as times of crises.

Excursus: Should Conrad Grebel College Accept Department of National Defence (DND) Funding for Human Security Research

I would like my following remarks to be seen as standing firmly within the historical Mennonite commitment to peace. However, I have thought for some time that the radical Anabaptist vision which emerged amongst 1950 and 1960 Anabaptist-Mennonite theologians and ethicists, who rehabilitated the vision of the Schleitheim articles (which in effect became their confession) of the Swiss radicals does not fully reflect the broad stream of early, particularly second and third generation Anabaptist-Mennonites, nor does it adequately represent where and how we as Mennonites have managed to live historically and at the present.

From very early on for Mennonites (even for Swiss Mennonites, as Arnold Snyder and Werner Packull are showing in their research) it was Pilgram Marpeck's approach to living within culture that actually won the day. Conrad Grebel College situates itself most authentically within Marpeck's vision, where political institutions (like the "magistracy") are not seen as evil in themselves but as potentially positive venues for human and also Christian activity. It is only at the point where they transgress their legitimate roles that one says No, as did Marpeck. This is the background for my subsequent comments on the issue before us. It is not simply a question of whether we are departing from our historical peace position and compromising ourselves on the slippery slope to the mainstream. It is, rather, our candid recognition of who we are, how we live, with which of our historical positions we identify ourselves, and what it means to be faithful Christians in the world.

1. The request for me to respond to the issue before us is forcing me to ask myself some hard preliminary questions. Do I think the Department of National Defence should be disbanded? If not, what role should it play? And what

attitude should I as a citizen of Canada, as a Canadian Christian, and as a Mennonite Christian have toward it? Until I can be persuaded otherwise, I do not think DND should be disbanded. It's like asking myself: should Kitchener-Waterloo get rid of its police-force? No, I do not think so. There is much about DND and the local police force, and their actions, that I don't agree with; that's why it is my responsibility as a citizen, Christian, and Mennonite to keep on reminding them of what their true role ought to be. Their role should be peace-keeping, peacemaking, and "policing," not killing.

2. To accept money from DND for a well-defined project which is in keeping with our historical-Mennonite peacemaking position is not to agree with or condone everything the Canadian military establishment does, just like paying taxes to or taking money from the government does not mean one agrees with everything the government does.

3. As Ernie Regehr's article shows, Canadian foreign policy, and by implication the Canadian military establishment as one of its instruments, has been historically (and is increasingly) interested in peace-keeping, peacemaking, peace-building and "policing," which Christians, and especially those in the historic peace church, ought to welcome and support conditionally and with reservation.[5] I see this as a form of witness. It is important to remember in all of this that one ought not to compromise the clarity of one's witness, and that this is but one of many forms of witness.

4. As I have argued elsewhere, a distinction needs to be drawn between "policing" and "war-making." Policing can and ought to respect the biblical mandate of governments to "preserve the good and restrain the evil" while respecting (loving, if you like) the enemy or perpetrator of evil. As Christians we ought to reject all war-making but support well-controlled, limited "policing." This reasoning is I believe biblically and theologically supportable. I have been impressed recently, for instance, with the comparatively benign view the Lukean materials, especially Acts, have of the Roman establishment (in contrast to the book of Revelation). It is really quite remarkable how frequently in Paul's travels he takes advantage of his Roman citizenship for a kind of police protection against the threat of mob violence.

5. So as far as I now see it, I would support applying for research funding from DND on the strict condition that a) such research proposal be focused strictly on issues of human security and peace-building, as Regehr defines it in his article, and b) we in our proposal clearly identity ourselves as standing within a tradition which has a long history of rejecting war and all participation in war as a way of solving conflict—and that it is precisely for this reason that we are engaged in such research.[6]

THIRTY-THREE

Virtue, Justice, and the Moral Community: A Critical-Appreciative Appraisal of Alasdair MacIntyre and the Narrative School of Theology*

In this and the subsequent three articles I begin reflecting on the nature of the church as a worshiping and moral community – I say "begin" deliberately for, I do not present a comprehensive doctrine of the church. The essays are no more than occasional reflections on some aspects of ecclesiology.

The following previously unpublished piece was presented upon invitation at Brock University, St. Catharines, for a conference on "Love and Justice in the Writings of Alasdair MacIntyre," sponsored by the Brock Philosophical Society on February 13, 1993.[1] Since then, other Mennonite theologians than those cited here have critically explored the theology of narrative thinkers like MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas in relation to Mennonite theology.[2] My own fuller acquaintance with the person and thought of Hauerwas came later that same year, through the organizing and moderating of a special session of Mennonite scholars at the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature meetings in Washington, D. C. This event, sponsored by the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, was called "Mennonites on Hauerwas: Hauerwas on Mennonites," and consisted of five presentations by Mennonites (Lydia Harder, Scott Holland, Harry Huebner, P. Travis Kroeker, and Ben C. Ollenburger) and a final response by Hauerwas.

Each of the presentations together with an introduction by me were later published.[3] In my introduction, written on the island of Korcula off the coast of Croatia while the ethnic war in Bosnia was still going on, I noted that while Hauerwas

* The original title was "Virtue, Justice and the Moral Community: A Mennonite Theological Appraisal of Alasdair MacIntyre." For notes on the text see the Notes section below.

conduct of its affairs accordingly.

[14] Tillich, "Autobiographical Reflections" in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretail (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 12.

[15] The Greek term *kairos*, meaning "fulfilled time," plays a central role in Tillich's early political writings, in which he tries to bring together socialist thought and Christian thinking about history. *Kairos* becomes for him the bridging concept between socialism and Christianity – the socialist movement is the *kairos* moment in history, when through the proletariat (representing the new humanity) the divine is enters history in a unique way.

[16] Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954, 1960), 100.

[17] *Ibid.*, 123-24.

[18] Cf. John Howard Yoder, *Karl Barth and War* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 37ff.

[19] "Truth and Revelation in Tillich's 1925 Dogmatics," *Truth and History – A Dialogue with Paul Tillich / Wahrheit und Geschichte – Ein Dialog mit Paul Tillich* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 227-38; "A Postliberal Metaphysics for Christian Ethics: The 1925 Dogmatics of Karl Barth and Paul Tillich," a chapter in a soon-to-be published book edited by Jean Richard.

[20] Because this paper was presented to an audience that had come to hear a panel on Tillich's thought on the subject of war and peace, I concentrated on Tillich's pespective on Barth's views rather than analyzing Barth's own position on war.

[21] See Schäfer, *Die Theologie*, 94-125, for an analysis of these texts.

[22] Bishop Ludwig Müller, a former army chaplain, personal friend, and confidante of Hitler, was the controversial, newly-elected head of the "German-Christian" controlled national German Evangelical Church. Martin Niemöller, the leader of the Pastors' Emergency League and symbol of the Confessing Church's opposition to the German Christians, became the personal prisoner of Hitler in the Dachau concentration camp in 1937.

Chapter 31

[1] "God is not a Pacifist," *Canadian Mennonite* 3.15 (July 26, 1999): 8-9. The biblical texts for the sermon were Deut. 32:18-34 and Rom. 12:9-21.

[2] Miroslav Volf, *Exlcusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996). See especially 275-306. In the end, Volf compromises his own powerful critique of the human use of violence by slipping back into a Niebuhrian type of political realism: "It may be that consistent nonretaliation and nonviolence will be impossible in the world of violence. Tyrants may need to be taken down from their thrones and the madmen stopped from sowing desolation" (306).

Chapter 32

[1] Previously published as "Christians and the Civil Order" in *The Grebel Scholar*2.1 (August 1999): 5-7 and in a shortened and modified form in *Canadian Mennonite* 3.17 (August 30, 1999): 6-7.

[2] The concept of "orders of creation" has received a bad name ever since German Christians during the Hitler period applied this notion to race. It is for this reason that Dietrich Bonhoeffer preferred to talk about 'mandates' – the tasks that Christians have in the world. I believe that it may be possible to rehabilitate the notion of 'orders' – in the sense of divinely ordained institutions intended by God for the preservation of individual and social life, if these are not given too fixed and rigid a form, are subject to prophetic critique in the light of God's revelation in Christ, not used as a form of domination and exploitation, and open to change and reformation.

[3] Karl Barth in his *The Göttingen Dogmatics* [1925] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), says that even in Christ God is revealed as hidden. See my "Truth and Revelation: Epistemological Presuppositions in Tillich's 1925 *Dogmatik*," in *Truth and History – a Dialogue with Paul Tillich/Wahrheit und Geschichte – Ein Dialog mit Paul Tillich* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 232.

[4] John Howard Yoder, in his *The Christian Witness to the State* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1964) identifies seven classical options: Medieval Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Liberal Pacifist/Niebuhrian, Jehovah's Witness, Traditional Amish-Mennonite, and his own (60-73). For my purposes these can be collapsed into four.

[5] Ernie Regehr, "Defence and human security," *The Ploughshares Monitor* (December 1999): 2-6. See also Margaret Loewen Reimer's interview with Regehr, "'Premier' peacemaker focuses on reducing violence," *Canadian Mennonite* 4.8 (April 17, 2000): 18-19.

[6] The CGC Council in the end voted against applying for such funding from DND, believing that it would compromise our peace witness.

Chapter 33

[1] The original title was "Virtue, Justice and the Moral Community: A Mennonite Theological Appraisal of Alasdair MacIntyre."

[2] Chris Huebner, for instance, has concentrated in his doctoral work on MacIntyre, Hauerwas, Yoder, and the narrative school. Cf. Chris K. Huebner, "Mennonites and Narrative Theology: The Case of John Howard Yoder," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 16.2 (Spring 1998): 15-38. See also Harry Huebner and David Schroeder, *Church as Parable: Whatever Happened to Ethics?* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1993).

[3] A special issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review* (13.2 [Spring 1995]) was devoted to this "Dialogue with Stanley Hauerwas."

[4] Reimer, "Dialogue with Stanley Hauerwas: Introduction," *The Conrad Grebel*