

The battle over the flag: protest, community opposition, and silence in the Mennonite colleges in
Kansas during the Vietnam War

by

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B.A., Taylor University, 1976
M.A., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982
M.A., University of Denver, 1985

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Abstract

This study examines how three Mennonite colleges in Kansas struggled with issues of church and state during the Vietnam War as they attempted to express patriotism while remaining true to their Anabaptist theological heritage and commitments. It considers how the pressures of an undeclared war in Vietnam and acculturation into the greater American society produced tension within these colleges and also evaluates whether these forces eroded or sharpened their peace positions and those of their parent denominations. Allowing for close analysis of three groups that derive from the same theological tradition, but which have struggled with how to express their dual doctrines of nonresistance and nonconformity in regard to the American state and society, the investigation considers both the motivations for and political experience of dissent by these people previously opposed to political involvement.

This study examines why the three campuses chose different responses to this dilemma and argues that their actions depended not only on students, but also were influenced by the leadership of faculty and administration, decisions by the three parent denominations, and pressures exerted by the towns in which they were located. As such, this study relies on a thick social analysis to explore what acculturation meant for Mennonites struggling to emerge from isolation and to be faithful to their Christian commitments. It offers an answer to the historiography that locates antiwar protest as a chiefly secular exercise and breaks new ground by arguing that even theologically conservative religious groups opposed the war and demonstrated against it because of their convictions and commitment. Moreover, it also explores the pressures exerted by Kansans on these groups and why two of the three were willing to raise questions and perform protests of a wide variety that risked the protected status extended to their draft-age young men.

It also begins to fill a gap in the historical literature on Mennonites in central Kansas during the Vietnam War, describing the diverse responses by the different colleges and considering how the war challenged denominational attitudes about their historic faith and its relationship to government. In the case of one school in particular, the analysis also will indicate that the college had not completely resolved the tensions between church and state, but only postponed their resolution to the next decade.

Finally, the study will lay groundwork for further investigation and argumentation regarding the abilities of the main Mennonite groups to experiment with and redefine non-conformity in regard to issues of church and state in the United States and the contested nature of antiwar unrest and protest in twentieth-century America.

This dissertation incorporates the publication by Robin Deich Ottoson, “The Battle Over the Flag: Protest, Community Opposition, and Silence in the Mennonite Colleges in Kansas during the Vietnam War,” *Journal of Church and State*, 52, no. 4 (October 2010), 686–711, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csq106>. Used with permission by Oxford University Press and the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University, this is the first comparative study of Mennonite college protest during the Vietnam War.

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Major Professor
Dr. Robert D. Linder

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List of Abbreviations

ORGANIZATIONS

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
CALCAV	Clergy and Laity Against the War
CO	Conscientious Objector
CPS	Civilian Public Service
FOR	Fellowship of Reconciliation
IPF	Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
NISBRO	National Interreligious Service Board for Religious Objectors (successor to NSBRO)
NSA	National Student Association
NSBRO	National Service Board for Religious Objectors
SANE	National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
VMC	Vietnam Moratorium Committee

ARCHIVES & SOURCES

AMC	Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen College, Goshen, IN
BHLA	Brethren Historical Library and Archives, Elgin, IL
CMBSF	Center for Mennonite Brethren Archives, Fresno Pacific University, Fresno, CA
CMBSH	Center for Mennonite Brethren Archives, Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS
GAMEO	Global Anabaptist Encyclopedia Online
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee Archives, Ephrata, PA
MCUSA	Mennonite Church USA Archives, Elkhart, IN
MHI	U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA

MHL Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, IN
MLA Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS
MSHL Menno Simons Historical Library, Eastern Mennonite University,
Harrisonburg, VA

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Dedication

To Edith Clara Ellis Griffith (1894-1981)

And Gary

Introduction---Faith, Citizenship, and Contested Loyalties

Midway through 1962, the American presence in Vietnam had increased from seven hundred to twelve thousand men. The Cold War conflict that saw the French capitulate to Vietnamese forces in 1954 had been shouldered gradually by the United States, first through material support and then through the provision of army officers designated as advisors. When these uniformed men now appeared on television, few Americans realized that more than “advisors” were in Vietnam and that the war was being escalated secretly, according to military historian Stanley Karnow. When directly asked at a January 15, 1962 news conference if U.S. soldiers were engaged in combat in the Southeast Asian country, President John F. Kennedy answered with one word: “no.” The administration and its military, infused with a “can-do” attitude, were only beginning the escalation which, in the hands of Kennedy’s successors, would eventually commit the United States to a full-scale undeclared war.¹

Meanwhile, in September 1962, the small town of Hillsboro, Kansas more than doubled in size when it hosted a statewide forum on the military draft between prominent representatives of the nation and the church. Lieutenant General Lewis B. Hershey, director of the U.S. Selective Service system, appeared at the newly-constructed Tabor College gymnasium opposite Reverend George R. Brunk II, a popular evangelist of the MC Mennonite Church. Billed as “Serving God and Country,” the evening meeting followed a special, invitation-only luncheon

¹ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Viking, 1991), 275-278. This dissertation incorporates the publication by Robin Deich Ottoson, “The Battle Over the Flag: Protest, Community Opposition, and Silence in the Mennonite Colleges in Kansas during the Vietnam War,” *Journal of Church and State*, 52, no. 4 (October 2010), 686–711, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csq106>. Used with permission by Oxford University Press and the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University.

for 100 local dignitaries, ministers, Selective Service counselors, and their wives in the basement of the Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church.² The event, the first time in his 48-year career the general had appeared before a Mennonite audience, had been widely publicized. In the Mennonite enclave in Henderson, Nebraska, the local newspaper encouraged, “Parents, young people [and] especially men of draft age [to attend] the presentations” and to hear Hershey speak to “Survival and Religious Freedom” and Brunk address “Survival [and] Christian Witness.” The Hillsboro Star Journal reported that the state Selective Service headquarters in Topeka had encouraged all draft board members in the state to attend so that they might understand and explain the options open to draftees as combatants, noncombatants, or conscientious objectors.³

Whether drawn by the topic or the prominence of the featured speakers, so many people arrived that the gymnasium overflowed and some attendees were diverted to the chapel in the main administration building where Hershey and Brunk spoke a second time. In addition, three hundred would-be listeners were turned away. A large American flag and a huge banner proclaiming “Serving God and Country” stretched behind the platform in the gymnasium. Among the attendees were Mennonite Brethren, Amish Mennonites, Church of God in Christ Mennonites, General Conference Mennonites, and MC Mennonites who heard, according to the

² “General Hershey, Rev. Brunk Discuss Draft Choices,” The Hillsboro Star Journal, September 20, 1962, 1. The newspaper earlier had announced that Major Junior Elder, Kansas Selective Service Director, also would address “Pre-Draft Preparation for All Young Men”; “Lewis B. Hershey to Speak Here,” The Hillsboro Star Journal, September 13, 1962, 1.

³ “Important Meeting at Tabor College Saturday,” The Henderson News, September 20, 1962. Also, poster announcing the event, Brunk file, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Hillsboro, KS. The author is indebted to assistant archivist Connie Isaac and archivist Peggy Goertzen, who identified the event from a picture in the 1963 Tabor Bluejay. “General Hershey, Rev. Brunk,” 1.

Tabor College newspaper, “two men representing two entirely different ways of solving the world’s problems.”⁴

So many people had arrived that simultaneous meetings were held, each man addressing one group, then changing rooms and speaking to the other. Both men paid their respects to the other’s position. The General, dressed in a suit, referred to his own Swiss Mennonite ancestry, and then commended the Mennonites for their cooperation with the alternative service program that had been designed for those whose religious convictions forbade them to engage in conventional military service. With respect to the administration of draftees who had registered as conscientious objectors, he remarked, “We [the Government and Mennonites] don’t disagree over what should be done, but on how it should be done.”⁵ Hershey stated that his task that night was to interpret the government to the Mennonites, describing at length the dilemma the government faced when the state was in jeopardy and religious toleration was juxtaposed against national survival. While Hershey thus referred to the ongoing discussion between Mennonites and Selective Service about who should oversee the assignment and daily supervision of conscientious objectors, his subsequent remarks touched on the central issue of conflicting views of religious convictions on the one hand and loyalty to the state on the other. Reassuring his listeners that recognizing religious liberty meant the government should protect dissenters “to the

⁴ “3,000 Hear Talks Saturday,” The Hillsboro Star Journal, September 27, 1962, 1. Bob Suderman, email message to author, November 12, 2008. Suderman was a conscientious objector serving under the Mennonite Brethren Conference Christian Service Program. Also, the 1962 Tabor Bluejay, [12-13]. “2,800 Hear Hershey and Brunk,” The Tabor College View, October 4, 1962, 2 (hereafter The View).

⁵ “3,000 Hear Hershey-Brunk on ‘Survival,’” Christian Leader, October 2, 1962, 13-16. For a description of Hershey’s attitudes toward Mennonites, see George Q. Flynn, Lewis B. Hershey, Mr. Selective Service (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 126-133.

ultimate,” he nevertheless also told a story about people traveling in a boat with someone who decided to drill a hole in its bottom. At what point, he implied, would toleration for a position threatening to the state be accepted?⁶

Dr. George R. Brunk II appeared in the standard black plain coat of the MC Mennonites, the descendants of the heavily persecuted Swiss and Southern German Anabaptists who had fled to America in the 1700s. Editor of the conservative periodical, The Sword and Trumpet, and professor at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisburg, Virginia, the evangelist emphasized that “we owe a debt of gratitude to our Government, and to our neighbors who have made room in this country for us and the testimony we have to give.” Noting that Hershey was a minister of the government and he was a minister of the church, he underscored the separate spheres of each. While the state could offer the alternative service that the Mennonites were profoundly grateful to accept, Brunk insisted that the church’s loyalty was not simply to a nonresistant stance on peace, but one which derived explicitly from the “centrality” of the person and teachings of Christ. He warned the listeners that promoting peace apart from Christ was “a doctrinal bulge” Mennonites could not endorse, thereby cautioning them against pacifism as a secular ideology, but also implying that establishing real peace was beyond the jurisdiction of the state.⁷ The two speakers sidestepped each other, both paying tribute to the government’s support of alternative service, but both carefully framing different arguments about loyalty to the church and the government.

⁶ Lewis B. Hershey, “Survival and Religious Freedom,” September 22, 1962, transcript, private collection. Also, “3,000 Attend Service Rally in Hillsboro,” Mennonite Weekly Review, September 27, 1962, 1A.

⁷ George R. Brunk, “Survival and the Christian Witness,” September 22, 1962, transcript, private collection.

The scene, placid enough in the photographs of the event, included all of the elements that would erupt during the next decade. In October 1967, Lieutenant General Hershey, formerly a congenial supporter of the 1-W draft designation for conscientious objectors, collaborated with President Lyndon B. Johnson in punitive reclassification or revocation of deferments for those seen as resisting or interfering with draft registration.⁸ In 1969, Reverend Brunk would advocate for “hippie”-garbed draft resisters and eventually promote the adoption of the MC Mennonite Church’s statement that not only reaffirmed traditional Mennonite *conscientious objection* as an essential peace position, but also asserted that *non-cooperation* with Selective Service was a “valid and ‘legitimate witness.’”⁹ And, finally, those in the audience in 1962 who supported, taught, or attended the three Mennonite colleges within twenty miles of Hillsboro faced their own decisions about the war and what the national flag meant both on their own campuses and in their particular Mennonite denominations or fellowships. The turmoil that soon descended on America was about to become their own concern.

This study will examine how the three colleges founded by the largest Mennonite denominations in Kansas struggled with issues of church and state during the Vietnam War as they attempted to express patriotism while remaining true to their Anabaptist theological heritage and commitments. It considers how the pressures of an undeclared war in Vietnam and acculturation into the greater American society produced tension within these colleges and also evaluates whether these forces eroded or sharpened their peace positions and those of their parent

⁸ George Q. Flynn, The Draft, 1940-1973 (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1993), 215-216.

⁹ Paul Toews, Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), 325.

denominations. Allowing for close analysis of three groups that derive from the same theological tradition, but which have struggled with how to express their dual doctrines of nonresistance and nonconformity in regard to the American state and society, the investigation considers both the motivations for and political experience of dissent by these people previously opposed to political involvement.¹⁰

The analysis will then argue that the three campuses chose different responses to this dilemma. Their actions depended not only on students, but also were influenced by the leadership of faculty and administration, decisions by the three parent denominations, and pressures exerted by the towns in which they were located. As such, this investigation relies on a thick social analysis to explore what acculturation meant for Mennonites struggling to emerge from isolation and to be faithful to their Christian commitments. On the one hand, it thus begins to address a gap in the social historical literature on Mennonites in central Kansas during the Vietnam War, describing the diverse responses by the different colleges and considering how the war challenged denominational attitudes about their historic faith and its relationship to government. On the other hand, even as the analysis offers a piece toward the first comprehensive and comparative study of Mennonite college activism during the Vietnam War, it contributes to the larger historiographical debates about American antiwar protest during the Vietnam War, including those that address memory and the meaning of disorder.

¹⁰ “Denomination” is a problematic term among some Mennonites, but since the three sub-groups in this study increasingly have referred to themselves as “denominations,” the term will be used with the understanding that it is complicated and does not completely represent the nature of “common peoplehood” or “brotherhood” used by the tradition. James C. Juhnke, “Denominationalism, 1990 Article,” in Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Denominationalism> (accessed February 27, 2014).

It offers a rejoinder to the historiography discussed shortly that has challenged the perception of antiwar protest in American memory as a chiefly secular exercise and breaks new ground by arguing that even theologically conservative religious groups opposed the war and demonstrated against it because of their convictions and commitment. By examining the reasons why these individuals and groups participated or did not participate in protests the study argues that this activism derived from religious motivations, even as it significantly interacted with and upon secular antiwar dissatisfaction.

Moreover, it also explores the pressures exerted by Kansans on these groups and why two of the three were willing to raise questions and perform protests of a wide variety that risked the protected status extended to their draft-age young men. In the case of Tabor College, whose students were especially articulate about the war, the analysis also will indicate that the school had not completely resolved the tensions between church and state, but only postponed their resolution to the next decade. The issues manifested particularly at all three schools in a highly charged symbol --- the American flag. As the increasingly prominent emblem of national identity and focus for campus protest nationwide during the 1960s, it was already one considered problematic for Mennonites, who had debated saluting it or flying it since the early 1900s. Some contended that such actions displayed loyalty to the state rather than to God. Others had even begun to fly the American flag in their churches. The banner will appear throughout the narrative and will illustrate each college's struggles with the questions of church and state.¹¹

¹¹ Rachel Waltner Goossen, "Flag," in Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Flag> (accessed February 27, 2014); David L. Weaver-Zercher, "Between Two Kingdoms: Virginia Mennonites and the American Flag," Mennonite Quarterly Review 70, no. 2 (April 1996): 165-190; John Perry, "Not Pledging as Liturgy" Lessons from Karl Barth and American Mennonites on Refusing National Oaths," Mennonite Quarterly Review 76, no. 4 (October 2002): 431-459.

Finally, the study will lay groundwork for further investigation and argumentation regarding the effect an institutionally secured conscientious objection policy and practices had on the abilities of the main Mennonite groups to experiment with and redefine non-conformity in regard to issues of church and state in the United States. Did the boundaries established by Selective Service enable the kind of internal discourse that encouraged each group to re-think and re-work its stance toward the government in such a way that each better defined its own position, disrupted traditional structures of decision-making, and both strengthened and weakened the Historic Peace Church tradition? Did the Mennonite actions strengthen the ability to effectively oppose the conduct of future wars?

Who Are The Mennonites and Why Do They Matter?

But why were Mennonites, arguably perceived as one of the most conservative of American religious traditions, involved as protesters against any war, and, in particular, the Vietnam War, whose activists are widely perceived as college-age radical students whose motivations derived from secular impulses? Before turning to the larger historiographical questions regarding the latter a brief descriptive sketch of the former is in order.¹²

¹² Both Mennonites and American culture have identified the faith tradition and its adherents as essentially conservative. In part, the latter has reduced the wide range of Anabaptist groups to some of their most culturally nonconformist --- and therefore visible --- members. Thus, Anabaptist associations (such as the Amish, Old Order Mennonites, Conservative Mennonites, Hutterites) which would fit under the umbrella of Mennonites as outlined separately by historian James C. Juhnke and sociologist Donald Kraybill are the standard representation of Mennonites for many Americans. Men with beards and black plain coats, women in caps wearing plain mid-calf, long-sleeved dresses with black hose, black vehicles with blackened chrome (to avoid ostentation) or horse-drawn buggies, and an aversion to technology are stereotypical images of what is in fact a diverse collection of groups with historically strong commitments to a peace tradition that can radically question the cultures in which they have resided. Mennonites themselves have self-identified as conservatives, but with significant caveats to that identification, both theologically and in practice, particularly in regard to what

The forum between Reverend Brunk and Lieutenant General Hershey was consistent with ongoing attempts by Mennonites to clarify their positions as one of the three Historic Peace Church traditions granted exemption from military service in the United States. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Mennonites had moved throughout Europe for many reasons, but in large part due to persecution based on their beliefs regarding adult believers' baptism and nonresistance, or military service. Those doctrines had put them in disfavor with both religious and civil authorities resulting in torture and a martyr's death for many. Persecution was most severe for the Swiss-German branch of these people, but those who began in Holland, were forced into Prussia, and then finally into Russia also adopted survival strategies, chiefly by blending into rural communities. They were known as *Die Stillen im Lande*, or the "peaceful people in the

that might mean in a country engaging in war. Both strands will be explored in Chapter 1 in considering twentieth-century historical and theological contexts, particularly in regard to Mennonite struggles with modernity. For a concise and clear explanation of Mennonite identification as essentially conservative, see James C. Juhnke, "Mennonite Churches," in Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, and Harry S. Stout, eds., Dictionary of Christianity in America (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 725-729. For a more thorough historical analyses undergirding Juhnke's essay, see James C. Juhnke, Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989), in particular 300-317, and Toews, Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970, 21-39, 64-106. In regard to the Amish, see Donald Kraybill, The Amish Struggle with Modernity (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994). Explicating how Mennonites situated themselves theologically and culturally was originally undertaken in the landmark study conducted in 1972 by sociologists J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder who analyzed surveys administered to five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups on both theological and social variables. The results, which reflected beliefs and practices, were reprised nearly two decades later through the follow up project conducted by Kauffman and sociologist Leo Driedger. In both studies, the faith tradition had strong identification with many culturally conservative attitudes toward conventional morality and identified positively with theological positions more conservative than most Protestants, although varying significantly on issues of peace. The inter-Mennonite picture, to be explicated in the next chapter, depicts some variations between groups, particularly in regard to what the authors attribute to the influence of American fundamentalism. J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, Anabaptists Four Centuries Later (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975); J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger, The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991).

country,” who practiced their religion privately and who did not engage in political activity. Migrating to the United States in the colonial era, and again in two waves in the 1870s and 1920s, they continued to explore how their peace stance could function within the Selective Service system of twentieth-century America. It had not been a simple path. Mennonites in World War I had been pressured to buy war bonds in order to demonstrate their loyalty to their new country, and they had also endured beatings, vandalism, and arson. Like Quaker and Church of the Brethren conscientious objectors, their young men drafted into service were frequently abused in military camps. During World War II, Major General Hershey, a descendant of Swiss Mennonites, worked with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to create an alternative service program that allowed conscientious objectors to work in prisons, hospitals, forests, and farms--or to volunteer as subjects in medical experiments--rather than to be based in military camps. The partnership continued to be an uneasy one and, while Mennonites expressed their appreciation to the American government at denominational conferences in the United States and Canada, they also continued to discuss this cooperation and the pressure to participate in war. These assemblies passed no fewer than thirty statements or resolutions on peace issues and military service between 1945 and 1965. Each war, or threat of war, generated more discussion as Mennonites grew increasingly acculturated as Americans and faced the pressure to support the majority stance.¹³

¹³ The term “Historic Peace Churches” was coined in 1935 to describe the collective peace convictions of the Mennonites, the Society of Friends (also known as Quakers) and the Church of the Brethren (not to be confused with other groups such as the Brethren in Christ or River Brethren). Melvin Gingerich and Paul Peachey. "Historic Peace Churches." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, [http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Historic Peace Churches](http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Historic%20Peace%20Churches) (accessed March 23, 2009). On “*Die Stillen im Lande*,” s.v. Leo Driedger. "Urbanization." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, [http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/index.php?title= Urbanization](http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Urbanization) (accessed February 27, 2014). These comments are a simple reduction of the Mennonite position on peace which will

There were nine main groups of Mennonites in Kansas in the 1950s, with the four largest responsible for founding the three Mennonite colleges in the state. The largest branch, the General Conference Mennonite Church, had been founded in Iowa in 1860, attracting progressives from other Mennonite bodies and incorporating many of the Russian Mennonites who arrived in the 1870s and 1920s. The Mennonite Brethren were an evangelical reform movement among Mennonites in Russia, a group that was heavily influenced by German pietism and that chiefly immigrated to the United States as a group in the 1870s. In 1960, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, who had emigrated from the Russian Crimea and who resisted Americanization, joined their four congregations to the Mennonite Brethren in 1960. The MC Mennonite Church descended from the heavily persecuted Swiss-South German branch of the faith and as a result was the most wary of government intrusion. It emphasized nonconformity in their dress (with men wearing the collarless plain coat and women wearing small caps) and separation from the world.¹⁴

For reasons more fully developed in subsequent chapters, these four groups of Kansas Mennonites had founded three colleges within fifteen years and twenty miles of each other.

be examined in the following chapter, For an in-depth treatment of the classic theological stance at mid-twentieth-century, see Guy F. Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969), with historical framing by Perry Bush, Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). See Bush, Two Kingdoms, 26-55, for the treatment of conscientious objectors during World War I. Urbane Peachey, ed., Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns, 1900-1978 (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1980), 27-92.

¹⁴ James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1975), 22-23. These denominations include the three largest groups of Mennonites in America, the Mennonite Church (also referred to as Old Mennonites or MC Mennonites), the General Conference Mennonites, and the Mennonite Brethren. MC Mennonite Church will be used in this analysis, rather than the more potentially confusing Mennonite Church label.

Bethel College was established by the General Conference Mennonite Church near Newton (later called North Newton) in 1896, followed by Tabor College in Hillsboro (Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren) in 1908 and Hesston College (MC Mennonites) in 1909. Each school struggled with enrollment at different times (Tabor had closed in 1934 for a year) and each attempted to come to terms with the fundamentalist-modernist tensions that began to affect American Christianity in the interwar period between 1919 and 1939. All three would continue to contend with how to reconcile faith and politics during the course of the Vietnam War, when they found their students and constituents torn between individual, personal piety on the one hand, and concerns about peace, social justice, and collective well-being on the other. As the war progressed, each came to terms differently with the conflict, its demands on young men, and what it meant to be a patriot. While across the nation American flags were being burned as a free-speech exercise and an excoriation of the American military presence in Vietnam, the flag ranged from being a silent symbol of freedom to the focus of activist confrontation on the Kansas Mennonite college campuses.

Historiography, Popular Memory, and Remembered Disorder

The historiographical picture is a remarkably complex one, because it includes not only treatments by historians, but also an unusually intense popular memory which has largely defined a decade and established a particular understanding of the sources of fragmentation in American society. Because this interpretation helps to nullify the presence of actors moral and religious, and has been consistently invoked as a convenient trope in American war making during the subsequent fifty years after the war, it is essential to keep it present---although backgrounded---during this analysis. The inquiry will first turn to this cultural memory, then examine elements of disorder not considered in the long memories about the Vietnam War and

the 1960s, then move into the particular historiography. Before leaving the historiographical picture the analysis will reflect and interact with historian Sydney Ahlstrom's conclusions about the turbulent Sixties and its *de facto* closing of the door on the American Puritan epoch. Thus, before engaging in a formal historiography, the study will first consider issues of memory and public opposition to the war.

The Vietnam antiwar movement has long been posited as a chiefly secular exercise that demonstrated little patriotism and created unprecedented civil disorder. Young radicals sporting long hair, torn jeans or dungarees, and angry fists jammed in the air alongside picket signs that often carried crude language have found their way into a long popular memory. Few women appear on the scene --- much less as leaders --- and those that do include base creatures who spit on returning soldiers or, conversely, who greet National Guardsmen with expressions of beatific and wishful thinking. The iconic young hippie inserting a daisy into a guardsman's gun barrel stands alongside tear gas, free love, and, above all, disrespect for the honorably discharged warriors returning from Vietnam. The long-lived result has been a bifurcation in popular memory between those who honorably served in the military and those who dishonored them upon their return home, alongside visions of disorder. The image has been a particularly useful one for those who continued to define patriotism as willing participation in America's subsequent wars, but has also contained a baffling subtext.¹⁵

¹⁵ Sociologist Jerry Lembcke, in his classic study that initially endeavored to investigate the long-held stories of antiwar protestors spitting on GIs returning from Vietnam, in fact discovered not a single case of such activity. Instead, he discerned not only that the numerous reported incidents were essentially part of an urban myth, but also that the constructed myth itself was highly useful as a trope to garner and to reinforce support for *subsequent* American wars. In particular, he has continued to argue that the composition has enabled American presidential administrations in the late twentieth century to argue "that opposition to the war was tantamount to disregard for [the soldier's] well-being and that such disregard was reminiscent of the treatment given to Vietnam veterans upon their return home. [For example], by invoking the

As Sylvester Stallone's iconic anti-hero, Rambo, explained in a lowered, measured, authoritative voice in the blockbuster film *First Blood* in 1982, "I did everything to win, but someone didn't let us win. And at home at the airport these maggots were protesting. They spat at me, called me a baby murderer and shit like that! Why protest against me, when they weren't there, didn't experience it?" The former U.S. Army Special Forces officer has returned to Southeast Asia, a man abandoned by his country and living off the land by his wits, extraordinary self-discipline, strength of character, and rugged determination to survive as an independent operator, all undergirded by an exceptional musculature. He is both the symbol of all that went wrong with the war and all that remained fascinating about it, with over seventy-seven (77) million Americans revisiting those times through Rambo's abandonment and his thorough determination, albeit reluctantly, to fight and win the battle against cruel, despotic, communists and their corrupt affiliates in the jungles 8500 miles from the screen and years after the war has ostensibly been ended. Stallone's cachet contributed to the film's success (and the production of three lucrative sequels), but as Marita Sturken argues in her analysis of popular

image of anti-war activists spitting on veterans, the [Bush] administration was able to discredit the opposition and galvanize support for the war. So successful was this endeavor that by the time the bombing of Iraq began in January 1991 President Bush had effectively turned the means of war, the soldiers themselves, into a reason for the war." The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 2. Lembcke, himself a Vietnam veteran, has continued to hammer away at the ongoing use of the myth in order to argue that patriotism includes dissenting opposition and that continuing to service the memory of such stories has reinforced the notion that dissent --- rather than the conduct of the wars themselves --- harms the hapless soldier. His work evidences not only the long cultural reach of the memory of the Vietnam War, but its usefulness as an ongoing political weapon. Jerry Lembcke, "Popular Consensus or Political Extortion? Making Soldiers the Means *and* Ends of US Military Deployments," in Social Policy and the Conservative Agenda, ed. Clarence Y.H. Lo and Michael Schwartz (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 245-257.

American memory regarding Vietnam, Rambo also contributed to the common theme of films about Vietnam produced after the war and their subsequent portrayal of antiwar opposition:

The films portray the Vietnam War as one characterized over who the enemy was. The enemy in this war was elusive, invisible, and disguised. The message in many of the Vietnam War films is that the real enemy was America --- not simply as Rambo might have put it, that the American public and U.S. government would not let the war be won but rather, as perhaps Oliver Stone would put it, that blind patriotism and anticommunism were the real foes.¹⁶

As the films contested the identification of the real enemy in the war, they also argued over the meaning of the war from an American perspective, yet always framing antiwar protestors as oppositional, in contrast to the warriors.

Films such as *Platoon* and *Casualties of War* present the war of the indecisive American psyche, the country that could not agree on a narrative under which to fight, the war of the grunt, struggling for survival, versus the antiwar protestors at home---that is, the war produced by the American public's collective guilt over having allowed the war to happen and then mistreating or ignoring the veterans on their return.¹⁷

¹⁶ Transcript, *First Blood* (1982). I am indebted to the theatre and business librarians at Kansas State University's Hale Library for providing the raw statistics and calculators used by the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) and the Motion Picture MPAA to determine ticket sales for films released prior to 1995. The nearly 77.5 million tickets sold were for the entire *Rambo* series of four films. "Annual Average U.S. Ticket Price," National Association of Theatre Owners, <http://www.natoonline.org/data/ticket-price/> (accessed September 29, 2016); "Franchises: Total Grosses," Box Office Mojo <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/franchises/chart/?id=rambo.htm> (accessed September 29, 2016). For method of calculation for previous years see "Theatrical Market Statistics 2015," Motion Picture Association of America, http://www.mpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MPAA-Theatrical-Market-Statistics-2015_Final.pdf (accessed September 29, 2016), p. 9-10; Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997, 104. The screen character of John Rambo was loosely based on an actual Vietnam veteran, and Sturken notes the ongoing activity at the national Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC by individuals who take rubbings of his name.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 106. While labor historian Penny Lewis focuses her memory study on the invisibility of the working class as frequent opponents to the war contrary to the popular narrative, her conclusions concur with Sturken's overall analysis on cultural memory, particularly that promoted through mass culture. "With the exception of the two films explicitly

Although films like Oliver Stone's *Born On the Fourth of July* (1989), novels such as Tim O'Brien's The Things They Carried, and, most of all, the creation of the Vietnam War memorial in Washington DC explored a more complex story of those who fought in Vietnam --- both Americans and Asians --- American memory has continued to see the times in less nuanced terms when it comes to antiwar protest. The warrior is identified with the war and any lack of support for the war is not honorable or patriotic, but a betrayal of the sacrificial hero, the Everyman who loyally served his country.¹⁸

about the movement, (*Hair* and *Born on the Fourth of July*) the antiwar movement is singled out for scorn or remembered with ambivalence.” Penny Lewis, Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 30.

¹⁸ *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) is based on the autobiography of Ron Kovic, a wounded Vietnam veteran who actively opposed the war through the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Ron Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976); Tim O'Brien, The Things They Carried, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. Sturken, 44-107. Sturken emphasizes this point when she recounts President William Clinton's visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC in 1993 to deliver a Memorial Day address. Some veterans booed, held signs “Never Trust a Draft Dodger,” and turned their backs on him when he began to speak. Sturken, 272n40. Clearly, one who opposed the war and avoided military service was not included in the remembrance of the war and its dead, yet, as cultural historian Keith Beattie recalls, there is a stubborn cultural obstinacy in America that remembers what it wants to about the war and antiwar protests, even against the objection of its direct participants, that is, those who performed military service. When Vietnam veterans demonstrated in Boston against *Rambo* and Stallone's receipt of an award for the film in 1986, they were met by a crowd of teenagers who screamed for them to “go home,” that Stallone was “a real veteran.” Beattie's analysis argues that remembrance of the war deliberately lacks a “canon” that includes dissenting veterans in favor of one that emphasizes a particular kind of cultural unity (the unity that Lembcke finds essential to building an embedded culture of war-making). Reflecting on the twentieth annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association in 1990 which included sessions focusing on the topic, Beattie remarked on the usefulness of this construction. “In select and specific ways Vietnam veterans have drawn upon their experiences within the war and on the homefront to inform their criticisms of militarist policies and domestic inequities. Such articulations contradict and contest unity by revealing the inadequacy of a notion that presumes and asserts a basic cultural homogeneity. In this sense, the veterans's voice of dissent is a way of ‘talking back’ --- an insolent and insubordinate voice that ‘dare[s] to disagree’... Acknowledgement of the limitations of ‘central’ texts, specifically the impact that canonized texts have on the effectiveness of attempts to articulate experiences that contradict

These memories locate The 1960s as an age of disorder, rather than as a time of attempted reform and corrective to the stretch of American overreach and defaulted vision both domestic and international. As America and those sympathetic to the Civil Rights movement and its reform impulses endured the shock of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy in the span of less than sixty days, the culture of seeming consensus stretched to breaking, appeared to be doing just that. Evening news reports of racial disorder remained in memory, as did the increasing amount of footage of the war in Vietnam. On the cultural front, the lines between young New Left activists and cultural nonconformists increasingly blurred, so that by late 1968 anyone appearing countercultural was likewise identified with antiwar protest. Those who were “tuning in, turning on, and dropping out” by embracing drugs, alternative lifestyles and sexual mores, psychedelic fashions, and “flower power” included those whose stances expressed criticism of the Establishment, a yearning for authenticity, and a moral objection to a war built on national hubris, but in the lens of the times and in later memory, they simply represented a miasma of disorder.¹⁹

dominate interlocutor positions, informs [the attempts to offer a corrective to an oppositional cultural unity that omits their voices].” Thus, Beattie discovered that not only is the cultural memory unusually persistent, but that eliminating some actors who expressed dissent in these narratives (such as veterans who questioned or opposed the war, whether they were affiliated with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, or not) is a continuing process. Keith Beattie, The Scar That Binds: American Culture and the Vietnam War (New York: NYU Press, 1998), 96-97, 182n143.

¹⁹ Bruce J. Schulman, The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics (New York: Free Press, 2001), 14-23. Historian David Farber analyzes the complex distinctions between the antiwar movement and that of the counterculture, noting that although each had early “draw lines” between those who wanted to force political action for change and those who saw the creation of alternative realities (chiefly through drugs and sexual experimentation) as the most essential shape of reform, by the end of the Sixties, he argues, there was considerable overlapping, although not complete identification. The pressure of the war and the interest of some influential organizers like David Dellinger to create bridges absorbed part of the counterculture even as it redefined political engagement. Historian Michael Foley explored

Yet, other kinds of disorder remained invisible, even though they profoundly affected the underpinning of the seemingly sturdy consensus culture that had emerged during the 1950s, and would enable the culture wars that would follow for nearly a generation. The consumer culture that proved so gratifying and unifying had a collection of myths undergirding it, including an acceptance of debts, conformity, wishful thinking, racial exclusion, and the illusion of the classless society, while the growth roundly applauded and manifested by religious institutions in material resources, membership, and physical plants owed at least part of its success to mass marketing and a desire for respectability, rather than commitment to a faith and its incumbent ethical obligations. Systemic issues, including those concerning justice and freedom for many Americans, remained absent from this narrative, even as they positioned the society for fragmentation and economic disillusionment.²⁰

For example, the year 1968 is remembered as a year of unprecedented disorder in the streets, yet the political and bureaucratic revolt against the Johnson administration's reforms

the development of such dynamics (and the later regrets of activists) in key organizations in Boston late in the decade as they accommodated themselves to the counterculture both out of frustration with the trials and convictions of prominent peace leaders (including clergy) and the attempt to re-think strategies of community change. The point here is to note that the two were not the same and that there were many factors in cultural and political revolutionary practices. To the onlooker, the distinctions were frequently, and sometimes, deliberately, blurred by the media and the Nixon Administration in particular, as Melvin Small observed. David Farber, "The Counterculture and the Antiwar Movement," in Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement, ed. Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 8, 7-21; Michael S. Foley, Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 296-335; Melvin Small, Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002), 79-81.

²⁰ Lisabeth Cohen, A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Knopf, 2003); Kevin M. Kruse, One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America (New York: Basic Books, 2015), ch. 5.

remains in the background. The worldwide economic crisis of 1968 most evident in an international run on gold and subsequent destabilization is almost entirely absent from common memory, although the battles five months later in the streets of Chicago during the Democratic National Convention retain their grip as evidence of antiwar protesters determined to overthrow democratic process. As Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, the powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, continued to table President Lyndon Baines Johnson's proposal for a tax hike, he pushed the President to cut the liberal domestic programs and their long-range obligational authority that were at the heart of The Great Society and its attempts at systemic reform. The long-term economic fragmentation of a split society that President Richard M. Nixon would so thoroughly reinforce and exploit to his own ends remained invisible, even as social disturbances appeared paramount.²¹

²¹ Economic historian Robert M. Collins argued that the long-term building of "the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression [that] shook the Western world" and which exposed faults throughout the world economy, remained invisible because of the seemingly-expanding pie of the American economy which cloaked the chronic balance of payment deficits the United States incurred beginning in 1950, and experienced every year throughout the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, save 1953. This looming crisis that was exacerbated by the Cold War and about which successive administrations both Republican and Democrat had been aware, was brought explicitly by Council of Economic Affairs (CEA) chairman Gardner Ackley to Johnson's attention in late 1964. Collins dissects how Wilbur Mills skillfully played "guns" over against "butter" as a "sophisticated attempt to decouple the defining elements of growth liberalism, to separate growth economics from liberal activism." Robert M. Collins, More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 68, ch. 3. LBJ's "guns and butter" strategy took the hit as the entitlements put into place in the 1960s deflected criticism from the systemic financial overspending and widening economic inequalities onto the urban poor, chiefly represented by blacks. Even though the economic stresses began to affect working class whites, George Wallace, then Richard Nixon, successfully parlayed fear of disorder as evident in the antiwar movement and urban riots to undermine the Democrats and their domestic reform programs. Jefferson Cowie, Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class (New York: New Press, 2010). Cowie also addresses a piece of cultural conflict that has eluded popular recollections about the Vietnam War and antiwar activity when he touches on union members' experiences of or interest in Vietnam, reflecting not only the working class nature of the war, but also the working class opposition to the war -- something he keeps backgrounded throughout and which parallels the

The Silent Majority cannily built on George Wallace's racist political message by Richard Nixon and reinforced by Spiro T. Agnew which seemingly erupted late in the 1960s and early in the 1970s did so as middle-class Americans believed that their dreams had been sacrificed to underwrite the entitlements now perceived to be freely available to minorities. Nixon adroitly side-stepped a direct identification of racial issues as the central problem by focusing overtly on civil disorder. His enjoinder to enforce "Law and Order" encoded an appeal to racism, while referring explicitly to the breakdown of American society, particularly revealed in the widespread antiwar protests which intensified in 1968 and 1969, then continued to erupt as Americans discovered Nixon's secret extension of the war in bombings and invasions of Cambodia and an American-supported incursion into Laos. Nixon's subsequent self-destruction enabled a caveat to the historical record regarding his suitability as President, but his rhetorical strategies regarding disorder remained successfully embedded in American memory. His naming "The Silent Majority" reified a restless unknown into a distinctly oppositional force against those who engaged in anything that could be cast as civil unrest. He thus successfully created a Manichaean analysis of protest. Within this process of bifurcation, Nixon and his supporters successfully not only augmented a vision that cast disorder in particularly public terms, but also cloaked much of the destruction wrought behind the scenes through policy-making

argument Penny Lewis makes about memory and working class opposition to the war. Schulman thoroughly explores how Nixon systematically undermined domestic programs while seeming to support them. By decentralizing funding, for example, and shifting allocations to local control via block grant programs, the President appeared to foster liberal agendas while dismantling the political and economic structure of The Great Society. An avid fan of Kevin Phillips' The Emerging Republican Majority, he calculated how to restructure political alliances by building on fear of social disorder, both real and contrived, including that which he abetted. Schulman, 23-52, 106-114.

and bureaucracy. Thus dissent which included social and moral dimensions was recast as a particular kind of anarchy in an opposing, well-ordered moral universe.²²

Diminishing the memory of the religious dimensions of antiwar protest during the Vietnam War not only enabled an incomplete secular narrative of civil disorder with far-reaching consequences in the subsequent decades, but also increasingly discounted pacifism (and also antiwar protest from a peace position, the differences to be discussed in Chapter One) as a sustainable form of American patriotism. The loss of the opposing voice of conscience --- particularly that based on religion --- as a viable historical actor in American memory thus leaves a gap in twentieth-century American history and by such enervation facilitates the kind of uncritical acceptance of subsequent narratives of American empire that historians such as

²² Historian Dan T. Carter describes author Norman Mailer's apt portrayal of Nixon as a protean Wallace: "even if they were 'not waiting for George Wallace,' mused Mailer, was it possible they were ready for 'Super Wallace' --- a dressed-up, more sophisticated and refined salesman for the venom and bitterness that too many whites felt toward blacks?" Dan T. Carter, The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 374-380. Melvin Small argues that Nixon was able to exert more force against the antiwar movement because of his willingness to overstep civil liberties more than Lyndon Baines Johnson had been willing to do, including the use of a bureaucracy like the Internal Revenue Service to conduct audits that did not necessarily result in convictions or fines, but which "occupied the energies and resources of movement leaders." Melvin Small, Antiwarriors, 101-102, 129. As Nixon speechwriter William Safire noted, the antiwar movement was politically useful in a Manichaean universe, "useful as the villain, the object against which all our supporters could be rallied." William Safire, Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1975), 308. Princeton historian Kevin M. Kruse has recently emphasized the role of evangelist Billy Graham in this dichotomization through his shoring up of the Nixon presidency particularly in May and July 1970 after antiwar protest reignited over the invasion of Cambodia and the subsequent shootings at Kent State University. Although Graham's stated purpose was to include all Americans, the structure of the crusade at the University of Tennessee and his leading of services in Washington DC on July 4 at the "Pro-America Rally" were designed to strengthen an implied linkage between his followers and The Silent Majority. Kruse, 242-263. Small also emphasizes Graham's appearance in Knoxville as another of Nixon's attempts to define an order-loving and moral Silent Majority. Small, Antiwarriors, 128.

Godfrey Hodgson and Loren Baritz had criticized as leading to the cultural endorsement of entry into the war in Vietnam in the first place. Moreover, this clouding of memory also occluded the far ranging moral voice that concerned itself with systemic concerns, both economic and social, which religious historian Sidney Ahlstrom strongly mulled over in his critique of the Sixties and which will be briefly examined at the end of this introduction.²³

Historiography and Antiwar Opposition

The historiography of protest about the Vietnam War in America has refuted the popular perception that protesters were dirty, ragged, dissatisfied youth who roamed the streets of America and created havoc while acting as a Fifth Column that undermined U.S. military efforts to thwart Communism in Southeast Asia. Although most of the focus on the antiwar movement was media-dependent, with images of both the war and its opposition readily available on the evening news for immediate cultural appropriation, many of the early reflections on antiwar activity were written by participant-observers, particularly those who were outspoken and often the flashiest individuals. Some of these works were designed to raise money for the cause itself, while other reflected a combination of political message and self-aggrandizing ego. These

²³ Godfrey Hodgson, America in Our Time: From World War II to Nixon---What Happened and Why, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Loren Baritz, Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us Into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did (New York: William Morrow, 1985). Both historians argue that John F. Kennedy's eloquent enjoiner to Americans framed foreign policy as a kind of privilege: "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." Baritz refers to the nationalism myths of America, including the metaphor of the "City on a Hill" for the religious, Wilsonian idealism conjoined with the secular version of nationalism, while Hodgson wryly eschewed the sacred-secular imperatives in favor of exceptionalism, and its sudden awakening to economic reality: "([Kennedy]did not go so far as to say Americans would pay any *tax* in that cause!)." Baritz, 41-42; Hodgson, 260; Sidney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 1079-1096.

autobiographies and biographies focused on young, male leaders, who had been proponents of the New Left or of the counterculture, and whose names were familiar: Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, David Harris, and, to a lesser extent, historian Todd Gitlin, whose work is usually recognized as a scholarly analysis. The accounts generally focused on the efficacy of young, white, student-led protest generated by radicals out of the New Left, with a sprinkling of other groups and individuals not as focused (or articulate) as those self-described as in the forefront. Some accounts such as that written by the irreverent and colorful Abbie Hoffman also conflated those on the Left fighting for reform with the counterculture that might or might not have genuine political commitments, but which called attention to some of the most memorable and bizarre aspects of the decade. Early analysts such as Paul Jacobs, Saul Landau, and Jack Newfield provided some insightful correctives in their contemporary accounts during the mid-Sixties, but even those appearing a decade later tended to focus on the movements as almost solely a product of the New Left.²⁴

²⁴ Tom Hayden, Reunion: A Memoir (New York: Random House, 1988); Abbie Hoffman, Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1980); David Harris, Dreams Die Hard (New York: St. Martin's, 1982); Fred Halstead, Out Now: A Participant's Account of the Movement Against the Vietnam War in the United States (New York: Pathfinder, 1978); Todd Gitlin, The Sixties, Years of Hope, Days of Rage (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); James Miller, "Democracy Is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, The New Radicals (New York: Random House, 1966); Jack Newfield, A Prophetic Minority (New York: New American Library, 1966). The use of the term "movement" is ambiguous, with many "movements" comprising the whole. Small captures this fuzziness and sees it as both strength and weakness, the former, because of its multi-faceted inventiveness and the latter because of its easy capture by anyone interested in associating with it and its ready availability for political distortion. "There were no membership cards in the movement, nor were there any organizations that dominated its activities for the more than seven years of its existence... If you said you were in the movement, you were accepted as a member in good standing." Small, Antiwarriors, 3. This analysis will nevertheless use the term with the understanding that it contains these tensions.

But, more than a decade after U. S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho signed a peace accord between the adversaries, two analyses issued a challenge to the prevailing narrative and foreshadowed what would become the magisterial treatment of the antiwar movement. Journalists Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan's painstaking study, Who Spoke Up? American Protest Against the War in Vietnam, 1963-1975, established that anti-war demonstrators represented a wide swath of American society and that, even as the "movement" coalesced, contracted, and then re-formed, it was a complex combination of groups and individuals, rather than a drive chiefly by Leftist students. Although Zaroulis and Sullivan described antiwar action as a "homegrown movement of the Left which eventually encompassed the entire political spectrum," their treatment is far more nuanced than the statement appears at face value. As they maintained, although some parts of the movement derived strictly from elements of the Old Left and New Left, because many of these groups had pacifist commitments (including those based on religious convictions), the picture is more complicated than simply arguing for a secular-sacred divide with easily discerned and classified actors. Moreover, they claimed a widespread disaffection and opposition to the war chiefly led by a preponderance of adults who largely embraced respectability and who chiefly eschewed the trappings of the counterculture.²⁵

²⁵ The journalists emphasized the inherently peaceful nature of the movement, "which was begun and led by lifelong pacifists, many of them devoutly religious men and women who practiced nonviolence as part of their faith" and offered no small encomium to "the two old men" to whom they attribute the inspiration for the movement. One of the "two old men" who early articulated and then engaged in direct opposition was the indefatigable Quaker A.J. Muste. The other was David Dellinger, later notorious in the trial of the Chicago Eight, who was a lifelong exponent of nonviolent resistance which was derived from his religious faith and his interaction with the teachings of Gandhi. Dellinger had studied theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York in the late 1930s. Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, Who Spoke Up? American Protest Against the War in Vietnam, 1963-1975 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), xii.

By scrutinizing the development of the New Left, Marxist historian Maurice Isserman further explored the political, and philosophical commitments of a wide variety of actors, leaving no partisan group of the Old Left unexamined. In doing so, he created a rich fabric for understanding the genius underlying antiwar protest associated with “the movement,” and also why it later fragmented. Isserman’s study, while focused on the traditional Left, contributes two significant frameworks that help structure the subsequent historiography and also call into question studies that would ignore the influence of the religious sources of Sixties protest. First, he thoroughly explicates how many of the politically committed leftist conscientious objectors who later became leaders in the 1960s became acquainted with and then embraced the tenets of radical pacifism during either their imprisonment or their Civilian Public Service Work during World War II. He thus explained and complicated the narrative, even as his work anticipated some of the historical analyses of the early twenty-first century to be discussed shortly. Second, and equally important to understanding the web of antiwar opposition and some of its foundations in religion, Isserman extended his analytical timeline into the 1940s and 1950s. Not only did this long timeframe enable him to trace commitments and changes in the Left, but also to examine more thoroughly those pacifists he called radical pacifists and their actions in postwar America. Subsequent analyses have validated that working from such a long timeline focused on the Left also enables the religious actors and underpinnings to come into focus, even if that was not the original intention or primary focus of the authors. Thus, the Zaroulis-Sullivan recognition of multiple actors combined with Isserman’s detailed examination of a changing Left over an

extended timeline complicated the narrative of antiwar protest and began to reveal the intricacies of intergroup overlap, interaction, motivations, and differentiation.²⁶

²⁶ In part, this emphasis may be due to the kind of self-examination that some members of the Old Left were already considering, even as the New Left formed. Isserman analyzed what radical pacifism meant to American Marxists struggling with Stalinist visions before offering an approximate description rather than a definition. The definitional process is significant for understanding the dynamics of antiwar activism and for appreciating the contentions of those who would later make a case that “the personal is political.” For example, socialist Norman Thomas, who had led the “pacifist-religious” Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in the early 1930s, explored Gandhi’s approach to opposing unjust systems, and “considered the possibility that Gandhi’s means might serve to attain Marx’s ends,” but had then, according to Isserman, “dropped that interesting line of inquiry in factionalist fighting prior to World War II.” But, other later antiwar activists of the Sixties reprised such thinking when they traced their development as radical pacifists to their experiences as conscientious objectors either in Civilian Public Service Camps or prison during the war. Some encountered the practices of objectors from the Historic Peace Churches whose cooperative stances were baffling, while others absorbed the writings of Gandhi: “Communism lost whatever appeal it earlier may have had for them. Pacifism itself seemed far more radical than the beliefs of the traditional parties of the Left, because it was radical in its means as well as its ends.” Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 130, 134, 125-169. Historian Ronnie Lieberman also explored part of this moral tension as she examined very early Cold War America through 1963. Arguing that the peace movements in postwar America were a tangled picture, with many Communists also dedicated peace activists, Lieberman likewise included a variety of religious actors in her analysis. Although Communists’ insistence on tying commitments to the fate of the Soviet Union impugned them in the eyes of those with whom they had contact, Lieberman also discovered that the kinds of dynamics later faced by peace activists during the Vietnam War also prevailed during the Cold War as the U.S. government deliberately and systematically cast anyone advocating “peaceful co-existence” rather than military buildup as a Communist. At the same time, deciding whether or not to sever ties with other activists, whether Communist or not, put non-Communists under a deep scrutiny and discredited their actions as unpatriotic, themes that would continue to resonate through and after the Vietnam War. These characterizations had far-ranging impacts for religious actors uneasy with both the labeling of others as “godless communists” and the pressure to disassociate themselves automatically from fellow peace activists. Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000). Thus, using a wide lens in studies of the Left and a timeframe that extended at least into the 1950s uncovered religious actors and an interaction between them and others without religious commitments who were either rethinking the presuppositions inherent in their radical allegiances or who were in organizations that brought them into common contact.

Three years later in 1990, the hallmark study of the American antiwar movement during the Vietnam era appeared. An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era by historians Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield, built on the wide scope of the former's earlier consideration of peace movements throughout American history, The Peace Reform in American History. The historically expansive lens DeBenedetti introduced in the initial work enabled him to thoroughly recognize a wide range of religious actors and organizations in the Vietnam antiwar movement, better differentiate between traditional pacifism and the radical pacifism which was foundational for many activists, and draw distinctions between those Americans who protested and those who opposed the Vietnam War but eschewed either protest or the countercultural accretions that were increasingly associated with activism. In using the 1950s as a starting point for their analysis, DeBenedetti and Chatfield rooted the later Vietnam antiwar movement not only in the Left, but also in the anti-nuclear atmospheric testing and civil defense protests which informed ordinary citizens to the dangers of the increasing arms race and national security state. By doing so the historians foreshadowed what within a decade became a complicated, frequently overlapping combination of religious groups, labor unions, traditional pacifist organizations, and veterans, including those who had returned from the war itself. They also emphasized the social characteristics of those early groups who provided the backbone of later protests in sharp contrast to the perception fostered by early analyses and in memory. For example, the historians observed that organizations such as The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) which were originally founded to exert pressure on other objectives, but who widely embraced and engaged in antiwar protest, prided themselves on their respectability. Even as they led some of the earliest and largest mass protests, they concerned themselves with "how not to appear as crazies and fringe people, although SANE was 180 degrees opposite to

that charge in style and demeanor.” By using the DeBenedetti-Chatfield flattened timeline that extends into the 1950s, historians of the movement such as Melvin Small of Wayne State University have recognized that the origin of Vietnam-era antiwar protest included many religious actors and groups, even if they originally ignored or minimalized such strands in their earlier work.²⁷

²⁷ A few comments on the comprehensive nature of the classic work are in order. Originally a 1,100 page manuscript, what had been DeBenedetti’s solo work ended in Chatfield’s involvement as an “assisting author” when the former was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor. Faithful to DeBenedetti’s plans to edit the manuscript by about half, Chatfield fleshed out the final two chapters from notes and added a final reflection. Due to the nature of the work, however, and Chatfield’s contention that “your work is a precious child and I am conscious that it is your child. My role is like a doctor at birth,” the book is generally attributed by peace historians to DeBenedetti, with Chatfield, but sometimes shorthanded in other works as written solely by DeBenedetti. Hereafter, it will be referenced as DeBenedetti-Chatfield, for these reasons and also easily to distinguish it from solo works by DeBenedetti. Charles DeBenedetti, with Charles Chatfield, An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), xi. DeBenedetti’s earlier work began with Quaker William Penn’s “Holy Experiment” in founding Pennsylvania as a place of religious toleration and refuge which included many traditional “peace sects” that refused to engage in war or killing. It had concluded with a chapter on the last of eight periods of reform, “The Deferred Reform, 1961-1975,” which had included the Civil Rights and antiwar movements of that period. Charles DeBenedetti, The Peace Reform in American History (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980). In regard to the distinctions between traditional pacifism and radical pacifism, DeBenedetti-Chatfield focused on the inherent meaning of radical (as root), even as they acknowledged its ambiguities in actual usage: “By 1955 there was an incipient form of pacifism with a politically radical nuance. Its adherents differed from traditional pacifists, whose absolute repudiation of war and military service did not extend to activism, and also from liberal pacifists, whose efforts for social reform did not extend to direct action or civil disobedience. Radical pacifists were not necessarily revolutionaries. They repudiated violence, and their activism was consonant with selective reform. Humankind does not live by definitions, however, and the ambiguity associated with the word *radical* would become associated with the word *pacifist*.” DeBenedetti, with Chatfield, An American Ordeal, 20. Former co-chair of SANE and political scientist Marcus Raskin provided this particularly apt quote which illustrates DeBenedetti-Chatfield’s point about the focus on respectability by many of the religious actors. Marcus Raskin, “The Vietnam War and SANE’s Change of Focus” in Peace Action: Past, Present, and Future, ed. Glen Harold Stassen and Lawrence S. Wittner (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 43; Melvin Small, Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Covering Dissent: The Media and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994). In his most recent work

How religious groups fit into the larger Vietnam antiwar movement has been a point of argument, both in general terms and in regard to specific types of opposition. In 1988, emeritus political scientist Gunther Lewy of the University of Massachusetts/Amherst launched a salvo against American pacifism and its involvement in the Vietnam antiwar movement at large. Focusing his ire on four long-standing traditional peace organizations, Lewy denounced them for the activism they had expressed during the war and how their increasing involvement with the American Left had essentially drawn three of them from their religious roots into a secularized haze. In part, he pulled his conclusions from basic tenets of content analysis, contending that the use of a common language of protest meant a congruence of vision and motivation. On the one hand, his use of such evidence too quickly identified religious radical pacifism with secular revolution without unpacking the meaning of either, but on the other hand, he raised significant questions about the confusion, denial, and naiveté of those who held strong religious convictions, protested because of them, and then blurred their peace witness, sometimes deliberately, with the work of antiwarriors drawn from a “totalitarian Left.” By the mid-1980s, he charged, the major peace organizations had little hope of reclaiming any moral high ground unless they abandoned the public protest they had embraced.²⁸

focusing on those who opposed the war, Small has also recognized religious actors in part by expanding his timeline, but also by widening his focus. Small, Antiwarriors.

²⁸ The four major pacifist organizations Lewy examined were the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and the War Resister’s League (WRL), all founded early in the twentieth century, each with a distinctive mission, but by the postwar period 1975-1985 all having arrived at “a similar ideological stance,” according to the political scientist. Lewy countered what he saw as dangerous activism that had foresworn a morally pure pacifism for the sake of engaging in a quest for justice, even if it compromised its means.

Urging religious pacifists to recognize the Niebuhrian dichotomy between individual purity and social obligation, Lewy allowed that they might, as citizens, be allowed to participate in democratic process, but only if they did not disturb order and place the society or lives of others in jeopardy. “When the pacifist’s conscience does not allow him to support policies that utilize force or the threat of force,” Lewy maintained, “the proper course for him is to remain silent.” Quickly taken to task by a wide range of ethicists, historians, sociologists, and clergy, his work as a whole was largely discredited as a comprehensive analysis, although many of his challenges remain relevant to studies such as this one.²⁹

In regard to whether or not religious actors engaged more heavily in particular types of antiwar opposition, sociologist Charles C. Moskos has argued that conscientious objection has become a secular exercise, even as he has taken historian Peter Brock to task for arguing that religious commitments continued to be significant in the Vietnam era. Moskos disputed Brock’s earlier extended argument that religious protest was foundational in it of itself, that is, that

²⁹ “Individual perfection is not a basis on which to build a political platform. Pacifists have every right to avoid the moral dilemmas posed by the world of statesmanship, and statecraft and seek individual salvation through ethical absolutism and purity, but they have no right to sacrifice others for the attainment of this vocation.” Gunther Lewy, Peace & Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), viii, 242, 248. Lewy was both applauded and opposed in a special day-and-a-half forum sponsored by the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, DC shortly after the publication of his work. In particular the resulting papers by leadership in the four organizations, activists who had been involved in the multiple overlapping of groups described by Zaroulis and Sullivan, peace historian Charles Chatfield, who drew from his forthcoming work with DeBenedetti, and ethicists from Roman Catholicism and the largest of the Mennonite denominations countered both his evidence and his methodology at either the forum or in separate publications. Michael Cromartie, ed., Peace Betrayed? Essays on Pacifism and Politics (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989); Tom Cornell, “U.S. Pacifism Attacked and Defended,” Cross Currents 41 (Summer 1991), 234-242. Quakers issued a collective rejoinder to Lewy in Chuck Fager, ed., Quaker Service at the Crossroads: The American Friends Service Committee and Peace and Revolution (Falls Church, VA: Kimo Press, 1988).

religious convictions motivated these groups and individuals to activism (particularly conscientious objection, but extending to public protest and participation in demonstrations against the war). Moskos and historian John Whiteclay Chambers instead contended that those motivated by religious convictions gradually were secularized and that both pacifism and conscientious objection were essentially secular in nature. Brock was joined by sociologist and peace studies theorist Nigel Young in 2006 when they contended that Moskos' and Chambers' evidence not only erroneously dismissed the impact of faith, but also argued that the protests of the 1960s were driven by the basic moral currents that derived from religious impulses in the American culture itself. Recent works have begun to grapple with the Brock and Young rejoinder by evidencing the explicit religious convictions held by not only the actors and groups in the civil rights movement, but also key members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and other organizations that involved themselves in antiwar protest.³⁰

³⁰ Peter Brock, Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968); Charles C. Moskos and John Whiteclay Chambers, eds., The New Conscientious Objection: From Sacred to Secular Resistance (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 39-46, 47-56, 196; Peter Brock and Nigel Young, Pacifism in the Twentieth Century (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 301-302. In part, the disagreement is due to the frameworks utilized by the two opponents. Brock and Young not only delineate a wide number of peace initiatives and movements over the course of a century, but they also argue from a comprehensive view of pacifism which includes the radical variety to which DeBenedetti-Chatfield allude, e.g integrated and rooted. This significantly complicates the definition of secular, by raising questions about the religious or moral roots of justice and the origins of modern notions of individual freedom, and how both undergird notions of conscience. Moskos and Chambers do not deny the significant support of religious objectors on behalf of the new, more inclusive definitions which have broadened objection to include many beyond not only the Historic Peace Churches, but also to those in other religious traditions, or even those objecting on what Moskos and Chamberlain ascribe as "humanitarian" grounds. Although focused on conscientious objectors, their critique includes broader antiwar activity, and that of the surrounding culture which has supported it and argues that secular impulses have made these definitions (and legal classifications) possible.

In particular, two studies by historians attempting to disentangle religious commitments and action characterized as “secular” built on the earlier work of former SDS activist and sociologist Wini Breines in which she considered the effects of those who attempted to live their dedication to nonviolence, peace, and justice in both private and public life --- a thorough, political, and personal congruence between means and ends. Historian James J. Farrell explored how the philosophy of personalism and its various manifestations in America laid the groundwork for the essential understanding that the “political is personal” as its adherents not only attempted to cultivate a “third way” between Marxism and capitalism, but also find an ethical correspondence between means and ends. Farrell’s explication of the theistic strands of “realistic personalism” reveal how many groups and individual actors in later antiwar (and cultural) protest in the postwar period through the Vietnam War were motivated by essentially religious convictions. Douglas Rossinow’s The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America is the most carefully nuanced of the new studies that concern themselves with not only the explicit and direct, but also the implicit and derived, impact of religion on activism couched as a basic quest for moral authenticity.³¹

³¹ James J. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). Sociologist Wini Breines, a former member of SDS and antiwar activist, had laid footing for Rossinow’s later argument fifteen years earlier when she specifically recognized the significant theoretical underpinning provided by what she labels radical pacifists such as A.J. Muste, David Dellinger, and the Catholic Worker movement, all of which distrusted hierarchical organizations, offered ethical critiques of capitalism, and focused on the significance of moral witness: “Their impact on the new left may not have been extensive, nevertheless, the pacifists and anarchists are among the new left’s real forerunners.” Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*. 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 14. In addition, her model of “pre-figurative politics,” in which activists lived in ways that “embodied the desired society” anticipates Rossinow’s emphasis on activists who desired congruence, including that which derived both directly and indirectly from religious commitments. Breines, 6. Breines also explicitly recognizes the distinctive building of the

Likewise, Axel Schafer's compendium of twelve studies ranging over the Sixties (including Andrew Preston's analysis of Vietnam) argues for the pervasive impact of religion within the culture in which it "shaped and transported sixties impulses in unexpected ways" and was in itself re-defined. Although only a handful of the essays briefly touch on issues of social protest, they nevertheless address the religion-secularism divide raised by Moskos and Chambers. On a microscopic level with larger implications, Mennonite historian Gordon Oyer's recent analysis of a little-known peacemakers retreat initiated by Trappist Thomas Merton offers a substantive look at social and antiwar protest by religious actors and their motivations. Held in late 1964 on the heels of Freedom Summer and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which enabled Lyndon Johnson's public escalation of the Vietnam War, the intense retreat, which included Quaker A.J. Muste, Roman Catholics Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, and Mennonite John Howard Yoder, focused on a thoroughly integrated model of Christian faithfulness which would engage

communities in which politics was "lived out" in the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, as both model and energizer for those opposed to the war. These important exemplars, which were significant for many of the Mennonite students and faculty in the schools in this study, are well-considered in a wide variety of works on the movement such as David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); John Lewis, *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Vincent Harding, *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996). Likewise, on the sociological front, a young Robert J. Wuthnow analyzed four "systems of meaning" and their intersection with social changes associated with the 1960s, with special attention to ethical congruence and the re-ordering of society during the course of the Vietnam war. Although his dissertation centered on 1200 respondents to a Bay area survey of San Francisco, California, the sociologist discovered a microcosm of concern with values (including those derived from or interacting with religion) which Breines had seen operative in the New Left and effectively explicated. Robert John Wuthnow, "Consciousness and the Transformation of Society" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1975).

systemic issues of structural evil through both means and ends, while eschewing the “political expedients” of the secular culture.³²

The close consideration demonstrated in Oyer’s work on religion foregrounds the benefits of cultural and social analyses regarding antiwar activity, which have in recent years included historian Kenneth J. Heineman’s comparative study of four state universities, Marc Jason Gilbert’s compendium of short case studies, and Andrew Grose’s examination of the University of South Carolina, all attempting to provide “a more perfect mirror” of institutions not generally associated with activism. In doing so, Heineman and Grose are able to thoroughly consider issues such as student government, policies about *in loco parentis*, concern about the draft, and administrative responses to student fears and actions, while Gilbert offers a snapshot of a variety of institutions ranging from small state universities to secondary schools. Although Heineman has been criticized for his detailed consideration of these seemingly adjacent topics, rather than the war itself, this study indeed will demonstrate how significant campus rules and administrative decisions loomed for draft-age men, including those members of the Historic

³² Axel R. Schafer, ed., American Evangelicals and the 1960s (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2013), 6. Regarding the intense retreat at Gethsemani, although many topics were aired, three stood out in sharp relief: conscientious objection, dehumanization and issues of technology and Merton’s question “By what right do we protest?” Originally to include Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mennonite Paul Peachey, the small group blossomed to fourteen participants, most not members of either the mainline Protestant denominations already engaging in anti-nuclear objection or the Historic Peace Churches. Oyer’s work ably teases out the complex questions the retreatants considered, including issues of right motives and faithful witness, questions that were especially pressing for Mennonite John Howard Yoder, whose tradition did not support this kind of public protest, and the Roman Catholics, who were just coming to grips with Vatican II and Pope John XXIII’s monumental encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. Gordon Oyer, Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest: Merton, Berrigan, Yoder, and Muste at the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemakers Retreat (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), xiii, 189. The study evidences the strong primacy of faith, with protest derived from it and not the culture or a secular peace movement.

Peace Churches with conscientious objector classifications, particularly after General Hershey implemented punitive reclassification in October 1967. Moreover, the historian's analysis of Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, discovered not only direct antiwar activism, but the kind of antiwar stances held by working and professional class Catholics not typically associated with protest. All of the case studies in these three investigations suggested the pressures local communities and regional cultures might exact on individuals and on the campuses themselves, factors which would indeed manifest among the Mennonite colleges in Kansas.³³

Few non-Mennonite scholars have studied the twentieth century encounters with modernity and pressures on pacifism (or antiwar thought and action, including that during the Vietnam War) with a particular focus on either the Historic Peace Churches in general or Mennonites in particular, although the classic treatments by Charles DeBenedetti, Peter Brock, and Lawrence S. Wittner include some general discussions on Mennonite involvement prior to the Vietnam War, and Brock offers an insightful twelve-page consideration of "Pacifist Renewal Among Mennonites and Brethren" that incorporates the Vietnam War. Even Mitchell Hall's substantive analysis of *Clergy and Laity Against the War (CALCAV)* makes only one spotty reference to Mennonites, even though many were active particularly in the regional chapter for Indiana. Former president of the Council on Peace Research historian Melvin Small's earlier

³³ Kenneth J. Heineman, Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Marc Jason Gilbert, The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001); Andrew Grose, "Voices of Southern Protest During the Vietnam War Era: The University of South Carolina As a Case Study," Peace & Change 32, no. 2 (April 2007): 153-167. Heineman's examination of the tensions felt by Catholics who were antiwar, but who opposed the kinds of antiwar protests seen on nightly news, models what Penny Lewis later discovered about working class opponents of the war. Kenneth Heineman, "American Schism: Catholic Activists, Intellectuals, and Students Confront the Vietnam War," in The Vietnam War on Campus, Gilbert, 88-118.

work considers long-standing pacifist groups which have many of their roots in religious convictions, but focuses on secular actors with little attention to the Historic Peace Church traditions in general and almost none on Mennonites. Although his most recent analysis, Antiwarriors, has provided a definitive corrective to some of these omissions, with an emphasis on a number of individual actors and groups who were acting out of their faith commitments, Mennonites still do not appear. For example, even though Small emphasizes the strategic effectiveness of the Moratorium events held around the country in 1969 in convincing the Nixon administration that it was losing the battle with the antiwar movement, the Moratorium events at Bethel College in Kansas are not mentioned, even though they garnered national attention both in print and on the nightly news as an example of protest “in the heartland.” A notable exception to the invisibility of a particular Historic Peace Church’s antiwar protestors acting out of deep faith commitments is Tarik W. Kamil’s 2006 dissertation that comprehensively analyzes Quaker activism during the Vietnam War and concludes that the faith tradition interacted with secular peace antiwar activism, both shaping it and being shaped in turn.³⁴

³⁴ DeBenedetti, The Peace Reform in American History; DeBenedetti-Chatfield, An American Ordeal; Brock, Pacifism in the United States; Lawrence S. Wittner, Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941-1960 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). Wittner’s remarks regarding the Historic Peace Churches during World War II are especially cutting, but foreshadow the kinds of questions many HPC actors would ask themselves as they faced the Vietnam War: “Most pacifists did not rebel or follow the lead of the new radicals [“drawn in good part from the ranks of political objectors”], but dug many a fine ditch for Selective Service between 1940 and 1947. The Historic Peace Churches proved particularly acquiescent, cheerfully ready to ‘walk the second mile.’ Mennonites, with their philosophy of non-resistance that accepted suffering as a logical concomitant of this world, posed no threat to the alternative service system.” Wittner, 82; Brock and Young, Pacifism in the Twentieth Century, 345-356; Mitchell K. Hall, Because of Their Faith: CALCAV and Religious Opposition to the Vietnam War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Small, Antiwarriors. The earlier festschrift for DeBenedetti by Small and William D. Hoover includes an essay by Hall on chiefly mainline church involvement in CALCAV, but otherwise ignores those protesting because of explicit religious commitments. Mitchell K. Hall, “CALCAV and Religious Opposition to the Vietnam War” in Give Peace a Chance, Small and Hoover, 35-52.

Even though Mennonites were the largest of the Historic Peace Churches, there is no *comprehensive* work focused on Mennonite activism and attitudes during the Vietnam War, although several shorter treatments on ancillary topics are exemplary. Moreover, because Mennonites were the first Protestant group to arrive in Vietnam as aid workers in late 1954 shortly after the French left and were present as missionaries and aid workers throughout the war, with four remaining after most Americans had left the country, they had direct experience of the conflict. Quick to consider whether or not their increasingly complex entanglements with the U.S. military were worth the costs to their peace commitments, their communication with those at home and in MCC demonstrate their conflicted thoughts, some of which had earlier motivated Mennonite college students to protest. Articles and short monographs by these individuals offered an immediate challenge to their constituencies and evidenced considerable reflection, as did several compilations regarding Mennonite conscientious objectors. Bluffton College historian Perry Bush has offered the most extensive analyses of Mennonite reaction to and involvement in the Vietnam War not only in two chapters of his notable analysis of Mennonite pacifism in the twentieth century, but also in a highly reflective series of articles considering the impact of voluntary service in Vietnam on those peace workers and their constituencies. Evidencing his skill in political sociology, the historian has also considered the

Patricia Applebaum explicitly ignores the Mennonite presence in the pacifist culture at large because they did not “maintain a conspicuous public presence” in American society. Patricia Applebaum, Kingdom to Commune: Protestant Pacifist Culture Between World War I and the Vietnam War (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), 39. Tarik W. Kamil, The Politics of Time and Eternity: Quaker Pacifists and Their Activism During the Vietnam War Era. (PhD diss., Ohio University, 2006).

memory of Vietnam as experienced by the larger denominational groups and their constituencies during and after the peace treaty had been signed.³⁵

Apart from several significant exceptions by historians at Bethel College (Kansas) and Goshen College (Indiana), little has been done *particularly* to document and analyze the effects of the Vietnam War on the Anabaptist colleges in the United States, or on the Kansas schools in particular. No one has analyzed inter-campus societies among Mennonite schools, including most significantly, the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship (IPF), which provided a means for mutual organizing among Mennonite and Brethren collegians nationwide. At the college level, Bethel College historians James Juhnke and Keith Sprunger and their students have detailed a wide variety of activities at their school during the war. The latter include written descriptions by the Levellers Club and a set of oral history interviews, all of which are housed in the

³⁵ Max Ediger, *A Vietnamese Pilgrimage* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1978); James E. Metzler, *From Saigon to Shalom: The Pilgrimage of a Missionary in Search of a More Authentic Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1985), Articles from the “Vietnam” issue of *Mission Focus* published in 1977, were reprinted with a reflective analysis in the journal’s collection of essays in 1980. Missiologist David A. Shank commented on the articles written by aid workers and missionaries in Vietnam, noting the constraints and convoluted dilemmas of Americans offering service under what he called the *pax Americana*, or the shadow of U.S. foreign policy. David A. Shank, “Comment on Vietnam Appraisal,” in *Mission Focus: Current Issues*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980), 360-366. Shank reflected on the variant struggles posed by James E. Metzler, “Vietnam: I Wouldn’t Do It Again,” in *ibid*, 313-321; James Klassen, “Walking With Vietnam Christians,” in *ibid*, 322-228; and Luke S. Martin, “Implications of the Vietnam Experience for World Mission,” in *ibid*, 339-359. Delbert L. Wiens, “My Saga: ‘In’ and ‘Out,’” in *A Dangerous Mind: The Ideas and Influence of Delbert L. Wiens*, ed. W. Marshall Johnston and Daniel J. Crosby, eds. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 247-263. Melissa Miller and Phil M. Shenk, ed. *The Path of Most Resistance: Stories of Mennonite Conscientious Objectors Who Did Not Cooperate with the Vietnam War Draft* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982); James W. Tollefson, *Strength Not to Fight: An Oral History of Conscientious Objectors of the Vietnam War* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1993); Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties*, 188-256; Perry Bush, “The Political Education of Vietnam Christian Service, 1954-1975,” *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 198-224; Perry Bush, “Vietnam and the Burden of Mennonite History,” *Conrad Grebel Review*, 17, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 5-27.

Mennonite Library and Archives in Newton (MLA). Juhnke, Sprunger, and historian John Sharp of Hesston College have also evaluated some of the events involving their colleges and towns, but almost nothing concerning Mennonite Brethren or their denominational school during the war had been documented or analyzed.³⁶

The latter is a significant omission. The third largest of the groups, Mennonite Brethren are almost completely absent from any analysis regarding the impact of the war or their involvement in antiwar protest, even though one of their alternative service workers was the first long-term Mennonite in Vietnam in 1954 and Mennonite Brethren students were the first Mennonite college students nationwide to evidence awareness of the war and issue a written

³⁶ The systematic use of college senior history seminars at Bethel College and Goshen College enabled the collection, analysis, and preservation of both primary and secondary sources, including work on campus peace clubs and, tangentially, activity in the IPF. A sampling includes Mark G. Chupp, "Reconciliation Through Resistance: Mennonite Draft Resistance and the Mennonite General Conference Turner, Oregon, August 1969," (History Senior Seminar paper, Goshen College, 1981), Mennonite Historical Library (MHL); Terence Goering, "A History of the Bethel College Peace Club," (Student paper, Bethel College, 1975), MLA; David Harder, "An Editor and His Denominational Periodical, or Maynard Shelly and The Mennonite: 1961-1971," (Student paper, Bethel College, 1982), MLA; David Leaman, "Politicized Service and Teamwork Tensions: The Mennonite Central Committee in Vietnam, 1966-1969," (History Senior Seminar Paper, Goshen College, 1985), MHL; Steven P. Miller, "Mediating Revolution: The Goshen College Peace Society and the New Left," (Senior History Paper, Goshen College, 1999), MHL; David Roth, "Engaging a Politicized World: Goshen College Record Coverage of the Vietnam War, 1964-1974," (Goshen College History Seminar Paper, 1998), MHL; James C. Juhnke, "Clashing Symbols in a Quiet Town: Hesston in the Vietnam War Era," Kansas History 23, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 142-153; James C. Juhnke, Small Steps Toward the Missing Peace: A Memoir (Newton, KS: Flying Camel Publications, 2011), 39-94, 109-115; Keith Sprunger, Bethel College of Kansas, 1887-2012, (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2012), 139-177; John E. Sharp, School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009 (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2009), 269-333. Very recent attention has been paid to Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Central Committee worker Delbert Wiens, who was the first Mennonite assigned by MCC to Vietnam in 1954, but apart from a very generalized assessment of his impact among students at either Tabor College or Bethel College, his influence on antiwar activities at Mennonite colleges or his impact on the larger Mennonite community's understanding of Vietnam has not been assessed. Johnston and Crosby, A Dangerous Mind.

protest as early as 1963. Omitting this group misses an essential piece of the historical record, but also precludes the detailed analysis that could issue from comparing them to the more numerous General Conference Mennonites who also include a large contingent of German-Russian immigrants that derive from the same historical-cultural context in Russia. Moreover, because Mennonites, and Mennonite Brethren in particular, have executed an intricate, although occasionally fumbling dance with American evangelicalism, examining the tradition's attempts to bridge this movement and Anabaptism offers an additional aspect to the larger religious and sociological understanding of acculturation and its influence on this smaller group.

Several Mennonite historians and sociologists have analyzed the traditions' tensions with American society and the attempts to maintain a peace position in twentieth-century America and the debate is an ongoing interdisciplinary one among many Mennonite intellectuals and the denominations themselves. Historians Paul Toews and James Juhnke considered the increasing pressures of acculturation (including that involving nonresistance and conscientious objection in the World Wars and Vietnam) in their separate volumes of The Mennonite Experience in America, while historian Perry Bush evaluated how a changing view of the theology of the state provided the theological undergirding for protests that were further enabled by the passing of significant policy decisions by the two largest Mennonite bodies (the General Conference Mennonites and the MC Mennonites. Mennonite sociologists Leo Driedger, Leland Harder, J. Howard Kauffman, and Donald Kraybill have been foremost analysts of the internal and external pressures on Anabaptist groups during the mid-twentieth century, resulting in inter-systemic and conflict research studies which figure in the historical analyses, while communications theorist Ervin R. Stutzman has recently explored changes in Mennonite peace rhetoric that reflect cultural adaptation (or resistance). By focusing on social history and juxtaposed against the

connection between ideas and structures, my proposed research and its argument also will trace “different paths to different outcomes” as suggested by Mennonite sociologist Fred Kniss of the University of Chicago in his call for comparative studies on social change such as this one and will further contribute to this aspect of the literature.³⁷

Organization and Chapter Descriptions

In addition to this backdrop, because community and consensus have been essential hallmarks of Mennonite identity, decision-making, and adaptation to pressure in the process of modernization and industrialization, both social and intellectual history are significant pieces of this study. Moreover, even though coming to terms with power and wrestling with its implications were part of the Mennonite struggle to construct identity prior to and during the scope of this study, because political science has not been a well-developed field among Mennonites and most work in the area has been an outgrowth of studies in power by sociologists, ethicists, or theologians, these likewise are reflected in the argument considering the intermingling of identity and political protest.³⁸ In particular, the three central chapters on the three colleges contain a mixture of primary and secondary sources, including college newspapers, Kansas newspapers, oral interviews (both contemporary and recently collected),

³⁷ Toews, Mennonites; James C. Juhnke, Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989); Bush, Two Kingdoms; J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger, The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991); Leland Harder and J. Howard Kauffman, Anabaptists Four Centuries Later (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975); and Donald Kraybill The Amish Struggle with Modernity (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994); Ervin Stutzman, From Nonresistance to Justice: The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908-2008 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2011); Fred Kniss, Disquiet in the Land: Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 191.

³⁸ These include MC bishop John E. Lapp, ethicist Keith Graber Miller, theologian John Howard Yoder, and sociologists Calvin Redekop and Rodney Sawatsky.

extensive reflections and “discussions” in denominational publications, and resolutions enacted by the various conferences during and immediately after the ending of the war. The triad is bracketed by chapters that considers shifts in church-state theological orientations by Mennonite intellectuals and theologians in the late 1950s and the ragged consensus that began to emerge among conservative laity about the definition and shifting meaning of “peacemaking.” Throughout the five chapters, the American flag appears and disappears, as do the deadly serious “jokesters” of Mennonite Central Committee, who carried firsthand accounts of the war as early as the late 1950s and American intervention in Vietnam as early as 1962. The presence or absence of the flag will support the thesis that each college came to terms differently with issues of church and state, while the latter will argue the force of the transnational claims of Mennonite faith and identity. An introduction and conclusion surrounds the five chapters, followed by a limited final analysis that further interacts with the current ongoing arguments among historians of American religious history regarding secularization and modernity and those among Mennonites regarding nationalism that are rooted in the 1960s and which suggests directions for further study.

A Word Regarding Sidney Ahlstrom and the Ahlstrom Argument

No dissertation in American religious history which contends with the overwhelming tensions of the Vietnam War era can be written without including historian Sidney Ahlstrom as companion and critic. His presence is more than an exercise in historiography, but speaks to many of the issues that lie at the heart of the entanglements between freedom, justice, and disorder which rest in the story of the decade. Ahlstrom’s monumental classic published in 1972, *A Religious History of the American People*, concluded with a lamentation directed at the Sixties and his argument has continued to resound among American historians, whether in one guise or

another. Specifically, the historian asserted that the Puritan era, or, the systemic influence of Puritanism as a guiding interpretive lens in American history, had been definitively challenged by the social and cultural disorder of the immediately preceding years.

The decade of the sixties seems in many ways to have marked a new stage in the long development of American religious history. Not only did this intense and fiercely lived span of years have a character of its own, but it may have even ended a distinct quadricentennium---a unified four-hundred-year period in the Anglo-American experience.

His framework was an expansive one, not only focusing on Puritanism as a discrete body of belief, but on its wider scope as cultural influence, and against which all other traditions and movements formed or responded.

This is not to say that only the vicissitudes of Puritanism are vital to an understanding of the intervening years, but it *is* to say that the exploration and settlement of those parts of the New World in which the United States took its rise were profoundly shaped by the Reformed and Puritan impulse, and that this impulse, through its successive transmutations, remained the dominant element in the ideology of most Protestant Americans. To that tradition, moreover, all other elements among the American people --- Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Jewish, infidel, red, yellow, and black --- had in some way, negatively or positively, to relate themselves. Or at least they did so *until the 1960s*, when the age of the WASP, the age of the melting pot, drew to a close. Let us look more closely at this momentous decade, this seeming watershed and alleged turning point in American history, the moment of truth for “the nation with the soul of a church.”³⁹

³⁹ Ahlstrom, Religious History, 1079. Although he did not expand on his earlier framing of the Society of Friends (Quakers) as a movement that arose “out of left-wing Puritanism,” it is tempting to extend the Ahlstrom thesis through the 1960s and beyond by arguing for the profound impact the relatively small movement had on American history in the twentieth century and particularly during the long reach of the Vietnam War, including the 1960s. As Ahlstrom noted, “As a movement, it exhibits the relentless movement of the Puritan-Reformed impulse away from the hierarchical, sacramental, and objective Christianity of the Middle Ages toward various radical extremes in which intensely individualistic and spiritual motifs become predominant.... The movement which looks to George Fox as its founder is overwhelmingly the most important and enduring manifestation of Puritan radicalism in either England or America.” *Ibid.*, 176. Yet, Ahlstrom did not concern himself with Quakers beyond the Civil War, even though their efforts to secure conscientious objection on behalf of the Historic Peace Churches

The Ahlstrom thesis has been revisited and endorsed, and, recently in 2007, subjected to a strong structural critique from a social and cultural historical perspective. Although, this particular appraisal concluded that Ahlstrom's work closed the door to those who followed simply because social and cultural history could no longer admit the "top down" denominational, institutional, and denominational approach he had demonstrated, others saw Ahlstrom's work as a harbinger of the movement toward cultural and intellectual investigations and exploring the questions raised by the epoch. The discussion continues to be a lively one, and Ahlstrom can never be discounted, even by articulate critics like David A. Hollinger who focus on the "post-Protestant" or "post-Christian" era in American history.⁴⁰

and objectors in the twentieth century remains a significant contribution to American religious history.

⁴⁰ James M. O'Toole, "Religious History in the Post-Ahlstrom Era," in Recent Themes in American Religious History: Historians in Conversation, ed. Randall J. Stephens (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 13-18. Harry S. Stout and Robert M. Taylor, Jr. better recognize that Ahlstrom was engaged in social and cultural history even as he organized American religious history around denominational and institutional categories. Along with Sidney Mead, they understood that these "two giants ... while representing the culmination of a tradition inspired by Perry Miller ... also signaled newly emerging intellectual and cultural themes: post-Puritan religion, secularization, civil religion, and pluralism." Harry S. Stout and Robert M. Taylor, Jr., "Studies of Religion in American Society," in New Directions in American Religious History, eds. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 17; Ahlstrom himself provided ample support that his thesis and method encompassed wide social changes, including those that had resulted in the consensus (or conforming culture, a culture that thrived on comforting spiritual works of "harmonial inspiration" and which saw alienated individuals swelling church membership rolls because of their need for affiliation). Ahlstrom's choice to publish an expansive analysis in Daedalus moreover evidenced that he did not see his work as focused on religious structures and events which at that time might be seen as largely ancillary to American culture and the purview of church historians in theological schools. Sydney Ahlstrom, "National Trauma and Changing Religious Values," Daedalus, 107, no. 1, A New America? (Winter, 1978), 13-29; even intellectual historian Hollinger's exploration of the seeming dis-integration of American mainline Protestantism reacts to the Ahlstrom thesis, however indirectly framed. His analysis interacts with Wuthnow's classic argument published in 1988 about the shift and splitting of American religious denominational and institutional commitments, reflecting not only on the

To be fair to Ahlstrom, he lived barely more than a decade after his opus' publication in 1972, a year that would see the ongoing deflation of the antiwar movement, attempts by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to negotiate peace with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam while "de-Americanizing" the war, the arrest of five men for breaking into the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate complex in Washington, DC, and the re-election of Quaker Richard Nixon over peace Democrat George McGovern. Ahlstrom had no chance to revisit his thesis in depth --- or to interact particularly with those of DeBenedetti-Chatfield or Brock and Young --- or even those of Isserman, Lieberman, Small and Hoover which also emerged during the decade following Ahlstrom's death. Rather, on the religious front, attempts to reclaim a "Christian America," to redeem the culture from the throes of secular humanism, and to resist the perceived encroachment of the state in a spate of judicial decisions during the decade would prove to be fodder for the rise of a new Religious Right which came to terms with the social justice movements of the previous decade by reinforcing the idea of a disintegrating vision of America.

Ahlstrom may well have reworked his conclusions on the 1960s, perhaps even the 1970s, and re-opened the door to Puritanism's cultural reforming imperatives, but his arguments as they stand open three doors to themes that resonate in the current task at hand and which are also at the forefront of any analysis of the antiwar years: the re-definition of the American public square, a re-casting of the nature of secularization (including elements such as the fragmentation

expanded religious spaces, but also the values which inhabited those spaces. Robert Wuthnow, Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); David A. Hollinger, After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 18-55.

of American mainline Protestantism and its loss of cultural power), and the use of each in a re-examination of the nature of disorder. Ahlstrom himself opened the potential for this richer analysis as he reflected in 1972:

No account of the decade's radicalism, especially at the ethical level, is complete, however, unless it also takes cognizance of a vast and long overdue moral renewal. A revolt against the hypocrisies and superficiality of conventional moral codes by no means resulted in nihilism or libertinism, though both of the latter were defended and practiced by some especially alienated groups. Much of the violence and organized protest of the sixties arose from intense moral indignation, a deep suspicion of established institutions, and a demand for more exalted grounds of action than social success, business profits, and national self-interest.⁴¹

Examining the three Mennonite colleges in Kansas will include their interactions with denominational structures as they struggled to articulate --- or deny --- reform. But this analysis will to a greater extent offer a challenge to the popular memories of disorder and its causes and offer evidence that elements of the Sixties as reforming rather than disordering in essence. The study is small, a piecemeal social and cultural analysis of three nearly invisible groups in the

⁴¹ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 1085. That Wuthnow as sociologist was concerned, like Ahlstrom, with a larger view of what constituted disorder can be seen in a near-companion monograph issued shortly before *Restructuring*. Musing on what underlay social splitting, he noted what occurred when the meaning and understanding of moral obligations was disturbed, resulting in not only a kind of fragmentation, but a larger consequence for ideology: "In other words, disturbances in the moral order are likely to be a factor in the production of new ideological forms... Disturbances in moral obligations appear to be the most likely sources of alteration in ideology.... Indeed, the role of moral obligations in many cases is to anticipate disturbance in social resources and to provide for the maintenance of social order in the presence of such disturbances." These implications are an essential piece to understanding what will be discussed not only regarding the Mennonite response to postwar Europe and Vietnam but also concerning whether American religious commitments were overtaken by a secular Left in antiwar activity. Robert Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 154-155.

heartland of Kansas. But, it offers a distinctive counter to the perceived and remembered decade of turbulence during which American Christianity defaulted on its stabilizing mission.

Chapter 1 -- The Mennonites and Modernity

Situating the Mennonites

The forum that took place in tiny Hillsboro Kansas in 1962 both diverged from American Mennonite history and was consistent with its participants' attempts to come to grips with the forces of modernity, the pressures of acculturation, and the demands of the state, particularly in twentieth century America. Although its primary encounters would be with nationalism and its local forms, the struggles that began to manifest on the campuses and in their parent bodies also add a thick layer to the meaning of secularization theory and complicates its easy application as a concept of decline in religious commitment and engagement with society, particularly during the long 1960s. At the same time, the story leading up to the meeting between Hershey and Brunk evidences both the maintenance and adaptability of Mennonite identity, factors which expressed themselves in the three Kansas colleges' responses to the Vietnam War.

The task is a two-fold one within these broader theoretical frameworks. Just as in the faith tradition itself, the story focuses not only on the historical theological issues intertwined within the schools' decision-making, but also with the very concept of a lived faith that was expressed largely through its local community. At the same time, even though the resident expression of faith was paramount, the larger constructs of memory, kinship networks, denominational authorities, and historical shared experience all informed the approach to decisions, including decisions "not to decide." Furthermore, the uneven attempts to come to terms with national claims during times of war clashed with the Mennonite self-identification as "the peaceful people," forcing them to consider just what it meant to be a faithful witness to peace in a country not especially appreciative of those who opposed war. How the colleges reflected the larger discussions and decisions about nationalism and claims for social justice that

were taking place within their larger denominational communities is an essential component to understanding how they fit within the national culture and why Hershey found time to visit the small community that hosted the forum. It offers important clues to the Mennonite journey through modernity and raises larger interrogations that feed into the central questions raised by the dissertation regarding the nature of social and political protests. Did modernity have an essentially secularizing effect on the groups, or, could a journey through modernity actually focus a peace position rather than diminish it?

Although General Hershey was the prominent symbol of America's military demands on individual conscience in 1962, it had been a long and checkered road for Mennonites to come to grips with these claims --- and what lay behind them, namely, the state's ability to conscript those who refused to bear arms against another. Contending with these claims had multiple impacts, that affected not only identity formation among those who would be named as the Historic Peace Churches, and their situating among peace adherents, but a wide extension of what it meant to indeed be carriers of peace and peaceful people. For those who lived in Kansas and whose children attended one of the three Mennonite colleges in central Kansas, the long 1960s and the Vietnam War, in particular, challenged them to move from relatively insular cultures to the willingness to engage with the vast array of social problems in twentieth-century America. In part, the pressures exerted by war forced them not only to protect their own peace and nonresistant commitments in terms of explicit pressures to participate in the military, but also to move beyond what subjects might be considered appropriate private or communal reflections of "peace" and into the public square. Living under the protection of the state and enjoying its benefits forced the groups to decide whether a protected position was more faithful -

-- or less. Thus twentieth-century American wars pushed them to wrestle with re-defining peace and forced them to draw on their own modern history as a people to do so.⁴²

Mennonite Origins: Nonconformity, Nonresistance, Persecution, and Endurance --- A History of Movement

Stripped to its essentials, Mennonite identity can be pegged to the anti-authority impulses of the Protestant Reformation in which those who sought a true faith turned from Roman Catholicism and the commitments it exacted from church and society. First attempting to reform it and then, when that failed in the eyes of some, choosing to return to the purity of the early Church motivated a diverse assortment of opponents, who ranged from former priests to laity situated throughout the social spectrum. As the formidable Martin Luther of Saxony took on the Roman Church and its hierarchy, others both interacted with the Lutheran critiques and established their own particular stands on the individual conscience, interpretation of the Bible, sacramental issues, and --- in the case of those who were caustically called Anabaptists --- the religious commitments and social ordering of medieval society.⁴³

⁴² Hans-Jurgen Goertz, "The Confessional Heritage in Its New Mold: What is Mennonite Self-Understanding Today?" in Mennonite Identity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Calvin Wall Redekop and Samuel J. Steiner (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 3-6. Goertz reflects on the edginess of modernity and how the Mennonite location in crisis suggests several aspects of their identity as "precursors of modernity," albeit identity in a tangled way that opens part of this author's considerations of the pressures of nationalism and secularization.

⁴³ Reformers such as Luther and Calvin wanted to reform the church (*Reformatio*), whereas those reformers who did not think these measures went far enough wanted reforms that would restore the church to its earlier life and practices (*Restituito*), thus the common phrase "reforming the reformers." Each wished to establish a faith that placed the faithful in a more direct relationship with the word of God, whether in verbal or lived experience. Thus, all of these basic reformers are part of the Protestant Reformation with those who wished to move to a more radical reform further designated as The Radical Reformers, The Radical Reformation, or even The Left Wing of the Reformation (a designation by Reformation historian Roland H.

Contrary to their fierce and pejorative characterization at the time, the Anabaptists were not necessarily intent on social disruption for its own sake, although scholars who wrestle with the essentials of the movement's identity recognize that the chiliastic, fanatic millenarian, and anarchic elements in various strands need to be acknowledged, especially when considering why the groups were such a threat. Rather, early reformers such as Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Georg Blaurock, Michael Sattler, and Hans Marquart argued that to have a truly free conscience, the believer embraced only the authority of God. Sixteenth-century European society's seamless view of church and state in which belief and citizenship were interlocked precluded this kind of distinction. When a child was born as a member of the state, it was automatically baptized into church membership, thus maintaining a congruence necessary to social order. For Anabaptist reformers, however, the demands on individual conscience meant that an individual had to make a conscious choice to believe (and therefore to be baptized). Moreover, the new movement's

Bainton that has largely been abandoned, although it occasionally appears in the literature). "Radical" is considered a more apt descriptor because of its focus on "roots". Those radicals who wished to return to the life of the early church and emulate its earliest practices such as baptism upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ were pejoratively and derisively labeled "Anabaptists" by their opponents. Creating such a moniker also enabled state (and church) authorities to recall and forcibly implement the ancient Justinian code that had been created originally to expunge the Donatists, a law that leveled the death penalty on re-baptizers. As both Bainton and Robert D. Linder indicate, the term embodied the overwhelming fear that their beliefs profoundly threatened the religious, social and civic order. The designation is thus not a self-description, although as this study examines, the label was embraced in the twentieth century by those within its traditions who were attempting to define its central tenets of identity. This re-visiting of Mennonite identity is reflected in the two articles on "Anabaptism" published in 1955 and then revised in 1990 in the fifth volume of the Mennonite Encyclopedia, a magisterial collective work by Mennonite intellectuals issued in four volumes during the Cold War and then updated with a fifth volume in 1990. Robert Friedmann. "Anabaptist" in The Mennonite Encyclopedia (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1955-1990), 1:113-116 and Walter Klaassen. "Anabaptism," in Ibid., 5:23-26. Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston, MA: The Beacon Press, 1952), 95-100; Robert D. Linder, The Reformation Era (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 82-85.

refusal to swear oaths, embracing of pacifism, use of lay leadership, and, in some cases, commitment to other first-century economic practices (such as sharing of wealth) sharply reinforced not only their purely theological threat to Roman Catholicism and emerging Protestantism, but also their potential intransigence within the state. The movement, which attracted numerous adherents and which also appeared to withstand dispersal under persecution, was therefore both heretical and seditious.⁴⁴

The resulting challenge to Roman Catholicism and the Protestant reformers such as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, coupled with the high concentration of magisterial states (political states which maintained the view of a seamless relationship between church and state) resulted in persecution that ranged from widescale blistering martyrdom to harassment of all sorts. Not only were leaders targeted for death, and accorded the gruesome deaths especially designed to silence and provide an example to others, but in some areas of south German states and Switzerland, squads were sent out to ferret out those who were practicing the threatening faith. It is widely accepted that more than 5,000 individuals were executed during the Reformation, with the majority being Anabaptists.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Historian Franklin H. Littell elaborates how normative Anabaptist beliefs and practices were seen as a threat to social order, a threat magnified by the near-revolutionary disturbances in the city of Munster in 1534. Franklin H. Littell, The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 1-4; Hans-Jurgen Goertz, "The Confessional Heritage," 4-6. Sociologist J. Milton Yinger highlights how the ultimate goals of the state and the ultimate goal of the believer conflict: "The final concern of the state is self preservation, whatever the means; the final concern of religion is salvation, whatever the costs." J. Milton Yinger, The Scientific Study of Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 457.

⁴⁵ Historian Lionel Rothkrug contends that the early Reformation correlates with a decreased activity in the search for Jews and witches in south German states, particularly during the Great Peasant War, an argument which suggests either that Anabaptists now fit the categories of both insurgent and heretic or that the label could be conveniently used to subsume other dangerous individuals. That the particular corridor which had been a lively area of witch-hunting saw action against others (including Anabaptists) is especially intriguing considering that

During the course of these persecutions, a priest from West Friesland in the Netherlands began to doubt the sacramental claims of the Roman Church, decided in favor of the Anabaptist practice of believer's baptism, and then wrestled with whether or not to commit himself to the movement. Appalled at the loss of life and the authorities' vicious recriminations on those who had participated in the chiliastic revolt at Munster, Menno Simons decided to embrace reform, even as he maintained his pulpit at Witmarsum. Concluding that he must break with Roman

approximately one-third of all Anabaptist martyrs were women. Linder cites Harold S. Bender's and Marilyn J. Peters' Mennonite Encyclopedia articles on "Women," 4:972-974 and 5:933-934, to emphasize the high level of female participation and martyrdom and to underscore their part in enabling the highly dispersed movement to persist. Littell and Dyck detail the macabre tortures meted out to Anabaptists, as well as the commonplace means of social isolation, such as the strictures against giving shelter and food introduced in Strassbourg in 1527 and 1530 and the enforcement of banishment in 1538. The debate about the number of Anabaptist martyrs evidences how intense the persecution was, how threatening Anabaptists were perceived to be, and how these memories could be maintained with such force for later generation dispersed throughout Europe. The detailed teasing out of numbers in The Mennonite Encyclopedia's article on "Martyrs" by Paul Schowalter notes that only those deaths that were civil executions were recorded, and that variant records among locales kept numbers from being exact. Moreover, sixteenth-century society's attempts to eradicate the real and remembered presence of a heretic meant that civil (religious) records could be altered (erased or overwritten) so that the individual was no longer recorded as existing. As historian William R. Estep noted, this was especially true for any prelate or priest who had converted to Anabaptism. Drawing from the listings kept in Mennonite hymnals such as the Ausbund (and later reprised visually and in print in The Martyr's Mirror), Mennonite historian Guy Franklin Hershberger argued for 5,000 martyrs among the Swiss Brethren alone, believers whose deaths were remembered as a matter of course during subsequent church services. The ratio regarding women is derived from the next century's detailed accounts of Anabaptist martyrs in T. J. van Braught's The Bloody Theatre, or Martyr's Mirror of the Defenseless Christians, translated into English, but widely utilized in Dutch and German by descendants of the original Anabaptists. The Martyr's Mirror is a source that has been subject to scrutiny and validated as historically accurate by historian Brad Gregory. Lionel Rothkrug, Religious Practices and Collective Perceptions: Hidden Homologies in the Renaissance and Reformation (Waterloo: University of Waterloo, 1980), 139-149; Linder, 96-97; Littell, 74-75, 90-91; Cornelius Dyck, An Introduction to Mennonite History (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967), 85-88; Paul Schowalter, "Martyrs," in The Mennonite Encyclopedia, 3:523-524; William R. Estep, The Anabaptist Story, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI, 1996), 58; Guy Franklin Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1944), 85; Brad Gregory, Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 243-249.

Catholicism, he left his pulpit, disappeared for a year, was baptized and married, then appeared to lead the various fragments of Anabaptism in the Netherlands. Over the course of the next twenty-five years, he led a clandestine existence, moving throughout the Netherlands, Schleswig-Holstein, and the Rhineland, preaching a peaceful gospel drawn from the Bible and lending his name to those who followed this form of Anabaptism. The “Mennists,” *Mennisten*,” or “Mennonites,” thrived under his diligent and yet fugitive care, seeing their leader carry the “extraordinary price of 500 gold guilders on his head” and existing under the direct threat of death for aiding him. As for their tenacious leader, who died of natural causes, Menno Simons wrote more than two dozen books and pamphlets, reaching thousands through his writings and leaving a legacy estimated as high as 100,000 believers in the Netherlands.⁴⁶

The Mennonites and other Anabaptists also left two particular public legacies that resonated through their Reformation-era sufferings and which continued in practice and memory as essential elements of their identity: 1) their lamb-like sufferings (as individuals and as a collective) and 2) their opposition to the use of the sword. Both were foundational to their early origins as refugees seeking freedom of conscience and both would be drawn upon as the groups developed their ethical traditions and practices. They likewise left a less public legacy that was also derived from the same desire to create a more faithful church based on the life and teachings

⁴⁶ It was common practice for groups to be identified with their leaders, whether Anabaptist (e.g. Melchior Hoffmann (Melchiorites), Jacob Hutter (the Hutterites), Jacob Ammon (the Amish)) or not (Martin Luther (the Lutherans)). On December 7, 1542 the authorities in Leeuwarden laid a price on Simons’ head of one hundred guilders, and over the next twenty-five years he saw a number of individuals executed because they had assisted him or offered him shelter (e.g. Tjaard Renicx of Friesland was executed in 1539 for sheltering Menno, Klaas Jans executed for the same in 1549, and Jan Claesz was beheaded in 1544 for possession of 600 copies of the leader’s writings). Cornelius Krahn, “Menno Simons,” in The Mennonite Encyclopedia, 3:576-584. According to Linder, during Menno’s ministry, “He was the most sought after heretic in Western Europe.” Linder, 94-95.

of Jesus. This particular bequest of contention, factionalism, and splitting would ironically later be mirrored in American religious history. It reflects the dynamic character of the freedom of conscience established by the Anabaptist movements and, raises questions about the nature of modernity within a religious framework. It is also an important factor in this study's consideration of Mennonite unity or disunity during the twentieth century and particularly in the long Vietnam War.⁴⁷

As followers of Jesus, Anabaptists saw themselves as lambs, the sheep of the Good Shepherd, who trusted in God's power and authority and who laid down His life willingly for His sheep. As Conrad Grebel of the Swiss Brethren enjoined his fellow believers in 1524:

True, believing Christians are as sheep in the midst of wolves ... They must reach the fatherland of eternal rest, not by overcoming bodily enemies with the sword, but by overcoming spiritual foes. They use neither the worldly sword nor engage in war, since among them taking human life has ceased entirely, for we are no longer under the old covenant.

⁴⁷ Mennonites generally have resisted the "systematization" of their ethics and theology, preferring instead to see their beliefs derived directly from the Bible. Hence, words like "tradition," "practice," or "experience" are more accurate designations, especially prior to the twentieth century, even though theological engagement was ongoing within "the brotherhoods" and occasionally intense enough to result in the splitting of congregations. Using them as an example of the intense divisions that occurred in early Anabaptism, Cornelius Dyck gives an account of the extensive splits and factionalism among early Flemish and Frisian Mennonites, who, in their zeal to create a pure church, placed a variety of strictures on fellow believers (including the "ban" a form of church discipline that separated the intransigent from other devotees) and those that did not conform within the community. The division spread across northern Europe in spite of an attempt to reconcile differences in 1567. As he notes, "The tragic, and in a way almost comic, point was reached in Emden, where minister Jan van Ophoorn finally banned everyone in the congregation except himself and his wife!" Dyck, 96-97. Thus, even as Mennonites faced intense persecution from the civil and magisterial church authorities, they could also find themselves in opposition to their fellow co-religionists as they attempted to create a pure church. The pattern would continue, albeit not as the public face, or even the desired outcome for these "yielded" people. C. Arnold Snyder also offers a historical theology perspective on the internal theological pressures on the Anabaptists and how their free church beliefs predisposed them to splits. C. Arnold Snyder, Anabaptist History and Theology (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1995).

The metaphorical lamb was grounded in fact, as both Roman Catholics and magisterial Protestants attempted to annihilate the movement. “Those who held themselves as sheep for the slaughter were dreaded and exterminated as if they had been wolves,” contended Bainton, in analyzing the Anabaptist threat to the Reformation order and its response to them. “They challenged the whole way of life of the community. Had they become too numerous, Protestants would have been unable to take up arms against Catholics and the Germans could not have resisted the Turk.” This representation of biblical meekness and martyrdom would continue to reinforce Anabaptist, and particularly Mennonite, identity not only as they suffered persecution, emigrated throughout Europe and then the Americas, and found stability, but also as they presented themselves to civil authorities and the general populace throughout their migrations.⁴⁸

Also derived from their interpretation of the New Testament, and particularly the Sermon on the Mount, Anabaptists championed the notion of “nonresistance” or relationships with people (and the state) that completely opposed the use of any violence against others, whether offensive or defensive force. This included coercive action in any form, whether direct coercion backed with the threat of violence or indirect, and precluded Mennonite service to the state. As Menno Simons explained in a treatise directed at civil authorities:

The regenerated do not go to war, nor engage in strife. They are children of peace who have 'beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning forks, and know no war' (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3) ... Our weapons are not weapons with which cities and countries may be destroyed, walls and gates broken down, and human blood shed in torrents like water. But they are weapons with which the spiritual kingdom of the devil is destroyed... Christ is our fortress; patience our weapon of defense; the Word of God our sword... Iron and metal spears and

⁴⁸ Conrad Grebel quoted in Ernst Crous. “Nonresistance,” in The Mennonite Encyclopedia, 3: 898; Bainton, 101; Littell describes this proclivity as “their sense of destiny as the Church of the Martyrs,” a destiny infused with eschatological hopes of the Lord returning to establish his people throughout the earth. Littell, 106-109.

swords we leave to those who, alas, regard human blood and swine's blood of well-nigh equal value.⁴⁹

In spite of their characterization by contemporaries who had their own reasons to identify them as anarchic troublemakers, and their later depiction by those who elided their essential Christianity in favor of more material explanations (e.g. as instigators and participants in the peasant revolts), Anabaptists opposed revolution in all of its violent forms. They were quick to emphasize that they intended to be obedient citizens of earthly governments, provided that those governments did not attempt to exact what was only due to God. These beliefs, derived from their desire to follow the mandates of conscience, but also to live in the orderly manner they saw outlined in the Bible (particularly the New Testament), initially explained how they viewed themselves as earthly inhabitants. Soon after Anabaptists at Munster engaged in their violent attempt to implement the peaceful vision, Anabaptists were quick to distance themselves from the horrifying results and to clarify their position regarding earthly authorities (the magistrate). Their stance would become a doctrinal formulation known as the two spheres or the two kingdoms, thereby acting as a means by which Mennonites could be faithful to God and also be faithful within what they saw as a civil order ordained also by God. Littell translates the Hutterite explanation which is particularly clear in its elucidation of the civil sphere:

Our will and mind are not, however, to do away with worldly government nor not to be obedient to it in goods and sanctions. For a government shall and must be in the world among men just as the daily bread and just as the schoolmaster must have the rods among the children. For because the great house of this world will not admit and let rule the Word of God, the knaves and rascals or children of this

⁴⁹ As will be seen, this concept would later prove especially challenging to twentieth-century advocates of non-violence. This included members of the Historic Peace Churches, who saw it effectively used by Gandhi (as *satyagraha*) and then others in the American Civil Rights Movement, including Martin Luther King, Jr., as a nonviolent means in order to force justice. Menno Simons, "A Christian and Affectionate Exhortation to All in Authority," Menno Simons.net <http://www.mennosimons.net/ft016-exhortation.html> (Accessed June 3, 2017).

world who pursue no Christian piety must yet have a worldly and gallows-piety ... Therefore the magistrate is an institution of God.⁵⁰

The diffuse nature of the movement, its persistence through the appearance of leaders who took the place of those who had been martyred (some later suffering the same end), its recognition and utilization of lay leadership, and the protection offered by tolerant rulers in Hesse, east Friesland, and Moravia enabled Anabaptist survival, but also occluded a tidy and precise story of origins. Mennonite historians initially favored Switzerland-South Germany as the origin of Anabaptism, in large part due to the cohesive narrative brought to America by those who settled in unified settlements in Pennsylvania, then later the corridor into Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, but also in large part through the efforts of MC historian Harold Bender, the energetic collector, organizer, and preserver of the movement's documents. In the latter part of the twentieth century, however, a case was made by other historians and sociologists who argued vigorously for a multiple origins theory known as *polygenesis* to explain the fragmented and shifting nature of Anabaptist identity during the Reformation. The issue is a significant one for this study, not only in its later manifestation among Mennonites --- including those in Kansas --- in the twentieth century, but also in terms of essential questions regarding Anabaptists, Mennonites, and modernity that arise during this analysis.⁵¹

⁵⁰ For example, Littell remarks on the views of German Socialist Karl Kautsky and British Socialist Belfort Bax as those who late in the nineteenth century remarked on Anabaptism as a social movement only. Littell, 153-154. Littell, translating and citing A.J.F. Zieglschmid, ed. Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder (Philadelphia: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 1943), 307 in Littell, 194n130. Robert Friedmann's analysis of the two kingdoms emphasizes how the Anabaptist doctrine was essentially derived from the gospels, in contrast to that developed by the Reformers who focused on the writings of Paul as he moved through the Roman empire. Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds," in The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, ed. Guy F. Hershberger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1957), 105-118.

⁵¹ The intense discussion in part reflects the turn toward and recognition of the advantages of using social history within the profession, but also reprises some of the discussions

In particular, and without pursuing the detailed arguments of Reformation historians concerning other groups that might be classified as Anabaptists, the question of multiple origins is important because of the collective identities that they forged as Mennonites both in spite of

among Mennonites in the mid-twentieth-century. The classic statement on origins is by James M. Stayer, Werner O. Packull, and Klaus Deppermann published as "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins" in 1975. Stayer, et. al. focused on the emergence of at least three separate strands which all had different sources and subsequent work by each scholar discovered significant differences in origin or focus (Packull identified a strong streak of mysticism among South-German-Austrian Anabaptists, while Stayer emphasized the impact of Reformed congregationalism on the Swiss branch and Deppermann saw a heavy apocalypticism among Anabaptists located in the Netherlands). These arguments modified and expanded on the earlier work by intellectual historian Robert Friedmann which had argued that using different schemes of classification and clustering brought different groupings into focus, particularly in regard to theological positions. The discussion of which Stayer, et. al. were a part was also designed to overcome what they saw as the construction of Mennonite identity by Bender and other MC historians that privileged the early arrivals in America and diminished the particular claims brought by other streams, particularly the second largest grouping of Dutch-North German Mennonites who had migrated to the United States after migrations through Prussia and Russia. In another statement now considered authoritative, James Juhnke refined the discussion with his argument for "a bipolar mosaic," preferring the terms Swiss-South German and Dutch-Russian, a convention this study will follow while recognizing an additional bifurcation within the second body (the "*Kirchliche*" for the dominate and normative body among Dutch-Russians, and the "*Brudergemeinde*" known in America as the Mennonite Brethren). Using social history as a lens has also forced the recognition of Bender's work as an attempt to consider pressures of acculturation and the state, thereby viewing his work from a different angle of intent and allowing for a greater latitude in assessing what can be seen as his urgent work on identity. Goertz pushed the early social dimensions of Anabaptism further, most recently arguing for origins not only based in theological and social issues clustered around anti-clericalism, but also heavily invested in class issues and other social conflict associated with the Peasants Revolts in the German states. James M. Stayer, Werner O. Packull and Klaus Depperman, "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins," Mennonite Quarterly Review, 49 (1975): 83-121; Werner O. Packull, Mysticism and the Early South German Anabaptist Movement, 1525-1531 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1977): 341-365; Klaus Depperman, Melchior Hoffman: Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of Reformation (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987); Robert Friedmann, "Conception of the Anabaptists," Church History 9, no. 4 (1940); James C. Juhnke, "Mennonite History and Self-Understanding," in Ibid., 83-99; Goertz, 3-6; A. James Reimer on the assertions by Goertz, A. James Reimer, "Mennonite Theological Self-Understanding, the Crisis of Modern Anthropocentricity, and the Challenge of the Third Millennium" in Mennonite Identity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Calvin Wall Redekop and Samuel J. Steiner (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 13-38.

and because of their beliefs and distinctive histories. Under the intense pressures of persecution, but centered on the elemental Christianity of the Bible, the movement was yet able to adapt in part because of its diffuse origins, use of narratives of suffering and persecution to construct and maintain a mobile identity as refugees, and the enlistment of those stories in the following centuries to reinforce a non-threatening, yet hard-working, frequently separatist, presence in a Europe fraught with nationalism. How did the Mennonites survive, in order to reprise and re-claim or re-invent their divergent and common identity (or identities?) four hundred years later on a different continent? The answers begin in Reformation Europe.⁵²

First, different groups embraced different survival strategies. Swiss-South-German Anabaptists who endured the harshest persecution from both Catholics and other Protestants fled from their urban origins deep into the countryside in an attempt to achieve invisibility. Those in northern Germany and Holland eventually established themselves in Holland's increasingly more tolerant environment where they were able to enter urban and commercial life in movements

⁵² Recent work by rhetorician Gerald Biesaker-Mast, while opposing what he sees as the oversimplification of polygenesis, explores the ambiguities present in the various streams, recognizing the complex adaptive strategies they used in the sixteenth century to create a living presence that both articulated a radical posture and yet appeared as politically quietist. Recognizing the fragmentation associated with intense and widespread persecution and coupled with the various streams of immigration to North America, the question becomes not only one of *origins*, but why it was so important to these groups not only to maintain elements of Anabaptist identity that enabled them to keep an identity of connectedness throughout Europe for four hundred years but also to focus on identity issues in twentieth-century America especially under the pressures of acculturation and nationalism. Unfolding this particular aspect of the construction (including recovery) of tradition from multiple sources is considered by philosopher Laura Roberts, who argues that the reconstruction of such identity is possible hermeneutically, but also strains to retain the dynamism of its traditions over time. Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Separation and the Sword in Anabaptist Persuasion: Radical Confessional Rhetoric from Schleithem to Dordrecht (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing, 2006), 26-27, 35-67, 233-236; Laura Schmidt Roberts, "Refiguring Tradition: Paul Ricoeur's Contribution to an Anabaptist-Mennonite Hermeneutics of Tradition" (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2002), 179-208.

more fully explored later in the history of the Kansas Mennonites. Later generations of the Northern Germans-Dutch migrated to Prussia and then Russia, with smaller communities remaining along these corridors.

Second, because of persecution and the need to locate as far away from observation as possible, Anabaptists who remained in areas subject to harassment fled to rural areas where they might be undetected. This, combined with historiographical issues to be considered shortly, resulted in a strong identification of Mennonites in particular with agrarian occupations --- and with increasingly self-protective and separatist practices. Reinforced by the migration of urban Dutch and North German Mennonites into agricultural occupations in Prussia and later Russia, the linking of faith with land found ultimate expression in the satisfying moniker, *Die Stillen im Lande* (“The Quiet in the Land” or “The Peaceful People in the Country”).⁵³

Third, memories of persecution became paramount in the collective identity --- even among those who had not experienced the devastating harassments, tortures, and martyrdom that had reduced their numbers and devastated their leadership. That the movement was born in spite of intense persecution was brought to mind and reinforced for subsequent generations by the publication of the seventeenth century Martyrs Mirror, a collection designed to encourage the faithful to persist both in times of trial and in lukewarm times of ease. As Mennonites were pushed from place to place chiefly because of their nonresistant stance and refusal to serve in the military, their times of rootlessness also fused with memories of these harsh persecutions.

⁵³ Roland R. Goering, “*Die Stillen im Land*,” Mennonite Life 14, no. 1 (January 1959): 30-31.

Genuine suffering melded with the experience of migration to create distinctive collective memories that remained a hallmark of these “peculiar people.”⁵⁴

Fourth, and for related reasons, the story of the Swiss-South Germans initially served as the defining narrative around which the various other streams revolved and depended. Revisited in particular by late twentieth-century American Mennonite historians who insisted on a dual stream of origins --- the North German-Dutch and Russian trajectories in addition to the Swiss-South German --- the impact of Reformation-era persecutions nevertheless favored the most heavily persecuted as the normative Anabaptist and Mennonite experience. Recent historians such as Juhnke have argued for equal time for the Dutch/Prussian/Russian (hereafter, Dutch-Russian) stream, particularly in the North America context. Characterizing the resulting combination as a “bipolar mosaic,” the historian contends that focusing chiefly on the Swiss-South German movement not only has omitted or skewed a significant part of the historical picture, but also given more cultural authority to the group’s defining of the Anabaptist and Mennonite narrative.

The point is that multiple sources of origin coupled with their tenacious belief in the freedom of conscience and disregard of the geographical boundaries of state churches frame the

⁵⁴ Ervin R. Stutzman, whose work focusing on the rhetorical shifts in Mennonite conceptions of nonresistance to an advocacy for justice will be considered later in this chapter, observes that the Martyr’s Mirror “was so central to Mennonite self-understanding that it could be found in most homes next to a copy of the Bible and a hymnbook.” Ervin R. Stutzman, From Nonresistance to Justice: The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908-2008 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2011), 41. Indeed, The Martyr’s Mirror is still in print as Thielemann J. van Braght, The Bloody Theater or Martyr’s Mirror of the Defenseless Christians, published simultaneously by Mennonite publisher Herald Press in the United States and Canada in a 1979 edition.

Anabaptists and the Mennonites as harbingers of modernity and as potential challengers to national loyalties.

The gathering of small congregations by believer's baptism went on apace, and Anabaptism spread in many areas closed to Protestant state churches by their acceptance of the principle of territorialism. The Anabaptists represent thereby an early Protestant vision of a world mission unrestricted by territorial limitations and in a unique fashion foreshadow the later concept of the church as a community of missionary people.⁵⁵

Understanding these beginnings as a free church with multiple points of origin drawn together and yet dispersed under the fires of persecution sets the stage for understanding the Mennonite maintenance of and yet search for identity in America --- and how their identity developed under the heat of American nationalism. Coupled with strong memories of dislocation that would be reinforced in the twentieth century as Mennonites faced the suffering of two world wars and the distinct grief of their co-religionists under Stalinism, the tradition was in a position not only to observe the suffering of others, but also to question the nationalism that promoted it. Among North American Mennonites in the twentieth century, the determined memories and questions regarding identity made room for an even larger picture than their separatist ancestors had adopted in order to survive. On the one hand, their particularity not only could create rigid communities of conformity, but on the other hand it would also challenge nationalism through the faith tradition's belief in and practice of a gospel that was universal in its witness. Their struggles to recreate a nonresistant identity based on their traditions in the face of the claims of the American state. Who had authority to resolve issues of identity and to negotiate the claims of the American state was a complex issue for groups that both accepted a collective identity and yet rejected its many particulars. The challenges the multiple strands faced in negotiating

⁵⁵ Littell, 18.

nationalism ironically created both a more entangled citizenship and yet one more capable of resisting national claims. Like the larger bodies, the Mennonite colleges in Kansas would manifest these same struggles during the long Vietnam conflict, bringing the beliefs of this theologically and culturally conservative religious tradition to bear against war and bringing it in the context of their conservative local communities.

Mennonites on the Move --- Or Not. A Few Notes on Mennonites in Europe To 1874

When the first Mennonites began to trickle into North America in the late seventeenth century, they left behind a Europe that alternately hunted them, persecuted them, offered them refuge, proffered toleration, encouraged their economic development, embraced their practice of nonresistance when it yielded a ready and compliant workforce (particularly endorsing their increasing reputations as industrious farmers able to work unprofitable lands), eschewed their nonresistance when it meant they refused military service, enacted edicts forcing them from settlement, and extended imperial decrees designed to populate areas with willing agrarians who could also serve as a buffer against the Turks. The patchwork of European states that varied in their state formation, religious toleration, encounters with modernity, and national aggression mimicked the variety of encounters the Anabaptists had experienced since 1524, with mercantilism, nationalism, and industrialization offering opportunities for freedom or for suffering and desperate poverty. The picture was a kaleidoscope, and Mennonites were a part of it. Sketching a very brief overview offers all of the elements Mennonites would call into play as they reconstructed their identities in twentieth-century America under the pressures of nationalism and also clarifies the two largest streams of Mennonite origins, the Dutch-Russian and the Swiss-South German.

The Dutch-Russian Experience

During the earliest years of persecution as has already been noted, several German princes had established pockets of toleration and refuge, as had the Moravians where followers of Jacob Hutter (the Hutterites) had been welcomed. These exceptional offers were dependent on the good wishes of the ruler, and were not widespread policies of toleration. The standard narrative holds that after William of Orange wrested independence from Spain after northern provinces united against the common enemy, he issued the first statewide edict of limited religious toleration in the 1579 Union of Utrecht. Having earlier ordered the city of Middelburg to stop attempting to force the Mennonites into military service in 1577 and to leave them in peace (provided they were otherwise useful citizens), William opened the Netherlands to what Mennonite historian Cornelius J. Dyck calls “The Golden Age.” Not only did Dutch Mennonites integrate into society (for better or for worse), but they established a long tradition of benevolence and assistance to Mennonites in the persecuted areas of Switzerland and various German states, and what would become a centuries old tradition of hospitality even later as they helped their co-religionists to immigrate to America in the late seventeenth century and then again in the 1870s. Known and valued for their skillful weaving, they entered the life of Dutch trade, both by participating in various aspects of it and by following its trade routes to other points of settlement. Far from being only “the Quiet in the Land,” Dutch Mennonites achieved prominence as physicians, in the overseas fishing trade (with the provision that they did not work or travel in boats that carried weaponry and cannons contrary to their nonresistant position), and in the cultural life of the city. At the same time, they established their reputation for excellence

in farming that would serve as a defining hallmark (and occasional lifeline) when they became expert at draining swamps and recovering the marshy lands precariously at risk from the sea.⁵⁶

In the northern German states, Dutch and German Mennonites found persecution or refuge dependent upon the protection of tolerant or sympathetic noblemen, or even, for a brief period of time, with the Archbishop of Cologne, but toleration was uneven and could be revoked or established accordingly. The Mennonite reputation as stolid and productive farmers was increasingly known and was an added incentive for tolerating or protecting the peaceful people. Scheswig-Holstein tendered protection on various estates, the nobility offering the Dutch Mennonites an opportunity to drain the marshy lands, implement a system of dikes, and recover the land for productive farming. The congregations in and near Hamburg thrived under the legal protection officially established after 1601, and Menno Simons passed his last years there peacefully.

Yet recent scholarship focused on the Vistula Delta on the Baltic Sea opens a picture that more fully explicates the immediate and long-term consequences of the persecutions exacted on the early Dutch Mennonites by Spaniards Charles V, Phillip II, and the Duke of Alva, a general particularly determined to implement Phillip's orders to eradicate the poison of Protestant and dissenting heresy. Implementing the blistering attacks on the growing population of Anabaptists in the early and mid-sixteenth century, their violence resulted in the martyrdoms already briefly

⁵⁶ The Union of Utrecht chiefly benefitted Mennonites, but also addressed toleration for the growing number of religious movements, such as the nascent Baptists and the Quakers who also challenged the unity of church and state. In addition to the pockets of toleration and protection in the German states, Strassburg on the Rhine River was also an early site of acceptance, a city known for its willingness to consider ideas --- and, also a city that had divested itself of its ruler in the centuries prior. Ruled by what Dyck describes as a “democratic form of government ... with a complicated system of councils and elected officials ... [its] main center of power lay with the twenty guilds, which were unions of craftsmen.” Dyck, 63-65, 100-102.

discussed and which would become the strong stuff of Mennonite memory. But, as their persecutions intensified and those who chose to flee did, the commercial networks of the Baltic Sea would play a large part in the preservation --- and dispersal --- of the dissenters. Because Spain's grip in the northern provinces was weak, refugees flocked to the Baltic Sea where they could obtain passage to the free city of Danzig via ships bound there from Amsterdam. Taking advantage of the strong trade networks established between these two ports and centers of commerce, Mennonites not only escaped persecution but also established settlements in the Vistula Delta region in which Danzig nestled.⁵⁷

Accepting work from local nobility, many of whom were Polish, Mennonites found not only work as farmers, but a location that enabled them to easily keep in contact with Mennonites in Amsterdam via the trade routes by sea and to establish and maintain communication with Mennonites scattered southward along the Vistula waterway. The region's complicated overlapping of jurisdictions between the Polish crown (which controlled what was called "Royal Prussia" (West Prussia)), the lands held by Albert, Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights who upon converting to Lutheranism submitted to the king of Poland and designated himself "Duke of Prussia" (thereby creating the "Duchy of Prussia" or "Ducal Prussia" (East Prussia)), nobles,

⁵⁷ Danzig was so prosperous it was considered "The Queen of the Baltic" and its heavy grain trade with Amsterdam reinforced the latter's reputation as "the granary of Europe," according to historian Peter J. Klassen and his analysis of shipping records from 1550 to 1650 that are independently attested in both cities. The alliance between the two cities carried heavy economic clout, with the independent city in the Vistula managing more than 70 percent of the Baltic's grain trade and the Dutch maintaining not only a system of factors and a bank, but also able to weigh in on decisions concerning Mennonites as Klassen attests. Not only has his recent work uncovered a wide range of carefully-teased commercial, governmental, and land documents, but it has also made them available in English or German, translated from the Polish. Peter J. Klassen, Mennonites in Early Modern Poland & Prussia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). In regard to Danzig and Amsterdam, *Ibid.*, 2, 8-9. The "Netherlands" at this time approximated present day Belgium and the Netherlands.

quasi-independent cities and two prominent independent cities (Danzig and Elbing) created competing loyalties that also resulted in variant approaches to religious toleration. Some entities extended toleration almost continuously over the next two hundred years (Danzig, Elbing), while others varied according to ruler, economic conditions, or religious impulses.

What prevailed, however, were two substantive realities. One was religious. One was economic. Both would keep the Dutch Mennonites who had emigrated in place, by their own volition and in accord with their professed beliefs in nonresistance intact. In conjunction, these realities would offer them a place which they would occupy until the pressures of the Napoleonic wars and the Third Division of Poland yielded to European nationalism. First, what historian Peter J. Klassen labels “a dramatic demonstration” of religious toleration took place in 1573, six years before William of Orange’s widely-heralded Union of Utrecht was established. Known as the “Confederation of Warsaw,” nobles in the *Sejm*, or national assembly, called for an act of toleration that would preclude the violence that was occurring throughout Europe in the name of religion. Vowing that such warfare would not be Poland’s solution to religious and civic turmoil, they enacted what became the binding commitment on Polish kings for more than two hundred years:

Since there is in our Republic no little disagreement on the subject of religion, in order to prevent any such harmful strife from the beginning among our people on this account as we plainly see in other realms, we mutually promise for ourselves and our successors forever, under the bond of our oath, faith, honor, and conscience, that we who differ with regard to religion will keep the peace with one another, and will not for a different faith or a change of churches shed blood nor punish one another by confiscation of property, infamy, imprisonment, or banishment, and will not in any way assist any magistrate or office in such an act.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Klassen, 14-15.

Although the act would be binding on the king, the fragmented and overlapping jurisdictions would still mean that Mennonites were under strictures from local nobles or cities regarding their commercial activities, ability to purchase land, or opposition to their settlement. Hostility would occur in different locations and by different entities. Yet, as Klassen notes, no Mennonites were ever expelled from the crown's lands or those with whom the crown could negotiate.⁵⁹

The second condition would, combined with the toleration extended through the "Confederation," eventually position the Mennonites as valuable, yet conflicted members of an extended national community --- and both establish and reinforce their well-known reputations as farmers who could reclaim wastelands. The Vistula delta was a wide marshy area that also included a network of smaller tributaries, including the Nogat River, and five distinctive areas, all of which were subject to the devastating floods of Poland's chief waterway. Eager to solve the precarious conditions, Danzig welcomed the fleeing "Netherlanders" who were skilled in the construction of dikes, building of windmills, and other techniques that would drain arable land, then maintain consistent water levels. By offering them a measure of local autonomy, guaranteeing them rights of inheritance, and proffering religious toleration, the city, then various other authorities, saw their hopes realized when the "sober, hardworking Mennonites" reclaimed

⁵⁹ As Klassen provides in one of his singular translations from Polish, the crown also retained a strong memory it was willing to voice on behalf of the Mennonites (and perhaps upon the crown's foresight). For example, one hundred years after the first refugees had fled to the delta, King Wladislaw IV in 1642 proclaimed: "We are well aware of the manner in which the ancestors of the Mennonite inhabitants of the Marienburg islands (Werder), both large and small, were invited here with the knowledge and by the will of the gracious King Sigismund Augustus, to areas that were barren, swampy, and unusable places in these islands. With great effort and at very high cost, they made those lands fertile and very productive. They cleared out the brush, and in order to drain the water from these flooded and marshy lands, they built mills and constructed dams to guard against the Vistula, Nogat, Haff, Tiege and other streams." Klassen locates this document in the *Archivum Panstwowe w Gdansku*, 358/132. *Ibid.*, 11-12.

land that no one had been able to farm. The subsequent regional prosperity enlisted the heavy support of local officials when Mennonites were criticized for their religion, and when they were disparaged for the economic success of their communities. Increased landholdings meant more income for the city, the crown, or the nobility who wanted their lands drained and they ensured that the Mennonites received a specially protected minority status that guaranteed their nonresistance by exempting them from the military. Thus, the refugees established a reputation that not only served them well, but also aroused a long community memory that, under the pressures of nationalism, would raise the question regarding their peace position regarding military service. Under the crown, they had enjoyed toleration and a variety of land and property rights, and yet they did not enjoy full equality before the law. Did all citizens have equal rights and obligations to serve national ends?⁶⁰

Although tolerated in the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth century, their protected status was increasingly tenuous as Poland was carved up and Danzig lost its independence to the German state of Prussia, then Germany after 1848. The pressures exerted on Mennonites by the Hohenzollern dynasty beginning in 1772, coupled with the desire of some to be full citizens in German society eventually forced them to choose between their nonresistant faith which precluded warfare and participation in military service and the citizenship that was increasingly defined to support nationalism. The wars for German unification in the 1860s were capped by the revocation of the Mennonites' military exemption in 1867. As the Prussians embraced nationalism and exerted pressure on the Mennonites to enlist in their armies, these settlements in

⁶⁰ The Dutch Mennonite system of reclaiming marshy land and creating productive farms was so distinctive, that it engendered its own term, "Hollandereien." Mennonites in the Vistula delta were not only farmers, but also skilled craftsmen and artisans, their skills later bringing them into sharp conflict with the city guilds in Danzig. Klassen, Mennonites, 10, 143.

the extended Vistula delta would be the source for a majority of the Mennonites who would first emigrate to Russia in response to Catherine the Great's invitation in 1763, and then leave the Russian colonies a century later for the United States and Canada. They are thus the originators of the Dutch-Russian stream of American Mennonites who would arrive in Kansas, then found Bethel College and Tabor College.⁶¹

The Swiss-South German Experience

Although the last Dutch Mennonite martyr died in 1574, and those in the movement later labeled the Dutch-Russian stream generally no longer feared for their lives, whether in the Netherlands, the states of northwest Germany, or eastward in the Vistula delta and its patchwork of independent cities, duchys, and the Polish crown, those in the Swiss-South German stream faced a far different reality. Trapped by a determined Reformed presence in Switzerland, and the warring of Lutherans and Roman Catholics, they were despised as heretics and purveyors of disorder almost uniformly throughout the region, with the exception of scattered points of refuge and the city of Strassburg. The intense persecutions not only eliminated most early Swiss Anabaptist leadership, but forced the laity into remote areas and poor land, where they endured widespread privation and sometimes extremes of poverty. Some Swiss Brethren remained in enclaves in Switzerland, escaping persecution by retreating to the protection of nobles in the Jura

⁶¹ Klassen and Mennonite historian Mark Jantzen analyze the tentative negotiations that took place at different points in the history of the Vistula Delta/Prussian Mennonites, Klassen focusing on land, religious, and commercial issues while considering the long view of overlapping jurisdictions in changing conceptions of citizenship and the state and Jantzen concentrating on the years after the capitulation of Poland and the rule of the Prussian Hohenzollerns prior to Bismarck. Ibid., 160-198; Mark Jantzen, Mennonite German Soldiers: Nation, Religion, and Family in the Prussian East, 1772-1880 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

Mountains where they worked as tenants, while others withdrew into isolated villages that were predominantly French.⁶²

Although the last execution of a Swiss Mennonite martyr took place in 1614, the Reformed Church in Switzerland, once established, continued to press the Mennonites to recant or to leave. In the seventeenth century, they faced a double threat: from official persecutions enacted by the civil governments in Switzerland, and by the devastation of the Thirty Years War when Roman Catholics and Protestant armies fought for control of Germany. Swiss Mennonites had already fled into the Rhineland and other regions north of Switzerland, scrambling for an existence that kept them out of the reach of hostile authorities, but persecutions unleashed in waves by the city of Zurich and the canton of Bern intensified their suffering, particularly for those who had escaped north. With the Thirty Years' War devastating large portions of the German states and killing nearly one-fourth of the German population between 1618 and 1648, Swiss and South German Mennonites found little refuge. When the city of Zurich initiated persecutions in 1639 in the midst of the war, refugees fled down the Rhine (northward) particularly into the Palatinate and Alsace, but as far as Worms into areas where their co-religionists attempted to survive. Most of the Mennonite settlements in the Palatinate were destroyed in the course of the war, as were other areas ravaged during the course of military maneuvers or defensive actions taken by the populace (such as flooding of land). In 1664, when elector Karl Ludwig of the Palatinate issued an edict of religious toleration, then five years later specifically offered the Swiss Mennonites refuge and a limited amount of religious freedom in

⁶² C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites, 4th ed., rev. and enl. by Cornelius Krahn (Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957), 302-305; Dyck, 74; David A. Haury, Prairie People: A History of the Western District Conference (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1981), 12.

exchange for rebuilding his devastated province, many emigrated. Settling in areas between Wiesloch and Wimpfen that in 1622 had experienced the most intense battles of the Palatine, they rebuilt the farming economy through a number of innovations while their Flemish brethren established a thriving manufacture of silk and velvet in Krefeld. Their status nevertheless remained tenuous and dependent on the good will of a particular ruler.⁶³

After the canton of Bern issued an order expelling all Anabaptists from the jurisdiction, Swiss Mennonites successfully pressed for a ten year reprieve in order to settle their affairs, but in 1670 the government passed new legislation offering them the opportunity to recant --- or to leave. According to historian C. Henry Smith, more than seven hundred Mennonites were driven out of their homes, making their way through the Vosges Mountains to the Palatine where they joined their brethren who had settled and farmed under the protection of Karl Ludwig. This reprieve was cut short when Louis XIV of France ordered the destruction of the Palatinate in 1688 and warfare resumed. Those who managed to remain in Bern were repeatedly subjected to

⁶³Karl Ludwig's stipulations included a ban on proselytizing, freedom of worship in homes (but not in public meetinghouses), and an annual payment of tribute (three gulden for the first year, six gulden in subsequent years). Smith, *Story*, 305-310; Christian Hage also recounts the long-term consequences of the Thirty Years War on more than 20,000 Hutterite Anabaptists who were forced out of their homes by the newly victorious Roman Catholics who overtook this early refuge. They subsequently moved to Hungary and Transylvania. Christian Hege, "Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)," in *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=ThirtyYearsWar> (accessed June 16, 2017). In regard to innovative agricultural practices that helped restore the land, Walter Kuhn describes Swiss Mennonites' introduction of a new variety of clover as ground cover and feed, the reform of feedlots, and the use of fertilizers. Walter Kuhn, "Swiss Galician Mennonites," *Mennonite Life*, 8, no.1 (January, 1955), pp. 24-26. Even these improvements did not necessarily accrue to long-term Mennonite stability. Smith recalls the difficulty Swiss-South German Mennonites faced under the reimplementation of the ancient code of *ius retractus* in which land that previously had been owned by one of the magisterial religious groups but purchased by a Mennonite had to be returned to the original owner upon payment of the original price. Thus, land which had been unproductive or devastated by war, sold at a low price, and then improved by a Mennonite farmer, could be returned to the original owner for the original outlay. Smith, 312.

persecution, with a special commission established to handle them from 1699 to 1743. Punishments ranged from branding on the forehead to identify them as heretics (thereby indicating that no one could give them lodging or provisions), sentencing to life as a galley slave, interment outside the public cemeteries, and other provisions that in symbol or fact distanced them from the Bern community, the only canton that still had Mennonites by the late seventeenth century.⁶⁴

If anything positive could be derived from the precarious position of the Swiss-Mennonites, it was that their intense situation came to the notice of Dutch Mennonites some time before 1645, at which time they began a long practice of brotherly intervention and material assistance. They pressed the Swiss to stop the persecutions, but they also raised funds for relief and assembled shipments of clothing, money, food, and supplies to help the refugees “who were fleeing in a steady stream” to the Palatinate. The stories of persecution so moved the Dutch that they overcame some of their divisions in order to cooperate in the relief of these refugees, a story that not only proved true for other situations in which the Dutch intervened on behalf of their co-religionists in Europe over the next three hundred years, but which would prove to be true for Mennonites in twentieth-century America, some of whom were their direct descendants, and others the descendants of those they had assisted. Moreover, as historian Richard K. MacMaster asserts, their contact with those who were suffering rekindled their own re-identification with their faith. It was at that point in time when Thieleman van Bragt compiled and published The

⁶⁴ Dyck, Introduction, 147, 113.

Martyrs Mirror in 1660, thus positioning the widely read and distributed work that would help create and maintain Mennonite memory and identity.⁶⁵

Memories of intense persecution coupled with an existence made tenuous by European religio-political warfare kept the Swiss-Germans in an uneasy situation and wary of the state in ways that their more confident co-religionists in the Netherlands were not. They also achieved far less prosperity and stability than those Dutch refugees who had fled eastward to the Vistula delta and then remained for more than two hundred and fifty years. The wars derived from religious disputes which the Polish “Confederation” had stymied on behalf of its various jurisdictions had only a vague parallel in the Treaty of Westphalia, which extended toleration solely to the Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed, and omitted non-magisterial groups

⁶⁵ The confident Dutch Mennonites did not just supply material relief, but on occasion were willing to involve the Dutch government on behalf of the Swiss-Germans. For example, when minister Benedikt Brechbuhl and his wife attempted to hide from authorities in Bern and were apprehended, officials collaborating with Bern commercial interests attempted to ship him and a group of fifty-six other prisoners to North Carolina in 1710. The trip northward via the Rhine to Rotterdam was, as MacMaster explained, exactly what the Dutch Mennonites hoped. The newly formed Commission for Foreign Needs successfully enlisted the help of the Dutch government to free all, many of whom reunited with their families scattered throughout the Mennonite diaspora. In regard to how refugees helped the Dutch reconstruct memories of persecution, MacMaster emphasized the formation of what would become The Martyr’s Mirror. Van Bragt’s work was derived from several earlier compilations, the earliest collected and published in 1615 by a Dutch pastor who was concerned about divisions among his fellow Christians (including the English Baptists and other religious exiles who had fled to the Netherlands and whom he assisted). He saw the exercise in memory could re-establish an authentic faith and Christian unity, believing that: “recovery of the Anabaptism that had flourished in the time of the martyrs was a common ground on which separated brethren might unite,” according to the historian. Richard K. MacMaster, Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1985), 54-55, 26-28. Dyck’s analysis, which was first published during the Vietnam War and two years before the MC Mennonites would work toward unity on the war in spite of wide cultural differences, also focuses on the wider dynamics of de Ries’ concern for spiritual vigor and community remembrance: “In a sermon shortly before his death in 1638, the octogenarian shared how the poor and suffering church of his youth had now become rich and socially acceptable but how much spiritual vigor had been lost in the process.” Dyck, 98.

entirely. They had the advantage, however, of a stubborn faith that had persisted in the interstices of persecution, in contrast to those who had grown lax in the “Golden Age” of Dutch Mennonitism. Not as literate as the expansive, educated Dutch, who did not have to hide and avoid congregating for either worship or for formal instruction, they nevertheless carried a long memory, which would refine itself in America and challenge a self-congratulatory and victorious twentieth-century culture nearly three hundred years later. Maintaining boundaries that viewed both state and culture with skeptical eyes, some Swiss-South German Mennonites would eventually make their way to Kansas and found two-year Hesston College in Harvey County in 1909 in a deliberate decision to provide their brotherhood in the west with a college education. Others, having initiated a reform movement aimed at the later manifestations of Swiss-German religious and cultural life in the mid-nineteenth century, would see themselves combining with strands of the later Dutch-Russian emigration to found Bethel College, also in Harvey County.⁶⁶

The Mennonites Meet America

By the time elder Peter Eckert arrived from Russia on the newly scrubbed plains in what would become Marion County, Kansas, in 1874, his co-religionists had been in North America for nearly three hundred years. Carefully cradling the grains of hard winter wheat for which Mennonites in Kansas, then the state itself would become famous, Eckert and his German-

⁶⁶ The Treaty of Westphalia obtained religious equality to the magisterial churches of Germany (the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and members of the Reformed Churches). To move beyond purely ethnic terms, the Swiss-German stream of Mennonites is not only the backbone of what became designated as the MC Mennonite Church that would found Hesston College at the turn of the twentieth century, but also the basis of what later organized as the General Conference Mennonite Church (the GCs), who would, together with a large infusion from the great Dutch-Russian emigrations of the 1870s, found Bethel College. Hesston College was first founded as an academy for high school students, then was recognized as a junior college in 1925.

speaking kin would set down roots in land that was newly theirs, having emigrated from Russia in large clusters, sometimes almost entire churches. They were part of the largest single migration of Mennonites in American history, with almost 10,000 arriving between 1874 and 1880. Their arrival in post-Civil War era America during the final years of Reconstruction would add a thick strand to the Mennonite presence in the United States, although it would be but one part of a fragmented weft that would be reconstructed and defined in the next century. Their story would be the predominant narrative in south central Kansas in the twentieth century, partially occluding the chronicle of those who had first arrived in North America in the seventeenth century.⁶⁷

The first Mennonites to arrive in America did not arrive as entire congregations or even complete family groups fleeing potential conscription as their co-religionists would later. Rather, the early records teased out by historian Richard MacMaster find a few souls who arrived not as self-identifying religious refugees, but as Dutchmen who were part of the trade established between the Netherlands and New Amsterdam (later New York). Although the first permanent settlement of Mennonites in Germantown, Pennsylvania, took place in 1683, their presence was already evident in the public records MacMaster is so adept at scouring and show a local populace already wary of the potential heresy of “Menonists,” Lutherans, and English “independents” (Congregationalists) against the official Dutch Reformed Church. For example,

⁶⁷ John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church: Pilgrims and Pioneers* (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1975), 131, 133. For the sake of clarity, this work will be cited further as John A. Toews, *History*, in order to distinguish the work from works by other Toews with the first name John.

one Anna Smits who was an Anabaptist was called to account in 1652 for her “slanderous and calumniating” language against a Reformed sermon.⁶⁸

The first permanent Mennonite settlement at Germantown in 1683 evidences the hodgepodge that was European Anabaptism and early American Christianity. Including Quakers, Mennonites, and Mennonites who were married to Quakers, the first meetings built on relationships that had developed in the Palatinate among Swiss-German Mennonites and Quakers (Friends) who had preached among them beginning in the mid-seventeenth century.

Contemporaneous with elector Karl Ludwig’s extension of toleration to the second wave of refugees from Bern, Quaker founder George Fox had travelled in Holland and through the Palatinate in 1677, preaching the gospel --- and a different good news about a potential refuge in America. Accompanied by William Penn, Fox and his religious message were not completely accepted by the Mennonites because of both theological reasons and different approaches to interaction with the state. Quakers were enthusiastic opponents of paying particular taxes levied to support wars, whereas Mennonites, although just as opposed to warfare and their personal participation in it, were eager not to arouse any further hatred against themselves in a Germany that had already cast Anabaptists as purveyors of disorder. They therefore preferred to pay taxes, avoid confrontation, and reside as carefully as possible as “the Quiet in the Land.” But, in

⁶⁸ The first Mennonite settlement in America was an outgrowth of the “Lamb” congregation in the Netherlands which, as described previously, initiated much of the material relief collected and distributed to the Swiss-German refugees that flooded into the Palatinate due to their ouster from Bern. Assisted by the Amsterdam City Council, one Pieter Cornelisz Plockhoy founded a short-lived colony in Delaware at what is present day Lewes in 1663. Hoping to build a communitarian life modeled on that of the Hutterites and explicitly forbidding slavery and the slave trade, the new village lasted less than a year. Razed by warfare between the English and Dutch, the colonists dispersed, with some filtering into other settlements. MacMaster, 31-39.

regards to the other good news regarding Fox's (and Penn's) potential refuge, the Mennonites were eager listeners.⁶⁹

The trickle of emigrants, a large percentage coming as indentured servants, initially included chiefly Quakers with a minority of Mennonites, until Quakers reminded Palatinate authorities just how dangerous their beliefs could be to civil order. After two female Quakers preached in the Palatinate in 1678, officials banned the Friends and harassed them, actions that stirred Quaker emigration and pulled along those who had intermarried with them or who were related by marriage, a number of whom were Mennonites.⁷⁰

After 1707 when Bern renewed its persecutions, Swiss-German Mennonites began to emigrate more deliberately, with 4,000 eventually leaving Germany by 1756 to join the approximately 200 Mennonites who had already moved in fits and starts to New York, then Germantown. Aided by a strong Dutch network of benevolence, the movement was both religious and economic in nature. The Palatine's policies of conditional and tenuous land ownership combined with persecution pushed the Swiss-Germans to leave, but the lure of Pennsylvania and its explicit welcome and guarantees of religious freedom and land also helped overcome any reluctance. Joined later by 200 Swiss-German Amish, few additional Mennonites arrived until the nineteenth century when 2,700 Alsatian and German Amish, 500 Swiss, and 200 Palatine Mennonites would arrive, most of the new arrivals following general trajectories of

⁶⁹ The Quakers are not Anabaptists, but their social connections and common beliefs in nonresistance brought them close together at many points in their histories. *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁷⁰ Although early Anabaptists had both male and female preachers, Mennonites eventually allowed only men to preach in contrast to the Quaker practice that continued to welcome its female testimonies and exhortations. Because Palatine authorities generally viewed Quakers as a kind of Mennonite, they lumped them all together, thereby recalling old fears of disorderly Anabaptists. MacMaster, 39-40.

American settlement by moving past east and central Pennsylvania to inhabit western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa.⁷¹

Their numbers would belie their eventual impact on American history, albeit an ironic impact. Bringing the same inclinations to America that they had in Europe, they generally avoided calling attention to themselves and preferred a quiet existence. Although their history in America would be multi-valent, with variations and separations of many sorts which this study will generally omit, their life in America would defy easy categorization. No longer forbidden by law to engage in certain trades, they moved into many skilled crafts and local commercial activities, thus disproving the stereotype that they simply melted into the land and worked solely as farmers. Moreover, as their early settlement and worship evidences, the Swiss-German Mennonites did not separate themselves from the culture as a matter of course, nor did they isolate themselves from other settlers. Congregational in organization and authority, evidencing the same strong doctrinal disputes that could result in the typical splitting characteristic of the free churches, they reinforced the strong boundary markers that sociologists view as means to maintain identity. Among these were tenacious holds on not only what would later be reified as “nonconformity,” but also their peace position of nonresistance, both of which would be historically conditioned. Together, these beliefs would make them conflicted critics of culture and American warfare, however, especially in the twentieth century.⁷²

⁷¹ See Appendix B for John A. Toews’ chart on Mennonite immigration, updated by Toews with additional numbers from The Mennonite Encyclopedia. John A. Toews, History, 131.

⁷² MacMaster notes that “Mennonites [in colonial southeastern Pennsylvania] were prominent in the crafts.” Schlabach also reprises the work of historical geographer James Lemon whose detailed analysis of southeastern colonial Pennsylvania concluded that “Mennonites, like Quakers and other German sectarians, did establish exceptional group discipline and mutual aid. But Lemon has pointed out that they did not choose the tightest of the available patterns of

The Dutch-Russians Become Dutch-Russians

Meanwhile, their theological kindred in Europe were starting to experience the nationalistic pressures in Europe that would eventually result in the large-scale migrations to North America in the 1870s. Situated in the Vistula Delta region, Mennonites had enjoyed the toleration proffered by the Polish crown for more than two hundred and fifty years. Many had prospered and established themselves and extended families on land they had recovered and improved. But, with the rise of first imperialism, then nationalism, Mennonites in Poland found themselves in an intense geo-political situation, with their futures no longer stabilized by the protection of the Polish crown. Instead, they saw Poland torn apart in three partitions, with Prussia, Russia, and Austria enjoying the spoils and their peaceful position endangered. By 1880, those Mennonites that remained had chiefly divested themselves of their nonresistant positions

community, for they established neither European-style villages nor religious communes. In outer life Mennonites were part of a pluralistic fluid community structure.” Moreover, they were highly networked along routes of trade, including those running from Philadelphia through Lancaster. “Lemon found Mennonites to have been ‘quite in tune with market conditions.’” Mennonite “nonconformity” is based on the Biblical injunction, “Be ye not conformed to the world, no anything in it,” an enjoinder that meshed with two-kingdom theology, which is discussed later in this study. “Nonconformity” issued in church splits, fragmentation within congregations, and, later between denominations, but it is not necessarily a reaction against culture for the sake of maintaining identity. As historian Steve Nolt cautions, it is imperative not to automatically construe a conflict as “boundary maintenance,” nor is it accurate historically to cast Mennonite life in terms of an ongoing struggle between individualism and collectivity, however tempting. Although his case studies are situated in the twentieth century, his larger argument concerns Mennonite history in general. Juhnke frames a similar argument in the context of American history, when, in considering late nineteenth-century church conflict involving revivalism, he cautions against seeing Mennonite splits as negative reactions in a simple polarity. Rather, he observes that the typical split between what he labels “conservatives” and “progressives” were reactions in juxtaposition with American culture that in actuality brought renewed spiritual growth to each of the parties. MacMaster, 101-102; Theron F. Schlabach, “Mennonites, Revivalism, Modernity: 1683-1850,” *Church History* 48, no 4 (December 1979), 402; Steve Nolt, “Problems of Collectivity and Modernity: Mid-century Mennonite Conflicts Involving Life Insurance and Biblical Hermeneutics,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 72, no. 2 (April 1998), 207-210; Juhnke, *Vision*, 109-110.

and accepted conscription as a measure of their status as would-be citizens, choosing to believe in the righteousness of The Fatherland as an instrument of God rather than their long-held beliefs against warfare.⁷³

Prior to these changes, Mennonites had chiefly adhered to their nonresistant position and refusal to serve in the military, a stance that was not especially threatened when European warfare was conducted through the use of mercenary soldiers. But now, citizenship was increasingly enmeshed with the military demands of the state, and the particular entity that would soon come to dominate Polish life. Prussia (Brandenburg-Prussia) would not only occupy and divide the kingdom of Poland beginning in 1772, but it also would challenge the Mennonite position on peace. Casting about for a position on what to do with the Mennonites, the question was finally solved nearly a century later when the Mennonites' military exemption was revoked in 1867. By then, the faith community had split over whether or not to view nonresistance as an essential belief, attempted a variety of strategies to accommodate the state short of conscription, seen its ability to buy property hedged as a condition of citizenship and military service, and then, finally, for those who stayed and made their accommodations with the Prussian state, recast its view of the emerging German state as a holy and righteous nation.⁷⁴

⁷³ Jantzen, *Mennonite*, 161-190, 247-254.

⁷⁴ There is an important and wide-ranging caveat regarding the use of mercenaries and the general freedom of the population before the universal draft was implemented. Unlike most of Europe, part of the stress on Mennonites in Switzerland was due to the fact that the Swiss economy depended in large part on the enlistment of its citizens as mercenaries. Serving in the military was not an option for the Swiss, but a requirement, a point stressed by Jantzen. Under the pressures of the Napoleonic wars, the victorious Prussians instituted what is popularly conceived as a universal draft. Although conscription of all adult males was possible under the accord proposed in 1813 by the *Landtag* (Provincial Estates) and religious exemptions were not allowed, Mennonites were initially able to negotiate their release from the requirement, being charged instead with an increase in the fees levied in its stead. What was not successful, however, was negotiating a situation in which Mennonites maintained their reputations with their

It also saw the exodus of 10,000 members of its community leave for the refuge of Russia, taking advantage of Catherine the Great's expansive offers to anyone willing to colonize her newly-acquired outlying lands taken in the Turkish war. Offering free land, free travel, wide discretion in the establishment of their own local quasi-governments and educational institutions, and exemption from military service, her edict of 1763 extended to anyone interested who was willing to settle and farm the unproductive regions, but by 1786, her governor general Potemkin specifically extended the invitation to the Mennonites in the Vistula delta and West Prussia in particular. Contrary to popular American Mennonite memory, the Russian provisions were not especially crafted for their special benefit, but were, rather, the stipulations fashioned for a policy that intended to keep the "foreign colonies" separate from the mainstream of Russian life.⁷⁵

Beginning in 1780, when Frederick William of Prussia issued his newly written *Charter of Privileges* which guaranteed that Mennonites would "remain eternally free from military registration and personal military service," but then began to modify the state's commitments first under the pressure of the Napoleonic wars, then in service of the growing Prussian nation,

communities. In the face of a draft to which almost everyone was subject, Mennonites now faced neighbors who were increasingly irate over Mennonite exemptions when their own sons had no choice but to comply. Increasingly, according to historian Mark Jantzen who has teased out the details of Prussian assessments, Mennonites found their would-be citizenship called into question. Jantzen, 88-94, 191-218.

⁷⁵ The immigration numbers of Mennonite settlers who emigrated from the Vistula were adapted from the work of J. Ewert by Cornelius Krahn. The confusion over special privileges is explained by Krahn, who notes that the later agreement extended to the Mennonites in 1788 and then reaffirmed as the *Privilegium* by Czar Paul I in 1800 included margin notes that the Mennonites would have exemption from military service for "all eternity." Cornelius Krahn, "Russia," Mennonite Encyclopedia 4: 384-386; Toews, John A., History, 14-15. Nevertheless, what is significant is that the Dutch-Russian Mennonites at the time of emigration to Russia and their descendants in America both argued that the exemptions regarding military service were an essential part of their agreement, therefore suggesting that they considered it, at least through the Vietnam War, to be one of the markers of their collective identity.

many Mennonites took up Russia's offer. Of the 12,603 Mennonite souls the king had enumerated in 1780, by 1789 a substantial number had left, creating alarm in Prussia at the loss of this productive farming manpower to the new colony of Khortitsa, and resulting in a halt to the issuing of passports, except to the laboring working class poor. Stymied in attempts to grant exemptions by social pressures, the Prussian view of citizenship, and a Mennonite community increasingly divided over whether citizenship or nonresistance was more important, the Prussians relented in fits and starts. More prosperous families began to emigrate, and by 1804, some well-to-do farmers had as well, interested in the 300,000 acres that comprised the colony of Molochna, the second colony founded and what would become the largest Mennonite settlement in Russia. As Peter Klassen concludes, "Gradually the population of Mennonites in Russia came to equal and then exceed the total number of those who remained in Prussia." By 1840, Mennonites had established forty-six villages from the 10,000 immigrants and the Russians had almost discontinued their earlier offers.⁷⁶

Why America? And Why Kansas?

A generation and a half later, the generous provisions in Russia, although maintained, were under the threat of modification, and some feared, revocation. The colonies that had been established as a means of maintaining an agriculturally productive and geographically strategic footprint against the Turks had enjoyed what later Mennonite historians characterized as "a state within a state." Governing in a quasi-independent manner and charged with running the internal affairs of their settlements, the original colonies had prospered --- and been extended when land

⁷⁶ This is Jantzen's translation of *The Mennonite Charter of Privileges* issued in 1780 which also contains the King's enumeration. Jantzen, 255; Smith, Story, 287; Klassen, Mennonites, 197.

grew short --- into two additional communities. Under Russian benevolence, the Dutch-Russian Mennonites enjoyed freedom from conscription as promised and the ability to teach their children in their own language (now German) and according to their own religious objectives. Yet, by 1860, first an internal issue, then, within a decade an external decision, threatened what they saw as a peaceful existence. Religious revival within the brotherhood in 1860, resulted in a split between those who shared a common heritage into the normative and more dominant group (the “*Kirchliche*”) among Dutch-Russians, and the revivalists or “*Brudergemeinde*” (known in America as the Mennonite Brethren). Fostering at least as much concern for the well-being of the brotherhood was the tsar’s imperial decree of 1870, followed by the announcement in 1874 that the military exemption enjoyed to date was coming to an end. Rather than having a complete exemption, the Russians informed the Mennonites that religious minorities would be expected to serve. Countered by the colonists in an extended series of meetings, the authorities eventually agreed to alternative service in such assignments as forestry or hospital work, but for many Mennonites, the prospects made them uneasy. Those who had left Prussia most recently were all too aware of stipulations invoked for the sake of nationalism had been a slippery slope, with policies that shifted and that threatened their hopes for citizenship. The threat that Russia would also revoke their exemptions rang in their ears. Their reaction and subsequent immigration of many to America would affect not only the brotherhood in the Russian colonies, but Mennonites situated throughout eastern Europe. The Dutch-Russians would not only transplant the intense tensions associated with the revivalist split, but also a variant view on church-state relations.

Their experience of governing their own “state within a state” gave them both a model for local government expectations regarding citizenship that they would transplant to their new country.⁷⁷

By the early 1870s, other Mennonite communities and enclaves across Europe actively investigated emigration by contacting settlement elsewhere and by sending emissaries to locations that seemed promising. Correspondence between Cornelius Jansen of South Russia and various American, Canadian, and British Mennonites fostered interest in North America and was publicized in his *Sammlung von Notizen ueber Amerika* which was published in Danzig in 1872 and widely distributed. Individuals such as Bernhard Warkentin of the Molotschna colony in South Russia toured the United States and Canada in 1872 and reported their findings through letters eagerly read and shared in his home colony. At the same time, several delegations which represented Mennonites from a variety of colonies in Europe toured together. One five-man deputation in particular influenced the course of Mennonite settlement in Kansas. Not only did the group choose Kansas after touring other locations, but it did so as what would later be called a “mixed” group of Mennonites, that is, as a working representation of various strands of the

⁷⁷ Smith is typical in his reference to the governing provisions that the Russians established for the foreign colonies as resulting in each being a “state within a state.” Smith, 439. There has been much discussion among Mennonite historians regarding the split within the Russian Mennonites and the historiography of the discussion would be a study in itself. Some argue that the reforming impulses would have been embraced by the entire body had more time been given to the decision to split formally, while others have focused on the deep socio-economic faultlines that were part of what became a chasm. This study will consider the impact of this split on the founding of the two groups’ colleges in Kansas and the attempts to resolve the bitter antagonism at the advent of the 1960s. See Smith, 427-436 and John A. Toews, *History*, 26-68 for part of the historiographical consideration of the bifurcation, including the spiritual, economic, and finally political complications of the split. In regard to nationalism’s press of Mennonites in both Prussia and Russia, Klassen recounted the crown prince’s (later Frederick III) rejoinder to the Dutch-Prussian Mennonites who threatened to immigrate to Russia late in February 1868 if their requests for exemption were not granted. “The crown prince dryly remarked that should Mennonites move to Russia, they might well be advised to have alternative plans, for Russia would soon, no doubt, also impose compulsory military service.” Klassen, 187.

tradition. Wilhelm Ewert of West Prussia was joined by Swiss Volhynian Andreas Schrag, Tobias Unruh of Michalin (Poland) and Karolswalde (Volhynia), and Molotschna colony (Russia) representatives Jacob Buller and Leonhard Sudermann.⁷⁸

As historian David Haury emphasized, choosing Kansas did not necessarily mesh with the objectives with which the delegates had been charged. In particular, the Molotschna representatives had clear directives from their congregations to find land and political conditions under which their people could have:

1. Legal assurance of complete religious freedom; specifically, full exemption from military service.
2. Sufficient land of good quality at low prices and easy terms.
3. Closed settlements with the German language and local self-determination.

A fourth condition --- the availability of financial assistance for the journey --- was not considered as crucial as the other three, but highly desirable. Yet, as word spread throughout Mennonites in Europe, and positive accounts were posted and reported back to their communities, enthusiasm for America prevailed in spite of what became no firm guarantees at all of either military exemption as an aspect of religious freedom or of the establishment of local governance (including the right to continue using the German language). Only the guarantee of good land at moderate prices --- and sufficient quantity --- prevailed in the long run.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Haury, 21.

⁷⁹ Haury, 476n10. I am grateful to James C. Juhnke's translation of these terms summarized from Leonard Sudermann's Eine Deputationsreise von Russland nach Amerika (Elkhart, IN: Mennonitische Verlagshandlung, 1897), 10 and reprinted in Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms, 177n18. By the 1870s, the German language had become almost a marker of faith (akin to a "sacred language") among the Mennonites derived from the North-German-Dutch streams (which included the Russian Mennonites and groups left along the migration to Russia). Hence, this essential condition embodied far more than a preference for a particular language. This would be in sharp contrast to the Swiss-South German Mennonites who chiefly embraced learning English on arriving in North America. German would continue to be used among descendants of the former well into the mid-twentieth-century. One of the leading newspapers in

Haury and Juhnke each consider the paradox --- or even outright contradiction --- between these stated goals and those that were finally accepted. Was there a disconnect between the desire for religious freedom and the economic drives to acquire land, particularly in Kansas? Were they, as Juhnke ponders, “Mennonites [who] talked like religious men, but acted like economic men”? Both he and Haury explicate a more complex reality than this simple equation would admit, with the former exploring previous Mennonite migrations in terms of their approach to governmental authority and the latter focusing on internal affiliative patterns and community decision-making. They each nevertheless raise the question of mixed motives against stated religious convictions --- and open the door to ongoing issues of memory among the Mennonites of Kansas as they faced American nationalism in the twentieth century.

Situating Mennonites and American War

Before turning to the Mennonites in Cold War America and their reactions to the Vietnam War, it is necessary to sketch a brief outline of Mennonite encounters with American warfare. This summary by necessity includes a short discussion of their essential interpretation of relations with the state, in what is called “two-kingdom theology.” Because it began to show in sharp relief after the crisis Mennonites faced in World War I, I have chosen to locate it there.

Hillsboro, KS, Vorwaerts, was published in German into the 1950s. Its masthead carried the slogan, “Die goldene Regel uberwindet die Macht des Goldes” (“The golden rule overcomes the power of gold”). As MB historian John A. Toews acutely observed in 1975, “Had the Mennonites emigrated to Russia some fifty years earlier, they would in all probability have continued to speak the Dutch. It would have been well in later generations in Russia (and even in Canada and the United States) would have reminded themselves that the change from Dutch to German was a mere historical coincidence, and that the German language was not an integral part of the Anabaptist heritage. The constant identification of true Mennonitism with German language and culture created serious problems for the faith and mission of the church.” John A. Toews, History, 14.

American Mennonites and War Prior to the Twentieth Century

Conscientious objection to military service was accepted in early America and the fact that many early Mennonite settlers established themselves in Quaker Pennsylvania supported and reinforced their nonresistance. During the French and Indian War and then the Revolutionary War, Mennonites employed a number of strategies to maintain military exemption and, as possible, to avoid paying levies that were used to support the war. Interpreting the New Testament literally and employing their two kingdom doctrine, they ironically paid any charge labeled as a “tax,” although if a fee levied in support of war was not labelled a “tax,” they frequently refused to pay it. Moreover, historian Theron Schlabach discovered widespread instances of both tax resistance and the refusal to craft armaments by Mennonites in spite of the penalties exacted against them.⁸⁰

During the Civil War, the practice of nonresistance was largely respected, with most Mennonites refusing to serve in either Union or Confederate armies. Faced with the legal option of whether or not to hire a substitute that was available in the North and the South, Mennonites (and Amish) wrestled with the moral dilemma of equivalency. Although Mennonites were almost unanimous in their condemnation of slavery (with evidence of even more consistency than the Quakers), their apolitical approach to social reform meant they eschewed abolitionism, as either a political means or as a compelling justification for bearing arms. At the same time, historians James O. Lehman and Steven M. Nolt discovered that although the Mennonite Church as a brotherhood eschewed participation in the military, in fact whether or not a young man served as a soldier largely depended on his own congregation’s stance. In a brotherhood of

⁸⁰ Schlabach, “Mennonites, Revivalism, Modernity: 1683-1850,” 403-406.

multiple conferences and strong congregational polity, local decisions sometimes deviated from the historical position. Moreover, some conferences of the church struggled with articulating a position even though they considered the problem multiple times, a problem Schlabach attributes not to uncertainty about nonresistance, but indecision about what structures would formalize a decision.⁸¹

At the same time, Lehman and Nolt discovered widespread resistance to supporting the war, particularly among Virginia Mennonites who heavily populated the Shenandoah Valley, an opposition that the two described as “no doubt the largest collective act of defiance ever carried out by American Mennonites.” Some aided both Mennonite and non-Mennonite draft resisters to escape north, while others refused their officer’s commands to shoot. That their opposition was widespread and engendered hatred among their Southern neighbors is supported by the evidence of claims for damages available during Reconstruction as well as the long-term resentment of their communities.⁸²

⁸¹ The issue was also complicated by the fact that provisions regarding the draft and exemption included only men who could prove they were “member[s] in good standing” in a church that opposed warfare as a religious tenet. Since a Mennonite man rarely joined the church as a formal member until adulthood (and sometimes only after marriage), many young Mennonites were dependent on local authorities’ views of their membership. Brock, Pacifism in the United States, 781-781; Schlabach, 137-138.

⁸² Although Mennonites generally eschewed supporting the war, and came to different conclusions about the hiring of substitutes or paying commutation fees, the evidence shows that they willingly offered to care for the needs of women and children whose husbands went to war or who had been injured or killed. Schlabach, Peace, 177-185. In regard to the Shenandoah Valley, for example, Lehman and Nolt discovered that more than 85 percent of claims to the Southern Claims Commission from Rockingham County, Virginia, were initiated by Dunkers or Mennonites. James O. Lehman and Steven M. Nolt, Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 226-228. The resistance to conscription and refusal to support the war effort is also documented by William Blair who described the devastation of the Shenandoah Valley. William Blair, Virginia’s Private War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17-18, 57. Schlabach reprises several quotations attributed to Stonewall Jackson regarding the uselessness

American Mennonites During World War I

The war evidenced the dislocation that was taking place in American national dreams. A president was re-elected in large part because “he kept us out of war” and yet within three years the United States would enter the war, embrace a martial fervor that contradicted the cries for peace, and then profit by its careful management of European debts. The victorious allies would then punish the defeated while the same president who had promoted his country’s entrance into the war as a means of “mak[ing] the world safe for democracy” and a great exercise in idealism would see his own dreams short-circuited by Congress. The conflicted vision was one that also took place for American Mennonites who, as the country stutter-stepped from peace to war, likewise staggered in attempting to come to terms with the Great War within their own brotherhoods, then with the state and its claims on the bodies and consciences of their young men. As a result, they reckoned with a government that focused on and constructed the exigencies of war, a social fabric that unevenly tolerated dissent, and a brotherhood that began to learn to work with other religious traditions that objected to warfare. Within the brotherhood, they realized that many of the differences they had within their own groups were far less important than their common shared vision of nonresistance.⁸³

of Dunkers and Mennonites, who generally obeyed their officers, except when it was time to shoot, they refused “to take correct aim.” Schlabach, 190-191.

⁸³ Vietnam War era Mennonites later took particular note of William Jennings Bryant, who saw these discontinuities as he embraced a peace position in his run for the presidency, anticipated what the turn to war meant for the country and to American Christianity, and believed pursuing warfare contradicted American ideals in the Progressive-era. Willard Smith, “The Pacifist Thought of William Jennings Bryant,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 65 (January & April 1971), 33-81; 152-181. Peace historian Charles Chatfield analyzes both the elemental religious pacifism of the peace movement that prevailed prior to 1917 and its unraveling after America entered the war. He argues that almost all of the epoch’s religious pacifism derived from the life of Jesus, and that the stolid Mennonites, coupled with the more activist Quakers and most of the Brethren maintained their opposition to war even as many progressives who had

On April 6, 1917, Congress declared war at the request of President Woodrow Wilson who had concluded he had done everything he could do to avoid it. Within six weeks, he signed the Selective Service Act into law on May 18, 1917, building on the earlier National Defense Act that had established compulsory military training in the event of a “national emergency.” Both acts seemed to provide for conscientious objectors, offering them complete exemption from combatant duty as a matter of conscience. The bills both, however, failed to exempt objectors from fulfilling *noncombatant* service under the express authority of the military, leaving its definition and its implementation to the President. The qualified exemption put Mennonites in a quandary. How could they oppose warfare and yet become a part of its machinery?

Historians agree that American Mennonites’ issues were never ones that questioned their basic embrace of essential beliefs about peace, although there were exceptions. Rather, they floundered in how to organize their responses, a dilemma due to different approaches to church polity and the authority of the local church, and, secondarily, due to how they understood what

initially invested themselves in pacifism (even out of their religious beliefs) realigned themselves with nationalism once America entered the war. For the nonsectarian pacifists who attempted to maintain their stances, “the war became an interior event” in which they endured isolation from former friends and society, whereas Mennonites were, however castigated by their local communities and nation, still able to maintain their collective peoplehood. For the economic and political consequences of the war in addition to an overview from a social history perspective, see David M. Kennedy, Over Here: The First World War and American Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 311-347, especially 311-313 on the use of the Trading-With-The Enemy Act to seize German chemical patents and permanently transfer them to American interests. As an example of actions in conflict with stated American ideals or reconstruction, these actions coupled with newly enacted stiff tariffs so crippled what had been German “undisputed leadership” in dyes and pharmaceuticals that Kennedy could assert: “[this] must severely qualify Woodrow Wilson’s claim that America alone among the great powers was disinterested in economic gains from the war.” Kennedy, 313. Like Kennedy, Chatfield viewed the war as an essential betrayal of America’s stated ideals. Charles Chatfield, For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941 (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1971), 6-8, 15-67; in regard to “war as an interior event,” 37.

the national government was prescribing. Two of the three largest groups also struggled with how to negotiate their affinity for Germany, whether based on a reasoned analysis that placed the blame for the war on the French and the Russians or a reaction derived from an attraction to all things German. The struggle for the Dutch-Russian strand would be its first large encounter with an American war and its national claims, but for all of the groups how to envision themselves as patriotic citizens whose first loyalty was to God plunged them into a crisis which grew as the war progressed, and, particularly, after the United States entered the war. Had they anticipated not being fully exempt for any service directed by the military, they could have held a unified front, such as they later began to develop at great effort during the interwar period. Instead, they were faced with a compressed time frame in which they had to come to terms with legislation that was not fully detailed until nine months after the mandatory registration on June 5, 1917 and six months after Mennonite men had already started being assigned to camps. There they were faced with the three minimum requirements for service: uniforms, drilling, and assigned work.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Historian Gerlof D. Homan particularly emphasizes the simple internalization of nonresistance that most Mennonite draftees had. Biblically based and heavily literal, the young men had grown up with a communal objection to warfare, a simplicity that confounded and irritated the army authorities charged with dislodging them from their positions. Drawing from the papers of political and military figures charged with overseeing conscription policies and the draftees, he noted their annoyance when psychological studies conducted on the resisters found them to have above average intelligence, even though the Mennonites in particular seemed “bovine” in their stolid insistence on not participating. Gerlof D. Homan, American Mennonites and the Great War, 1914-1918 (Waterloo, ONT: Herald Press, 1994), especially 29-56, 135-167; Juhnke, Vision, 208-242; John A. Toews, History, 347-349. The Swiss-German Mennonites who were long resident in America and spoke English now populated two groups: the Mennonite Church (MC), which was more numerous, and tended to live east of the Mississippi, and the General Conference (GC) Mennonites, who had split from the main body in an attempt to reform it. After 1874 and the Dutch-Russian Mennonites began to arrive, most of them joined the GCs, swelling its ranks and adding two different cultural complications --- their experience in local government in Russia and their appreciation of the German language. The third largest group, the Mennonite Brethren (MB), who also arrived in the great migration from Russia, were more clannish, and became both more insular and more insistent on maintaining their German tongue. In regard to church polity and the war, because the MC Mennonites had a better developed

The men soon learned that any agreement to engage in these tasks put them at risk for camp authorities to challenge their nonresistance, revoke their objection as “insincere,” and put them at risk for being sent into combat. Because the churches had not considered the prospect of induction into a military environment and educated their young men about nonresistance, early inductees struggled with what tasks integrated into the making of war and what did not. Moreover, the lack of agreement among Mennonite church bodies on what could be acceptable hampered these decisions even after the President finally issued what qualified as noncombatant service (medical, quartermaster, engineering corps). MC Mennonites, with their strong objection

organizational structure within conferences, a central conference that helped the individual conferences consider coordinated action, and a heavy interest in making a clear statement about nonresistance, they first issued a statement in 1915 objecting to any Christian’s participation in “carnal warfare under any circumstance, nor for any cause.” On August 29, 1917 they adopted the most forceful statement about nonparticipation in war that had been issued by Mennonites in the twentieth century. To insure that there were no doubts about the authority of the statement made at the Yellow Creek church in Indiana, all sixteen conferences approved the document by affixing the signatures of one hundred and eighty one delegates and representatives. Peachey, 166-167, 81-82. Because MC polity consisted of long-standing conference structures headed by bishops who were accorded heavy authority and who also enjoyed informal power, the MCs thus positioned themselves to rigorously enforce sanctions against anyone who violated church decisions and discipline. In contrast, GCs had a more diffuse response, with decisions dependent on forceful personalities, according to Juhnke, partly because the church was reluctant to rule on a matter of conscience and partly because church polity deferred to the autonomy of the local congregation. Noting that the GCs tabled a motion to consider a stance on conscription in September 1914, then three years later still could not make a decision, Juhnke argues that the focused action of four Western District Conference GC leaders [in Kansas] regarding conscription “helped speed up a process whereby Newton [Kansas] was becoming the geographical center of the GC denomination.” He also recognized similar processes at work among the MBs who were heavily concentrated in Marion County, Kansas. In this case, the president and a member of the faculty at the denominational college, Tabor College, worked to fill the void left because the brotherhood lacked an official conference statement on conscription and had only a single sentence regarding nonresistance in their statement of faith. The work of these two men “recentralized MB denominational power” in Hillsboro. I am indebted to Juhnke for his analysis on these two processes. Juhnke, Vision, 212-214. Toews also notes that the MBs had not only *not* issued a statement on nonresistance, but they had no committee charged with peace and nonresistance issues. John A. Toews, History, 348.

to the state and their structures that helped them enforce church discipline, soon reacted and told their young men not to perform any task, a stance that increasingly put them under scrutiny and the threat of being charged under the Sedition Act. The other bodies, in attempting to come to terms with the same issues, chose different responses at different times, adding to the confusion for their men and increasing the ire of camp and national authorities.⁸⁵

The war abroad and at home also introduced them to the realities of the modern state in which trying not to support warfare concerned more than bearing arms. It also involved them in the social and political fabric that underlay modern warfare, particularly the financing of the war, and laid the groundwork for a heightened awareness of church-state entanglements, even for those people who sought to maintain the traditional separations between the two. As the Mennonites cast about for a solution to the stunning Selective Service Act of 1917 which presented them with the predicament of “noncombatancy,” they faced the increasing ire of the communities around them who frequently harassed and sometimes violently tormented them,

⁸⁵ Peace historian Peter Brock emphasized Mennonite laxity toward their nonresistant position after the Civil War and prior to World War I, noting in particular how little publishing and formal education was organized on the matter in spite of several exceptional cases such as publisher John F. Funk, evangelist John F. Coffman, and John Holdeman, the founder of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Brock considers the latter’s Ein Spiegel der Wahrheit (A Mirror of Truth) first published in 1878 the “most elaborate exposition of Mennonite pacifism” during this period and a theologically nuanced exposition that moved beyond biblical literalism. A small pamphlet, “On Nonresistance,” based on one of the chapters, can still be found today in Marion County, at the Main Street Café owned by Holdeman Mennonites in Durham, KS. Brock, Pacifism in the United States, 894-900. In regard to the U.S. government’s increasing concern about seditious activities of particularly the MC Mennonites, see Homan on the harassment and intimidation of Aaron Loucks whose pastoral activities and visits to army camps on behalf of men were seen as threatening, the attempt to indict the signatories of the Yellow Creek Church statement against war under the Espionage Act, and the Western Federal District Court’s seizure of the Mennonite Publishing House’s 2-page tract, “*Nonresistance*,” which simply restated the church’s positions, but was charged with “willfully uttering, printing and writing and publishing language to incite, provoke, and encourage resistance to the U.S.” under the Sedition Act. Homan, 75-76.

painting their homes, churches, and barns yellow, inscribing epithets such as “coward” or “slacker,” and, on occasion, administering beatings and near-lynchings. Although most Mennonites initially refused to buy Liberty Bonds or Thrift Stamps, attempting a wide range of negotiations to substitute donations to the Red Cross or other humanitarian efforts, many capitulated under explicit threats from their neighbors and communities, particularly in areas engaged in war bond fervor. While the memories of their sons who were persecuted or died in the course of their conscientious objection could be viewed as a kind of martyrdom, however much grieved, the guilt of buying war bonds, even when they had done so under intense community pressure, called some of them to confront the same issues as had draftees regarding the complex nature of complicity in the modern state.⁸⁶

The state’s uneven approach to conscientious objectors not only evidenced its disregard for religious freedom when that resulted in dissent, but also its strong belief in national conformity. On the one hand, it attempted to accommodate the men and their religious traditions regarding war. On the other, it attempted to keep them integrated into a social fabric that was

⁸⁶ Homan, 57-80. Two examples will illustrate some of the means by which Mennonites were forced under community scrutiny during the war. Individual Mennonites who discussed their conference’s advice not to do anything that would contribute to the war machine were found guilty under the provision of the Sedition Act that concerned “the obstruction of the sale of war bonds.” On a larger scale, all but two of the fifteen Hutterite colonies in South Dakota emigrated to Canada after their young married men were drafted (contrary to standard conscription practice), two died after horrific treatment at Alcatraz, and local communities forcibly seized Hutterite assets to buy war bonds. In one case the Yankton County Council of Defense led a raiding party of “good citizens” who seized one thousand sheep and one hundred head of cattle, sold them at a public auction, then attempted to buy Liberty Bonds in their names. Homan, 98, 94-96, 152-155. Like the obverse of the young draftees who had to figure out what actions were truly nonresistant and what contributed to the war effort, Juhnke explores Kansas Mennonites’ ethical shaving in which they attempted to embrace a nonresistant ethic while also coming dangerously close to justifying their choices in nationalistic terms. For example, he refers to C.B. Schmidt’s appeal for exemption in order that Mennonites might contribute their agricultural expertise to the war effort. Juhnke, Vision, 106-107.

increasingly seized with passion for war and eager to create structures to engage in it. It found itself in opposition to a community that was both traditional and resilient in its assessment of warfare, but one that was subject to government coercion as well as popular pressure. Within the army camps themselves, treatment of objectors varied widely according to military leadership, many of whom abjured the Selective Service Act's provisions for treating objectors with "tact and consideration" and who often encouraged verbal and physical abuse, a problem exacerbated by the determined housing of resisters in the main population. The men in the camps were as much trouble as were their nonresistant families and churches, even though they eschewed causing problems in the first place.⁸⁷

In Kansas, these issues were particularly intense, for both draftees and the Mennonite population. Camp Funston was considered one of the most abusive of objectors and Ft. Leavenworth housed the men court-martialed for noncompliance with orders, including conscientious objectors. In addition, the heavy population of German-speaking immigrants from Russia in central Kansas fueled a wide range of threats and physical harassment, both of individuals and of churches. Still debated in popular memory, one college's administration building was consumed in a fire in the same town in which an articulate and zealous Mennonite editor living in the particularly insular community had been more than willing to publicize his

⁸⁷ Mennonite historian C. Henry Smith is far more generous in his praise of the U.S. government's attempts to uphold the objectors than what is evidenced in standard works about the time period. Smith, 794-796; Homan, 99-134. "As farmers, the Mennonites are 100% efficient --- as militants, 100% deficient." Historian Allan Teichroew, quoting a Military Intelligence Division Report's conclusions, in "Military Surveillance of Mennonites in World War I," Mennonite Quarterly Review 53, no. 2 (April 1979), 122.

early support of Germany against French militarism --- *in German*. A stubborn individual, he had nevertheless taken seriously his freedom of speech --- and his affinity for Germany.⁸⁸

Thus, American Mennonites had attempted a unified vision of war because of their common embrace of nonresistance, but they had experienced little official cooperation between their brotherhoods on the matter. Moreover, they not only had experienced the harsh marginality accorded dissenters, but also had seen their formerly apolitical stance to be inadequate in the modern state, particularly under the pressure of war. In some cases, they had embraced the war effort, whether heartfelt or coerced. Nevertheless, the First World War saw Mennonites formalize their peace commitments in statements recognized within their groups and sometimes used as models by others who lacked representative policies and wanted to create them. They also saw their national government recognize, however imperfectly, that religious dissenters could be troublesome and stubborn actors, no matter how seemingly simple. For Mennonites, how to negotiate the increasingly conflicted loyalties would result in a reworking of tightly constructed theological beliefs and social practices that had underwritten their approach to the civil order for four hundred years.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ James C. Juhnke, "Mob Violence and Kansas Mennonites in 1918," Kansas Historical Quarterly 43 (August 1977), 334-250. Juhnke, Vision, 211-212. John A. Toews also considered the same situation, although in writing the official MB history he simply noted that the editor had been "an outspoken critic of American entry into the war," perhaps leaving the reader to a different conclusion. John A. Toews, History, 288. Regarding the fire, anonymous long-term Hillsboro resident, conversation with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 15, 2016. Juhnke and his colleagues, Keith Sprunger, John Waltner, and John Thiesen at Bethel College created an in-depth collection of oral histories regarding Mennonites in the First World War that have preserved this era, including the Showalter Oral History Collection on World War I Conscientious Objectors.

⁸⁹ As Juhnke emphasized, the need to formalize positions about nonresistance for the sake of their men who were drafted, often saw Mennonite groups cooperate that might not otherwise. "Thus they crossed the boundaries which in other situations they tried hard to keep firm." Juhnke, Vision, 215. Mennonites also sometimes found themselves pursuing allies not

American Mennonites Between Wars—Cooperative Peace

Postwar Service and the Challenge of Cooperation: the Formation of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)⁹⁰

Reeling from the shock of World War I and not only the experiences of their drafted men, but the rejection many faced in their local communities, Mennonites felt dislocated from the larger American culture. Many had bought war bonds under compulsion, although others had done so voluntarily. The war had also brought substantial prosperity, as agricultural prices rose under the pressure of war, a no-win situation for Mennonites in communities that already questioned their patriotism. Yet, the war also enabled a means by which Mennonites could meld their common history of mutual aid in spite of their sharp differences theologically and culturally and begin a project that would have unforeseen and long-ranging consequences. They acted basic beliefs even as they scrambled to understand and articulate them.⁹¹

traditionally associated as such. For example, the increasingly beleaguered Aaron Loucks who was harassed not only for his pastoral and advocacy work on behalf on Mennonites in army camps but also because of his work at the Mennonite Publishing House, requested help from Roger Baldwin, the pacifist head of the American Civil Liberties Bureau (forerunner of the American Civil Liberties Union), who assisted him in appealing to the Justice Department. Homan, 75.

⁹⁰ For the sake of clarity and to avoid acronym overload, Mennonite Central Committee is spelled out, except in paragraphs where it is the focus of discussion. The documents regarding MCC throughout this study do not necessarily have consistent classification numbers. Much of this research was undertaken during the summer of 2009 when the MCC archives were housed at Goshen College in the MCUSA (Mennonite Church) archives. The MCC archives were moved in 2012 to MCC headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania and occasionally reclassified, as the author encountered during work in the MCC archives in June 2014. I have kept the classifications in place at the time of each visit. The archivists at the current site are very helpful in negotiating any cross-classification issues.

⁹¹ Regarding their real and perceived rejection by the larger national culture, Homan, American, 169-181; Paul Toews, Mennonites, 107-109; Juhnke, Vision, 241-242, 254-257.

Disease and famine raged in pockets throughout Europe after The Great War. In what was now known as the Ukraine, it was especially pervasive, not only due to war and weather, but also the impact of the Russian Revolution in which Whites and Reds scoured the countryside in their attempts to control the territory. Mennonites in the old colonies were hit especially hard by the ongoing violence, in part due to their nonresistance. When the four-man delegation or *Studien Kommission* from Russia arrived in Kansas seeking help from their co-religionists in January 1920, they were greeted enthusiastically and warmly in the small town of Hillsboro, home of the German language newspaper Vorwaerts, the Mennonite Brethren college which had recently rebuilt its administration building after fire had consumed it eighteen months prior (Tabor College), and a community that included those who had immigrated from the old Russian colonies a generation earlier. When they returned in July after a round of visiting other Mennonites in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, and in nearby Harvey County, so many people arrived to hear their account and make their acquaintance that tents had to be set up to accommodate the crowds. Mennonites in Marion and Harvey counties who had heard the earlier accounts and were themselves chiefly immigrants or descendants from the Dutch-Russian strain had already had quickly moved to organize relief, basing their decisions in part from the early reports of suffering from socialist Jacob Ewert, who was a regular columnist in Vorwaerts and who was known for his reports on international news. But, yielding to the recommendation of the *Studien Kommission* (which had accurately assessed the real or potential chaos of multiple actors), they sent representatives to join MC Mennonites on July 27-28, 1920 in Elkhart, Indiana, in what would be described as “the most momentous meeting in American Mennonite history.”⁹²

⁹² Historians Robert S. Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen outlined the impact of war and disease in their popular account of MCC’s history, noting that “the battlefield had shifted more than twenty times in two years through some Mennonite villages.” Robert S. Kreider and

The story, simple in outline, and seemingly simple in interpretation, focused on need for material aid and assistance to would-be immigrants, a long-standing Mennonite practice now amplified by the acute suffering of relatives, extended kinship networks, and friends. But, even in its initial stages of organization it moved beyond itself, beyond its own narrow strictures and into what would later become a potent focus of identity. It dismantled culture even as it amplified it. Taking time to unpack the cultural dynamics of the meeting emphasizes not only some of the fissures among American Mennonites in the early twentieth century, but also emphasizes the significance of the cooperation that unfolded and suggests the means by which it took place.

In the compilation of scholarly essays analyzing and celebrating the meeting's impact over the next ninety years, historian James Juhnke paints a picture of this unusual gathering and the basic dynamics of American inter-Mennonite reality in 1920:

Rachel Waltner Goossen, Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: The MCC Experience (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 31-32. At one point during this crisis Mennonites had abandoned nonresistance in attempts to protect themselves, but the result had been disastrous. John B. Toews, Czars, Soviets & Mennonites (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1982), 79-106. Early relief efforts defy easy stereotyping. Dutch-Russian Mennonites (including more progressive strains) had organized relief efforts to benefit Mennonites in Russia, but they had not moved beyond helping their own communities of faith at this point in time. They collected money for Russia (1910), Germany (1914), and Siberia (1919), but it was targeted toward alleviating Mennonite suffering. When they formed their Emergency Relief Commission in 1920, it was with an eye to serving their own brethren. On the other hand, the more strident strain of conservative Swiss-South Germans in the MC cooperated with the Quakers in an international project designed to alleviate suffering in the Near East and Turkey. Their Relief Commission for War Sufferers worked in France and offered their young people an opportunity to work directly with the consequences of war, a situation that on the one hand rendered real service regardless of faith confession, but on the other hand increasingly worried conservatives because they could not exercise ready control over those "essentials" of the faith concerning dress and cultural conformity. Juhnke, Vision, 248-249. James C. Juhnke, "Turning Points, Broken Ice, and *Glaubensgenossen*: What Happened at Prairie Street on July 27-28, 1920?" in A Table of Sharing: Mennonite Central Committee and the Expanding Networks of Mennonite Identity, ed. Alain Epp Weaver (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2011), 66.

[In spite of their mutual aid to each other at various points in their history] ... these so-called “Brothers” found it impossible to share communion with each other, to accept each other’s ordination, or to come together in a common denominational organization. Their religious-cultural differences were too great... We don’t have photographs or other descriptions of the Prairie Street meeting to know what attendees were wearing, who sat with whom, who spoke the most, etc. But we can make some reasonable assumptions based on what we know about the participants and their times. The Russians [the GCs and MBs in this study] and the Old Mennonites [the MC Mennonites, likewise] were separated by distinctive clothing. The Old Mennonites, perhaps with the exception of Slagel and Smucker, wore regulation plain coats as prescribed by Old Mennonite church discipline, None of the Russians even owned plain coats. They probably wore lapel coats or less formal wear. The two kinds of Mennonites probably sat together in their separate groups rather than intermixed.⁹³

Juhnke continued, moving on to the language differences intrinsic to the more recently arrived Dutch-Russian immigrants who had emigrated less than fifty years earlier:

The groups were also separated by language. Their formal deliberations probably were in English, though the Russians [American Dutch-Russian Mennonites] spoke with a stronger German accent [in Low German]. For most (perhaps all) of the Old Mennonites, the mother tongue was Pennsylvania German. The Old Mennonites, having had more decades of acculturation to American ways and language, probably spoke English more fluently and High German less fluently than the Russians.⁹⁴

This description, as Juhnke acknowledges, does not even address the further subdivisions within the two general streams, a reality all of the participants would have understood.⁹⁵

⁹³ Juhnke, *Ibid.*, 67. GCs, as already noted earlier, derived from a reform movement among the Swiss-South Germans, but also incorporated a majority of the Dutch-Russians. This is a simple identifier for the sake of readability.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

⁹⁵ Juhnke notes the internecine issues at work and just how complicated negotiating the differences could be among the individual groups. “The differences among subgroups within both the Russians (MB, GC, KMB) and those of Swiss and South German background (Old, New, Old Order, Amish) were substantial. Moreover, the years following World War I were times of painful theological and organizational disputes. The Russians [the Ukrainian nationals] attending the ... meeting were keenly aware of differences, even hostilities, among the Mennonite Brethren, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, and the Church Mennonites (*Kirchliche*) going back to splits in Russia ... [within the Swiss-South German stream, there were

And yet --- and yet --- the participants agreed on three essential actions. They charged a three-member provisional committee (one each from MC, GC, MB) to organize the effort, chose the name Mennonite Central Committee for Russian Relief, and scheduled a meeting in Chicago later in the year to finalize their arrangements. Over the next five years, the organization managed more than \$1.3 million donated by American Mennonites for Russian relief, fed more than 75,000 people, including 60,000 Mennonites, and cooperated with Herbert Hoover's American Relief Association (ARA) in direct distribution of food, clothing, and medical relief. They also moved beyond these essentials and delivered two large shipments of Fordson tractors

generational disputes, moreover.]” Juhnke, *Ibid.*, 71. Biographer Wesley Prieb's typically understated comment that “in 1920 Mennonites from different conference groups did not know each other well ... some feared being unequally yoked with other Mennonites” embodied the real fear that too much contact with those who did not follow Christ in non-negotiables (e.g. certain forms of dress, the amount of chrome on a vehicle, preaching in English, etc.) would taint the true believer. Moreover, within these dynamics rests an organizational one: most of the groups already had relief organizations of their own and creating another one would open a number of battles for turf, particularly, perhaps, among the MC Mennonites and their multiple conferences. To complicate the picture, but to add an intriguing exercise in memory, the historiography supports a complex picture of origins, and also a running concern between Mennonite historians representing the two major streams. Correcting what he sees as an origin story determined by the MCs, Juhnke teases out an earlier account in which MCC was founded not in Elkhart, IN, but in Hillsboro, KS, in the heart of the Kansas Dutch-Russians nearly seven months earlier than the canonical account. Juhnke, “Turning,” 73-83. As MCUSA moderator Erwin Stutzman recognized in 2011 in the book that resulted from his dissertation in communications, “[Juhnke] rightly contends that the narrative of Mennonite Central Committee's origins has long been dominated by an incomplete and at time inaccurate MC Mennonite perspective.” Stutzman, 355n46. As far as the MBs are concerned, Wesley Prieb's popular biography of P.C. Hiebert emphasizes the importance of the Russian delegation itself and an early report on its plea by MC Mennonite Orie Miller, who had relief experience in Syria. Wesley Prieb, Peter C. Hiebert: “He Gave Them Bread” (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1990), 53-57. Considering the obstacles of internecine cooperation and the thick culture within the MCs in particular, it is likely that giving primacy to the original narrative (with some corrections) does not necessarily weaken the other arguments, but rather reinforces the memory that would function in the creation of a more resilient Anabaptist identity in an American culture of war later in the century. The formation of MCC thus had a dual historic significance, with its memory a direct historical agent.

maintained and operated by relief workers who then trained the Ukrainians how to use them. Canadian Mennonites and the Canadian government meanwhile successfully enabled the emigration of 21,000 Ukrainian Mennonites to the western prairies, thus reinforcing a memory of shared suffering, assistance, and migration, albeit one with yet another historical context.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Kreider and Goossen, 41. The most thorough account of the Russian relief operations was written by Tabor College Vice-President P.C. Hiebert, the first chair of The Mennonite Central Committee (hereafter, MCC) and who served for thirty-three years until 1953. His narrative that was written in popular language detailed the operations, including the familial connections that were involved, but also sought to build bridges among American Mennonite bodies. Hiebert later left Tabor in 1933 and moved to Sterling College, where he served as head of the Education Department until he retired in 1945 and moved back to Hillsboro, the center of the MB world. P.C. Hiebert, Feeding the Hungry: Russia Famine, 1919, 1925 American Mennonite Relief Operations Under the Auspices of Mennonite Central Committee (Scottdale, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1929). By 1924 the U.S. had largely closed its doors to immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe through the National Origins Act, but Canada extended terms of settlement even more generous than what American Mennonites had received. More than 21,000 took Canada's offer to settle them on its plains and enjoy exemption from military service. As Mennonites began to flee Stalinization later in the decade, MCC moved beyond relief work and helped Russian Mennonites migrate to Paraguay, where a large number of Mennonites still exist. Regarding U.S. foreign aid, Hoover's actions as Secretary of Commerce (and therefore director of the ARA) yielded substantial humanitarian assistance, but, as the Quaker later admitted, it also "may have helped set the Soviet Government up in business," a suggestion that is supported by American Mennonite jubilation at having provided the tractors that enabled "the upbuilding of Russian agriculture" in the Ukraine. Hoover nevertheless maintained that the humanitarian actions outweighed political considerations. Joan Hoff Wilson, Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1992), 197-198. Concerning Mennonite material aid, see Prieb, recording B.B. Janz, president of the *Verband*, regarding this "work of love ... a loud testimonial" and also quoting a Russian news clipping, Prieb, Peter, 70. According to Juhnke, Herbert Hoover remains the unsung hero of the first chapter of Mennonite Central Committee, "perhaps unacknowledged because Mennonites did not want to highlight their alliance with the United State government." Juhnke, "Turning," 79. For an extended treatment of the famine from a macro perspective that does not mention Mennonites, see Bertrand Patenaude, The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002). Glen Jeansonne's recent biography provides a brief snapshot that is a solid companion to Hiebert's extended treatment and Juhnke's contextualized overview of MCC's work. It offers a short overview of the particular difficulties ARA faced in Russia, the agency's exceptional delivery of relief, and Hoover's compassionate nature informed by his Quaker beliefs. Glen Jeansonne, Herbert Hoover: A Life (New York: New American Library, 2016), 141-159.

Even before the Russian relief project seemingly neared completion in 1925, chair P.C. Hiebert recommended that the inter-Mennonite project continue, a suggestion that was rebuffed by the MC Mennonites who held to their original agreement for a temporary centralized committee to handle an acute emergency. Improvising with those groups that had joined the original three (minus the support now of the MCs) and who wished to continue, MCC reconfigured itself as the American Mennonite Relief Commission, seemingly creating a new body. In fact, the new board used a tactic that would prove to keep inter-Mennonite discussions open. It “accorded the privileges of the meeting” to two members of the recalcitrant MCs, and even elected one as secretary, a position he held and used to keep the break from happening. The man who served with him and also acted as a bridge builder would become one of the strongest links between conservatives in the MC and MCC after the American Mennonite Relief Commission quietly dissolved.⁹⁷

Thus MCC straddled tradition and modernity, as it created an organization that interacted with other agencies to address human needs, but did so in large part through the use of traditional networks and highly personal improvisations. By working with other nonresistants such as the Quakers and the Brethren (the latter joining MCC as a constituent organization), it fostered a broader awareness of the experiences of other religious pacifists, created connections that would result in the formal ideation of the Historic Peace Churches and laid a nascent foundation for an international approach to peace. At the same time, it cooperated with the U.S. government means of delivering aid without concerning itself with whether this was an entanglement with the state

⁹⁷ Levi Mumaw and Orie Miller were the members of the MC Mennonite Relief Commission who continued contact, with Mumaw elected secretary and Miller continuing what would be his long association with inter-Mennonite projects. Kreider and Goossen, Hungry, 28-29.

or not. Rather, Mennonite generosity meshed with national humanitarian goals and even, when Stalinization created a refugee crisis for 10,000 Mennonites, helped more than 5,000 emigrate to the desolate Chaco of Paraguay. In highly personal terms it incorporated Mennonite concepts of service to brotherhood, created a voluntary structure of inter-Mennonite cooperation, and fostered forms of service and contributions that were monetary and non-monetary (which also incorporated women in a distinctive means of service). Created as a temporary body designed to address reports of acute famine in Russia, it became the chief organ by which Mennonites addressed government in times of war. Its actions ironically positioned Mennonites to re-work their long-standing theology that kept them from political action and to re-cast their very definition of the political.⁹⁸

But deliberately forming a conscious peace presence that would directly confront and challenge the American social and political order (including the increasing culture of war) was far from how Mennonites of all variations viewed their task. Rather, they held to their long-held beliefs derived from the Bible that prohibited the exercise of violence and that also, they

⁹⁸ Sociologist Donald B. Kraybill examines MCC as an aspect of Mennonite identity through the lens of the sociology of knowledge, detailing how its formation has enabled twentieth-century Mennonites to reconstruct their essential identity. Donald B. Kraybill, "From Enclave to Engagement: MCC and the Transformation of Mennonite Identity," Mennonite Quarterly Review 70, no. 1 (January 1996), 23-58. To emphasize the point that Mennonites were not recognized as a conscious peace presence or organization that would challenge the political order is evident in John Whiteclay Chambers II's analysis of peace movements from 1900-1922. The past president of the Council on Peace Research in History acknowledges the existence if Mennonite (and Quaker) conscientious objectors, but does not comment on their early postwar relief (and reconstruction work) even though he includes an exchange between Jane Addams and Woodrow Wilson regarding the urgent needs in Europe and Asia for relief. The "traditional pacifist sects" were not politically organized and thus almost invisible. John Whiteclay Chambers II, The Eagle and the Dove: The American Peace Movement and United States Foreign Policy, 1900-1922. 2nd ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), lxiv, 158-9, 176-178.

believed, called them to a life of nonconformity with the world, the latter an increasingly contested concept. At the same time, however, these twin beliefs propelled them to re-think the peace education of their brotherhoods, and particularly the instruction of their young men. As their discussions demonstrated, they had few illusions about what a peace stance might mean in the next American war, a prospect that came into sharp focus in the 1930s. Determined not to be caught so flat-footed, but also faced with conflicting views in their brotherhoods regarding government, cooperation with other Mennonite bodies, and alliances with the other historic peace sects, they relied on traditional means of conflict resolution and the possibilities raised by the formation of Mennonite Central Committee to navigate internal conflicts and imagine external cooperative endeavors. In the long run, however, American war pushed them not only to creatively structure a means of alternative service for their young men, but also to re-work their collective identity --- and identities. Taking a brief theological trip will focus how Mennonites faced American culture in the years between the world wars and why different groups argued for different approaches to the state.

Theological Interlude

The Two Kingdoms

To understand the great shift that took place among American Mennonites during the twentieth century in which they moved from positions that were chiefly quietist in regard to the state to critics willing to speak out against American warfare, it is necessary to unpack two theological constructs, their essential view (theology) of the Two Kingdoms or the Two Worlds, and the means by which internal conflict could be navigated. In their collective theological view, all of humanity was part of the kingdom of the world, which was ruled by Satan, a realm in which coercion and warfare prevailed and in which the state ruled as a matter of bringing order.

The kingdom of Christ, on the other hand, was the community the believer entered upon baptism and was chiefly evident in the church. As citizens of the kingdom of Christ, believers were called to discipleship and had social responsibilities within their fellowships, but also relinquished those practices which Christ had eschewed. This included using violence against others, giving allegiance to the state through oaths, and submitting to worldly authorities when to do so was to ignore the commands of Jesus. The state had been ordained by God to restrain evil, and was responsible to Him, but as part of the worldly social order was outside of the “perfection of Christ.” The state could not rule on or exact behavior on matters of conscience, but otherwise had to be obeyed. Thus, the Christian must pay taxes, but could not serve this worldly kingdom by participating in it, either in war or politics. Mennonites had derived this basic view based on their recognition of the primacy of conscience over against the magisterial churches that were melded to the state in Reformation Europe, but their historical experiences of intense persecution and the threat of state violence had heightened their awareness and belief that the kingdom of the world needed to be avoided as much as possible. When, however, the two realms were so tightly separated that the church had little to say about warfare (other than not to be involved), leaving it to the state’s business, the danger was that nationalism took priority over the faith community.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Mennonites historically were uneasy with the term “theology” or the designation of an idea as “theological.” In part, this was due to their fear of a living faith being reduced to formulaic concepts or systematizations that distanced a believer from the living God and the discipleship that resulted from this relationship. In addition, because some of their most ardent persecutors were Reformation-era theologians, they distrusted men whose interpretations justified violence against believers. Later, this unease with the term made for some interesting tensions between the two waves of American fundamentalism in the twentieth century. The first which was biblically based, was more acceptable (and embodied many Mennonite ways of thinking), but the overly systematized approach to salvation remained suspect, even though many were attracted to it. Mennonites since Robert Friedmann (see n59) have viewed the term more positively, using it as a means of organizing doctrinal principles, and it is in this sense that I use it. For an extended discussion regarding the term, see Harold Bender, Nanne van der Zijpp and

Mennonites had been chiefly of one mind in regard to this two kingdom theology, although they did not always interpret what the idea of the state's "magistry" or function of a magistrate meant. Dutch Mennonites, for example, had participated in government, although carefully avoiding positions that exercised coercion (such as the police). Although there are smatterings of European Mennonite participation in political office, they are generally rare, with one exception. For Dutch-Russians who had exercised a degree of autonomy within their individual colonies in Russia, participating in government was viewed more positively, although, again chiefly on a local level and in largely limited positions.¹⁰⁰

How high of a wall existed between the kingdoms had historically been conditioned, with a high wall not only preserving the theological interpretation, but also serving as a means of cultural protection. A tall barrier offered protection --- but it also meant that the church recused itself from any interaction --- much less criticism --- of government policies. The only exceptions were matters in which the state attempted to interfere with matters that belonged to God, including the refusal to engage in warfare.

As American Mennonites in the twentieth century deliberated how to face a warfare state, they found themselves in a position in which they could argue for exemption and refuse to fight (and face the consequences exacted by the state), but could not speak to the increasingly complex interstices of a national government and culture committed to war. That a people might be

Marlin E. Miller, "Theology, Mennonite," 1989 in Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Theology_Mennonite (accessed June 30, 2017).

¹⁰⁰ Juhnke has elaborated on how this manifested in Kansas, where the bulk of the emigrants of the 1870s had settled. He has recently published a sequel to his original analysis published in 1975, A People of Two Kingdoms II: Stories of Kansas Mennonites in Politics (Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2016) which picks up in 1940 where his original volume ended.

complicit in warfare even while not directly acting as combatants was now a real issue, foreshadowed by the twin conundrums of noncombatancy and pressures to fund a war. For Mennonite conservatives and fundamentalists who maintained the tight construction of the two kingdoms and repeatedly opposed treading on the government's domain, the dilemma was particularly acute as they contemplated how to maintain nonresistance not only during wartime, but also in times of peace.

An additional theological and cultural construct complicated the post-war world.

Mennonites had long held to the doctrine of nonconformity, a belief drawn directly from the New Testament and the words of Paul, the apostle:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (KJV Roman 12.1,2)

Other passages were also used to encourage the believer distancing himself or herself from "worldliness," but what that meant had become an entangled issue. Originally focused on a discipleship that followed Jesus, nonconformity not only included taking up the cross (particularly the cross of suffering), but also disciplines of simplicity, humility, and purity.

Coupled with the "twin" doctrine of nonresistance, nonconformity encouraged separation for the sake of holiness. In early Anabaptism, as already discussed, what this meant for the church was a ready source of schism. What activities were conformed and what were not were frequently disputed. By the twentieth century, Mennonite bodies had split, re-formed, and fractured again, contributing in part to the variations among American Mennonites, Hutterites, and Amish. Moreover, nonconformity had acquired a cultural function, serving to draw the line between people protecting their way of life from the larger culture. Disputes over women's head-covering, for example, led to sharp exchanges, while what sort of coats men wore identified them

as holding a particular theological position. Why this is significant for postwar discussion is because of its ready supply of justifications for not cooperating with other Mennonites, other peace churches such as the Brethren and Quakers, and having a particular fear of contamination from “the world” of pacifists. It nearly disrupted the formation of alternative service arrangements during the Second World War, and continued to challenge Mennonite reckonings with culture.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Bender, Harold S., Nanne van der Zijpp, John C. Wenger, J. Winfield Fretz and Cornelius J. Dyck, in "Nonconformity." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.1989, <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Nonconformity&oldid=143679> (accessed July 12, 2017). Nonconformity was more formally an issue with the MC Mennonites, but it served as a handy construct for dissenters among all of the groups. By the mid-1950s, however, the MCs had taken “a middle position” and young Mennonites chose new forms of nonconformity. Ibid. Several examples will suffice to illustrate how concerns for cultural nonconformity and humility intersected, sometimes to reinforce cultural traditions against threatened changes and sometimes to generate an innovation. Paul Toews offers one example of a dispute that was in fact an attempt at sectarian boundary maintenance. The MC Lancaster Conference deliberated over the use of the automobile in the 1920s, with one side arguing that it was associated with being “proud” or “fashionable” (as well as dangerous), another asserting that it was a practical invention, and a third contending for a developmental view that agreed that early adapters of technologies tended to be “worldly” people “puffed up” and with “high heads,” but that once a technology became widespread it was simply utilitarian. In this case, when the principal objecting bishop died, his successors split over the issue, with one no longer excommunicating members who purchased cars, and the other withdrawing to create a splinter group. Their successors are the “black bumper” Mennonites (who have over-painted the chrome on their black cars) and the “team” Mennonites who use horses. Toews, Mennonites, 35-36, 72-75. One form of conformity pressed by conservative MC Mennonites was dress. A wide variety of strictures and stipulations focused on women’s clothing (some of these differences are apparent today in the variations on types of caps worn, what color they might be, and whether or not a pattern or trim is acceptable), but men also were urged to demonstrate nonconformity via dress, most notably through wearing the plain coat. Couched as a form of “witness,” the dark coat without lapels mainly confused those outside the brotherhood. For example, intellectual and classicist Edward Yoder’s fellow students at the University of Iowa (1923-1925) and the University of Pennsylvania (1925-1926) mistakenly took him for a clergyman. Painful to many within the GC brotherhood, it nevertheless offered a means by which to identify oneself as conservative even while advancing different, even progressive initiatives. Orie O. Miller, Harold S. Bender, and Guy Franklin Hershberger all wore the plain coat, although Bender had embraced it reluctantly and usually wore a tie underneath it. It was thus an acted argument on its own, and occasionally a powerful one. Juhnke, Vision, 130-132, 279, 301.

Acted Theology

Mennonite theology was hardly pre-literate, but it always performed a delicate balancing act between holding onto and living out of a shared text and yet representing a commitment that was symbolic, wordless, and highly ethical. Charging someone with “pride” was not only an attempt to ensure humility, but also a means by which to exert control within the brotherhood. Indeed, Schlabach points to this very issue at the heart of the progressives’ struggle within the Mennonite Church in America in the nineteenth century. Using forceful speech, wearing clothing that might be seen as “assertive,” or using language that evidenced education undermined humility. The tensions the historian observed during the birth of the GC movement, remained a constant throughout the twentieth century and serve as a backdrop to Mennonite decision-making.¹⁰²

But, this exercise in identity offers important clues to the methods by which Mennonite intellectuals and congregations came to terms with the definition of peace after the First World War in a highly charged environment. Choosing to act out their beliefs in a way that was both biblical and yet embodied in the community as people of God situated them firmly on behalf of the suffering. That was the affiliative power of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). It offered

¹⁰² Mennonites in fact did not have a systematic theology. One of the first attempts that is still recognized as a foundational exercise was written by Robert Friedmann, a Jewish convert who had fled Germany with the aid of Harold Bender at Goshen. Friedmann melded the lived experience of peoplehood, the Bible, and Mennonite categories of thinking in Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries published in 1949, more thoroughly explicated as an “implicit theology” in his The Theology of Anabaptism. He fully recognized the credibility of an acted theology, even if it was not explicated in the typical manner of systematic theologies. Robert Friedmann, Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries (Goshen, IN: Mennonite Historical Society, 1949), 78-88 and Robert Friedmann, The Theology of Anabaptism (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 27-52, 158-162; James Reimer, "The Nature and Possibility of a Mennonite Theology," *Conrad Grebel Review* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 33-55.

an embodied theology that reinforced essential aspects of identity: community, service, humility, actions that spoke in the place of words. Performed first on behalf of the brotherhood, but then extended beyond it, MCC was both symbol --- and then an active means of inter-Mennonite cooperation. Tactics for promoting unpopular ideas (which frequently involved MCC and what became its expansive vision) drew from these same markers of identity that reinforced the brotherhood and which its authorities could not easily dismiss. For example, in an exchange that illustrates humility as a means and canny strategy for recognizing and yet disarming of brotherly authority, the man who would later appoint the first MCC representative to serve in Vietnam couched his arguments in terms that resonated with MC views about humility. After being successfully pressed to resign from the Continuation Committee of the Conference of Pacifist Churches in 1928, Orié Miller responded to the conservative heavyweight who had warned him about his association with the suspect organization, writing,

I am sure I want to do right, and try to serve obediently and submissively the Master and His Church. Will you pray for me that I might be kept more faithful and more watchful yeas and more humbly submissive in life, attitude and mind? I appreciate the confidence that fellow workers in the Church have and have had in me, and certainly pray that I might merit its continuance.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Quoted in Juhnke, Vision, 283-284. Bishop Mosemann thought Miller was “a dangerous man ... [who] gets machinery set in motion that will take some power to stop,” yet Miller’s careful submissiveness combined with his patience and work to gain the confidence of those involved, “let him take advantage of changed situations or new crises,” according to Juhnke. Juhnke and Bush have teased out the careful framing of responses MC Mennonite reformers made to those who wielded authority within, especially, the conservative Lancaster and Virginia conferences, with Juhnke’s focus on the 1920s and Bush’s from 1930-1950. That the progressive and conservative groups could negotiate in these terms is evidenced in MCC locating its headquarters in Ephrata, PA, in the midst of the Lancaster conference. That the letters exist in the MC archives is also an indication that the individuals involved and the church itself valued and were willing to preserve such an exchange. Juhnke, 275-285; Bush, 42. For further insight on Mennonite views of humility, see Joseph C. Liechty, “Humility: The Foundation of Mennonite Religious Outlook in the 1860s,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 54 (January 1980).

Miller then maintained his connections with the Conference of Pacifist Churches by serving as an “observer” so that he might report his findings back to the brotherhood.

Postwar Service and the Challenge of Cooperation: the Formation of the Historic Peace Churches and the Creation of Civilian Public Service

Mennonites did not wait for another war to be on the horizon. Chastened by the experiences of their young men that demonstrated the churches’ naiveté, lack of foresight, and inadequate peace education, almost all bodies scrambled to educate their young men. The U.S. government’s approach to conscientious objectors ironically reinforced the churches’ positions and educational efforts. Because objectors remained in military prisons far past the war, the church bodies formed to support them did not disband immediately after the war. Formalizing positions in their own bodies, they also met with other non-Mennonite church bodies as early as the 1920s. But with whom could they cooperate?¹⁰⁴

In postwar America, pacifism made a comeback. Committed pacifists re-surfaced and there was a renewed interest in international organizations that promoted peace. The appearance of antiwar sentiment and new organizations, was welcoming and disturbing. On the one hand, more progressive Mennonites welcomed the discussions about peace and the very real interest in preventing warfare. On the other hand, Mennonites --- particularly conservatives --- feared the influence of pacifism on their own brotherhood. At worst, it distorted the doctrine of nonresistance, separating it from the life and person of Christ and his redemption of humanity as portrayed in the Bible and replacing it with a an optimistic view of the world that forecast the

¹⁰⁴ Because some draftees were not released from prison until the early 1930s, church bodies that attempted to represent them continued to exist, even though the war had ended nearly fifteen years earlier. For example, the Exemption Committee of the Western District Conference (GC) represented the WDC at conferences of the pacifist churches in 1922 (Bluffton College, OH) and 1926 (Friends University, KS). Haury, Prairie, 204-205.

end of war because of human actions. It focused on political action, a task forbidden to Mennonites whose allegiance was not to an earthly government, but rather to the kingdom of God. And, at best, it still “unequally yoked” the brotherhood with both nonbelievers and professed believers who did not conform to the real faith. As Lancaster conference bishop Mosemann wrote in the widely distributed MC Gospel Herald, the modern peace movement was a front for theological modernists, “nothing less than a Satanic delusion, a mighty and deceptive force intended to deceive the Church of Christ and lead her headlong into the clutches of modernistic and liberalistic leaders.” Associating with such groups could lead to the soul-threatening influence of Shailer Matthews, Harry Emerson Fosdick and other “semi-infidels.”¹⁰⁵

For MC conservative John R. Mumaw, moderator of the MC general conference, its dangers were clear and publicizing the differences essential. Expressing the views of conservatives that would later be issued during the Second World War in his Nonresistance and Pacifism, his 32-page booklet clearly stated the menace of the dangerous movement. In it, he listed the “Vital Differences” between pacifism and nonresistance in chart form, comparing basic beliefs, attitudes toward the state, objectives, and means for achieving objectives. His

¹⁰⁵ As already noted in the Introduction to this study, many of the so-called secular peace organizations had strong religious roots in Christianity and had members who acted on their beliefs. The Fellowship of Reconciliation was one significant group that had both domestic and international ties. Other organizations that focused on antiwar credos included The War Resister’s League, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the National Council for Prevention of War, and the Emergency Peace Campaign (the latter what Chatfield considers “the most important coalition in the history of the American peace movement before the Vietnamese war”). Chatfield, For Peace, 91-117. Regarding the Emergency Peace Campaign, see 107. In 1933, thirty-seven organizations united to form the National Peace Conference. As Chatfield notes, seventeen of these were peace organizations while the remainder were affiliates with additional goals. Chatfield, Ibid., 108. As Wittner explored the broader popular base of pacifism, he estimates that between forty-five and sixty million Americans were sympathetic with it. Wittner, Rebels, 15; J.H. Mosemann, “The Modern Peace Movement,” Gospel Herald 18 (January 28, 1926), 898 cited in Toews, Mennonite, 45.

comments, based on scripture, were a formulary of Mennonite beliefs about pacifism and why “[It] and Nonresistance are Incompatible.” Arguing that pacifists had only advocated their positions during peacetime, only to abandon them during war, he castigated them for their confident position grounded in an optimistic view of humanity, rather than true peace being derived from God. His concerns were representative --- and not only of conservatives. For Mennonites, peace was impossible without the person of Christ.¹⁰⁶

Mennonites had cooperated with Quakers in relief operations and their men had encountered each other, along with Brethren, in military camps, but they did not share formal affiliations or peace statements before the 1930s, a situation that troubled the disparate traditions from all sides, but which reflected their differences. For example, Quakers were willing to hold an absolutist position that would defy the government. Mennonites were eager to cooperate with a government, provided it extended exemptions for the individual conscience. Brethren were in between the two positions. A common statement was more than difficult, even though the American government treated them all as “peace sects” since peace was foundational to each’s identity. In addition, other Protestant churches had also awakened to peace issues, and were eager supporters --- between wars. For example, the Federal Council of Churches Conference on the Churches and World Peace held in 1929 resolved that “the churches should condemn resort

¹⁰⁶ Mumaw’s language clearly is skewed toward the conservative wing of the MCs, but is nevertheless representative of Mennonite beliefs in essentials. That the booklet was re-issued in 1952 clearly evidences that the MC Mennonites did not think the issue dead. John R. Mumaw, Nonresistance and Pacifism (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1944), 15-19. MBs also voiced concern during their annual conference in 1924, when their Committee on Nonresistance reported that some of the “peace conferences” they had attended seemed to advocate the creation of a “warless world” through the efforts of humanity. General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren, Yearbook, 1924, 62-64.

to the war-system as sin and should henceforth refuse ... to sanction it or to be used as agencies in its support.” But, for Mennonites, forming associations with such bodies was suspect.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the churches continued to move on peace issues, performing delicate balancing acts within their bodies, and sometimes achieving results that provided models for others. For example, the MC Peace Problems Committee (PPC) carefully formulated a new conference peace statement in 1937. Developed off of traditional arguments about nonresistance derived from the scriptures and led by chair Harold S. Bender, the PPC built its case from the heavily attended “Mennonite Conference on Peace and War” convened in 1935 in Goshen, Indiana. At the meeting, the usual sides presented their arguments with the typical lines of division, but they were challenged by two historians to consider how potentially precarious the nonresistant position was in America. Gentle and patient Guy F. Hershberger argued that nonresistants clearly could not take the offer of noncombatancy that had caused so many issues in the war, but had to absolutely refuse military service unless the government offered some sort of alternative service. Yet, by prodding his co-religionists to address the issue themselves, he carved out an indisputable area of conscience, even while still recognizing the government’s purview: “the position of nonresistant Christians in time of war promises to become increasingly difficult unless they themselves provide some means to relieve the situation.” His careful advocacy not only achieved what historians consider the “intellectual articulation of what would be the Mennonite negotiating position” in the creation of alternative service in the Second World

¹⁰⁷ Wittner, Rebels, 5.

War, but also received approval from conservatives as he worked with two kingdoms boundaries.¹⁰⁸

But fellow plain-coated historian Harold Bender delivered the PPC proposal that would garner “an easy and wholehearted approval,” even as it explicated and condemned those activities that were part of the modern warfare state. Carefully qualifying any direct challenge to the government, he nevertheless laid out individual systemic elements of warfare that Mennonite

¹⁰⁸ Postwar, almost all of the larger Mennonite bodies (denominations) formed peace groups, while individual conferences in some cases did as well. In 1925, the MCs revived their Peace Problems Committee, which had been established in 1919 but become inactive after the war. The GCs formed a conference Peace Committee in 1926, but individual districts also organized their own in 1933. The MBs had created a Committee on Nonresistance in 1919 at the same conference in which they endorsed their first official statement on nonresistance, but by 1927 they had asked that their Southern District’s Committee on Nonresistance serve as the general conference organ. That this committee, chaired by P.C. Hiebert, was merged in 1936 with the Relief Committee indicates that the MBs saw the two ideas entwined. John A. Toews, History, 348-349. Historian Albert N. Keim’s classic study that argues that the eventual Civilian Public Service solution ironically met the desires of both the MC Church and Selective Service, focuses on the MC Peace Problems and the GC Peace committees as the central actors, but the record also suggests that Hiebert’s presence as MB and as an individual heavily facilitated the interactions between the two. Albert N. Keim, “Service or Resistance? The Mennonite Response to Conscription in World War II,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 62, no. 2 (April 1978), 143. Even as the peace committees proliferated, they sometimes had to face uncomfortable truths. For example, The Western District Conference (GC) Exemption Committee which had “led the way in peace education among the pacifist churches in World War I” nevertheless saw almost 70 percent of its young draftees from Kansas accept regular or noncombatant service, according to David Haury, Prairie, 204. On Hershberger’s “intellectual articulation” see Paul Toews, “Will a New Day Dawn From This? Mennonite Pacifist People and the Good War,” Mennonite Life (December 1990), 17 and Bush, Two, 42, 44. In advocating for a proactive approach, Hershberger reprised his conference argument in stark terms in the widely respected Mennonite Quarterly Review: “the history of the Mennonite church seems to teach that when the forces of militarism become too strong there is always a danger of compromise.” Guy F. Hershberger, “The Christian’s Relation to the State in Time of War: II. Is Alternative Service Desirable and Possible?” Mennonite Quarterly Review 9, no. 1 (January 1935): 29. Harold S. Bender, “Our Peace Testimony, Goals and Methods: To the World,” in A Report of the Conference Including the Principal Addresses Given (Goshen, IN: Peace Problems Committee, 1935) [Mennonite Conference on War and Peace (February 15-17, 1935: Goshen, IN)]. 33-35. MLA.

conservatives condemned. Moreover, by noting that the church should “present the truth of God to the powers that be,” Bender laid the groundwork for what would become an overarching principle of “witness to the state” twenty years later, even as he nodded to the separation of the two kingdoms. The result was not only a carefully framed recognition and opposition to the means of warfare, but also a theological means by which to confront it. The resulting “Statement of Our Position on Peace, War and Military Service” that was adopted by the MC conference in 1937 was later lifted almost verbatim by the GCs for their “Statement of the Position of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America on Peace, War, Military Service and Patriotism” passed at their annual conference in 1941 a few months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor and U.S. entry into the war. Although the MBs noted in their 1936 statement on “The Issue of Military Service” that they had adopted their overall statement from like-minded bodies, there is no apparent direct borrowing. Their short statement on military service was followed by another on patriotism, both passed by the MB general conference meeting in Reedley, California, in late November, 1936. The collective statements issued later by Mennonite bodies, however astutely framed, did not spring forth only from the work of the MC Conference in Goshen, Indiana. They were also derived from another important conference held later in the year, in this case from a meeting of the three historic peace sects.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Note Paul Toews regarding this time period and his emphasis on the young Harold Bender’s framing of the “issue [of witness] in irresistible mission terms.” Paul Toews, “The Long Weekend or the Short Week: Mennonite Peace Theology, 1925-1944,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 60, no. 1 (January 1986), 49. Regarding the later statements issued by the three largest bodies, see the MC “A Statement of Our Position on Peace, War and Military Service,” in Mennonite General Conference: Report of the Twentieth Mennonite General Conference Held at Turner, Oregon, August 25-27, 1937, 123-126 and the GC “A Statement of the Position of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America on Peace, War, Military Service, and Patriotism,” in General Conference Minutes and Reports, 1941, 163-166, the latter including a section on “Our Concept of Patriotism.” The brief MB Resolutions [in German], “The Issue of Military Service” and “Our Understanding of Patriotism” are in Gen.

A year after the horrific storms of the Dust Bowl raged through the Plains, and six months after the notorious “Black Sunday” dust storm had forced Marion and Harvey counties into darkness at mid-day, representatives of the three “peace sects” met in Newton, Kansas in what was later considered a historic meeting. The Brethren, Mennonites, and Friends had met six times between 1922 and 1931 originally at the behest of Friend Wilbur K. Thomas, but continued through the interest of all. Originally calling themselves the “Conference of Pacifist Churches,” they changed their name due to the increasing discomfort some Mennonites had with the term pacifist and after Mennonite Henry (H.P.) Krehbiel explicitly raised the issue in 1931. The meeting in 1935 was the first to use the phrase “Historic Peace Churches,” the designation which has been widely accepted. Fifty-seven delegates and twenty-four visitors were present at the meeting, including forty-seven Mennonites. Discussions were wide-ranging with a findings statement that defined “Christian Patriotism,” called for “A Plan of United Action in Case the United States is Involved in War,” and created a Continuation Committee, with two representatives from each of the three groups. By now their chief focus was to find a means of

Conf. Year Book (1936), 61-63. All MLA. All statements are also available in Peachy, Mennonite, with the MB statements translated into English, 168-170, 140-141, 149 and 119. I am grateful for Bush’s reiteration and emphasis regarding the MC conference at Goshen and the final passing of a statement two years later. As he notes, the endorsement of the 1937 MC report was “wholehearted,” although in its path to approval the Virginia conference noted its disapproval of any associations with liberal pacifists. Bush’s thorough explication of MC and GC committees during the interwar period untangles the challenges “progressive” Mennonites (many of whom were young) issued to their parent bodies and the means by which they were able to do this. For example, Bush not only nods to Miller, Bender, Hershberger, Krebiel, Harshbarger and the young Robert Krieder as intellectuals and churchmen, but he explores the network that Henry Fast, the first executive secretary of Civilian Public Service, developed with the GC church’s encouragement to travel throughout the United States and Canada to promote missions. This complex, highly interpersonal arrangement served Fast well when he was later asked to manage the alternative service system in WWII, but it also exemplifies the associational aspects of Mennonite decision-making. Bush, on Fast, 44-55.

alternative service under civilian direction rather than by the military. Varying significantly in their theologies, histories, political views, and tactics, they nevertheless cooperated under the pressures of war to create a united front to the U.S. government, an approach that by 1940 yielded what would become the National Service Board of Religious Objectors (NSBRO) and then, the system of alternative service called Civilian Public Service.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ As Krieder observed in 1976 just prior to the American bicentennial, little notice was taken of the conference attended by 57 delegates and 24 visitors: “virtually nothing was reported in the conference papers, either before or after ... In 1935 this Historic Peace Church Conference appears not to have been viewed as of any particular historic significance.” Robert Krieder, “The Historic Peace Churches Meeting in 1935,” Mennonite Life 31, no. 2 (June 1976), 21. Mennonite Life was published by Bethel College in North Newton, KS, for a popular audience. Donald Durnbaugh, On Earth Peace: Discussions on War/Peace Issues Between Friends, Mennonites, Brethren and European Churches, 1935-1975 (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1978), 30-32. More than one-third of the representatives hailed from Kansas or had lived there, including MB P.C. Hiebert, GC E.L. Harshbarger, and MC Harold Bender (formerly of Hesston College) who would continue to appear in the subsequent encounter with the U.S. government. Hiebert had left Tabor College when it closed for financial reasons in 1934 and did not return, spending the remainder of his academic career as professor of education at Sterling College, a Presbyterian school in Sterling, KS, roughly eighty-five miles west of Hillsboro and north west of Bethel and Hesston. Harshbarger was professor of history at Bethel College. The three largest Mennonite brotherhoods all derived official positions based on the 1935 findings: MCs (1937), GCs (1941), and MBs (1943). While enjoining patriotism, they all emphasized that they would not perform any service directly under the command of the military or finance the war in any way (particularly proscribing purchasing war bonds), positions that would re-appear in the denominational statements. See n65 for the MC statement (1937) and the GC (1941) statement. The very brief MB “Resolutions” passed at the conference held in Buhler Kansas were now published in English as “Loyalty to Our Country” and “War Bonds” in Gen. Conf. Year Book (1943), 67-69. That the GCs and MBs, whose leadership and institutions were heavily concentrated in Kansas spoke to issues of patriotism in particular suggests a heightened awareness of the persecution and harassment their members had undergone in WWI. This is further reinforced by the statement issued by the MBs during their 1939 conference held in Corn, Oklahoma, a “Written Document of Loyalty Under Nonresistance,” which was published in English in the Conference minutes. It specified that “(b) the delegates further wish to go on record as having no sympathy or connection with organizations of foreign origin who are carrying on propaganda in these countries,” a likely reference to the accusation that Mennonites were actively supporting the German *Bund* in Kansas and Oklahoma. All MLA. See Peachy, Mennonite, 119, 221 for the MB statements issued in 1941, and the earlier document on loyalty (1939). The original organization was the National Council for Religious Conscientious Objectors (NCRCO), becoming the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) in 1940, then the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO),

This series of cooperative meetings, re-working of positions, and willingness of Mennonite bodies to contribute to the larger project of negotiating with the government has been thoroughly explored by social historians and participant observers from the Mennonites, Friends, and Brethren. A brief overview is sufficient in order to emphasize the overall trajectory, the dual nature of the solution reached between the Historic Peace Churches (HPC) and the U.S. government, and how American wars encouraged the recasting of Mennonite identity in the 1940s.¹¹¹

The Historic Peace Churches built off of the discussions in the 1920s and 1930s among themselves, deriving essential positions from their own bodies, and then adopting much of the

acronyms that commonly appear in treatments of the American draft and, later, in antiwar protest during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

¹¹¹ HPC (Historic Peace Churches) and CPS (Civilian Public Service) are used in the following section for the sake of brevity. The complete CPS story is covered thoroughly in Albert N. Keim and Grant M. Stoltzfus, The Politics of Conscience: The Historic Peace Churches and America at War, 1917-1955 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), while Gingerich focuses on Mennonite service and the details of CPS life common to all involved. Melvin Gingerich, Service for Peace: A History of Mennonite Civilian Public Service (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1949). Keim offers a detailed account of the negotiations among Mennonite bodies, the three Historic Peace Churches, and the U.S. government in Keim, "Service," 141-155. Brethren Rufus D. Bowman, details the Brethren involvement in the development of the joint proposal, his presentation of the Brethren position in 1939, and a copy of the Brethren plan. The Church of the Brethren and War (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1944), 259-261. See E. Raymond Wilson for an analysis that includes lobbying efforts. E. Raymond Wilson, "Evolution of the C.O. Provisions in the 1940 Conscription Bill," Quaker History 64, no. 1 (1975): 3-15. Philip Ernest Jacob's review of the legislation includes eyewitness accounts of the HPC engagement with the government and was published as an early overview for a popular audience. Philip Ernest Jacob, The Origins of Civilian Public Service: A Review of the Negotiations During the Fall of 1940 between Government Officials and Representatives of the Churches Most Immediately Affected by the Drafting of Conscientious Objectors (Washington, D.C.: National Service Board for Religious Objectors, 1941). The classic early history of objection during the Second World War is Mulford Q. Sibley and Philip E. Jacob, Conscription of Conscience: The American State and the Conscientious Objector, 1940-1947 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952).

Mennonite solution of alternative arrangements as advanced by Guy F. Hershberger as the basis for what would become their common stance before the government. Representatives met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 12, 1937 to discuss their opposition to militarism and their concerns about conscription. By their second meeting with the president on January 10, 1940, France and England were at war with Germany, and the eight-man delegation presented specific proposals for alternative service. Hoping to engage in the kinds of reconstruction and aid to the suffering that were increasingly characteristic of both the American Friends Service Committee and Mennonite Central Committee, the men quickly presented concrete plans of action derived from an intense meeting of the newly created Mennonite Central Peace Committee in Chicago three months earlier on September 30, 1939. What had been a meeting scheduled for three minutes turned into almost thirty, with the President's enthusiastic endorsement giving rise to premature optimism, reinforcing the illusion that conscientious objectors could be a part of a civilian-controlled process and that the churches could create and manage service projects that would alleviate the suffering of war. The group soon met with the realities of American politics.¹¹²

¹¹² The Mennonite Central Peace Committee (MCPC), although initially independent of MCC, was one of the predecessors to the MCC Peace Section created in 1942 during the war and an astute actor during the Vietnam War. Formed on March 4, 1939, the MCPC was explicitly charged to create a "Plan of Action for Mennonites in Case of War." The new executive committee was composed temporarily of the chairmen of the peace committees of the three largest brotherhoods, an arrangement that became permanent: MB P.C. Hiebert (chairman), GC E.L. Harshbarger (vice-chairman), and MC Harold S. Bender (secretary). As noted previously, Hiebert and Harshbarger were both Kansans, while Bender had served at Hesston College before moving to Goshen College. Hiebert, Toews, 132-133; Prieb, 94-95; Gingerich, 33-36, 44. Euphoric at Roosevelt's reaction to the delegation, P.C. Hiebert reported that the group believed they "had a friend" in the President. Prieb, Peter, 95. In fact, FDR had little use for conscientious objectors.

American Mennonites During World War II – Unintended Consequences

The Burke-Wadsworth Bill and The Selective Service and Training Act of 1940

When the original bill was reported out to the Senate on June 20, 1940 it largely resembled the Selective Service law of the First World War. Draftees were once again under the jurisdiction of the military and the bill only offered objectors the option of noncombatant service, thus reprising the problems of WWI. Moreover, only members of the Historic Peace Churches were candidates for these provisions. Disappointed with the proposal and faced with persuading Congress otherwise, lobbying by HPC representatives, along with that from the War Resisters League and other peace organizations resulted in modifications and amendments. They did not get exemption. But they obtained a broadening of the basis for objection beyond the Historic Peace Churches to include all of those who “by reason of religious training and belief [are] conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form,” an appeal process for those with rejected claims, and the civilian control provisions they believed would thwart entanglements with the military. Not only would they be assigned “work of national importance” under civilian direction rather than induction into the armed services, but also any who committed infractions or violations of the law would be judged by federal, rather than military courts.¹¹³

¹¹³ Historian George Q. Flynn contextualizes the creation of Selective Service and its provision for religious objectors. His detailed explication of the problems with the draft also explores the reasoning behind the structuring of a system that was both centralized and yet highly local, effectively weaving in the political effectiveness of General Lewis B. Hershey, the social construction of the “democratic” project of conscription, and how Hershey achieved the flexibility of a system that would be in place well into the 1960s. George Q. Flynn, The Draft, 1940-1973 (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 44-47 on religious objectors, 9-87. Gingerich weaves together the seemingly disparate denominational committees and the cooperative bodies formed by the HPC that would eventually result in the formation of NSBRO, the integration of policy proposals, and the details of the amendments to the Burke-Wadsworth Act. The Selective Service Act of 1940, Section 5(g), signed by Roosevelt on September 16, 1940, declared that “nothing contained in this act shall be construed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service in the land or naval forces of the United States, who, by

The hybrid project between the churches and the state that eventually resulted had mixed results in the long run, but in the short run, Mennonites were euphoric. Even members of the War Resisters League and other peace groups waylaid their concerns for the sake of cooperating in a project that would be under civilian control, believing that such authority would better safeguard freedom of conscience in comparison to the state. Moreover, although the process had been tenuous at times, the Historic Peace Churches (and their constituent groups) had put aside many of their differences in order to focus on their common interest in an alternative vision of peace, with Mennonites and Brethren focusing on consensus and a concrete plan, and the Friends drawing on their experience in political action to advocate. Mennonite Melvin Gingerich concludes that,

It would appear from the [detailed discussion regarding the eventual legislation] that the Brethren and Mennonites had taken the leadership in working out plans for action in case of conscription and war but that the Friends had taken the leadership in getting these concepts into the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.¹¹⁴

reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form.” Statutes at Large, 1940, 889. Apart from the broadening to include other religious objectors, the bill did not stipulate membership in a particular church, a problem that young Mennonite men had encountered when they had not yet, per church doctrine, joined a local congregation.

¹¹⁴ Gingerich, 50. Paul Toews concurs, noting that the document derived from the September 30, 1939 meeting of the newly created Mennonite Central Peace Committee, “A Plan of Action for Mennonites in Case of War,” had been quickly endorsed by all three bodies (and, in the case of Mennonites, by their various constituent bodies) with minor modifications and had been the “core” of the proposal advanced to Roosevelt. Toews, Mennonites, 133. Gingerich, writing in 1949, may have had his own reasons for carefully phrasing what had indeed been extensive lobbying. Although the Friends used their political experience, lack of concern about political process, and legal expertise to lobby most vigorously, the Mennonites also had “met” with congressmen and senators, actions that were a conundrum for strict two kingdom theology.

Nearly five months after Roosevelt signed the Selective Service Act, he issued Executive Order 8675 on February 6, 1941, establishing Civilian Public Service and essentially enabling the means by which draftees would perform their alternative service via “work of national importance.” On the one hand, the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) represented the peace churches, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, other church bodies, and non-affiliated individuals claiming objection. On the other hand, Selective Service, organized as a civilian arm of the government, represented the state. But, as historian Georg Q. Flynn argues, “the alternative service program was put together casually.” Cobbled together by representatives of peace churches who had little real power and a government facing the reality of the fall of Western Europe, Roosevelt largely left the directors of Selective Service to manage the project, with one large caveat. He pointedly refused to finance the CPS camp system in any way, except in general administration. The onus to fund daily operations was left to the churches, a charge they agreed to accept. As P.C. Hiebert later recounted,

At this crucial ... meeting [after the Selective Service Act was signed into law and prior to the issuing of the Executive Order], General Hershey and a number of representatives from the president’s office were present. Early in the morning, prior to the official meeting, a prayer meeting was held, and Peter Hiebert asked the Mennonite representative what the Mennonites might do if asked to finance the program. “Do you think we can do that?” asked Hiebert. Ori Miller looked at Peter Hiebert and said, “Have our brethren ever let us down when we had a real case to present before them?” With anticipation, the church representative heard the director of Selective Service ask, “Are you men and your people willing to undertake this job even if it will cost you a great deal of money?” There was silence for a while and then Ori Miller spoke with deep and sincere conviction: “By the help of God we will try.”¹¹⁵

The end result was that Selective Service agreed to "furnish general administrative and policy supervision and inspection, and [to] pay the men's transportation costs to the camps." Its

¹¹⁵ Prieb quoting Hiebert, Prieb, Peter, 96.

director retained final authority to choose work projects and assignments, and was the final arbiter of appeals. NSBRO agreed "to undertake the task of financing and furnishing all other necessary parts of the program, including actual day-to-day supervision and control of the camps (*under such rules and regulations and administrative supervision as is laid down by Selective Service* [italics mine]), to supply subsistence, necessary buildings, hospital care, and generally all things necessary for the care and maintenance of the men." The peace churches had thus obtained a project chiefly under civilian agency, but with almost all of the responsibility on their own shoulders. The arrangement, not completely public, nor completely private, was heavily dependent on the adaptive abilities of each within a loose bureaucratic framework. For example, in spite of Roosevelt's early objections, NSBRO director Paul Comly French managed to convince Selective Service to use old Civilian Conservation Corps camps temporarily, a request made permanent in practice. In the long run, the CPS camps that started opening on May 15, 1941, more than six months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor and U.S. entry into the war, had unintended consequences for both the government and the churches and unaffiliated objectors.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ One early proposal by the HPC's was categorically rejected by an irate FDR. When Friend Paul Comly French proposed that the men would receive wages as did men performing military service, they were quickly disabused by Roosevelt who emphasized that he did not see their service as commensurate with that of soldiers. Paul Toews, quoting Paul Comly French, Toews, *Mennonites*, 137-138. French's account in a letter he wrote to Clarence E. Pickett, December 3, 1940, is reprinted in Jacob, *Origins*, 21. In hindsight, this proved to be a harbinger of how alternative service was couched. While at this point in time the HPC delegation anticipated performing significant work including reconstruction or the relief of suffering in potentially dangerous situations overseas (as well as forestry, farming, or non-military hospital work), the government had no such intention. The wage issue smarted at the time and continued to do so. CPS historian Melvin Gingerich framed the issue clearly in 1953, not only clarifying the contributions, but likely preempting the characterization of CPS men as moochers. "At least 120 different types of work were done according to the Works Progress Reports in the Selective Service Records Offices. As the draftees were not paid for the work performed in the base camps, and only given maintenance wages of \$15 per month in the special projects (using the basic army pay of \$50 a month for estimation) men in Mennonite CPS contributed approximately \$4 million worth of labor to the federal and state governments. The federal government spent

On the one hand, it tested the ability of the HPC bodies to continue to cooperate in NASBRO as the different groups questioned whether or not they had been compromised. In particular, for the Friends and others who had attempted to argue for those who held absolutist positions (in which even registering for the draft was a concession), the project seemed to be increasingly flawed and hollow. On the other hand, the government, mediated through the genuinely reflective, yet politically astute and resilient Lewis B. Hershey, was routinely called to task for providing any sort of option for objectors.¹¹⁷

approximately \$1 1/3 million on CPS. Thus the United States benefited to the figure of \$2 2/3 million from the contribution of men drafted to Mennonite CPS camps.” Melvin Gingerich, "Civilian Public Service," in Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Civilian_Public_Service&oldid=120961 (Accessed July 12, 2017). Paul Toews argues that Mennonites paying their own way, “[even if] every Mennonite had to mortgage his farm,” disarmed many of the harshest critics of the program. Toews, quoting Orie Miller and John Mosemann, Jr., Paul Toews, Mennonites, 138. This was the basic process of conscription: all men were encouraged to register for the draft. An individual then noted that he was claiming religious objection on Form 47. The notice routed to the local draft board which determined whether or not the request was a sincere one, based on both the answers the individual had provided on the form, and, if necessary, by personal interview. If accepted as sincerely meeting the legal requirements, the draftee was shifted to NSBRO’s responsibility, then assigned to a “unit” where he would, in general, serve out his term of service. These units could be based in a CPS camp or assigned to a non-camp posting (such as a mental hospital). Each unit was under the general jurisdiction of a “Technical Agency” (such as the Forest Service or State Mental Hospital) and the particular administration by one of the “Operating Groups,” one of the HPC bodies (MCC, for the Mennonites). Any would-be objector could appeal to a civilian process if his original request was denied. If, at the point of registration, the individual was willing to enter the military (as 30-60 percent of HPC men were), he chose whether to enter the regular service (provided he passed the physicals) or to enter service, but as a noncombatant (I-A-O). Men in alternative service received no pay, nor the host of military benefits available to them and their dependents either during the war or in postwar legislation. NSBRO assumed financial responsibility for objectors not associated with the HPC, although in fact the three church bodies contributed toward their expenses as well. Gingerich, Service, 39-83, 338-394. Flynn offers a nuanced portrait of the process objectors faced before their local boards and how Hershey pressed for and applied broad and sympathetic judgments on objectors whose claims had been denied. George Q. Flynn, Lewis B. Hershey: Mr. Selective Service (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 126-134.

¹¹⁷ The need to negotiate as a group obscured the differences between Mennonites, Friends, and Brethren in their initial approach to the government. In particular, the Friends

American Mennonites During World War II—Attempts at Institutionalization and Unintended Consequences

The alternative service project that managed the more than 12,600 young men assigned to it tested the organizing skills of the HPC bodies who divided responsibility for the camps, promoted the development of young men who would become future leaders, created an amalgam of religious and political dissenters, offered churches an unprecedented access to educating their young men about peace convictions, and disappointed many who had seized on a vision of meaningful “witness.” It tied Mennonites, who were attempting to navigate their theology of “the two kingdoms” into an ironic entanglement. As historian Albert Keim observed,

Among those most consciously attempting to remain aloof from government, the Mennonites by force of circumstances found themselves in one of the most intimate relationships ever established between church and state in American history, and with the military arm of the government at that.”¹¹⁸

attempted to protect those who held absolutist positions derived from Quaker theology and its views regarding the individual conscience. When Mennonites refused to support the absolutist position that would effectively refuse cooperation with the government, the Friends had to resort to a memorandum to the main proposal, a rider that was completely rejected by Congress. Paul Toews, Mennonites, 132-133. The wily Hershey alternately played the press and Congress, diffusing criticism and achieving a wide range of latitude for his administration of the draft, including his general oversight of the CPS system. A descendent of the heavily persecuted Swiss-South German stream of Mennonites, he had embraced a largely self-fashioned religious creed of stoicism, humanism, deism, and American individualism. Rising in military ranks until he lost the use of his right eye in a polo accident at Fort Bliss, Hershey was the second director of Selective Service, remaining in that position from 1941 until 1970. He routinely maintained that the alternative service program was an experiment in democracy and dissent, an “experiment ... to find out whether our democracy is big enough to preserve minority rights in a time of national emergency.” But, he also made the case before Congress that the program would “relieve the armed forces of thousands of malcontents.” It was essential that they not be able to “spread the doctrine of pacifism to our youth in its formative period.” Flynn, Lewis, 128, 130.

¹¹⁸ Keim, “Service or Resistance?” 155. Peace historians Peter Brock and Nigel Young consider some of the inherent complexities and contradictions in the formation of a peace stance during World War II, juxtaposing the CPS system with conscientious objection of the absolutists who chose prison. Brock and Young, Pacifism, 151-220.

Yet, the fact that MC conservative Amos Horst who maintained the traditional stance of the separation of “the two kingdoms” was satisfied with the program thus far in 1945 reiterated how the doctrine played out. That Mennonites had been subject to the government and had kept their young men away from the war and military jurisdiction recognized both the sphere of the world and the sphere of God. But, even so, as he emphasized in a letter to his son-in-law Harold Bender, the issue remained a live one, even under civilian control:

we should always be prepared to make clear to government that if a civilian program ... demands one’s loyalty to the Gov. rather than to God that we would at any time withdraw from civilian service and try to live true. That we obey God rather than man, take the course with the Lord and meet the consequence with society.¹¹⁹

Horst’s primary “citizenship” thus was in the kingdom of God. In the long run, the state was not preeminent, even though their situation, as General Hershey was willing to remind objectors, was not a right of citizenship, but rather a “privilege” that could be revoked.¹²⁰

Yet, Mennonites in particular had hoped to evidence that they were loyal Americans, demonstrating both their convictions and their willingness to serve the country --- to be patriots -- by engaging in significant work for the well-being of others. Building on the significant reconstruction work initiated by the American Friends Service Committee in the First World War (and which took place during the war itself) and the relief activities of Mennonite Central Committee, CPS bodies hoped for equivalent service. NSBRO had hoped to move into overseas work “of national importance,” and the first conscripts were on their way to China to work in medical relief and rehabilitation when word arrived that Congress had cancelled overseas work

¹¹⁹ Horst quoted in Bush, Two, 87.

¹²⁰ Flynn, Lewis, 132.

for COs. It was thwarted by Representative Joe Starnes (AL) who attached a rider removing approval to a 71 billion dollar military appropriation bill. The defeat was a significant one for NSBRO participants who wanted to directly address the destruction of war.¹²¹

Initially, Mennonites were satisfied with CPS, viewing it as an improvement over the entanglements that resulted from the solution that had been pressed upon them in the First World War. Although Selective Service sponsored the new program and administered particular pieces of it, the fact that it was overseen by civilians satisfied both those who considered the previous plan as a still too direct supporter of warfare and those who desired their “service” to be a form of “witness.” For the men of CPS, however, there were increasingly mixed feelings about what this witness really meant. For some, the chance to be away from home and from the oversight of their local church bodies was liberating. Mixing with other men and having free time, even if little money, was an adventure, a means by which to break loose. For others, the grinding boredom and the nagging knowledge that they were performing work that was shallow when juxtaposed against those who were in the military in combat was deeply disturbing. Appealing for and being granted more meaningful assignments that included an element of danger or required exceptional compassion--- such as smoke-jumping, volunteering for medical investigations such as the starvation experiments, or working directly with the mentally ill in severely understaffed institutions met the need for consequential work that embodied both a peace witness and alternative service as Americans.¹²²

¹²¹ Krieder, Looking, 40; Toews, Mennonites, 133. In regard to the Starnes Amendment see Gingerich, Service, 307-309.

¹²² In re: the starvation experiments, see Todd Tucker, The Great Starvation Experiment: The Heroic Men who Starved so that Millions Could Live (New York: The Free Press, 2006). The work with the greatest long-term consequences of all was in mental health, a focus that Mennonites and others directly pursued after the war due to their work in CPS. After four

Although the experiences in CPS camps continued to nag at the consciences of other members of NSBRO because they increasingly believed that their involvement aided conscription and the war effort, Mennonites were largely satisfied with the arrangements. Even as the early consensus among NSBRO's affiliates broke apart, the Mennonites cast their involvement as service within the dictates of their beliefs.¹²³

Quaker CPS men who had carefully documented what they had observed in The Philadelphia State Hospital and decided to form a clearinghouse of information in 1944, they solicited accounts from the approximately 3,000 fellow conscientious objectors (more than half of them Mennonites) who were working in the 61 CPS units assigned to sixty-five state mental hospitals and facilities for the mentally retarded. Initially called the Mental Hygiene Program of CPS, they received more than 1,400 reports detailing the modern-day Bedlam of the institutions (the Philadelphia State Hospital, for example, had a stated capacity for 3,500 patients, but housed more than 6,000, with a ratio of 1 attendant per 212 patients). Science reporter Albert Q. Maisel's graphic exposé published in *Life* magazine, "Bedlam 1946: Most U.S. Mental Hospitals are a Shame and Disgrace," drew from the COs' documentation and helped launch modern mental health reform. Alex Sareyan, *The Turning Point: How Persons of Conscience Brought About Major Change in the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1994); Stephen J. Taylor, *Acts of Conscience: World War II, Mental Institutions, and Religious Objectors* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009). Taylor focuses on the activism of Quakers who were more willing to speak out, but also recognizes that Mennonites, even though less likely to confront conditions directly, contributed widely to the collection of reports. *Ibid.*, 237. For Mennonites, work in mental hospitals resulted in their postwar creation of mental health systems, including the Prairie View network in Kansas. Participant William Keeney, later academic dean at Bethel College during the Vietnam War, documented this service and its long-range impact after the war. William Keeney, "Experiences in Mental Hospitals in World War II," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1 (January 1982), 7-17.

¹²³ Other members of NSBRO had mixed reactions to CPS. The Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors was the third group to leave the NSBRO arrangement, departing in October 1945, following the War Resister's League's departure from its position on the consultative council (1943), and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (1944). Although the HPC and other bodies had stayed together in an effort to support alternative service, the reasons given by the FOR represented the thoughts of others. Instead of removing themselves from the war effort, they had, in an attempt to provide an alternative, "allied [themselves] with the military in administering conscription, one of the most essential phases of the war effort. The Catholic group concurred, with language aimed particularly at the Mennonites. "It is our duty to uphold the Christian ideal of evangelic love at all times, but there can be no great or lasting merit in a program of involuntary servitude that ignores the basic Christian concept of justice. To attempt to identify this ideal of evangelic love (embracing the testimony by "service" and "second mile"

One endeavor within the camps with consequences that have not been assessed and bear further investigation was profoundly satisfying for many Mennonites, although it also sent mixed messages about freedom of religion to those who were not Mennonites and yet serving their terms of service in Mennonite-run units. In the 89 units administered or co-administered by MCC, the Mennonite churches used CPS camps as an opportunity to educate the young men about their brotherhoods' beliefs, and particularly its position on peace. Remembering the difficulty World War I draftees had experienced when asked to explain their nonresistant positions, MCC encouraged the publication of "The Mennonite Heritage Course," and then promoted that the men take it during their first year of service. Many did, working their ways through the six forty-eight page booklets that ranged over Mennonite history in Europe and America, to an explanation of church and state relationships, and then general tracts on mission and social relationships. The churches also utilized the camps to invest their next generation of leaders, many of whom will crop up as significant actors in the Kansas Mennonite colleges during the Vietnam War. At the same time, some Mennonites worried about the influences to which their young men might be exposed. The danger was not only exposure to non-Mennonites,

philosophies so often used to justify the CPS program) ... is rather to distort those ideals and expose them to the contempt and ridicule of those who neither accept nor understand the Christian counsels of perfection." Articles from The Reporter [The Fellowship of Reconciliation's newsletter] quoted in Gingerich, Service, 71. Re: the War Resister's League withdrawal, see Scott H. Bennett, Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 91. Bennett estimates that of the 12,000 conscientious objectors in CPS and 6,000 who went to prison, at least 550 War Resistance League members participated in the former and 100 in the latter. His notes explain that WRL counts tended to be low because of under-reporting and cross-affiliations with other groups, such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation. *Ibid.*, 98, 276n1.

but to other Mennonites themselves, a situation that concerned church elders no small amount of consternation.¹²⁴

As some of the early historiography of CPS documented, however, in spite of the issues that bothered them and concerned their brotherhoods, the experience was a positive achievement in the eyes of the men themselves. They discovered that other Mennonites from different

¹²⁴ Mennonites comprised 38 percent of the objectors assigned to the 151 CPS units. Of the eighty-nine units administered by MCC as Mennonite representative, seventy-seven were run solely by MCC, five jointly with the Brethren Service Committee, three jointly with the American Friends Service Committee, and four as coops. Gingerich, “Civilian,” in Global. The Mennonite Heritage series was edited by Harold S. Bender and authored by men from the three major Mennonite bodies: no.1, “Mennonite Origins in Europe,” (Harold S. Bender (MC)), no. 2, “Mennonites in America” (C. Henry Smith (GC)), no. 3, “Our Mennonite Heritage” (Edward Yoder (MC)), no. 4, “Our Mission as a Church of Christ,” (Edward G. Kauffman (GC)), no. 5, “Christian Relationships to State and Community,” (Guy F. Hershberger (MC)), no. 6, “Life and Service in the Kingdom of God,” (P.C. Hiebert (MB)). Toews captures the dynamic of Mennonite identity in the mid-twentieth century in his comments about the series: “Except for not giving voice to smaller groups, they represented Mennonite syncretism with an interpretation that emphasized commonality of history and faith. This was true even though that inter-Mennonite perspective was a down payment on the future more than a portrayal of the past.” Toews, Mennonites, 71. Regarding dangerous influences, for example, MB P.C. Hiebert who had been heavily active in the Historic Peace Church conversations and in the subsequent common negotiations, was nevertheless deeply concerned about what would happen if MCC chose theologically unsound individuals to be camp directors. Cautioning Orie Miller about several potential directors, he wrote: “I would feel bad if our boys would return from camps contaminated with modernism.” Since “there will doubtless be some liberal thinkers among the boys ... we must be all the more careful about the directors.” Quoted in Toews, Mennonites, 151. Hiebert’s concern is somewhat ironic since he had studied the writings of Walter Rauschenbush when he himself was at seminary. Rauschenbush as champion of the social gospel was suspect among conservative Mennonites. Mennonite focus on the achievement of their brotherhoods’ internal objectives (including the surveys that evaluated whether or not the educational program and/or CPS strengthened Mennonite understanding of nonresistance) has, unfortunately, done little to enrich the historiography of how Mennonite-run CPS camps apprised the development of the peace witness among non-Mennonite men described in this study’s opening chapter and which energized the antiwar protests of the Vietnam War. Doing so systematically would not only inform how Mennonite lived theology contributed to a non-Mennonite comprehension and utilization of nonresistance, but also enliven the discussion about the roots of antiwar protests during the Cold War and enrich the conversation about the nature of secularization and whether or not the disorder associated with peace protest reflects a fragmenting of the religious witness.

brotherhoods and objectors from other traditions were not what they had been characterized to be. Differences remained, but they made friendships in work groups, in camp bull sessions, and in intense problem-solving situations, such as mental hospitals. For those young men who were assigned to be camp leaders, managing budgets, assignments, conflicts, and educational and social programs, the experience yielded a next generation of organizers --- and visionaries.

Historian Robert S. Kreider who was conscripted as a conscientious objector, assigned to CPS No. 5 in Colorado Springs, served as an MCC administrator for CPS, volunteered as a Pax man and later was dean at the GC school Bluffton College, eloquently explained what the camps meant to him and others:

At age 22 when I was drafted into CPS Camp No. 5 at Colorado Springs, I had already experienced more pluralism than most. I had just received my master's degree from the University of Chicago, itself a world of choices in an urban setting. For me it was a liberating experience to escape from university studies to live with largely farm fellows of seventeen or more Mennonite varieties ... making friends for the first time with Mennonite Brethren, Amish, Hutterites and Holdeman. Detached from the border-protecting sanctions of home communities and clinging together in awareness of public displeasure with our stance, our pluralism was encompassed by a sense of a new extended family. The family spirit even reached out and embraced John, a Plymouth Brethren; Reuben, the Pentecostal; two Jehovah's Witnesses; George Yamanda, a Nisei CO moved east from coastal California where he imperiled West Coast detainees; Bruce, the restless Methodist, Arlo Sonnenberg, the Evangelical who had a lyrical way with words; but perhaps not the macho Mennonite from Nebraska who left camp after Pearl Harbor to join the army and came back ... later wearing a button: "Jap Killer" ... Never in Mennonite history were so many different Mennonites thrown into the same pot and stirred with Molokans, Christadelphians, Nazarenes, ... a sprinkling of atheists and agnostics, and scores more. This enforced acceptance of pluralism had a variety of problems for Mennonites: ... Who is the brother whose sensitivities are not to be offended? Who are the keepers of the boundaries?¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Krieder, Looking, 192-193. Krieder's reflections were an excerpt of his earlier article "'Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom' and 'One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism'," Mennonite Quarterly Review, 57, no. 3 (July 1983). Pax was the designate for the foreign service branch of alternative service administered by MCC for I-W men after WWII. It is also spelled PAX and its service workers are variously considered as Pax man, Pax-man, Pax Men, and Pax-Men, although women also were later admitted as Pax workers. Harold S. Bender, "Pax" in Global

The universe had expanded, and had done so with men eager to parse their convictions about peace. It had helped acculturate men, yet done so by re-focusing identity, and calling its essence into question. But it did so in tandem with the older leadership and established hierarchy who had not yet shelved the questions raised by twentieth-century America, a process to be considered shortly. The movement was in both directions, from the top down and from the bottom up.

Overcoming the failures of World War I had emphasized not only the problematic nature of their position in the American state, but also demonstrated that Mennonites themselves had not necessarily kept their focus on the issues of peace that they had long used to organize and to protect themselves in their settlements and migrations since the Reformation. Their focus on relief work, which arguably began and continued on behalf of their own brotherhood, nevertheless also extended to others outside themselves, and by doing so offered both internal and external markers of identity. But attempting to negotiate space for themselves and on behalf of other peace churches in the face of the American government not only brought challenging and satisfying connections with others who agreed on Christ as the author of peace, but also called into question the boundaries of church and state within the brotherhoods and between the brotherhoods. These same encounters were reprised among the young men (and the young women) who served in Civilian Public Service. These discussions and the work surrounding them brought into sharp relief the larger interrogation about witness and what exactly that meant. The questions were the focus of what became the public work of two historians,

Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Pax> (Accessed March 31, 2018)

reflections that derived from august authorities, but which were appropriated and long re-worked by the CPS and postwar generation.¹²⁶

The Re-Appropriation and Re-Casting of Mennonite Identity

Two major documents emerged in 1943 and 1944, both written by historians, one hastily composed and the other the result of an extended time away from teaching responsibilities.

Those documents, and the process of their reception, had two long-lasting results. On the one hand, Harold Bender's address, "The Anabaptist Vision," delivered to the American Society of

¹²⁶ Although the extended entry written for the Mennonite Encyclopedia by historian Melvin Gingerich in 1952 makes no mention of women in CPS, some women created their own female CO units and called themselves COGS (C.O. Girls), even though they were encouraged by MCC director Peter C. Hiebert to change the name of their organization, which "might be offensive to certain groups." and to coordinate their work with ladies sewing circles in local churches. As historian Rachel Waltner Goossen observes, the women kept their name, but accepted his advice, carefully shielding the fact that they had created an organization. Their presence was an ambiguous one. Church officials readily recognized the value of having female volunteers to boost the spirits of CPS males, even though the women themselves saw their work as an act of personal conviction and commitment to peacemaking through service. Only the Friends appointed a female administrator to work with female units, but all three of the HPCs utilized the approximately 300 volunteers, particularly in mental hospitals. Their presence, like that of the more recognized C.O. males, contributed to the postwar focus on mental health. In particular, Goossen recounted Eleanor Roosevelt's changed attitude toward COs after members of the women's unit at the Poughkeepsie hospital invited her for tea, contact that also facilitated the former First Lady's work with the postwar National Mental Health Foundation. Rachel Waltner Goossen, Women and the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Home Front, 1941-1947 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 105-111. Their involvement also helped develop the postwar concept of Mennonite Voluntary Service, although Paul Toews echoes Goossen's assessment that incorporating women was not necessarily designed to create new opportunities for them. Paul Toews, Mennonites, 168-169. Although the two monumental arguments were presented by acknowledged and appreciated GC Mennonite historians, it is essential to recognize the work of Elizabeth Horsch Bender, scholar of German language and literature and a historian whose work has largely remained masked. Although the prodigious workload of her husband, Harold S. Bender, granted him particular authority, it likely reflected the work of two individuals working in tandem. Appreciating his at times ubiquitous presence in various initiatives reflects her hidden presence. Keim suggests many points at which she was heavily involved in his work and in Mennonite historiography. Albert N. Keim, Harold S. Bender, 1897-1962 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998). Paul Toews has been one of the few to recognize her as a Mennonite historian. Paul Toews, Mennonites, 36.

Church Historians annual meeting offered a new organizing principle that would situate Mennonites in Anabaptism at a time of crisis --- during the Reformation, and as American armies planned for the invasion of Europe. On the other hand, historian Guy F. Hershberger's War, Peace, and Nonresistance carefully argued for the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, but re-cast Mennonite nonresistance as no longer simply a way of living in the kingdom of Christ, but as a witness for the world. While explicitly maintaining that the New Testament had an "entirely unpolitical" stance, and that the faithful community could only model what the world might find "curative," Hershberger not only situated God's moral law as fundamental *for all time* but also used biblical language to position Mennonite engagement. Nonresistant life, he argued,

... is to bring healing to human society ... to prevent its further decay through a consistent witness to the truth. This world needs the ministry of nonresistant Christians whose light, set on a hill, stands as a glowing witness to the way of truth and righteousness. A people who provide this witness are not parasites living at the expense of organized society. They are its greatest benefactors.

Thus, he carefully threaded his way through two kingdom doctrine to articulate a broad consensus of Mennonite convictions about nonresistance and to arrive at a heavily nuanced analysis that positioned the church to concern itself with social problems beyond its own community. Hershberger's nonresistance was more than a rejection of war, but, according to historian Theron Schlabach, "what amounted to a self-consciously biblical social gospel." The result was "arguably the most influential statement on Mennonite social ethics in the twentieth century," a position that challenged conservatives and progressives alike.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Bender delivered his address as president of the ASCH, then turned the remainder of the meetings over to Roland Bainton and left for a rushed trip to Chicago for MCC meetings regarding Civilian Public Service camps. The past president had advised him to meet in Chicago as a more convenient location, but Bender had insisted on holding the meetings conjointly with the American Historical Association annual meeting. In his address, he contended that the central concepts for Anabaptist identity were discipleship (following Christ), "voluntary church membership based on true conversion," and an ethic of love and nonresistance, utterly

Together with the experiences derived from CPS, Mennonites worked the three strands together: nonresistance, community, and a nonconforming witness. The endeavor created an “acted” theology that was congruent with its own history, which incorporated Mennonite groups that widely diverged on cultural issues, and yet which challenged American nationalism during the Cold War perhaps as much as it challenged its own people. It positioned a peace witness that was an active force derived from conservative Christianity and stolid traditions, albeit a force that was still considering a public presence and public voice. Its colleges remained within a quietist umbra even as some of its intellectuals and churchmen wrestled with what it meant to be Anabaptist – or Mennonite. But, the church as a whole was by no means disengaged as it continued to enter situations of postwar relief and repair through the cooperative efforts of MCC which this study will consider shortly.¹²⁸

By 1941 and the United States’ entry into World War II, Mennonites in America had negotiated a means by which their young men could remain true to nonresistance in wartime. The erstwhile solution would avoid the sticky trap of noncombatancy when conscientious objectors were assigned to military camps, and it offered a means by which the brotherhoods

repudiating any involvement in warfare (“complete abandonment of all warfare, strife, and violence, and the taking of human life”). Bender’s text was published three months later in the Society’s journal, Church History. Keim, Harold, 306-331. Harold S. Bender, “The Anabaptist Vision,” Church History 13, no. 1 (March 1944), 31. Regarding Hershberger, see Guy F. Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1944), 49, 301; Theron F. Schlabach, “Guy F. Hershberger’s War, Peace and Nonresistance (1944): Background, Genesis, Message,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 80, no. 3 (July 2006), 293.

¹²⁸ At this point it is tempting to attribute the solution of their issues to modernity --- and its reputation for producing structures and enabling systematization. For the Mennonites, however, the structures they created could only be derived from the highly held community values of humility and the local --- a valuing of the individual conscience without embracing individualism. Rather than consolidating and simplifying, modernity tended to complicate and enrich Mennonite identity.

could manage the young draftees under their own terms. Structured in such a way financially that the churches themselves would bear a share of the burden rather than the federal government carrying it all as a function of the armed services, the Historic Peace Churches could also assert a place for themselves as citizens, as patriotic Americans who performed alternative service and assumed the debt for doing so. How they arrived at this position and what resulted from the creative, yet staid, Civilian Public Service camps of World War II proved to have unintended consequences for both the Historic Peace Churches and for the U.S. government. For those who assess the presence of modernity in terms of the formation of organizations and the consolidation of institutional identity, the actions Mennonites took after the First World War might on the surface fit these paradigms. The Mennonite approach to the twentieth-century, however much it might fit part of these patterns, varies significantly both in its unruly formation of identity and the long-term outcomes of this construction as they later manifested during the Cold War. How and why they were able to maintain congruence while negotiating an identity as Americans was an intense and ragged process spread over less than a generation --- and performed in the name of peace, the peace of Jesus.

But, in arriving at the policies that would protect their nonresistance and exempt them from bearing arms against another during the Second World War, the church engaged in a parallel construction of identity that was quintessentially American and yet extra-national in scope. It began to challenge its own presuppositions about the meaning of “peace” and wrestled also with the meaning of nonconformity. In doing so, it would encounter modernity in strange forms and challenge it in unexpected ways. Faced with the internal fragmentation of their own church bodies (now denominations) due to the desire for and the fear of acculturation, but challenged by an American nationalism that threatened their existence, Mennonites fashioned an

identity that was historically constructed. That is, it was constructed by using history as the authoritative referent. As such, it was an American religious improvisation, but one that was deadly serious.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Fear of acculturation and the loss of nonconformity is more generally attributed to the MCs, chiefly because their hierarchical structure and focus on isolation as a form of protection mean they attempted to maintain boundaries that were more easily seen and which they rigorously defended. But, of the three largest Mennonite groups, all dealt with issues of acculturation and control. Thus, drawing a line too tightly is not historically accurate. Regarding an overview of postwar nonresistance, this discussion now involves historians, sociologists, and a rhetorician. Analyzing American Mennonite peace activity, the re-casting and re-claiming of Mennonite identity, and their responses to war in the twentieth century includes several now-classic works, joined by three recent ones. Goshen College historian Guy F. Hershberger's The Mennonite Church in the Second World War (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951) details not only activities during the war, but also much of the interwar period and its inter-Mennonite activities. He speaks as both a historian and also as a participant observer in the intense MC discussions about nonresistance and nonconformity. His analysis is unparalleled for its astute observations regarding Mennonite nonresistance (success and failure) during the Second World War. James C. Juhnke and Paul Toews' volumes in the *Mennonite Experience in America* series are invaluable for their overviews, with Juhnke (GC) focusing on World War I, its deep impact on American Mennonites and the immediate postwar encounters with fundamentalism, while Toews (MB) considers issues of acculturation, the intense (and fragmented) attempts to meet with other peace churches and pacifists in the face of significant opposition from Mennonites themselves, the cooperation with Selective Service in the creation of Civilian Public Service, and postwar impacts on peace theology through the late Vietnam War. Juhnke, Vision and Toews, Mennonites. Juhnke's A People of Two Kingdoms is a now classic study of Kansas Mennonites through the Second World War and is particularly valuable for the larger discussion as Newton, KS, became the center of GC activity and Hillsboro, KS, the center of MB endeavors. Canadian historian Rodney J. Sawatsky wrote two classic studies never published beyond the dissertation submission, but which are indispensable to understanding the pressures of non-Mennonite and Mennonite fundamentalism. "The Influences of Fundamentalism on Mennonite Nonresistance, 1908-1944" (M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1973) carefully dissects Mennonite fundamentalism and is an excellent companion to the debate between Beulah Hostetler and Nate Yoder on the impact of American fundamentalism. Rodney J. Sawatsky, "History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition Through History" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1977) analyzes the creation of "The Anabaptist Vision" as a historical construct, using some methods of reader-response analysis. Bluffton University professor Perry Bush's Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties is an elegant treatment by a historian who is also acutely aware of the categories of political science. Juxtaposing his work with that of sociologists Leo Driedger and Donald Kraybill in Mennonite Peacemaking and Erwin Stutzman's From Nonresistance to Justice which focuses on MC rhetoric offers a complimentary and interdisciplinary trek through the interwar years and beyond.

The work was contested by a variety of actors, then loosely pulled together by Mennonite historians and intellectuals who articulated Mennonite identity in terms of nonresistance, but it was shaped (sometimes ironically) by the powerful forces of the denominations themselves as they proliferated peace and peace problems committees designed to formulate positions in relation to the state --- and sometimes to other Mennonites. But, it was a bottom-up activity as well, in which the relief and material aid concerns of individuals (including the strong presence of women in countless aid groups), combined with the widespread involvement of young men (and some young women) in far-flung Civilian Public Service actions. In the very short run between global conflicts, the pressures of war forced Mennonites to come to terms with each other, the two other American religious traditions that had long advocated peace as essentials of identity, and the state. It also enabled the young men of CPS to exercise a unique and authoritative voice within the brotherhoods. But, it also revealed the fissures that continuously haunted the maintenance of a peace position in Cold War America.

Mennonites Postwar and the Broadening of Claims

The Winona Lake Conference (1950)

In late 1950, what was later described as the “most representative American Mennonite peace discussion ever convened” converged on the Winona Lake, Indiana, conference grounds. Acting on behalf of thirteen denominations and almost all of the groups affiliated with MCC, the assemblage included sixty-two official delegates and an additional twenty-five observers from across the Mennonite spectrum. The list of attendees was a visual imprint of plain coats, suits and ties, young turks and old guard. There were two disjunctions, however. Although the

Leo Driedger and Donald Kraybill, Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994).

patriarchy was well in place, there were three female faces, two as delegates, one as a visitor. Whether this was any cause for alarm is not documented. One face, however was missing, and its absence was significant. MB P.C. Hiebert, the longstanding chairman of MCC charged to serve as Vice-Chairman for the meeting, was seriously ill. Although he would recover and continue in his capacity for just over two more years, he would not be able to convince his own brotherhood to build off of the conference's findings or cooperative statement as both the MCs and GCs would do.¹³⁰

Two concerns were in the background. The difficulty the Historic Peace Churches had in formulating a common stance to take before the U.S. government in 1939 was replicated in 1948 when a frustrated W. A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), chastised the same groups for not being able to agree on a common platform. Following extended visits to Europe by members of the MCC Peace Section who were implementing relief and reconstruction projects, the World Council of Churches had asked the peace groups to contribute a statement of their own convictions to the WCC resolution, "War is Contrary to the Will of God." The debacle was both embarrassing and instructive for the groups which had always been on the margins of the larger discussions and were now being specifically asked to contribute their thinking to the postwar milieu of devastation. Meeting at the ecumenical conference "The Church and the War" in Detroit in May 1950, the Mennonite delegates resolved

¹³⁰ Toews, Mennonites, 238; Bertha Fast (Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL) represented the Mennonite Biblical Seminary Students, Orpah Mosemann (Goshen College, Goshen, IN) represented the Mennonite Nurses' Association, and Alta Schrock, also of Goshen College (Goshen, IN) attended as a visitor. Fast was GC, the latter two MC. Hiebert's absence was discussed in the minutes. Report of the MCC Peace Section Study Conference held at Winona Lake, Indiana on November 9 to 12, 1950, 6-10, 14. MLA (Hereafter, Winona Lake Conference).

to take what they had learned from the WCC encounter and work toward a coherent and unified stance.¹³¹

On the home front, President Harry Truman had wasted no time in requesting a new Selective Service Act in 1948, and while it worked its way through a Congress not yet intent on prosecuting a Korean War, the government deliberated on what to do with conscientious objectors. The original version of the bill had considered simply giving a complete exemption with no provision for alternative service to any young man who, by virtue of “religious training,” had a peace position. Signed into law on June 24, 1948, but soon realizing that public outcry would never accept such a provision, further iterations called for Universal Military Training (UMT) with no exemptions, a proposal that received significant opposition. Re-named the Universal Military Training and Service Act, the final bill that passed a few months after the

¹³¹ John A. Lapp, “The Peace Mission of Mennonite Central Committee,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 44 (July 1970), 293, 291-293. Chastened by the rebuke in 1948 the three Historic Peace Churches plus the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) cobbled together a booklet published in 1951 in which they each issued a statement. As historian Donald Durnbaugh recognizes, the groups were not yet able to agree on a common declaration, even though they had a common witness to peace. The booklet was graciously received by the ecumenical leadership who again pressed the groups for a common statement, asking “how they expected as diverse a group as the WCC membership to come to unity on the peace issue when even the peace churches could not come to a common mind.” In 1953 the groups arrived at a common document, “Peace is the Will of God,” reflecting the work of young Mennonite and Quaker scholars. Durnbaugh, On Earth, 19-20, 73-90. Historian Beulah Stauffer Hostetler details the varied responses to the request within the MC Mennonite Church and emphasizes the work of two young Mennonite graduate students (Paul Peachey and Irvin B. Horst) who cooperated with British Quakers to create the resulting statement. Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, “Nonresistance and Social Responsibility: Mennonites and Mainline Peace Emphasis, ca. 1950 to 1986,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 64, no. 1 (January 1990), 51-52. Brethren historian William C. Kostlevy offers a particularly cogent assessment of the peace churches, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Catholic Worker movement during 1948 as the Cold War intensified and they found themselves increasingly marginalized by a culture of anti-communist realism. William C. Kostlevy, “A Perfectionist Remnant: The Christian Pacifist Dissent from Realism on the Eve of the Cold War,” Brethren Life and Thought 42 (Summer-Fall 1997): 199-215.

Winona Lake conference instead offered a 1-W classification and alternative service domestically or overseas. The result offered three expansive options to Historic Peace Church men, but hedged against other objectors. Although it was greeted with relief by many Mennonites, it also raised a wide range of ethical questions and renewed concerns within conservative elements of the brotherhoods about its acculturating effects. But these issues were still under debate when the Winona Lake conference convened.¹³²

Although the prospect of UMT and a renewed draft were on Winona Lake delegates' minds, broader questions occupied the sixteen study papers prepared for the conference. Thirteen of the papers considered six topics, with their authors matched with a presenter from a different denomination and including three young men who would emerge as intellectuals and churchmen over the next decade. Historians Paul Toews and Perry Bush reach different conclusions about the conference, both of which are correct from yet a third angle. Toews emphasizes the centripetal aspects of the meeting. There were no new findings, but rather a consolidation of positions:

It remained for decades the most prominent of inter-Mennonite peace statements. If the needs of the moment called forth a new document, that statement nonetheless reaffirmed more than it reformulated. More than pointing in new directions, which it scarcely did, the document consolidated a consensus. It both

¹³² Wittner explains how the proposed legislation both advanced and hedged against a peace position and its religious objectors. On the one hand, its early version offered complete exemption. On the other hand, it required the potential draftee to pass a stricter test of religious commitment. As in the 1940 bill, an objector was “by religious training and belief, is opposed to participation in war in any form,” but the new law specified belief in a Supreme Being, thereby excluding “essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views or a personal moral code.” Wittner, *Rebels*, 186. Selective Service Act of 1948, Deferment and Exemptions, Section 6 (j) was passed and signed into law in 1950. Zelle Andrews Larson explores the difficulty surrounding the new definition for pacifists who were not members of the Historic Peace Churches and Hershey’s willingness to “have nothing to do with the troublesome problem” of administering alternative service. Zelle Andrews Larson, “An Unbroken Witness: Conscientious Objection to War, 1948-1953” (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1975) 45, 59-72.

re-affirmed two-kingdom theology and acknowledged an “obligation to witness to the powers that be of the righteousness which God requires of all men, even in government.”

Toews’ recapitulation of “witness” sees it as a concept already franked, and therefore nothing new. Bush, on the other hand, sees the centrifugal forces that Mennonites themselves had already started to face in their attempts to perform the service of peace. By viewing the conference through an explicit two-kingdom lens that traces the impact of Hershberger’s earlier work and the careful staking of the notion of “witness,” Bush positions the conference as change agent. Examining, for example, the papers contributed by historian Robert Kreider and sociologist J. Winfred Fretz, both young GC intellectuals who argued on behalf of the lessons Mennonites were learning as a result of their Civilian Public Service and Mennonite Central Committee work, Bush juxtaposed two kingdom theology over against the claims of the state and found the “hidden prophetic qualifier that Hershberger had articulated” --- the Mennonite “obligation to witness to the powers that be of the righteousness which God requires of all men.” The conference thus laid further groundwork for Mennonites to see the large fabric of peace that they had long enjoined in their own communities, but not outside --- the systems that underlay peace. Thus Bush thoroughly explores the import of the conference, not only for some of the sub-themes regarding peace on two-kingdoms theology, but most notably as the origin of what would become the powerful concept called the “Lordship of Christ” which created the theological framework that would justify Mennonites’ entering the sphere of politics --- and which would allow many of them to justify explicitly and publically protesting the Vietnam War. Thus, by building on two-kingdom theology, but also accepting the potentially expansive concept of

witness, the conference both consolidated its peace identity, but further positioned it as a fulcrum for change.¹³³

In what churchman John Lapp considered the “only extensive inter-Mennonite theological document ever produced,” the Winona Lake delegates passed the “Declaration of Christian Faith and Commitment,” an expansive text for peace, whether it was racial, social, or concerned the state. Two sections germane to understanding how the Mennonites positioned themselves at the advent of the Cold War and four years before they undertook relief work in Vietnam focused on war in general and in Cold War America. First, they addressed the issue of conscription:

Section Seven. We cannot compromise with war in any form. In case of renewed compulsion by the state in any form of conscription of service or labor, money or goods, including industrial plants, we must find ways to serve our countries and the needs of men elsewhere, in ways which will give significant and necessary benefits which will keep our Christian testimony uncompromised, particularly with respect to war, and which will make possible a faithful representation of Christ and his love. We cannot therefor participate in military service in any form. We cannot have any part in financing war operations or preparations through war bonds. We cannot knowingly participate in the manufacture of munitions, weapons, and instruments of war or destruction. We cannot take part in scientific, educational, or cultural programs designed to contribute to war, or in any propaganda or activity that tends to promote ill-will or hatred among men or nations, races, and classes. And we cannot as churches lend ourselves to the direct administration of conscription or state compulsion, seeking rather to find voluntary patterns of service through which the demands of the state may be both

¹³³ Paul Toews, *Mennonites*, 238; Bush, *Two*, 179-181. Robert Kreider, “The Disciple of Christ and the State,” in *Winona Lake Conference*; Fretz recapitulated the results of relief activities: “Mennonites should propagate nonresistance because God has entrusted this heritage to Mennonites and has helped them preserve this aspect of the Christian witness through the centuries. We have had our nonresistant doctrine vacuum packed, as it were, within the confines of the Mennonite cultural walls. This seal has been broken during these thirty years of world wide relief activities of the Mennonite Central Committee. We must therefore go on. We cannot retreat into the shell of an isolated group existence.” J. Winfield Fretz, “Nonresistance and the Social Order,” in *Ibid*, 69. Fretz served at Bethel College from 1942 to 1963, with several intermittent MCC assignments intervening.

satisfied and *transcended* [italics mine], and going with our men in whatever civilian service they give.

They then reaffirmed their nonresistant position of peaceful service:

Section 8. If war does come with its possible serious devastation from bombings or other forms of destruction, such as atomic blasts, germ warfare, poison gas, etc., we will willingly render every help which conscience permits, sacrificially and without thought of personal safety, so long as we thereby help to preserve and restore life and not to destroy it.¹³⁴

Called by the MCC Peace Section in an attempt to find a common statement “on the essence of the Mennonite mind” the Mennonites and Brethren in Christ not only reached consensus among their leadership who attended, but, one that was broadly endorsed by most of the brotherhoods they represented. The conclusions reached in 1950 were widely published and within two years seconded by the two largest denominations who then issued statements of their own.¹³⁵

When MC historian and Executive Secretary of the MCC Peace Section John Lapp reprised the singular conference in the article he wrote for The Mennonite Quarterly Review in

¹³⁴ Mennonite Church USA archives IX-7-8, MCC Peace Section, Box 1, Folder 1951. The “Declaration” has also been republished in Peachey, Mennonite Statements, 160-161. Sociologists Driedger and Kraybill offer a content analysis of the final conference statement, noting that terminology had changed during its final formulation, moving most notably from “nonresistance” (the topic of nearly every paper presented) to “the way of love,” starting to frame delegates’ thoughts on the state in terms of “the Lordship of Christ,” and not using the word “justice” in the final statement even though presenters and participants frequently used it. Concluding that “nonresistance” was an integral part of the gospel, they nevertheless framed a foundational statement that positioned them to engage the social order in particularly Mennonite terms while recasting its language. Driedger and Kraybill, Mennonite, 84-87.

¹³⁵ The MCs adopted their statement in 1951 as “A Declaration of Christian Faith and Commitment with Respect to War, Peace, and Nonresistance,” in Goshen, Indiana, August 23, 1951 at their 27th session of their [MC] General Conference. 1951 Mennonite General Conference Report, 48-49. MLA. The GCs adopted “A Christian Declaration on Peace, War, and Military Service,” in Portland, Oregon, August 22, 1953 at their 33rd general session. 1953 Report from General Conference, 269-271. MLA. See also Peachey, Mennonite Statements, 170-173 and 141-143.

July of 1970, he did so as one of the participants in another highly significant meeting, this one held the previous year in Turner, Oregon, and which had, in a surprise agreement reached by traditionalists and progressives, supported Vietnam-era conscientious objectors. It is difficult not to surmise that his recapitulation of the Winona Lake statement was designed to promote and reinforce a similar unity twenty years later.

Yet, within three years of the Winona Lake conference, it was apparent that not all of the Peace Section participants' brotherhoods accorded the same weight to the proceedings. Although the MCs, shortly followed by the GCs, passed resolutions that basically affirmed the conclusions about the connections between nonresistance and an extended view of peace, the MBs remained silent. Was this due to essential disagreements with or suspicion of anything promoted by the MCC Peace Section as will be evidenced later --- or is there is a different explanation? Neither Prieb nor Johnson offer an account of the historic meeting, nor does historian John A. Toews offer a direct analysis, but the latter suggests a reason for the reluctance to build on the inter-Mennonite efforts, at least among MBs in the United States:

Inter-Mennonite associations and activities of Mennonite Brethren are not as fully developed in the United States as in Canada because of a difference in historical experience. The Mennonite Brethren who came to Canada in the 1920's and later had been deeply involved in inter-Mennonite cooperation prior to their coming to the new world. However, the Mennonite Brethren who came to the United States in the 1870's had left Russia at the time when the scars of secession were barely healed. This difference in experience partly accounts for the difference in attitude toward inter-Mennonite cooperation in the two countries.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Toews, History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, 385. These comments are congruent with C. Henry Smith's analysis of the Mennonite Brethren who had remained in Russia after the emigrations of the 1870s. He saw their interactions with pietists from Germany as a "stimulating influence from abroad in the culturally isolated settlements of Russia [that] resulted in the Mennonite Brethren becoming pioneers in a number of areas: evangelism, missions, Sunday school work, publication, enterprises, the introduction of gospel songs (*Glaubensstimme*), etc. ... This is not equally true of the Chortitza Mennonite Brethren and those who came to America in 1874." Smith, 435-436. Since those who left Russia in the 1920s

As insightful as Toews' remarks are regarding the MB Canadians and their more cohesive culture as an explanation for the reluctance on the part of American MBs to be involved in cooperative efforts, they do not necessarily provide a complete picture. GC Mennonites in Kansas were largely drawn from the same ethnic strain of the MBs who came from Russia in the 1870s, yet Henry A. Fast (GC), who also derived from the same strands, was a staunch and eloquent promoter of the Hershberger analysis offered at Winona Lake. Young and exuberant, his formal comments recognized the scriptural and historical foundations of the conference and its statement, but also acknowledged the new lens of "witness" --- as part of Mennonite identity. Perhaps historian John A. Toews' later analysis and brief comments on the National Association of Evangelicals are instructive, particularly in light of the discussion addressed in later chapters that analyzes the heavy pressure of fundamentalism on both Mennonite Brethren and GC Mennonites in Kansas introduced in the 1920s and which continued to dog each through the remainder of the century. Although the MBs did not enact supportive resolutions on the MCC

almost entirely emigrated to Canada, this later wave of Mennonite Brethren, however conservative, were more aware of other groups in general, less isolated culturally, and more likely to view their co-religionists in a positive light. J.B. Toews, Russian émigré, churchman, seminary president, Winona Lake conference participant, and one of the first MBs to pursue a doctorate offers a different reason that presented a challenge, lamenting that "before the 1950s and 1960s the United States Mennonite Brethren had no scholars in theology who could articulate the fundamentals of their own Anabaptist heritage. ... throughout my ministry I have been troubled by the absence of historical perspective among Mennonite Brethren. Esteemed leaders and colleagues, though deeply committed to the Scriptures, do not connect our theological heritage to the Anabaptist origins in the sixteenth century." MBs did not have the men in place who could articulate and encourage Anabaptist commitments as did those among the GCs who nevertheless shared a common ethnic heritage. This deficit did not facilitate their adapting the Winona statement to their own brotherhood, nor did a conference decision in 1951 that badly fractured the MBs. J.B. Toews, *JB: A Twentieth-Century Mennonite Pilgrim* (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1995), 119-120, 188. One of Toews' sons, Paul Toews, became one of the historians charged with writing a volume in the 4-volume comprehensive history, *The Mennonite Experience series*, late in the twentieth century.

Peace Section work like the two larger groups, they continued to affirm their cooperation with the conservative inter-evangelical NAE and its stand over against the National Council of the Churches of Christ and its purported “modernism.” In important educational and missions work, they affirmed their affiliation with the NAE while quietly avoiding the explicit commitments to the inter-Mennonite and Anabaptist statements discussed at Winona Lake.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Former Civilian Public Service administrator Henry A. Fast warmly endorsed the Winona Lake conference in extended “remarks” he offered during the closing worship service on Sunday morning before the sermon. “I think we have kept our feet solidly on Scriptural ground all through. . . . Jesus Christ is supreme, the source of our hope and faith in a new mankind, and new men; and out of that only can come a new society and social order and world of peace. . . . Four hundred years have given us a mission; and I hope that out of this fellowship together, this study together, this praying together, there may come a Mennonite Church that will sense its responsibility much more clearly than it does now. . . . I hope that out of this conference will come a Mennonite Church . . . which will stimulate us all down the line for more clear-eyed and more consecrated and dedicated witness to the world that has lost its way and is going down stream.” Henry Fast, “Remarks,” in *Winona Lake Conference*, 140-141. John A. Toews, *History*, 387-388. Foreshadowing what would continue to be a sticking point with MCC, Toews identified the “initial impulse for affiliation with the NAE came from the Board of Foreign Missions which submitted a request for affiliation to the Committee of Reference and Counsel.” The proposal which passed the General Conference convention meeting in Dinuba, California in 1945 recommended the affiliation with the evangelical group in order: “(1) To support morally the stand against modernism. (2) To have in times of need an adequate representation for our Foreign Missions activities, in case our own institutions are unable to take care of this. (3) To remain in contact with evangelical efforts in the Sunday school work.” Thus, the MBs consolidated significant portions of their anticipated undertakings not with other Mennonites, but with conservative evangelicals, a position later explicitly and publicly applauded in statements made by the General Secretary in 1971. The tension resident in the historian’s careful hedging, near disclaimer of the expansive public accolades, however, followed in his wry comments that “This contribution, it might be noted here, Mennonite Brethren were able to make partly because of their association with MCC. The latter organization was able, for instance, to provide the personnel for NAE for relief work at Hue in South Vietnam. The relationship of Mennonite Brethren with both organizations, MCC and NAE, has from time to time created unique opportunities for a meaningful witness.” In 1994, theologian J.B. Toews echoed the assessment of MCC’s significance for the Mennonite Brethren Conference and its development of foreign missions in his comments on what would be the significant postwar meeting of 1948: “The second major decision [the first was in regard to accepting a South American delegation for membership] was the overture of Mennonite Central Committee to the Mennonite Brethren to accept the responsibility for the postwar relief program in Japan with the intent to make it a stepping stone toward a church-planting mission. The 1948 conference thus marked the beginning of the most effective church-planting program of the Mennonite Brethren in the post-

Nevertheless, Mennonite Brethren were not indifferent to the basic considerations raised by the Winona Lake conference and the MCC Peace Section. They were heavily invested in nonresistance as long as it focused on either relationships within church fellowships or in its classic interpretation regarding military service, concerns born out in extended discussions that were originally formalized in 1948 and extended well into the 1950s. Faced with the U.S. government's decision to reinstitute Universal Military Training (UMT), the MB General Conference (which represented both American and Canadian churches) had a rude awakening when its representatives went to Washington DC and met with members of the Department of Defense in late 1954. Attempting to meld the model of noncombatant service Mennonites had established in Russia early in the century, the spokesmen asked the military leaders to clarify how their brotherhood could serve in civilian noncombatant medical corps, thereby fulfilling the demands of the state for service, but doing so under non-military direction. The Pentagon representatives disabused the MBs of any such service. The delegation detailed the jarring encounter in a six-page article in the popular MB magazine, Gospel Messenger magazine:

Major Abel offered an analysis [that explained] the division between civil and military law in the structure of the United States government makes it impossible to consider any provisions for civilian units in the framework of the United States armed forces... [the other Pentagon officers] confirmed the conflict of structural

World War II period, the church in Japan." Toews, J.B., A Twentieth Century Mennonite Pilgrim, 143. MB former missionary and professor at Tabor College Jacob A. Loewen described, however, how MBs reacted to the Winona Lake conference decision that encouraged cooperative mission efforts that would foster an explicit peace witness. Only after a heated "campaign of opposition" by MBs ensued and several attempts over the course of the next year to mediate concerns failed, did the final issue manifest. MBs, in spite of their insistence that peace was an integral part of the gospel and "should not be separated from the gospel witness and the total discipling process," did not want to incorporate it in their evangelistic efforts. "It was only then that Mennonite Brethren delegates expressed their real concern: they feared that openly identifying peace issues with the message of evangelism would seriously reduce the number of converts." Jacob A. Loewen and Wesley J. Prieb, Only the Sword of the Spirit (Winnipeg, MB: Kindred Productions, 1997), 150-151.

principles between civil law and military law which makes the provisions for civilian units in the medical branch an impossibility. To consider such provision in the future would first require a basic change in the structural division of civil and military law, which is unlikely to happen in the framework of a democratic country.¹³⁸

They then pointedly explained that the purpose of the noncombatant medical corps was not to heal for the sake of healing, but --- in order to return men back into combat.

Lt. Col. Ahr explained that the primary mission of the medical service was to contribute to the success of military operations and the Department of Defense was responsible to guard this objective in the formulation of the governing principles affecting this branch. Saving lives and easing suffering are not mentioned is part of the mission of the medics. The Army Field Manual FM 8-10 states: “The mission of the medical service is to contribute to the success of the military effort through (a) conserving manpower ... (b) Preventing adverse effects of unevacuated casualties on combat efficiency....” [Rather, the medical corps existed to] “remov[e] every obstacle which so easily is created through wounded and suffering soldiers in the pursuit of the army’s assignment to destroy the enemy”... Not humanitarian concern, but the goal of quick recovery to fight again motivates the treatment of injured soldiers.¹³⁹

Finally, the delegation reported to its readers, “the conference with the officials in the Pentagon establishes several very clear principles ... the conscientious objector ... must face the issue that in spite of personal interpretations which he may attach to his participation ... from the standpoint of the army he is considered part of the combat operation.” Thus, to their chagrin, the delegation faced the fact that their brotherhood had established a policy six years earlier which had no real grounding in fact.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ “The Noncombatant and Conscience,” Gospel Messenger August 27, 1955, 116.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Excerpts from the article are also reprinted in Peachey, Statements, 36-37. Both MB historians John A. Toews and Paul Toews argue that the attempt to rescind evidenced poor decision-making. E.g. The former contends, “... the damage was done. The church had legitimized a restricted form of noncombatancy. An uninformed and ill-advised resolution, the conference learned, could be interpreted by its members and government officials ‘as an acceptance by the Conference of ... noncombatant service,’” Paul Toews, Mennonites, 239-240;

Thus, a week after the meeting in Washington, DC, the MB annual conference rescinded the now widely accepted resolution made in 1948. Backtracking from and overturning their earlier recommendation that MB draftees engage in noncombatant service continued to haunt the brotherhood's peace position throughout the 1950s. But behind the six-year struggle is a different question: why, after so much co-operation between Mennonite bodies prior to and during World War II, did MBs rush to enact a position of their own when the draft bill itself was not even final? Their own P.C. Hiebert had been instrumental in facilitating inter-Mennonite (and Historic Peace Church) action, and many young MBs entered Civilian Public Service (although many had also entered the military as either combatants or noncombatants). Were there now reasons not to work with other Mennonites? Or, were other forces at work?

Conflict, Creativity, Ethics: Interrogating “The Anabaptist Vision” in the Age of Consensus

American Mennonites were by no means in consensus. Many of their young men had turned from nonresistance and entered the military as either combatants or noncombatants in spite of the CPS alternative, a situation that was lamented and examined at length by leadership. Moreover, Civilian Public Service and the war had facilitated acculturation and movement out of the rural environments that had been seen by many as essential to the maintenance of identity. Other issues provoked such internal conflict and disagreement to the point that sociologist Fred

John A. Toews, *History*, 352-353. MBs were also floundering, both theologically and organizationally in the early 1950s, as demonstrated in the attempts first to address issues of fragmentation in 1951, tackle a crisis fomented by fundamentalism at Tabor College in 1951, and re-work conference structures in 1954 as described by J. B. Toews. Toews argues that the restructuring that deferred decisions about important vision documents to a congregational level thereby diminished larger discussions that fostered unity. Significantly, the process also diffused support for classic Mennonite positions in favor of those influenced by fundamentalism. J.B. Toews, *JB*, 118-120, 188-189.

Kniss observes that “conflict frequency ... peaked immediately following the war’s end..... The post-war conflict rate was about fifty percent greater than that during the war.” These issues are addressed elsewhere by historians, and it is sufficient to note that the conversations were active ones among ordinary Mennonites as well as those accorded more authority.¹⁴¹

At this point, the narrative could end and align itself with what has been characterized and remembered as the consensus culture of the 1950s. Increased church attendance and participation marked the era, as did a consensus among political liberals and conservatives about the threats of communism and atomic war. An expanding economy that included provisions for returning veterans generated optimism for many Americans, even with the struggles for civil rights sitting in the background. Elements of American fundamentalism had become more mainstream, in part through the “new Evangelicalism” and with the evangelistic crusades of Billy Graham against the backdrop of opposition to “godless communism.”¹⁴²

Mennonites, too, enjoyed postwar prosperity and there were increasing pressures in favor of acculturation and against nonconformity, with local congregations sometimes exerting pressure for change. Migration to the cities threatened those elements of identity that were grounded in rural life and isolation. For large numbers of Mennonites technology remained

¹⁴¹ Hershberger, Mennonite; Kniss, Disquiet, 69. Paul Toews, Mennonites, 184-228; Bush, Two, 129-187. Kniss argues that the ground between traditionalists and what he calls communalists was still contested, but that its tenor had changed from sharply worded personal attacks to a diffuse style of communication aided and abetted by the proliferation and use of committees. Thus, the development of organization actually facilitated a more intimate and cooperative brotherhood during the postwar period. Kniss, Disquiet, 63-83. Others have questioned whether or not these structures facilitated a dominance contrary to Anabaptist ethics and the debate remains an active one. Keim, Harold, 11-12.

¹⁴² George Marsden, The Twilight of Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief (New York: Basic Books, 2014) recognizes the standard consensus narrative and offers a counterpoint.

suspect, even as others in the Dutch-Russian stream embraced the use of English. Their decision-making structures were less like brotherhoods and more like denominations, in spite of concern about these adaptations. Yet, the threats raised by war and the challenges issued to situate themselves in a historical recovery of identity enabled Mennonites to discover and create a source of grounding that was essentially conservative, and yet open-ended enough to accept challenges. How they accomplished this juxtaposed concrete actions in concert with abstract ideas, both of which derived from their beliefs and from the thick Mennonite culture of tradition and community. They did so at the periphery of a society largely pleased with its position as victor, but uneasy with dissent, especially opposition that questioned nationalism.

Just because they were on the margins domestically did not mean they were invisible internationally. Mennonites were far from being vocal public dissenters, but the Cold War found them privately and communally contesting conformity to the national culture, particularly in regard to war. They did so through their acted theology of relief work and in their engagement with internal and external recapitulations of the nascent Anabaptist Vision. By the time the clusters of Mennonites met in the small town in Hillsboro, Kansas, to hear representatives of the church and the state, they had recast their relationship with government in general and called American nationalism to task in particular.¹⁴³

In March 1954, Senator Joseph McCarthy was formally condemned by the Senate after four years of red-baiting and questionable interrogations of not only government bureaucrats, but

¹⁴³ Sociologist Fred Kniss' application of social movement theory to several MC case studies explores how cultural resources (including ideas and culture used together) become powerful symbolic actors in social mobilization and change. Fred Kniss, "Ideas and Symbols as Resources in Intrareligious Conflict: The Case of American Mennonites," Sociology of Religion 57, no. 1 (1996), 7-23.

also high-profile cultural figures via his infamous House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Although he burst onto the scene in 1950, the anti-communist initiatives had already started with Truman's determination to invoke loyalty oaths within his administration, an initiative soon mirrored elsewhere. McCarthy's castigations before long stripped the State Department of its Far Eastern specialists, leaving a vacuum on Southeast Asia that would be regretted in hindsight more than a decade later.¹⁴⁴

But, the increasingly strident anti-communism affected pacifists who found themselves subjected to scrutiny and harassment and their dissent characterized as anti-American to a heightened degree. As a result, the peace witness and its interrogations about systemic violence in the Cold War ironically became the domain of the sectarians who had already been at the margins of society (however much some of them wished otherwise). Unlike the Quakers, the Catholic Workers, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Brethren who were willing to engage in politics, the Mennonites largely insisted on maintaining their distance from direct political involvement. But they engaged in the "acted theology" that expressed their identity, and, in doing so, they inadvertently positioned themselves for a unique witness during the Vietnam War in spite of their small numbers.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ James T. Patterson, Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 241-242.

¹⁴⁵ Regarding the pressures on non-sectarian pacifists and their marginalization, see DeBenedetti, Peace, 138-154. For example, the American Friends Service Committee published Speak Truth to Power in 1955. The book became a classic manifesto among pacifists that is still cited and used as a model for nonviolent dissent. Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence (Washington, DC: The American Friends Service Committee, 1955). Although Mennonites continued their discussions reified in "The Anabaptist Vision," Hershberger's work, the Winona Lake declaration, and their overseas work, much of it remained sectarian, out of the public eye in the early 1950s, as contrasted with the Quaker and Catholic Worker projects. Exceptions to this are the shared statements made by the Historic Peace Churches. The War Resisters League (WRL) is somewhat of an outlier in regard to

Reconstruction, Questioning, and Identification

Mennonites re-implemented their reconstructive and relief work in Europe and other war-torn areas even before the war had ended. Both young men and young women --- many of whom were bilingual --- hurried overseas. Again, their operations seemingly focused on helping their kindred, but also extended to assisting those who were not, with 90 percent expressly allocated to the latter. At first these were volunteers, some having already performed work via CPS, but over the next decade as the draft was reinstated (after a single year's hiatus in 1947 and the re-working of the Selective Service Act of 1948), men who were serving alternative service as I-Ws joined in the projects that ranged from direct welfare, hunger relief, and reconstruction to assisting refugees on a number of levels (including immigration). Relief work sponsored by MCC was heavily supported yet again by those at home in North America and continued to reinforce Mennonite identification with the suffering, particularly with refugees and displaced people. True to its reputation, the organization was one of the first to arrive and to mobilize early shipments of direct relief. For example, in 1946 and 1947, MCC ranked first among all authorized relief organizations in the total volume of supplies sent to postwar Germany, and fourth in 1948. The relief operations embraced by leadership and laity alike both cemented organizational structures and offered means to re-envision them.¹⁴⁶

McCarthyism. Many of its members were also religious sectarians and the organization had explicitly distanced itself from communism in its actions and policy statements. Nevertheless, it faced more pressure than the sectarian pacifist groups. Bennett, Radical, 173-203.

¹⁴⁶ Nearly 1600 men and women served in MCC projects from 1943-1954 in forty-five countries. That women comprised 41 percent of these numbers raises some interesting questions about their historical near-invisibility and both the actual and gendered nature of alternative service for Mennonite men. Paul Classen, "Statistics on Mennonite Central Committee Personnel," Mennonite Quarterly Review 44, no. 3 (July 1970), 324-329. Peachey, Mennonite, 66. The U.S. government refused aid to Germany during 1945, but after repeated appeals from voluntary organizations, allowed relief to be distributed via a single organization, CRALOG

Unintended Consequences & International Conversations: The *Concern* group (1952) & Puidoux (1955-1962)

A significant number of those who became future leaders in the brotherhoods were among these young aid workers, staying to pursue graduate work in European universities and obtaining doctorates in history, theology, biblical studies, and sociology. In both relief work and their studies they engaged suffering and the catastrophe of war, but with a heightened awareness of the blistering questions about the meaning of existence --- for example, regarding the

(Council of Relief Agencies Licensed for Operation in Germany) beginning in spring, 1946. MCC was one of eleven entities that comprised it and eventually focused its distributions in a 3:2:1 formula in the British, French, and American zones, respectively, with one-third of MCC workers in Europe assigned to Germany by the end of 1947. Krieder and Goossen, *Hungry*, 71-83. The couching of MCC service is a curious one. On the one hand, historian Robert Kreider, who directed MCC relief in Germany after WWII, raises a query consistent with his earlier comments at the Winona Lake conference in regard to the focus of Mennonite service through MCC: "To whom do we as Mennonites owe primary responsibility: our kinsmen or the stranger outside the gate? These issues were most urgent immediately following World War II when one had to allocate scarce resources between Mennonites in need and non-Mennonite in greater need." Robert Kreider, "The Impact of MCC Service on American Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 44, no. 3 (July 1970), 253. Yet, on the other hand, the picture painted in the popular history of MCC clearly explicates the varieties of assistance made to European Mennonites. The chapter by no means excludes the relief proffered to non-Mennonites, which historian James Enns' study clearly emphasizes. "Kreider could still assure the leaders of *Hilfswerk* [the Protestant group that distributed aid] that only 10% of all MCC aid was being earmarked specifically for German Mennonites while the remaining 90 per cent continued to be distributed among Germans 'without institutional prejudice.'" James Enns, *Saving Germany: North American Protestants and Christian Mission to West Germany, 1945-1974* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queens University Press, 2017), 68. In order to understand why and how MCC has become, in the words of theologian Ted Koontz, "the epitome of the Anabaptist vision," historian Lucille Marr of McGill University encourages a more critical evaluation of MCC history. In particular she raises essential questions about the sources of the aid itself and its frequent generation by Mennonite women, especially via largely marginalized "sewing circles." The process she explores is similar to that employed by Southern Baptist women whose "women's work" gave them the separation they needed to develop their own leadership, even as Mennonite women continued to subordinate theirs. Ted Koontz, "Commitments and Complications in Doing Good," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70, no. 1 (January 1996), 60 quoted in Marr, 47. Lucille, Marr, "The History of Mennonite Central Committee: Developing a Genre," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 23 (January 2015), 47-58.

Holocaust --- and the consequences of silence or withdrawal. Coupling their direct relief work in Europe with a larger intellectual engagement, they became participants in two larger conversations --- one that was internal to Mennonites and of their own creation and one that was external, largely due to the Historic Peace Church encounter with the World Council of Churches in 1948 that eventually resulted in the shared statement by the HPC issued six years later. Informing both were the challenges implicit in the Hershberger analysis that had started to envision addressing social problems within a two kingdom model, but which pushed the church toward engagement as a witness to the state and to the culture at large. Already considering Harold Bender's "Anabaptist Vision," and its validity across the disciplines, the young intellectuals faced the ironic contrast between a devastated Europe and their situation in the birthplace of Anabaptism when they met in Amsterdam in early 1952 for what was intended to be a two-week respite and theological retreat. The material result over nearly two decades was an eighteen pamphlet periodical issued as "Concern: A Pamphlet Series." The immaterial result was a challenge to "The Anabaptist Vision" and those who had endorsed it conducted through not only the publication of the monographs, but also via sometimes intense discussion and correspondence over their content. The first seven "founders" of what was called "Concern" or "the Concern movement," expanded and contracted over time to include many of the brightest male minds across the Mennonite spectrum.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ The Concern group had seven original participants, but expanded to include a wider circle beyond MC Mennonites. Founding members with their affiliations as of the first issue were: Irwin B. Horst (Amsterdam), John W. Miller (Goshen College, Goshen, IN), Paul Peachy (Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, VA), David A. Shank (Brussels), Orley Swartzentruber (Paris), and Calvin Redekop (Minneapolis). Later contributors who appear in the story of the three colleges in Kansas include Sol Yoder (Hesston College). Redekop also served at both Hesston and at Tabor College. Virgil Vogt, ed. The Roots of Concern: Writings on Anabaptist Renewal, 1952-1957 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

“Concern” was important for what it did and what it refused to do. For example, sociologist Paul Peachey who introduced each of the early issues in the series, declared that the Mennonite Church, for all of its attempts at nonconformity, had not only become institutionalized, but was in danger of creating the very thing it had opposed, a culture that was self-reinforcing rather than one of faithfulness:

On the one hand we were aware of the more complete discipleship of the early Christians coupled with a fervent expectancy of the Parousia, and on the other, with our own compromised life and at-home-ness in the world. In a similar vein we sensed the validity of the Anabaptist dissent and “exodus” as over against world conformity within church life coterminous with society, freedom, and necessity as expressed in the pneumatic church versus conformity and organization within the institutional church and the renewal and perpetuation of the true Christian community as compared to a church which becomes traditional or justifies the process of assimilation.¹⁴⁸

The central questions thus challenged, in Orley Swatzentruber’s words, not a *Corpus Christianum* but a *Corpus Mennonitum*, a contained culture that focuses inward for the sake of protection, but then becomes its own referent culture to the exclusion of its ability to be a witness to the world. The discussions were both theoretical and aimed at the practical leveraging of power within the brotherhood. As Peachey noted in the letter that accompanied the first Concern pamphlet, they were necessary because the leadership had tamped down discussion: “There has been little grass-roots communication, and all too often decisions relative to them are made either by one or two leaders or in haste by uninformed conference bodies.” Yet, the group repeatedly stressed that it was not intent on separating from the church or creating its own society. It simply wanted to engage the dicey questions about institutional formation, maintenance of a separated culture, assimilation, and the ability to be faithful under the pressures

¹⁴⁸ Paul Peachey, “Introduction,” Concern 1 (June 1954), 5-6.

to acculturate. In short, “Concern” wanted the church to tackle modernity. Its critiques and questions would inform students in the 1960s, whether through direct contact with the publication and its discussions, through the response of the old guard to its arguments, or through the men who became faculty in the Mennonite colleges and brought its interrogations and analyses with them.¹⁴⁹

What were called the Puidoux Conferences were rooted in the immediate postwar conversations initiated in 1948 by Brethren M.R. Ziglar between the Historic Peace Churches (HPC) and the newly formed World Council of Churches. Although the WCC had been interested earlier in pacifism in the immediate postwar years, by the mid-50s the HPC and the Fellowship of Reconciliation had come to the realization that they needed to hold their own discussions about the nature of the state. Beginning in 1955 and ranging until 1962, they did so, holding intense study sessions and interdisciplinary discussions, all conducted under the umbrella of “The Lordship of Christ Over Church and State” and building from their earlier collaboration that resulted in their collective statement on “Peace is the Will of God.” Reprising some of the same categories derived from the earliest encounter between the groups held in 1935 in Kansas and expanding on Brethren, Quaker, and Mennonite work pre- and postwar, the conferences incorporated not only foundational discussions of the last twenty years, but also the newer generation of scholars and churchmen (and, in the case of the Quakers, women). These

¹⁴⁹ “Concerning ‘Concern’” [undated letter to potential subscribers enclosed in first issue], in author’s possession. Paul Toews, “The Concern Movement: Its Origins and Early History,” *Conrad Grebel Review* 8 (Spring 1990), 109-126. Regarding not forming a separate body, *Ibid.*, 120. An undercurrent running throughout the early “Concern” issues that focused on the corruption inherent in the creation of institutions is reminiscent of the work by French sociologist Jacques Ellul, a connection that needs to be explored further, especially in light of the use of Ellul by Thomas Merton and other antiwar voices in America in the 1960s who attempted to reconcile Christian faith with social disruption.

extended interactions evidence a serious theological engagement with the state, contrary to the pejorative assessments later levelled particularly against American Quakers and the Fellowship of Reconciliation in their antiwar Cold War protests. Because non-pacifist groups were included in the discussions, the conferences “developed rather as perhaps the first serious theological conversation since the Reformation era between the original Protestant traditions in Europe and the ‘radical Reformation.’” For Mennonites, the intergenerational consultations were consistent with their ongoing thinking about nonresistance, peace, and identity, both deriving from the work they had started on the nature of church and state relationships and contributing to its further development which would soon coalesce. But the intergenerational work also had more direct results, particularly through the paper presented by young MC John Howard Yoder, an MCC worker, participant in “Concern,” and student of neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth at Basel. Yoder’s paper, “The Theological Basis of the Christian Witness to the State,” coupled with work back in the United States by GC Elmer Neufeld at the MCC conference on “Christian Responsibility and the State” in 1957 demonstrated that many Mennonites were far from their previous self-protective sectarian stance, even if their theology remained restrained, traditional, and largely public only through their actions focused on the relief of suffering. How theology and the life of the brotherhoods manifested in Cold War America was now on the table. Mennonites soon had their chance to confront their own theology, encounter a new version of relief work in the service of American empire, and face the hot climate of anti-communist rhetoric.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ The Puidoux Conferences took place in Puidoux, Switzerland (1955), Iserlohn, Germany (July-August 1957), Bièvres, France (August 1960), and Oud Poelgeest, The Netherlands (July 1962), with MCC sponsoring Mennonite participation and providing financial support to the conferences. See Durnbaugh for selected keynote addresses, papers, overviews, declarations and related meetings. Durnbaugh, On Earth. Regarding a developmental timeline

Church and State in America

The Lordship of Christ & Witnessing to the State

Mennonites now had the pieces for a larger theological paradigm that could attend to the cultural issues that they believed they could not ignore. In addition to the stark reality of warfare, the injustices faced by African Americans had drawn Hershberger and others into close conversations with those who suffered, a category that called for empathy, if not address --- and which resonated easily with categories Mennonites already understood. Using the peace thinking that included the work at Puidoux, the MC Mennonites concluded that God had created a standard of righteousness for both church and state. The state still had its domain and the church was not to attempt to Christianize it, but it was also not to ignore injustice. Thus, the church was not only charged with *being* a witness, but with *acting* as a witness --- thereby calling the state to account for its activities. Historian Perry Bush analyzes the detailed discussions of the MC Peace Problems Committee which wrestled with the new conception of the two kingdoms. Integrating the theological work from Puidoux which pushed for a Lordship over both church and state with

that includes subcommittees, study groups, and auxiliary discussions, note John Howard Yoder's recapitulation. John Howard Yoder, "40 Years of Ecumenical Theological Dialogue Efforts on Justice and Peace Issues by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the 'Historic Peace Churches': A Chronology," in A Declaration on Peace: In God's People the World's Renewal Has Begun, ed. Douglas Gwyn et al. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991), 93-105. Paul Peachey, "Puidoux Conferences," in Global Anabaptist Encyclopedia Online [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Puidoux Conferences](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Puidoux_Conferences) (accessed July 31, 2017); Yoder's paper is available in Durnbaugh, On, 136-143. For Yoder, the separate orders remained intact, but the response to the orders were different. "The moral law included even the state, and so it was obligated to say yes to God. Still it would not say yes in the same way the church should say yes. Since the Lordship of Christ extended over both realms, both could be held accountable, but not in the same way." Paul Toews, Mennonites, 264-265. Young participants who brought these new understandings directly to their work in three Kansas colleges included two future deans at Bethel College, William Keeney and Albert Meyer.

the long-held Mennonite view of the “Lordship of Christ” over the church was no easy task. He recounts the tension:

Some of the participants thought the entire shift too radical, expressing concern that the new paradigm would “baptize” the social order” and erase the traditional Mennonite distinction between the two kingdoms. In fact, a leading dissenter to the breakthrough was the most influential Mennonite Church leader of his generation, Harold S. Bender. Metzler later recalled him “reluctantly dragging his feet” on the Lordship of Christ language during the discussions until he was prodded by two old reliable conservative allies. John E. Lapp and Lancaster bishop Amos Horst pitched their appeal in the ultimate legitimation for theological reshaping, the standard of biblical authority. “Bro. Bender, the young men have brought us Biblical teaching,” they pled, “and we want to be Biblical, don’t we.”¹⁵¹

The MC Peace Problems Committee’s decision to re-work their “A Declaration of Christian Faith and Commitment with Respect to War, Peace, and Nonresistance” approved at the annual conference in 1951, resulted in a new statement that cannily built on the old. By explicitly stating that the new statement simply elaborated on a “fuller understanding of the meaning of [the] obligation to witness,” the newly minted “The Christian Witness to the State” garnered almost no opposition, even from the Lancaster and Virginia conservatives.

At this time we would give special attention and further expression [to the earlier declaration that stated] “we acknowledge our obligation to witness to the powers-that-be of the righteousness which God requires of all men, even in government, and beyond this to continue in earnest intercession to God on their behalf.” The decade since these words were spoken has been given to search for a fuller

¹⁵¹ Although the following chapters will explore the intersections between civil rights advocacy and antiwar protest, Mennonites had, particularly with Hershberger’s work and that of GCs Leland Harder and Vincent Harding, already become involved in African American issues. For example, MCC had established a CPS camp that became a thirty-year project in Gulfport, Mississippi, that involved over 400 voluntary service workers over its tenure. David Haury, The Quiet Demonstration: The Mennonite Mission in Gulfport, Mississippi (Newton,KS: Faith and Life Press, 1979). Perry Bush’s nuanced research untangles the correspondence, meetings, and conversations regarding the MC Peace Problems subcommittee work, its implications for the political theology of the two kingdoms, and its careful formalization through MC structures of approval, the latter evidencing how widespread the eventual consensus was. Bush, Two, 200-203.

understanding of the meaning of this obligation. What is the basis of the Christian witness to the state? What is the character of that witness? And in what manner is it to be given? In addition to its reaffirmation of our historic nonresistant faith, therefore, the present statement seeks to find helpful answers to these questions and to set forth certain positive convictions concerning the Christian obligation to witness to the state.¹⁵²

While maintaining a two kingdom theology, but building on the Lordship of Christ discussions, the statement now recognized that challenging government to “find the highest possible values within their own relative frames of reference” was not only acceptable but essential witness. The church could rightfully challenge government regarding injustice --- and war itself.¹⁵³

By 1962 when the largest inter-Mennonite meeting ever held assembled for the Mennonite World Conference in Kitchener, Ontario, the phrase --- which no Mennonite could reasonably contest --- was the conference title. With 12,207 registered participants and thousands of unregistered attendees, at least twenty-five countries were represented under the rubric “The Lordship of Christ” and its multiple Bible studies, formal lectures, inspirational events, and discussion sessions. American Mennonite Brethren finally appeared as active participants, with Tabor College Acting President Wesley Prieb, Hillsboro minister Marvin Hein, J.B. Toews (who was on the cusp of assuming a position on the Fresno Pacific College faculty) and Christian Leader editor Orlando Harms joining their co-religionists as presenters on cultural and educational themes. The event was judged a success, even by some of the most conservative

¹⁵² AMC, I-3-5.II PPC, Guy F. Hershberger file, Minutes and Reports 1923-1965, Box 59, Folders 59/35 1959, 59/36 1960. Also reprinted in Peachey, Statements, 10.

¹⁵³ Bush, Two, 200-203.

elements among American Mennonites who nevertheless recognized and approved of Anabaptist identity, even as they lamented that “a real unity in doctrine and walk is sadly lacking.”¹⁵⁴

Mennonite Relief and Tiptoes of American Empire. Vietnam

If Mennonite relief efforts in Europe after the two world wars could be characterized as self-serving, their critics, had they known of a different venture on the other side of the world, were disabused of their cynicism. In August 1954, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was the first North American Protestant relief organization to enter the country on the heels of the French defeat at Dienbienphu and their exit from Vietnam in May. During the rest of the decade, Mennonites in the United States received a regular stream of news about Vietnam, initially focused on relief for the hundreds of refugees pouring from what had been designated as North Vietnam, and routinely published in denominational popular magazines and circulars. Again, Mennonites poured supplies into the country, trusting MCC workers to administer it “in the name of Christ,” and responding with different kinds of supplies when initial shipments did not match the daily diet of the Vietnamese.

As MCC deliberated over how best to meet long-term needs in Vietnam, it shifted some of its attention to medical services, collaborating with Christian and Missionary Alliance medical missionaries at the CMA leprosarium near Ban Me Thuot in the highlands beginning in 1957. MCC physician Willard Kraybill accepted appointment there and worked earnestly, but the

¹⁵⁴ MBs did not officially approve participation in the Mennonite World Conference until 1951, and even when they re-affirmed participation in 1954, their endorsement did not reflect an interest in mutual sharing and learning, according to John A. Toews. John A. Toews, *History*, 396-398. Although they terminated their membership in the National Association of Evangelicals in 1950 because of its political work, MBs nevertheless continued to support NAE financially and occasionally proffered delegates to its conventions. They renewed their membership in 1968. Paul Toews, *Mennonites*, 222. James A. Goering, “Reflections on the 1962 Mennonite World Conference,” *The Sword and Trumpet* Third Quarter (1962), 10.

realities of the escalation of the war as the United States increased its presence from 700 to 12,000 “advisors” in mid-1962 were soon felt. On May 30, 1962, Mennonite Pax man Daniel Gerber and two others were abducted by twelve Viet Minh guerrillas who ransacked the compound for medical supplies, clothing, and equipment. In spite of early reassurances in the Mennonite press regarding the safety of the three, none were ever released. The incident hinted at the entanglements MCC had encountered. Although the missionaries who were not harmed during the raid were told by the guerrillas to leave, not return, and to turn operation of the leprosarium over to the Vietnamese, they were able to return only with the proviso of the provincial governor that they have military personnel in the compound. The incident remained a live one for Mennonites.¹⁵⁵

What the congregations did not know were the stories behind the relief efforts, including the corruption of Vietnamese leaders, the struggles not to be used by the U.S. government in propaganda, and the varied reactions and political commitments of the missionaries from both Mennonite and other denominations. But MCC’s Executive Committee and officers knew --- and how they knew is covered in the following chapter about Tabor College. While Mennonites in general likely comprehended far more about Vietnam and the early stages of the war than the ordinary American, MCC possessed knowledge that informed Mennonite statements on church and state. It also positioned Mennonites not only to question the state of affairs in Vietnam, but to deny the narrative argued by the American government.

¹⁵⁵ “No Word on Kidnaped [sic] Workers in Vietnam,” The Gospel Herald, 55, no. 27 (July 3, 1962): 607. The other two workers were Archie Mitchell and Dr. Eleanor A. Vietti.

International Claims, Anti-communist Rhetoric, the Challenge of Communism and the Challenge of Nationalism (1961)

Although Western District GC Mennonites had first explicitly mulled over and formulated a statement on communism in the mid-30s and MCC had explicitly distanced itself from the essentially and “consciously materialistic” claims of the ideology, the MC Mennonites were the first to issue a thorough study which built on earlier MC declamations issued in 1937 and 1951. A year before the Hershey-Brunk forum in Kansas, and informed by not only the complex picture evidenced by the Puidoux meetings but also the reports coming through MCC about the burgeoning conflict in Vietnam, the Conference issued its wide-ranging statement, “Communism and Anti-Communism.” Meeting in August 1961 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, at the same annual conference which had approved the new statement on “The Christian Witness to the State,” and building from both practical experience and theological reflection, the MC Mennonite General Conference recognized a more complex picture behind the ideology. It therefore advocated for a more extended analysis of the problems of communism while incorporating a sharp critique of systemic issues --- and American nationalism. The result was far from the anti-communist rhetoric that infused much of Cold War American Christianity.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ David E. Settje, *Faith and War: How Christians Debated the Cold and Vietnam Wars*. (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Andrew Preston. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*. New York: Knopf, 2012; Axel R. Schafer, ed. *American Evangelicals and the 1960s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); Rick L. Nutt, *Toward Peacemaking: Presbyterians in the South and National Security, 1945-1983* (Huntsville: University of Alabama Press, 1994); Warren L. Vinz, *Pulpit Politics: Faces of American Protestant Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997).

Recalling the positions held in the earlier statements of 1937 and 1951, the new pronouncement first “reaffirm[ed] our commitment to our Biblical and historic nonresistant faith,” and emphasized the previous assertions:

1. Our love and ministry must go out to all, whether friend or foe.
2. While rejecting any ideology which opposes the Gospel or seeks to destroy the Christian faith, we cannot take any attitude or commit any act contrary to Christian love against those who hold or promote such views, but must seek to overcome their evil and win them through the Gospel.
3. If our country becomes involved in war, we shall endeavor to continue to live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty and avoid joining in any wartime hysteria of hatred, revenge, and retaliation.¹⁵⁷

Yet, now in late summer of 1961, the MC General Conference moved beyond its earlier enjoiners to live simply in its identifiable trope as “the peaceful people in the land” to something (close to a strategy) that encompassed a more deliberate reckoning. On the one hand, the statement emphasized the dangers lurking in various materialistic ideologies and the need to understand and intelligently oppose them:

That we inform ourselves thoroughly and intelligently on the evils of all atheistic ideologies and practices and all materialistic philosophies of whatever character.

Yet, on the other hand, using a clear a reference to the Gospel of loving the enemy, the Conference emphasized that simply residing as people of peace was not enough to be faithful. Faithfulness included direct acts of mercy, even toward a “reputed enemy”:

That we must be faithful and effective in our witness against those ideologies and philosophies (a) through the truth of the Gospel; and (b) through works of mercy which demonstrate the way of love which the Gospel proclaims, *even the feeding of our reputed enemies* [italics mine]

¹⁵⁷ AMC, I-3-5.II PPC, Guy F. Hershberger file, Minutes and Reports 1923-1965, Box 59, Folders 59/41 1961, 39/45 1962, reprinted in Peachy, Mennonite Statements, 20-21.

Since MCC's relief work in Vietnam was a well-known project that now had been in place for seven years, the point was clear. Refusing to minister to those who might be enemies was not an option and the MC General Conference Mennonites were not going to choose recipients of aid based on ideology. Moreover, the emerging picture might be a more complex one for both the faithful and those to whom they might offer help. Continuing its self-described "positive" points of action, the statement urged both a courageous willingness to "proclaim all the implications of the Gospel in human life even at the risk, if need be, of being misunderstood and falsely accused" and a gentle, yet pointed, emphasis on a bigger picture regarding more systemic issues:

That we urge upon governments such a positive course of action as may help to remove the conditions which contribute to the rise of communism, and which tend to make people vulnerable to communistic influence.

Moving to what it labeled the negative commitments, the Conference then first emphasized the dangers of communism ("we recognize the incompatibility of Christianity and atheistic communism and the challenge to the cause of Christ which the latter represents") and in no uncertain terms repudiated its downfall through Christian witness and not by violence. Yet, there was also no room for either nationalism or for the violent speech or hatred that created a "holy war." Without naming names, the Conference thus repudiated not only the kind of anti-communist campaigns such as Billy James Hargis and former Major General Edwin Walker were promoting in Operation Midnight Ride but also even the widely quoted comments by evangelist Billy Graham. "Negatively we understand our commitment to mean," continued the document,

That we cannot equate Christianity with any particular economic or political system, or with Americanism. Accordingly we cannot accept the view that to be anti-communist is therefore necessarily to be Christian, or that to exercise Christian love toward communist persons is therefore unnecessarily to be pro-communist. That although we teach and warn against atheistic communism we cannot be involved in any anti-communist crusade which takes the form of a "holy war" and employs distortion of facts, unfounded charges against persons

and organizations, particularly against fellow Christians, promotes blind fear, and creates an atmosphere which can lead to a very dangerous type of totalitarian philosophy. That our word of warning must go out particularly against the current use of the pulpit, radio, and the religious press, in the name of Christianity, for this purpose.¹⁵⁸

By calling its people to its historic nonresistance and Biblical faith, the Conference not only emphasized its nonconformity with a world of hatred, but by underscoring love's concrete application to distant enemies, it also enlarged the brotherhood's own "public" square. Church missionary endeavors and MCC relief work had already begun stretching its obligational sphere beyond a simple and localized ministry to suffering co-religionists who were Mennonites, and moved through work on behalf of victims of war. But this latest statement, interjected into the midst of Cold War fear and national distraction called for a consistent rejection of both harm to enemies and the means that were being employed to generate hatred --- and particularly those means that issued from the pulpit, the religious press, and radio.

Harold Bender was among those at the Conference, and, in addition to the weight he normally carried among his co-religionists, he also brought conversations which were taking place internationally to the denominational table. Drawing from the wide connections made through the Puidoux conferences, and increasingly solicited for their positions on peace, Quakers, Brethren, and Mennonites were now part of larger discussions designed to promote East-West dialogue rather than contributing to national tensions. When the MC General Conference met and issued its statement, it did so not only out of its own peace convictions, but because it had stepped into a more public forum designed to wrestle with issues that in the past had been beyond Mennonite purview. Sandwiched between the significant All-Christian Peace

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 21.

Assembly held in Prague in June 1961 and a colloquy between fourteen Americans and twenty-six Europeans (including a sizeable wedge of twenty participants from Iron Curtain countries) held in Karlsbad in January 1962, the Mennonites, through members of the Peace Problems Committee of MCC, had been incorporated into larger church circles. Reflecting on the nearly seven hundred delegates and official observers who attended the meetings in Prague, Bender emphasized to members of his tradition and also to the larger readership of the publication of American mainline Christianity, *The Christian Century*, that national boundaries were not foremost in mind and urged Americans not to embrace nationalism. “There are real Christians on both sides who are not dragging their banners in the dust,” he asserted. Bender would die eight months later at the age of fifty-six, one day before the Hershey-Brunk forum at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas.¹⁵⁹

On the Cusp of the Public War --- Tracking and Defusing Dissent (The Hershey-Brunk Forum)

Particular Notes on Mennonites in Kansas

For all of the work that centers on their being the “peaceful people,” Mennonites in Kansas carried a burden that few in the early generations fully appreciated. Despite their long years of displacement as refugees and their long cultural memory of persecution, abandonment, and, especially for those who would follow after the Russian Revolution, Mennonites in Kansas built their early legacy off of what had been stripped out of the hands of others. Hustled through

¹⁵⁹ Keim, Harold, 490-491. Quakers A.J. Muste and Douglas Steere and Harold Row of the Church of the Brethren had also been instrumental in the planning stages, Muste as the representative of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Other American Mennonites who participated in the assembly in Prague included MC intellectual and theologian John Howard Yoder, and GC Peter Dyck (MCC Europe representative), who, along with Bender were MCC Peace Section representatives.

the hands of speculators, including the railroads, the Cheyenne had treated with the U.S. government to move to the confluence of the *Elcah* (Little Arkansas River) and the *Ute-cha-og-gra* (Arkansas River) at the present site of Wichita. Two years later, the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Treaty coupled with the Drum Creek Treaty of 1868 managed the removal of the Cheyenne and Osage --- and the favorable sale of the eight million acres of native lands for twenty cents per acre. Six days after the Osage departed for Indian Territory (Oklahoma), Wichita was incorporated.¹⁶⁰

One year later, in 1871, the first Swiss-South German Mennonites arrived and settled in McPherson and Marion Counties. Within two years, the Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad brought Dutch-Russian Mennonites emigrating from Russia to settle on land managed and sold by the Santa Fe Railroad. Harvey, McPherson, and Marion counties were soon populated with a people whose tribal story was one of repeated movement, persecution and exile. According to Hesston College historian John Sharp, “there is little if any evidence that these Mennonites sensed any guilt or complicity for the dispossession of the First Americans.”¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Historian John Sharp has ably teased out the details of the first Mennonite settlers in central Kansas who purchased land northwest of Wichita in 1871 and laid the foundations of what would become Hesston, Kansas. His analysis, built in part on the work of Craig Miner, particularly contextualizes the sad irony of the occupation of land recently dispossessed of native peoples and re-occupied by those whose history included loss, displacement, and persecution. This situating of the Kansas Mennonites is indebted to him for this insightful groundwork. It is particularly poignant to read the words of poet Simon J. Ortiz and his specific mention of Mennonites as “simple enough,” but who became liars and thieves. John E. Sharp, *A School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009* (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2009), 29-38.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

Particular Notes on the Hershey-Brunk Forum

The Hershey-Brunk forum that took place on September 22, 1962 was certainly the strangest inter-Mennonite gathering that had ever occurred among the Kansas brethren. The introduction to this analysis already describes the numbers of people that appeared, the composition of the crowds, the festive hospitality surrounding Hershey's welcome, and the basic remarks made by the two speakers --- General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of the Selective Service, and Rev. George R. Brunk II, a popular evangelist of the MC Mennonite Church.¹⁶²

What has not been assessed is how atypical the event was in many ways for both the speakers and the audience. Hershey had never met with a large group of Mennonite laity. As Director of Selective Service, he had met at length with various Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker delegations, Historic Peace Church group representatives, individual leaders, and those associated with the National Service Board of Religious Objectors (NSBRO). Interviewed at length by Grant Stoltzfus of Eastern Mennonite University, he exuded his usual folkish charm, just as he had in meeting after meeting with members of the Historic Peace Churches prior to and during World War II. The general loved to tell stories and frequently disarmed his listeners by his extensive spinning of yarns sprinkled with jokes. He wore his rank lightly, yet authoritatively, when working with the Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren, yet he could be deadly sharp. Rev. Brunk, on the other hand, was a personable, yet serious conservative whose publication, the somewhat incongruously named, The Sword and Trumpet, could be depended upon to level accusations against the intrusions of modernism and any potential violations of

¹⁶²Lewis B. Hershey, "Survival and Religious Freedom," September 22, 1962, transcript, private collection. George R. Brunk, "Survival and the Christian Witness," September 22, 1962, transcript, private collection.

nonconformity. Wearer of the plain coat, Brunk II was, however, somewhat of a polymath who flew his own plane cross-country to appear at forums (such as this one) or to expedite the tent revivals that unfurled from semi-trucks in voluminous amounts of canvas. Enormously popular among Mennonite Brethren who loved a good revival, he normally did not address nonresistance, even though he strictly supported it as an essential identifier of a disciple of Christ. A MC Mennonite with a formidable capacity for hard work, he was also a man who had both a strict interpretation of the two kingdoms, and no tolerance for any governmental attempt to manage the individual conscience.¹⁶³

A few months before he and other Mennonite leaders met with evangelist Billy Graham in Philadelphia to solicit his counsel on evangelism and to encourage his recognition of nonresistance as a belief at the heart of Christianity, MB Dwight Wiebe talked with General Hershey about making a visit to the Midwest for a meeting like that that took place at Tabor College. As Director of the Christian Service Board which counseled and aided placement of MB conscientious objectors in I-W service, Wiebe was highly interested in anticipating wartime demands on objectors. Moreover, having recently vacated a position at MCC that supervised the vetting of I-W institutions and placements and having access to the carefully protected direct reports being made by MCC workers, Wiebe was fully conscious of what many were not --- the escalating war in Vietnam. When Hershey traveled to Topeka to meet with the state Selective Service officers, Wiebe followed up with a phone call to re-issue the invitation. Within days, the

¹⁶³ Wiebe explained that Brunk was chosen because of his “stature in our conference would enhance his message.” Dwight Wiebe, Letter to J. Harold Sherk, November 8, 1962. Private collection in possession of the author. In addition to being director of NSBRO, Sherk was a Mennonite Brethren in Christ minister who hailed from Canada.

Director of NSBRO, J. Harold Sherk, had finalized arrangements, somewhat to Wiebe's surprise.¹⁶⁴

As the evidence suggests, Wiebe's invitation was more than routine, even though he was an eager director highly interested in meaningful placement of his men. But documentation also raises questions about Hershey's reasons for coming. Belying the laid back, populist touch he applied to the mass meeting, evidence exists that suggests Mennonites and Brethren in Kansas were under heavy scrutiny by the Selective Service during the Cold War, although there is no evidence to suggest any particularly calculated reason for Hershey's appearance.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ To date, no memo has been discovered that indicates a particular targeting of potential hot spots of potential resisters. Yet, evidence in the Hershey files bolstered by a Hershey scholar and an emeritus archivist at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, strongly suggests that Kansans, including large populations of Mennonites (including Amish) and Brethren, were under particular scrutiny. Both emeritus professor of history James Zimmerman of Trine University and archivist David Keough of the Army War College warned me that the Hershey files were a "disaster," described as a truckload of disorganized papers which were, in the opinion of each, one of the worst projects to befall an archivist (or, in Zimmerman's case, a newly appointed history assistant professor charged with processing what occupied an entire room on campus at Hershey's alma mater, Trine (then Tri-State University)). Yet, after working in the files for the better part of a week, I discovered the Kansas files, impeccably neat, ordered, and organized to the county level. Conscientious objectors and other potentially troublesome individuals were identified by each draft board, and accompanied by detailed descriptions. Perhaps Major Junior Elder, Kansas Selective Service Director was an unusually organized individual, but the clearly organized files with their repeated reports on conscientious objectors, Anabaptist congregations, and members of those congregations begs for explanation, particularly since Marion and Harvey counties were two of the U.S. counties most heavily populated by Mennonites, and McPherson contained both a heavy concentration of Brethren and significant numbers of Amish and Mennonites, all of whom considered members of the Historic Peace Churches. Moreover, within his "Trips and Visits, 4 April-22 September 1962 Box," the Brunk-Hershey event merited its own distinctively labeled file, "9/22/62 Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas," the only individually denoted file. Lewis B Hershey Papers (hereafter LBH), Trips and Visits, 4 April-22 September 1962, unnumbered box, MHI. James Zimmerman, Emeritus Professor of History, Trine University, conversation with author, Angola, Indiana, July 21, 2009; David Keough, Archivist-Historian, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Army War College, conversation with author, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, July 23, 2009. Hershey's datebook, in spite of his detailed folder on the Tabor College event, only specifies that he will be in Newton, with a

Thus, as the representatives of the church and of the state met in what was a widely anticipated event, the thoughts of key individuals remain largely cloaked. For the listeners, who included Mennonites from as far away as Nebraska, the local community and those who attended, taught or supported the three Mennonite colleges, their loyalties were soon tested by not only a long undeclared war, but also by the perception that dissent was a profoundly un-American activity. How they experienced the challenge and why they chose certain strategies and actions depended on a variety of variables, including their adherence to Anabaptism, the pressures from their local communities, their embrace of nationalism, and --- in some cases --- their ambivalence.

meeting the prior day with the Selective Service representatives in Wichita. His other calendar leaves the day blank. Ibid.

PART I: FLYING THE FLAG WHILE LEADING PROTEST

Chapter 2 -- Bethel College and the Definition of Public Patriotism

Prelude

Bethel College had always flown the American flag. From the opening of the school in 1896, when it accepted the banner as a gift from Newton townspeople, the institution had kept it flying. Administrator David Goertz, however, had explicitly defined how the college viewed the donation. He made it clear in the letter addressed to the local women who had donated the flag that the college viewed it as “an emblem of liberty and freedom, of national unity and independence rather than as a battle flag.” He further emphasized that for those Mennonites who had come from Russia, the flag was a distinct symbol of religious freedom. Originally placed on top of the administration building, it was eventually moved to a tall flagpole next to its former home. It flew constantly during the Vietnam War, except on October 13, 1969 during an anti-war moratorium. But it was firmly in place, perhaps paradoxically, in spite of the campus’s reputation for protest from 1965 to 1975 and the flag-burning that accompanied anti-war demonstrations throughout the nation.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ David Goertz, Document addressed To the Ladies of the Bethel College Bell Club. David Goertz Papers. Mennonite Library and Archives / Mennonite Church USA Archives, North Newton, KS (hereafter MLA) MS.27, folder 16, box 2, quoted in “The Bethel Flag,” Gleanings from the Threshing Floor: Newsletter of the Mennonite Library and Archives, October 2004, no. 6. MLA. Goertz was one of the founders of Bethel College and served as its business manager in its early years. James C. Juhnke, email message to author, October 31, 2008. Juhnke is emeritus professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, KS. I am indebted to archivist John Thiessen and assistant archivist Jim Lynch of the Bethel College MLA for the primary documents they suggested and provided throughout this study.

As historian Keith Sprunger emphasizes, Bethel College intentionally promoted itself as the college that was at the crossroads of America. Early advertising campaigns emphasized this distinction, not only as a means of reflecting that it lay geographically near the center of the United States, but, more significantly, that it occupied a special location “at the center, at the intersection or focal point, at the point of decision.”¹⁶⁷ The first Mennonite college established in America, the school embodied the hopes and dreams of its founders, even as its early creation also contained tensions that would continue to hound it nearly one hundred years later. Building off of the earliest attempt to found a college, the Wadsworth Mennonite Seminary in Ohio (1868-1878), and then a preparatory school that planted in 1883 in Halstead, Kansas, the infusion of Mennonite settlers that arrived in the 1870s soon gave urgency to the creation of a college. Although Mennonite suspicion of higher education was prevalent, progressives pressed the culturally and economically diverse assortment of immigrants to seize the opportunity to situate themselves fully in the new land. Establishing a school was not simply for the sake of education, but to preserve the faith.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Keith Sprunger, Bethel College of Kansas, 1887-2012 (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2012), 1.

¹⁶⁸ The preparatory school started in rural Kansas near Goessel, a community roughly ten miles north of North Newton where Bethel was founded. After moving to Halstead, it functioned as the Halstead Mennonite Seminary (*Mennonitische Fortbildungsschule*) until 1893. Ibid., 1-17; Haury, Prairie, 81-109. Historian David Haury explains that, although the large groups that emigrated from Russia in the 1870s appear homogenous, there were actually eight different European Mennonite ethnic streams that relocated into Kansas within that movement. With some stark differences in economic and social status, they nevertheless overcame their differences enough to found the Kansas Conference of the General Conference Mennonites, the forerunner to the Western District Conference. This is a necessary simplification. Ibid., 25-59 and, particularly, 81-82 for an explanation of organizational lineage.

There is little indication that these optimistic immigrants had any sense about the dispossession of the Native Americans who had only recently been forced out of Kansas into Oklahoma, a point that both Sprunger and Hesston College historian John Sharp discuss. Instead, they eagerly seized upon the opportunities that the prairie seemed to afford. As Sprunger emphasizes in his treatment of Bethel's founding stories, the school's optimism paralleled that of nineteenth-century white settlers. The college only started to recognize its pre-history in the 1940s and, even then, re-mapped the Mennonite vision of rural wholesomeness and sectarian worthiness onto its own origins myth. He observes, for example, how easily the traces of the Chisholm Trail could be incorporated without irony into the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Mennonite migration and engraved on a monument funded by faculty and students in 1949. The marker read,

Beaten hard by the hoofs of millions of Texas cattle, the Chisholm Trail, from 1867 to 1871, wound northwest past the knoll on which Bethel College was established. Newton became the notorious "cow capital" of the west ... Santa Fe railroad agents and government officials sought farmers to settle in Harvey County and build homes, churches and schools ... So in the wake of the cowboys and their six-shooters came Mennonites with their plows and turkey red wheat. The trail lined with the bleaching bones of longhorns gave way to the railroad and wheatfields destined to become a breadbasket of the world.¹⁶⁹

This identity as useful farmers who contributed to American well-being --- and even that of the world at large --- offered a resilient vision that enabled the school's founders to persist in spite of numerous difficulties. Cajoled into moving the would-be college into Newton by a funding proposal that never quite came to fruition, Bethel's founders nevertheless chartered the school in 1887, cobbled together a small, but persistent faculty that taught its first classes in 1893, and then

¹⁶⁹ Sprunger, *Bethel*, 7. Sprunger incorporates the analyses of historians James Sherow and Craig Miner on the domestication of the prairie grasslands and their ready incorporation into global markets to situate the Kansas Mennonites.

weathered internal disputes and external challenges to establish a first-rate college early in the twentieth century.

In the process, they created a system of independent board governance, rather than one dependent on the Kansas Conference brotherhood, and entered a relationship with the city of Newton that would prove alternately to be fulfilling and frustrating. For example, the early promises by city fathers to give \$100,000 (\$85,000 in land and \$15,000 in cash) if the GC Mennonites established their college in the town never panned out. After starting a visionary building project with plans drawn up by notable architects from Wichita, construction halted, with the limestone “castle on the plains” abjectly standing partly finished for three years. With only about \$10,000 of the originally promised money actually donated and the region suffering the economic depression of the 1890s, the early high hopes of town and college cooperation were put on hold. At the same time, the Bethel Board that had once included several non-Mennonite Newtonians embraced the original terms of the charter and relegated any such members to “honorary corporation status,” a process Sprunger calls “Menno-izing” the board. Some of this same distance would later manifest when the small Mennonite enclave that had grown up around the college incorporated as North Newton, rather than joining with the original settlement.¹⁷⁰

By 1910 and the early death of C.H. Wedel, Bethel’s first president, the school had established itself as a liberal arts college, and one that had a vision for the church’s youth. Sprunger recapitulates that Harold J. Schultz successfully employed Wedel’s exhortation as he

¹⁷⁰ As Sprunger observes, “Menno-izing” also resulted in the purging of non-Mennonite donor records from the newly-created corporation book. Early supporters and their donor numbers simply disappeared from the record. *Ibid.*, 22-23.

later repaired relationships and restored the college to financial health in the years following the Vietnam war:

Much, very much of the whole future progress of our denomination, holding fast to the doctrines of our fathers, and the healthy growth of our congregations in general, will depend on the instruction on which our young people are nurtured.¹⁷¹

Wedel set a high bar for himself, publishing nine books and 182 articles, all while teaching and serving an unpaid charge as minister of the Bethel College Mennonite Church, the latter also held by his successors. In spite of its exhausting commitments, the college maintained its ties to the church even as it was governed by the independent board. It weathered the same challenges by fundamentalism in the 1920s and 1930s that so impaired Tabor College, and was able to attract gifted academics, many of whom served long tenures as professors and also were involved heavily in the life of the church. At mid-century, Bethel's intellectuals were party to the discussions about identity and "The Anabaptist Vision" advanced by Harold Bender, even as they also helped design and implement the Civilian Public Service camp system for conscientious objectors. Historians E. L. Harshbarger and a young Robert Krieder, along with sociologist J. Winfield Fretz, participated in inter-Mennonite discussions, while Bethel graduate Henry Fast discovered his untapped organizational and improvisational skills by serving as the first executive secretary of Civilian Public Service.

Co-hosting the Fourth Mennonite World Conference in 1948 evidenced Bethel's ability to challenge the potential hegemony of MC Goshen College in Indiana, but also to readily communicate with it, as they jointly hosted the conference even though they were over 1,000 miles apart. How was this possible? The Santa Fe railroad route that ran from Los Angeles to

¹⁷¹ Referring to Harold J. Schultz presidential records, "Centennial Fund Drive – Talks and Quotes, 1983-1988," (III.1.A.1.1). MLA. Sprunger, 40, 236n14.

Chicago passed through Newton, enabling participants to meet at Goshen August 3-5, then readily switch to Bethel August 7-10. This link helps explain why Kansans, including Mennonites, were able to connect readily with both coasts, in spite of the state's reputation as a rural outback.

The Long Vietnam War

Considered to be the most academically focused and socially progressive of the three Kansas Mennonite schools, Bethel accepted and promoted the involvement of students, faculty, and even board members in its rise from inactivity to deliberation, and then to peaceful dissent, in the years preceding the Vietnam War and continuing through its escalation. Although the Bethel College weekly newspaper, The Collegian, documented a wide range of activities that were typical for a liberal arts college in the early 1960s, the publication regularly despaired about the lack of student involvement in either student government or wider social concerns.¹⁷²

Nevertheless, behind the reports on Homecoming, football, and pranks lurked a longstanding attempt to articulate a peace presence at the institution. Bethel students, like those at Tabor College and Hesston College, had participated in a nationwide peace oration competition beginning in the early 1920s, performed an annual peace play that toured churches since the 1930s, shared a Showalter Peace grant that underwrote special projects, and, in 1950, joined other Mennonite colleges to form the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship (IPF) sponsored by the Peace Section of the Mennonite Central Committee, the same inter-Mennonite organization that focused on international material relief, peace, and self-help projects. Students such as James

¹⁷² On the comparison of the three schools' academic reputation, see Juhnke, People, 128. Brian Shrag, "Politics as Applesauce," The Bethel College Collegian, March 15, 1963, 1. (Hereafter The Collegian).

Juhnke and Dwight Platt, who later returned to Bethel as members of the faculty, were active in the 1950s in a club formally organized as the Bethel Peace Club that presented plays at local churches and led activities on campus that promoted peace.¹⁷³

Students later drew on a tradition of specific encounters with the state. Long-term economics professor J. Lloyd Spaulding had spent time in prison for registering as a conscientious objector during World War II. Raised a Methodist, his stance had not been recognized by his local community. The man who later brought his post-doctoral education at the London School of Economics to his classroom was sentenced to prison and served time at Sandstone, Minnesota, then paroled to a Civilian Public Service camp in Maryland. In 1956 when he returned to Bethel as an instructor, he became the faculty advisor for the Peace Club. Students were well aware that the FBI regularly came to his home in North Newton to check on him. Although James Juhnke pursued the more conventional alternative service as a Pax man in reconstructive work in post-war Europe, his fellow Bethelite, Dwight Platt instead refused to register for the draft, thereby becoming the kind of non-cooperator generally seen among Quakers, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and secular pacifist groups like the War Resisters League. He spent time in jail as a war resister in 1956, then later returned to Bethel to teach after he completed his doctoral work in biology.

¹⁷³ On the peace oration competition, see James C. Juhnke, "The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites, 1870-1940" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1966), 202, and on the Bethel Peace Club and its involvement with the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship, see Terence R. Goering, "A History of the Bethel College Peace Club," research paper, Bethel College, 1975, 9, 12. The Showalter Foundation in North Newton, Kansas, annually offered grants to underwrite various peace projects including lecturers and, occasionally, travel. The foundation funding was particularly important to the IPF groups on the individual Mennonite campuses in North America.

Other faculty members on campus wrestled with issues of peace while attempting to create a resilient academic environment. In particular, academic deans Albert Meyer (1961-1966), a physicist, and William Keeney (1968-1972), a theologian with a bent for social reform, brought the conversations they had as members of the “Concern” group in Europe to bear on what was valid Mennonite witness to the state and society and what that meant for Christian higher education. Meyer, a MC Mennonite on loan to Bethel from Goshen College, pushed Bethel toward excellence, even as he also cautioned against the idea that a Mennonite college was identical with the church.¹⁷⁴

James Juhnke, Anna Kreider (later Juhnke), and Dwight Platt all were involved in the challenges brought by the Civil Rights movement. Juhnke and Kreider met in the course of an absorbing Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship (IPF) annual conference held at Fisk University in Nashville in April 1961 in which they not only listened to civil rights leaders James Lawson, James Bevel, Vincent Harding, and student sit-in protesters Leo Lillard and James Zwerg, but also encountered racism first-hand when a member of their student delegation, Enos Sibanda from Rhodesia, was refused admittance to lodging at the Allen Hotel with the rest of his fellow students. Sibanda and IPF Vice-President and Bethel student Al Habegger checked into a room at Fisk, but the incident brought home the reality of racism, personal shame at not refusing to check into the hotel themselves, and then, disappointment in some of the Mennonite leaders such as Guy Hershberger who refused to intervene. For IPF and the Bethel students, the conference

¹⁷⁴ Obituary for J. Lloyd Spaulding, Mennonite Weekly Review, February 2, 1995, 10; Jay L. Spaulding, interview by Keith Sprunger, June 7, 1971, Original Tape B-2, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA. Jay L. Spaulding is the son of J. Lloyd Spaulding. Albert Meyer and Walter Klaassen, “Church and Mennonite College: Some Comments on the Relationships Between Two Communities,” Concern 13 (September 1966), 5-42.

was exhilarating, but full of self-reproach. Bethel student Kay Peters reflected on the incident in Nashville and extrapolated it in a short column in the next IPF newsletter:

Individuals have criticized the group for moral compromise when faced with an opportunity to practice what we say we believe. Since the conference was on race relations, it is emphasized, we should have acted positively with respect to the aims of the organization. Did we only go to Nashville to observe? The Allen Hotel incident brings the problem home to me as a person and to our campus and town. We lack a sensitivity to the extent and means of discrimination in Newton and were naïve about the situation in Nashville. We must learn for ourselves by what means and when we should promote demonstrations of protest. Our individual attitudes must be re-examined continually.¹⁷⁵

While still in Nashville, IPF delegates wrote a letter protesting Sibanda's exclusion to the Allen Hotel and presented it personally to the hotel manager, who was apparently relieved that the protest did not escalate. They also sent copies to the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and the Nashville Community Relations Conference. Upon returning to campus they were faced with the angry objections by a handful of other students including Lawrence Hart, Peace Chief of the Cheyenne Nation, and John Opiyo from Uganda. Although the same Peace Notes issue reporting the conference also contained a letter written by a student at Fisk that noted the hotel had changed its approach to a group of Africans at a subsequent conference, Juhnke could find no change in the segregationist policy when he inquired at the hotel in the fall of 1962 when he was once again in Nashville. The incident and the Mennonite response continued to haunt him.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Kay Peters, "Reflections," Peace Notes, 7, no. 3 (May 1961), 4. Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship Records, 1954-1969. X/033-01. Box 1: Minutes, Newsletters, and Correspondence, 1954-1968. Mennonite Church USA Archives, Goshen, IN (hereafter Peace Notes file, MCUSA). The Peace Notes are scattered across several archives with the most complete set at MLA (hereafter, Peace Notes, and the archive where located).

¹⁷⁶ Regarding the overall IPF conference in 1961, the Allen Hotel incident, and reactions by his fellow students when he returned to Bethel see James C. Juhnke, Small Steps Toward a Missing Peace: A Memoir (Lexington, KY: Flying Camel Publications, 2011), 41-44. For a copy

On the other hand, two years later, Platt walked with his family in the August 28, 1963 Civil Rights “March on Washington,” in spite of fears by some that the protest would be disorderly and violent. Both the biology professor and his wife, LaVonne, brought this experience to later Bethel protests when he walked in the first public Bethel antiwar march in 1966 and then joined students in the moratorium events of 1969, which are detailed later in this chapter.¹⁷⁷

As the number of military advisors increased in Vietnam in 1963, The Collegian announced “Peace Cast Tours Oklahoma Churches,” reported a joint peace conference held with Hesston College, and published political satires and editorials appealing for involvement in the Young Democrat or Young Republican political clubs. Thus, as the Vietnam War escalated, the long tradition of peace activities at Bethel included students and a few faculty. These activities were regularly reported in denominational publications such as the weekly The Mennonite, which also described events organized by other Mennonite denominations or fellowships.¹⁷⁸

Although Bethel’s first self-described “protest” event of the mid-1960s was the February 1965 all-campus walkout and march to main street to celebrate an upset victory by the basketball team over powerhouse Bethany College, the Peace Club soon became more activist. As the

of the letter to the Allen Hotel and an excerpt from the letter regarding the seeming change in policy note “Some Results Obtained,” in Peace Notes, 7, no. 3 (May 1961), 9.

¹⁷⁷ “Platt Joins Washington March for Civil Rights,” The Collegian, September 20, 1963, 1.

¹⁷⁸ In *ibid.*, see “Peace Cast Tours Oklahoma Churches,” February 1, 1963, 1; Brian Shrag, “Unsuspecting Charlie,” May 22, 1963, 3; and “Join a Political Club,” May 10, 1963, 1, 2. Among Shrag’s lines were: “God Bless America, land that I love, sit beside her and guide her while I go play golf,” and “America, America, God shed His grace on Thee, and crown Thy good with a larger Gross National Product.”

television news and print media reported on the Civil Rights and Student Power Movements, Bethel students took notice. In spring 1965, after thirteen students and faculty attended the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship IPF annual conference held in Washington, D.C., twenty-one Bethel students and four faculty sponsors (including Platt) participated in the Civil Rights march in Montgomery, Alabama. Less than two weeks later, ten students, mathematics professor Arnold Wedel, and Walter Paetkau, Director of Short Term Voluntary Service for the General Conference Mennonite Church, joined sixty students from five other Kansas schools to protest on behalf of fair housing legislation at the state capitol building.¹⁷⁹

As the 1965-66 school year opened, the Peace Club sponsored a protest fast to increase awareness about the war and to raise money to send to Mennonite Central Committee for projects in Vietnam. Forty students skipped dinner every Wednesday during the fall term. The fast raised a variety of questions in The Collegian. Some letters to the editor questioned its efficacy, while others argued that efforts on behalf of peace and justice should address ills in the United States. In November 1965, English instructor Janet Juhnke took four students to Washington, D.C. to join 25,000 anti-war activists picketing the White House. After the protest, the group attended the National Coordination Committee to End the War in Vietnam Conference held on November 25-28, thus continuing to connect Bethel students and faculty directly to

¹⁷⁹ “Negro Leader to be Speaker at Campus Race Conference,” *ibid.*, April 3, 1964, 1. Also in *ibid.*, “IPF,” April 2, 1965, 1; “School Boy Dream Comes True with Walkout Day,” February 19, 1965, 1; “Peace Conference Delegates Discuss Christian in Politics,” April 2, 1965, 1 and “Students March in Topeka,” April 14, 1965, 1.

significant national activities, individuals, and groups opposed to the war. When the IPF held its annual conference a few months later, it did so at Bethel, attracting more than 125 participants.¹⁸⁰

After President Johnson's administration began to revise Selective Service regulations in late 1965 and early 1966 to increase the number of draftees, articles in The Collegian warned that "Less Promising Students Could Be Drafted," and advised how "To Avoid the Draft" by following the correct registration procedures for eighteen-year-olds. The war was more than dinnertime conversation. There were now more than 200,000 troops in Vietnam. By the end of the year, 400,000 American men would be in or near combat.¹⁸¹

Entering the Public Square With a Resounding Tiptoe

Bethel's first formal protest in Newton evidenced a deliberate attempt to confront the war clearly and without violence. Several had already been involved in civil rights work, antiwar protest or both. Allen Teichroew, Kathy Gaeddert Teichroew, and Tom Friesen had all been involved in civil rights work, with Kathy's family serving as long-term staff at the MCC interracial ministry in Gulfport, Mississippi, and Friesen one of the marchers at Selma. Cheryl Ratzlaff had protested against President Johnson when he made a trip to Indiana. Several were VS or Voluntary Service workers, bringing their experience in inner city missions work and nonviolent protest to their concern for justice. Moreover, the images of the destructive effects of napalm were broadcast in 1966, shocking the same students whose talents were being recruited

¹⁸⁰ In *ibid.*, "Peace Club Members Will Raise Money by Fasting," September 17, 1965, 1; "Fast is Questioned," October 1, 1965, 2; and "Students Picket White House," December 10, 1965, 1.

¹⁸¹ In regard to the Selective Service revisions, see Flynn, The Draft, 172-173. Articles in The Collegian included "'Less Promising Students' Could be Drafted," March 18, 1966, 1; "To Avoid the Draft," 1; and "Draft Deadline Saturday," 3. For statistics on the continued escalation of the war, see Karnow, Vietnam, 696.

in the sciences. Beginning in October 1966 at two of the academic powerhouses for science at the University of California in Berkeley and Wayne State University in Michigan, more than a hundred other protests aimed at Dow Chemical and chemical warfare in general took place over the next year, incidents that Allen Teichroew attributed to part of the heightened interest in protest at Bethel.¹⁸²

When school started in September 1966, forty-students attended the first Peace Club meeting. After dean Esko Loewen offered them the opportunity to present a chapel on November 11, a day treated as Armistice Day rather than Veterans Day at Bethel, they instead immediately decided upon and began planning a peace rally. Concerned that a march might inflame relations between the college and the town, Stanley Bohn, board member and secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, met with the club. Consequently, the students decided to issue an advance statement and to reframe their action as a “Repentance Walk and Mail” during which participants would walk south two miles along Main Street into the adjoining town of Newton and mail letters of concern or protest to Congress. Sending the resolution to local churches and organizations, the club soon confronted objections from other students and community members and received anonymous threats in the mail promising violence.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Allen Teichroew recalled that the two greatest factors in galvanizing Bethel students to “want to do something” were the antiwar march in November of 1965 and the protests against Dow Chemical nationally, but he also stressed in an early interview with historian Keith Sprunger, that those who had been involved in civil rights work and community organizing were among those already focused. Allen Teichroew and Kathy Gaeddert Teichroew, interview by Keith Sprunger, August 20, 1971, Original tape B-4A&B, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA (hereafter, Teichroews to distinguish from his individual interview).

¹⁸³ For the timeline of the 1966 events, see “Chronology of Events Pertaining to Bethel College Peace Club Rally, November 11, 1966.” Peace Club Files, MLA. For a description of

Spurred into action by the proposed march to mail letters at the post office, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion decided to parade from the opposite end of town, timing their march to place them at the main Newton Post Office at the same time as the Bethel protesters. After a plea from Bethel President Vernon Neufeld, the club decided to limit the destination to the North Newton Post Office a few blocks away from campus. Wearing suits or dresses, the ninety students, faculty, and single board member walked there somberly on November 11, then returned to the school without incident to hear antiwar Methodist minister John Swomley of Kansas City. The quiet protest received national attention from Kansan Calvin Trillin in The New Yorker and generated even more excitement locally as Newton held its first Veterans Day parade in over ten years in reaction to the proposed march. Two hundred veterans, meanwhile, paraded down Main Street later in the afternoon to the accompanying blare of air raid sirens, according to The Collegian, as planes buzzed the Bethel College campus.¹⁸⁴

In spite of the local threats, Peace Club members soon found their actions obliquely supported by The Mennonite Weekly Review in an editorial issued less than two weeks later. Having opposed the Repentance Walk and Mail from the beginning, the widely-circulated newspaper now nudged Mennonite toes toward the public square, not only accepting the walk,

the decision-making about the Walk, the resulting threats, and speaker John Swomley's address on campus, see The Mennonite, December 13, 1966, 757-765.

¹⁸⁴ Calvin Trillin, "The War in Kansas," The New Yorker, April 22, 1967, 84 reflected on the Bethel protest in a national publication. In regard to the decisions and actions of the day, see "Memorandum" to Peace Club from President Neufeld, November 1, 1966. Peace Club Files, MLA, as quoted in Goering, History, 28, Ted Koontz, Bethel College alumnus, email message to author, November 5, 2008, and "Peace March Held; 90 Mail Protest Letters," The Collegian, November 16, 1966, 1, 3.

but also raising the question about the possibility of similar actions in other towns where Mennonite schools were located.

If marches are appropriate in Hillsboro, Bluffton, Harrisonburg, and Goshen – and indeed in our respective congregations....¹⁸⁵

If the inter-Mennonite weekly organ offered its tentative support, letters-to-the-editor in The Mennonite over the next month directly reinforced the Club's actions just as Bethel students would chiefly find again in 1969 after they engaged in other protests. Editor Maynard Shelly issued a wake-up call to Mennonites when he wrote,

So the question does not turn on the decision of Bethel College, but on the willingness of the Mennonite church to support its members in radical discipleship. In its action on the peace walk, the Bethel College administration has passed judgment on the Mennonite church ... when the chips are down the Mennonite Church will not put its money and its middle-class reputation where its preaching is. We would like to prove this judgment wrong. But we can't find the evidence, particularly in this situation.¹⁸⁶

He thus castigated the apparent hypocrisy between the church's insistence that it held a nonresistant stance about war and peace, and its reluctance to publicly make those claims and risk offending the majority culture.

Were those holding negative views willing to talk about it, but not put their views in print? Few negative letters made their way into print, but the scrupulous Maynard Shelly printed an exact facsimile of one response:

Editor

¹⁸⁵ These locations thus included colleges of the three largest Mennonite denominations: MB Tabor College (Hillsboro, Kansas), GC Bluffton College (Bluffton, Ohio), MC Eastern Mennonite College (Harrisonburg, Virginia), and MC Goshen College (Goshen, Indiana). Editorial, Mennonite Weekly Review, November 24, 1966, 4.

¹⁸⁶ As noted previously, The Mennonite was a GC popular publication. Letters to the editor, January 10, 1967, 28; Maynard Shelly, Editorial, The Mennonite, December 13, 1966, 765.

The Mennonite
Newton, Kansas

This is too much! Nine of sixteen pages devoted to one event! Over half of one entire issue! A publishing cost of almost \$700! This is too much!
One is tempted to conclude that the editor either has run out of news and articles, has an obsession about peace marches, or is trying to convince himself of his own views. "Methinks thou protesteth too much."
V. H. Neufeld
Member of a General Conference
Mennonite Church¹⁸⁷

Many supportive letters articulated various aspects of the meaning of Mennonite (or Anabaptist) witness, while others pointedly reminded readers that the Bethel students were simply acting on the basis of what they were being taught in church. Lydia Ewert of Hillsboro, Kansas, where MB Tabor College was located, posted her lament, not for what the students had done, but what the church failed to do. The woman who was known at her local GC congregation as "our conscience" used self-recrimination as a mirror for her readers:

In my sixty-four years I have talked, corresponded, and argued considerably against war and for racial justice. But that's the extent of it. Here comes a group of young men and women choosing to put into action what has been poured forth from our Mennonite pulpits and institutional pep meetings all these years. And we are caught-frightened, paralyzed, or enraged. As I analyze my heart it tells me I am a coward. Contemplating this detailed and, in my opinion, fair account of what happened as this plan progressed, I get no comfort for myself in detecting errors in either the motivation, the planning, or the execution of the Repentance Walk. There were none, in my judgment. The regrettable thing is that what could have been a dynamic expression in real discipleship, drawing with it the understanding and support of the larger Mennonite Church body, turned instead into cutting itself off and isolating those who gave themselves for that purpose. As you say in your editorial, "Our young people have responded to what we have been preaching for generations." How does their demonstration make us look? I earnestly pray that the agony and hurt engendered by this experience will pry deeply into our consciences and come forth in repentance and renewal in the Mennonite Church, called peace church. Bethel College has not suffered

¹⁸⁷ V. H. Neufeld, Letter to the Editor, The Mennonite, Dec 27, 1966, 799.

dishonor. Our college's honor has been enhanced by the quality of this group of students.

Mrs. J. P. Ewert, Hillsboro, Kan. 67063.¹⁸⁸

Of all of the letters to the editor received and published in The Mennonite regarding the Repentance Walk and Mail, only four were written by local Mennonites, two of which were from Marion County. Only a single letter --- which supported the changed route --- was printed from Harvey County, where Newton and North Newton were located.¹⁸⁹

Within weeks, the Peace Club joined an approved public spectacle by walking in the large Bethel College Homecoming Parade that marched down the length of Newton's Main Street. As Allen Teichroew recalled, between four to six members carried a large banner that said "WAR IS NOT A FOOTBALL GAME." No one called them out for their actions.¹⁹⁰

Although the Peace Club argued within itself over its motivations for what they were doing, most of the students characterized their actions as derived from their religious beliefs. The issue came to a head following one student's proposal that their protest be framed in explicitly religious language, that is as a "repentance" walk rather than an antiwar protest even though the repentance being called for was explicitly political. The religious language reflected what they wanted to accomplish and dovetailed with the caution that some had. Kathy Gaeddert Teichroew, whose family had suffered at the hands of the church when they returned to their home turf

¹⁸⁸ Lydia Ewert, Letter to the Editor, in *ibid.*; Carolyn Penner, interview with the author, June 16, 2014; Ron Brandt, email message to author, October 22, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Helen Coon, Letter to the Editor, The Mennonite, December 27, 1966, 798; in *ibid.*, Elmer Schmidt, Letter to the Editor, January 17, 1967, 44-45; Gerhard Friesen, Letter to the Editor, December 27, 1966, 798. Friesen was an elderly Mennonite from the community who had participated in the Walk, his letter the only local letter printed with his street address in Newton.

¹⁹⁰ Allen Teichroew, telephone conversation with author, October 8, 2017.

firmly committed to bettering race relations in general and advocating the welcome and incorporation of blacks in the Mennonite church, observed this acutely. When Allen and Kathy Teichroew had started school as freshmen, she was shocked at the depth of experience most students had and their fear of rejection if they were involved in social protest and reform:

The questions the students were asking here were things I had asked long ago, [such as] can you become socially committed because you lose contact with a certain amount of people [can you] become radicalized when some may be alienated from you because of your opinion. I was so tired of those kind of questions.¹⁹¹

She saw no real dichotomy between her religious beliefs as a Mennonite and advocating for social change, no bifurcation between the church and politics.

I think, I don't know if I would separate political and religious beliefs necessarily. As a student in high school I had been in Mississippi and my, and maybe most of my beliefs so much came from experiences we had had there and were basically the experiences of meeting people when we had come back from Mississippi [and met with rejection by the church] that was a very traumatic affair and I think the feelings then I, or the beliefs I had religiously were more of things that I had gathered from feeling and sensing what was happening among the people or observing what the war or what the civil rights movement had done to people or wasn't doing for people was the basis for how I became involved.¹⁹²

When Mennonite keynote speaker Gordon Kaufman, professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School, addressed the Bethel community during the inauguration of new President Orville Voth in February 1967, he put his reputation solidly behind the need for dissent and encouraged his listeners to engage in it. Invited by his long-term friend and former classmate to address the community, Kaufman's words were taken to heart, although their enactment proved

¹⁹¹ Teichroews, interview, Original Tape B-4B, MLA.

¹⁹² Ibid. Allen Teichroew also saw that the struggles Mennonites had when they attempted to dismiss the need for social justice as a "political" issue in which they should not be involved, rather than an outgrowth of their Christian faith. Allen Teichroew, interview with author, October 3, 2017.

to be a great challenge for his friend, the biochemist now become new president. Over the next two years, the basic struggles Mennonites had between their desire for personal piety, their heritage and communal memory as “The Quiet in the Land,” and their increasing concern about Vietnam were reflected in activities at Bethel. Challenges to the no dancing, drinking, and smoking policies and mandatory chapel attendance were interspersed with a variety of peace activities production of the anti-war play, “The Trojan Women,” attendance at the annual Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship meeting, and a “Supper of Sharing” meal of rice and tea in conjunction with the National Mobilization Against the War in Vietnam’s call for action. Faculty continued to participate in the various peace activities. Throughout it all, the American flag continued to fly, raised every morning and lowered every evening. Because Bethel had defined the banner as a symbol of religious freedom and the discussion about dissent had been explicitly tied to peace church theology, the college was content to see it fly.¹⁹³

As the Tri-College Symposium between Bethel, Hesston, and Tabor opened at Hesston in October 1967, featuring former Peace Corps Deputy Director Bill Moyers as speaker, the General Conference Mennonite Church sought to create a dialogue about Vietnam. While Moyers pointedly challenged the audience to realize that “there is no such thing as an innocent bystander,” during the same month the General Conference-Peace and Social Concern Committee sponsored a debate in McPherson, Kansas, between William Boyer, political science chair at Kansas State University, and his counterpart at the University of Kansas, Clifford P. Ketzel. The Mennonite editor, Maynard Shelly, joined five Bethel Faculty in a “teach-in” on the

¹⁹³ Clayton Koppes, “Kaufman Exposes Mennonite Crisis,” The Collegian, February 17, 1967, 3. In *ibid.*, “Anti-War Play Included in Folk Festival Program,” April 21, 1967, 2; Barbara Koppes, “Peace Club Members Observe U.N. at Work,” March 17, 1967, 4; and “Peace Club Holds Sharing Meal,” April 21, 1967, 3.

Vietnam War in November. Organizing an interdisciplinary forum, the art, history, religion and philosophy, and anthropology faculty combined efforts with President Orville Voth to present a series of five campus lectures, forums, and chapel services on the war. History Professor Keith Sprunger spoke on “Learning from History: Vietnam is not Munich,” a lecture transmitted by telephone to a Tabor College classroom, where students sat and listened. Editor Shelly challenged the audience to think about the credibility of both the press and the government and not to accept uncritically what either said.¹⁹⁴

But 1968 positioned Bethel’s students, faculty, and administration for crisis. Students’ high idealism, redounding support for the political process, and determined opposition to what they saw as *in loco parentis* met with shattering defeats both on and off campus. After President Johnson declared his intention to not seek re-election, antiwar students and faculty were jubilant. The election year found Bethel students organizing to support anti-war candidate Senator Eugene McCarthy. In the national student mock election, “Choice ‘68,” they voted for McCarthy, who garnered 139 votes, followed by Senator Robert Kennedy (104) and former Vice-President Richard Nixon (25), with the remaining 36 votes divided among nine other candidates. Thirty-five percent voted for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, fifty-six backed a phased retreat, and only five percent supported an “all out effort.” Bethel students were far more likely to support the peace candidate McCarthy (45.7 to 26.6 percent) and far less likely to support saturation bombing (5 to 21 percent) than students nationwide who participated in the poll.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ In *ibid.*, “Bethel Teach-in Will Present Six Facets of Vietnam War,” October 16, 1967, 1; Terry Unruh, “‘American Week’ Exposes Pseudo-Patriotism, Shortage,” November 3, 1967, 2; Jan Carpenter, “Political Scientists Spark McPherson Vietnam Meet,” October 19, 1967, 2; and “Bethel Professors, Shelly Relate to Vietnam War,” December 8, 1967, 3.

¹⁹⁵ On the reaction to Johnson’s declaration, Anna Kreider Juhnke, interview by Paul Brown, March 29, 1980, Original Tape B-32A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA (hereafter

Not only did the student body deliberate on political candidates and take mock polls, some joined in political campaigns, an act that for Mennonites had been debated a mere twelve years earlier when Bethel sponsored a “Conference on Education and Political Responsibility” and participants had mulled over the question “Should Mennonites Participate in Politics?” Many Bethel students were involved in the McCarthy campaign, with a few attending the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 where some experienced police violence firsthand. After McCarthy’s defeat for the nomination, student historian Goering characterized the Peace Club as briefly disenchanted. To a point that is true, but lingering issues over student discipline, the brutal Chicago Democratic Convention in which some students were clubbed by police, and the general disillusion with the war were manifested on campus. In spite of the issues this study will consider shortly, they still sponsored their annual Reconciliation Week fast to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee. Some met for discussion in the newly organized coffeehouse, “The Other Side,” where anti-war students from Tabor also came for companionship and intense discussions. In March, the three Kansas schools again sent students to the national Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship meeting in Washington, D.C. Forty-two students from Bethel, eighteen from Hesston, and thirteen from Tabor filled two buses chartered and paid for by the colleges. When they returned from the series, “The Peacemaker in Revolution,” they discovered that historian Juhnke had received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to

Kreider Juhnke, to distinguish between her interview and James Juhnke’s interview); “McCarthy Edges Kennedy in Bethel Choice ’68 Vote,” *ibid.*, May 21, 1968, 3; see University of Cincinnati Record, May 17, 1968, 2 on the national Choice ’68 results.

study conscientious objectors during World War I, a project that was to include both students and faculty in conducting oral history interviews.¹⁹⁶

But as the school year closed, Bethel students continued to be roiled by the griefs of 1968 --- both off campus and on. Those that had been involved in the Democratic National Convention in Chicago extrapolated their anger and disillusionment with the hypocritical “adults” who had let them down in the Windy City, either through the jaded political process or, more pointedly, through the calculated police violence exacted against peaceful campaign workers and demonstrators. In an interview conducted nearly four years later, several made the bitter point that what happened in Chicago affected how they looked at campus issues regarding trust --- and, particularly, authority. The disappointing political process in Chicago that had also illustrated the ease with which a garrison state could be enforced seemed to have stark parallels on campus.

History major and McCarthy supporter Fred Zerger explained the extrapolation:

Well I came back from Chicago as a sophomore and I saw Bethel College as a microcosm of the society that I had seen in Chicago. It was easy to see Voth and Goering and people in certain kinds of roles, Johnson, Department of Defense, everything, just all, your mind was so screwed on in Chicago, that you came back with categories, and you were unable to see people as individuals, rather you saw them all as parts of a conspiracy. It made, the whole experience of Chicago made, the whole mood it created in the country, it made 68 a rough year at Bethel. Kids just didn't trust anyone older, refused to believe that there was any good in anyone, in anyone in any authority position.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Juhnke, *People*, 156; see Goering, *History*, 36-38 on what he characterizes as the Peace Club's brief disillusionment. Although the Peace Club re-grouped and continued to support peace activities, some of its members recognized their discouragement throughout spring term. Fred Zerger, Mark Stucky, Terry Unruh, and Don Schrag, interview by Greg Stucky, May 22, 1971, Original tape B-12B, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA (hereafter, Fred Zerger, et al., interview, B-12B, MLA).

¹⁹⁷ Fred Zerger, speaking in Fred Zerger, et al., interview. MLA.

Punishments that the students explicitly rejected (yet also, on occasion, recognized had some grounding in fact) were magnified by seeming betrayals, such as the administration's decision to change the academic calendar to a new 4-1-4 system over student objections. In spite of the administration's belief that it was including students in some decision-making, many chafed under punishments that ranged from the inane to the serious. The undergraduates acknowledged that their own leadership had contributed to the problem, yet still smarted under President Voth's direction, in spite of the fact that he had implemented policies that allowed dancing on campus (1967) and a designated smoking room in each dormitory (1968), policies for which he took grief from the constituency and which were rare in Christian colleges. As historian Keith Sprunger recognizes, many students sympathized with those being called on the carpet simply because the punishments appeared to have been exacted without due process. As The Collegian jumped into the fray after the suspension of four offenders disciplined for smoking, drinking, "mixed partying," and other offenses, forty-three students, including a National Merit scholar, two Thresher scholars, two Outstanding Student awardees, and numerous members of the Dean's List, declared their intense dissatisfaction with the college and their intentions to leave Bethel, decisions changed only "if and when the present 'attitude' and direction of Bethel becomes more sensitive to student concerns."

We the undersigned are taking action now which will enable us to attend a college other than Bethel in the near future. Our action grows out of a concern greater than that generated by the recent expulsion and/or calendar change.¹⁹⁸

Although two of the four wrongdoers would later petition for readmission and return to finish their degrees, The Collegian columnist emphasized that the consequences of student life

¹⁹⁸ "Student Action," The Collegian, November 15, 1968, 2.

disciplinary action in the conservative institution resulted in one offending student's loss of his student deferment: "Marty Model had an immediate problem of the draft and Viet Nam." Even the formerly beloved Dwight Platt was castigated as "the very conservative Dr. Platt" who had judged the students worthy of suspension, thereby sending the hapless Model into the waiting arms of Selective Service. Platt said he had "a change of heart" and supported the students appeal, but the damage was done as far as some angry students were concerned.¹⁹⁹

In addition to the issues of student discipline, cultural issues called out for attention. Moreover, others who felt marginalized called the campus' attention to their invisibility during important campus rituals. Black students, for example, pointedly called the campus' attention to the fact that no "Afros" had appeared onstage as actors during the much-anticipated annual "Faculty Follies." The three freshmen and one junior lamented the insensitivity.

We enjoyed the faculty follies, but as usual, we were ignored. It would have been apropos to have includes at least one "Afro." However, this only exemplifies the ways white America shows the black man that unless he conforms to its standards, he will be left out --- invisible.²⁰⁰

Art professor Bob Regier framed his concerns in the May 9, "Wheat or Chaff?" forum which posed a question, then printed responses. "Do you feel students across the country should assume a more militant posture (as reflected at San Francisco State and Cornell), in order to achieve their desired goals?" The young associate professor tendered a nuanced response that questioned the nature of "militancy" and encompassed violent student unrest, government

¹⁹⁹ Neil Goldman, "Four Dissenters Suspended: 'Law and Order Triumphant,'" in *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ B.J. Cruel, Norma Jackson, Karethy Bowens, and Frances Carter, "Letter to the Editor," *The Collegian*, May 9, 1969, 2. The black experience at Bethel needs exploration and analysis, particularly as African-American student enrollment continued to climb during the decade when Bethel enrollment began to decline. By the late 1970s, African-Americans comprised nearly 10 percent of students. Sprunger, *Bethel*, 156.

hypocrisy, the war in Vietnam, and the delicate moral ground occupied by anyone who embraced apathy in the face of these forms of violence.

I'm troubled by a definition. Citing the examples of San Francisco State and Cornell suggest that physical violence and destructive acts lie within the term "militancy." If this is the case, then I would have to say that militancy is something I couldn't personally condone or encourage. However, such a response seems too easy. I would prefer to say that I hope a more militant posture will become less necessary as institutions become more responsive to making the changes that will reduce the cause of discontent. If schools fail to respond, they may have no moral ground on which to base condemnation of militancy.... If schools end up without moral ground from which to condemn student violence they will only be ending up where the government already seems to be. Strong statements by high government officials condemning campus violence and promising reprisals don't ring true with draft-conscious students who receive daily reports of condoned violence in Vietnam. This sober thought causes me to search for my own moral ground from which to speak. My apathy on various issues may implicitly condone violence. This question is becoming more difficult to answer with every word I write.²⁰¹

His careful transparency thus took the question seriously and peeled away the dimensions of the issues, even as it obliquely modeled what it meant to be a moral agent. Participant in the Repentance Walk and Remembrance of 1966, within five months the respected professor would again support the Peace Club in its major venture into the public square during the fall semester.

The last day of the spring term included a sobering project organized by professor James Juhnke that re-focused students on part of the human cost of the war-- a reading of the names of Americans killed in the war. Bethel faculty continued to create programs that systematically included student engagement with peace issues in general and the war in particular, but they also did so juxtaposed against a student body that was increasingly anxious. As Robert Regier had done, many faculty recognized the complex matrix of dissonance that the war and the means by which it could be thwarted posed for students. They themselves faced the same discord in living

²⁰¹ Robert Regier, [Response], The Collegian, May 9, 1969, 2.

faithfully and in preparing students to live in an American society that was uneasy about peacemakers, whether or not they entered the public square through the political process or direct actions.²⁰²

The Denomination Approaches Vietnam

As the college continued its discussions and activities focused on peace, while struggling to handle the sharp disillusionment of many of its students with national politics and local college governance during the 1968-69 school year, the denomination also had been busy. In a more sharply worded assessment of the situation in Vietnam than that issued in 1965, the General Conference Council of Boards recommended sending medical aid not only to South Vietnam as Mennonites had been doing through Mennonite Central Committee, but also to victims in North Vietnam, and called for tax resistance in the form of not paying the federal excise tax designated as a war tax. Its resolution argued for a systemic approach to the war, building off of the statement endorsed in 1965, but explicitly endorsing medical aid to North Vietnam:

The continuing war which is undergoing a step-by-step escalation in Vietnam prompts us to speak again. As a church which has engaged in some works of mercy, we feel prompted not just to devote our energies to repairing the destruction and giving aid to the victims of war. We must also seek to speak to the cause of destruction and war. We cannot be at peace with ourselves unless we have tried to witness as clearly as we can. The gospel as God's coming to the world and its people He loves, reconciling man to himself and man to his brother, prompts us to proclaim this good news and accept the responsibilities of peacemakers. Peacemaking is a most necessary task. Despite its awesomeness and in response to the biblical call, we appeal to the church to renew its efforts to carry out this commission ... [in regard to sending medical aid to North Vietnam], We are aware of the political implications of this kind of action and the accusations of propaganda maneuvering that might be leveled at us. Nevertheless,

²⁰² In regard to the reading of the names of Americans who had died in the war, see Goering. Goering, History, 36-38; The Collegian, March 21, 1969, 5, and May 23, 1969, 4 on the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant.

the demands and ethics of love are clear and we are called to be true witnesses to Jesus Christ.²⁰³

The GC Mennonites not only endorsed peacemaking actions in the war-torn country, but implemented creative programs that trained their young men in conscientious objection. In 1968, the General Conference Mennonite Church began conducting Peacemaker Workshops and boot camps for high school males in the Newton-Hesston area and in Oklahoma. The boot camps opened with a pledge of allegiance to the flag and a pledge of allegiance to conscientious objection, an unusual blending of patriotism with what would be for many Mennonites the questionable practice of taking an oath. By fall 1969, the Western District Conference (of the General Conference Mennonite Church) not only had made a decision to reaffirm the traditional stance on conscientious objection, or objection to military service in all wars, but also to consider selective objection (objection to a particular war). More than 200 articles and letters-to-the-editor on the war appeared in The Mennonite between 1968 and 1970, with most calling for all Mennonites to reaffirm their peace stance. Many explicitly supported the students who were raising questions at Bethel College and Goshen College, the MC Mennonite four-year liberal arts school in Indiana, although others did not. Even if the endorsement was not unanimous, students nevertheless found other Mennonites agreeing with their actions--- and agreeing in a larger forum.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ General Conference Council of Boards, "Statement on Vietnam," December 1, 1967, MLA; "An Urgent Message to our Churches from the 1967 Council of Boards," The Mennonite, December 12, 1967, 753-754.

²⁰⁴ "Peacemaker Workshop," *ibid.*, February 6, 1968, A-4; "Resolution on Conscientious Objection," *ibid.*, January 7, 1969, A-4.

Bethel College and the Public Square: 1969 and Mixed Commitments in the Public Square

By early 1969 the national antiwar movement was reeling, in part because of its own sometimes increasingly confused dynamics, and in part through the resolute opposition of the new President determined to reinforce a law and order platform. The ideological interests of the New Left, which had, in large part earlier accepted and embraced the tactics of nonviolent pacifism, were stretched thin and under growing pressures to accept and endorse violence. The drive to reform society and its systemic injustices via civil rights for African Americans had occupied many activists and spawned additional projects, such as feminism, while the Vietnam war challenged the nation's ability to fund both guns and butter. The counterculture that focused on nonconformity, authenticity, and consciousness at best, and seemingly unending confusion in its drugs, music, and lack of convention, had grown separately, but as the war continued, the rough lines between the two now blurred, in the public mind and partly in fact. The war's disproportionate consumption of Mexican-American lives spawned the Chicano movement, and the war's demand for more men amplified student rights struggles.

Prominent leaders were exhausted, dead, or jailed, and those that continued to persist were harassed in different ways. Of the two "old men of the movement," who had held radical pacifism to its nonviolent religious roots, Quaker A.J. Muste had died in 1967 and David Dellinger was in jail as a casualty of the protests in Chicago at the Democratic convention. The high hopes for a political solution were shattered in 1968 first by the assassination of Robert

Kennedy and then the failed candidacy of Eugene McCarthy. Hubert Humphrey's late alignment with the demands for peace were seen as both opportunistic and too little, too late.²⁰⁵

As DeBenedetti recounts, the antiwar movements in early 1969 scrambled to re-group, largely re-fueled by the old peace groups, many of which with religious roots and commitments to nonviolence, a story that is lost in American memory. As the old Mobe ceased to function over the disputes about actions in the streets, the pacifist groups fostered the first coordinated antiwar protest of the Nixon presidency with a "Resistance and Renewal" project on Easter weekend that involved approximately 150,000 people in forty cities and specifically avoided venues with strong concentrations of the potentially divisive elements of the New Left. The result was a balancing act between the Moratorium and the New Mobilization ("The New Mobe") which not only sought a different strategy to protest that sacrificed the inclusion that had opened the door to disorderly elements, but also created a kind of dissent that did not require the energy of large-scale organizing like the large protests that had taken place previously in cities like New York, Boston, and Washington, DC, and which had been both effective and also dangerously open to disruptive individuals and groups. The new approach called for a "moratorium" or "pause" every month to reflect upon the war, actions that were primarily local and distributed to evidence widespread dissatisfaction (and avoid the problems with mass

²⁰⁵ Not only were antiwar leaders harassed. For example, members of the American Friends Service Committee were arrested and taken to court for their determination to read the names of the dead on the steps of the Capitol. DeBenedetti-Chatfield, 248. For a recap of the situation, see 17n19 earlier in this study. According to interviews conducted by reporter Douglas E. Kneeland in the "heart of America" at Smith Center, Kansas, the town had little enthusiasm for politics, because of a sense of helplessness in part exacerbated by the assassination of Robert Kennedy. Smith Center is only miles from the geographical center of the continental U.S. Douglas E. Kneeland, "Center of U.S. Seems Far From Presidential Campaign," New York Times, August 1, 1968, 33.

protests), and an intention to extend the moratorium by an additional day each month the war continued without a specific timetable for American withdrawal. The approach created a broad tent of potential public protest. By focusing its objective on achieving a specific timetable for withdrawal, it not only offered radical pacifists an opportunity to focus on the war's injustices, but also incorporated those who were increasingly disenchanted with the war, including those antiwar liberals who had initially looked to Nixon for a political solution.²⁰⁶

Many of the elements that were now in play on college campuses and within the antiwar movement ---particularly within the groups that were attempting to maintain nonviolence--- came into play at Bethel College and in its immediate community. The religious commitments to Anabaptism, the strain of entering an explicit public square of protest, and local pressures to embrace nationalism combined with Mennonite acculturation and ambivalence about the war all manifested themselves after the college endorsed observing the moratorium called by the national antiwar movement. Treating the events leading up to the intense four days in mid-October 1969 in an extended discussion illustrates the complex negotiations entered into by students and their supporters, and evidences the particular strains protest placed on members of

²⁰⁶ The historian largely attributes the most persistent and significant antiwar activity of early 1969 to Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) and notes that many of the long-lived peace groups such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, WILPF, SCLC, and AFSC, cooperated with the newly formed National Action Group (NAG) in a quest for "sustained principled nonviolent action" as the radical left collapsed. He also emphasizes that the term "moratorium" was adopted over the word "strike" in order to emphasize a nonviolent pause, rather than the negative connotations with which some viewed the latter term. DeBenedetti-Chatfield, 238-274. In this study, moratorium is capitalized when referring to the distinctive event(s) associated with October 15, but is lowercase when referring to the general planning for the yet unformalized projects.

the religious tradition. Because these actions included people from the surrounding communities and the two other Mennonite schools, it throws into relief the pressures each faced.

When readers of The Newton Kansan opened their newspapers on Monday, September 25, 1969, they discovered that a particular kind of antiwar opposition was indeed about to be played out on their own doorsteps. Beginning on October 15 and continuing for three more days, Bethel College would observe the National Vietnam Moratorium that enjoined Americans to call for an end to the war by engaging in local protests of their own making. Newtonians were invited to join the activities that were scheduled both on and off campus. Included in the article that described the plans was an excerpt from the Peace Club's statement of purpose that emphasized its somber intentions:

We wish to respectfully express our sorrow for those Kansas men killed in Vietnam through a quiet, contemplative service. Though we don't agree with their being in Vietnam, we can recognize and sympathize with their cruel, dehumanizing situation. Hopefully, knowing for whom the bell tolls, how long it must toll, and why it must toll so long will sensitize us to the enormity of the devastation to human life. By memorializing those already killed, we hope to better realize the tragedy involved, and thus pledge ourselves to a greater effort for peace so that no more casualties shall be counted for any side.²⁰⁷

Nearly three weeks later on the day before the national moratorium, as it described the activities scheduled for the following day, the local daily again referred to the original document issued by the club. The news article selectively quoted the college Peace Club's "Statement of Purposes," stripping some of its more potentially provocative language, but also emphasized that the group's actions were not finished with the activities beginning the next day on October 15. These were

²⁰⁷ In an article buried on page 11 beyond stories about "Miss Kansas," the Peace Club plans appeared. "Peace Club Plans Walk," The Newton Kansan, September 29, 1969, 11. For the original Statement which contained seven planks, see Bethel College Peace Club, "Statement of Purposes," Peace Club clippings file, MLA.

actions aimed at a long-term objective and which challenged the local community to join in an antiwar effort.

This is not a protest-picket march. It is a walk with the positive goal of calling for a national moratorium on Nov. 15 which will help all policy makers realize that token withdrawals have not and will not satiate the American people's desire for a quick end to the war ... We wish to respectfully express our sorrow for those Kansas men killed in Vietnam through a quiet, contemplative memorial service ... We hope the walk will exact a deep commitment from its participants.²⁰⁸

The newspaper omitted the club's fourth plank, which called attention to Wichita "as the military center of Kansas ... [thereby] call[ing] into question some of the basis for her economic and financial wealth" and those words in the second plank that encouraged widespread participation:

We wish to encourage all Bethel, ACCK, Hesston, and Wichita State students, area ministers and laymen, and any other people in the community who are in opposition to the continuation of the Vietnam War in a mass showing of the general discontent with present war policy.

Finally, the news article omitted parts of planks six and seven that enjoined others to participate as not only "a witness of faith in a radical and highly visible medium" but also as an exercise in democracy, "following history's teachings" to engage in "visible social protests."²⁰⁹

What the article did report was a series of activities much larger than a solemn event planned by a small group of students that had previously comprised the peace club. Instead, the college faculty itself had endorsed the moratorium, planned an opening convocation followed by a teach-in by faculty, administrators, and representatives of a veterans organization, and accepted the Peace Club's plans to conclude the events with an 18-mile walk through the heart of Newton

²⁰⁸ "Bethel Groups to Join Moratorium Observance," The Newton Kansan, October 14, 1969, 1; "Moratorium Grows Far Beyond Original Plans," *Ibid.*; "War Moratorium Called Treason," *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

to Wichita. Moreover, it supported a highly symbolic action that would firmly fix the war's outcome in the public square.

What became a four-day event represented an intersection between the peace interests and frustrations of Bethel College students and faculty and the larger national antiwar movements, but it was also a sequence juxtaposed against a local population that saw itself as quintessentially patriotic America. It, too, was carrying on its own national conversation about patriotism through groups such as the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and national columnists featured in The Newton Kansan.

On the day before the Bethel moratorium joined hundreds of other local protests held nationwide, the Washington correspondent for the Newspaper Enterprise Association characterized the projected national October and November events in alarming terms. Contrary to what the organizers of the next moratorium planned for November 15 in Washington DC and San Francisco, reporter Ray Cromley's column on the editorial page of The Newton Kansan described the upcoming national-local collaboration as a calculated and disorderly sequence. Appearing under the newspaper's lead editorial which affirmed dissent, but also support for the President and his Secretary of State, Cromley emphasized what he thought the national protests expected to achieve:

The Oct. 15 antiwar protests are but a prelude to what is being set up for mid-November. The "plan" has been for October to be peaceful. The November confrontations are scheduled to be rough. The preliminary meetings held thus far have been led by men who believe in violence as the way to get results. As we move deeper into these months of protest, it would be well to remember again the ancient city of Hue, in central Vietnam, partially occupied by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces in the Tet offensive of 1968... [in which numerous atrocities were committed by the occupying forces]... It would be interesting to know how those who want all U.S. forces to leave "right now" (instead of gradually as South Vietnam's troops are strengthened) would face

their consciences when Hue was multiplied many times over in a North Vietnamese occupation of the south.²¹⁰

Thus, the moratoriums scheduled a month apart per the plans of the New Mobe and Vietnam Moratorium Committee to pressure the Nixon administration into “a firm commitment to a definite timetable for total withdrawal” were, in the eyes of the columnist and those who agreed with him, a kind of bluff. Seemingly peaceful, they were in fact vehicles for disorder, and for communism itself. As a meeting held at the local American Legion and caught by an ABC-TV camera crew evidenced, the protests were simply a front for the dangerous international conspiracy, and the Bethelites were simple dupes, at best.²¹¹

How the Peace Club Got Its Groove: Prelude

For some in Newton, there were good reasons to view the campus with suspicion. The college’s “Repentance Walk and Mail” three years earlier had raised patriotic hackles. The presence of two faculty who had been under routine scrutiny by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their conscientious objection or refusal to register for earlier drafts generated questions, as did the actions of faculty like Alvin Beachy and James Juhnke who made no apologies for their opposition to the war. The President, now attempting to mediate between the local communities and activists on his campus, had himself walked in the action in 1966 when he

²¹⁰ Ray Cromley, “Red Bloodbath in Cards for Weakened Vietnam,” The Newton Kansan October 14, 1969, 4. Cromley’s column, “What’s Going On in Washington,” was a standard feature in the Newton newspaper.

²¹¹ “Dialog Held Preliminary to Observance,” The Newton Kansan, October 14, 1969, 1 re: Greg Jackson and the ABC camera crew; [News Reports on Moratorium], recorded by James C. Juhnke, October 15, 1969, Original tape, B-1, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA; ABC-TV newscast, “Bethel College, Oct. 15, 1969, Vietnam Moratorium Day,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YZx_O9mNh4 (accessed October 24, 2017).

was dean. Moreover, as the campus yearbooks in 1968 and 1969 evidenced, some students on campus began to resemble the counterculture featured on nightly news, with men having long hair and facial hair and young women sporting blue jeans in bare feet.

On campus, the earlier student rumblings about student power had taken a turn. Although several students had begun publishing the caustic underground newspaper, The Fly, in 1968, in opposition to President Voth, during the summer of 1969 disaffected Bethel students calling themselves The Concerned Bethel Students (CBS) formulated a response to the actions taken by the administration during the previous year. Still angered by the suspensions of “The Four” smokers and other intrusions of *in loco parentis*, the group moved beyond its earlier statements in The Collegian and announced its determination in The Remnant Newsletter published shortly after the fall term began:

Working toward a possible restructuring activism, a group of concerned Bethel students began uniting this summer in the wake of a psychologically devastating school year. Drawn together by the experience of a year in which all intelligent creativity, discovery, and initiative seemed to be stifled, we, as a group, began to establish a tight organization, a strong power base, a hard line of philosophy and action, and a communal spirit of love.²¹²

The group, which included many individuals who were also Peace Club members, thus brought their irritation with administration decision-making and oversight to the planning sessions for what would become the college’s distinctive participation in the fall’s antiwar activities and the moratorium.

²¹² Mark Wagler, “So What,” The Remnant Newsletter, September 1969, 2. Two Peace Club members had a familial connection with one of the four students who had been suspended for smoking. Antiwar activists Phil Dick (who had been suspended) and Ed Dick were brothers and Peace Club leader Kirsten Zenger Dick had married the latter. Thus, the conflict was heightened through family ties.

At the same time, understanding the moratorium events and the wide participation of students in them, is a more complex picture than simply focusing action on the major actors. As a cartoon in The Collegian asked of the Concerned Bethel Students, “Do You Think They’ll Keep the Anabaptist Vision?,” there were students who considered themselves radicals and who did not agree with the tenor and language of the more barbed campus discourse advanced by CBS. As student Virginia Galloway argued in a letter to the editor,

It is the belief of Concerned Bethel Students that “Bethel maintains a policy of discouraging, stifling, and punishing radical thought and action.” I am a radical, but I am not “discouraged, stifled, nor punished” by Bethel as an “establishment.” My discouragement stems from those who cannot perceive that the only real “life” of the present and future of Bethel is in the hoped of the fulfillment of the ridiculed goals in the campus catalogue set down by the “establishment.” “A personal commitment of life to Christ for salvation and service.”

She continued, turning to the manifesto the Concerned Bethel Students had issued in the underground newspaper, The Remnant.

To the authors of the referred text, Bethel should be a “free university” with “hard rapping, grooving, singing, dancing, searching, crying, and loving for, between, and among everyone involved in the campus community.” What does this mean? “Searching” for what? “Crying” for what? “Loving” what? One must have something to find, to want, and to love.... If the members of CBS want to follow and use as examples their Anabaptist ancestors, they should do so in the most important area ---they should wish to be Christians.... I found what I came here for ---not as much as I’d hoped, but what there is, is found in the “heritage” and “purpose” of Bethel College.²¹³

Thus, those who were the most prominent actors in the subsequent events were not the only significant participants, and the questions such as those raised by Galloway about the place of Anabaptist faith, institutional authority, and the motivations of protestors, anticipated much of

²¹³ Virginia J. Galloway, “Letter to the Editor,” The Collegian, September 24, 1969, 2.

the later external criticism and self-examination regarding Bethel's most public protest and its memory within and outside the college.

How the Peace Club Got Its Groove: Action

Although the Peace Club held its first meeting of the year almost as soon as the fall term began, its early actions evidence its familiarity and intersection with national peace groups, both those that were distinctively religious in nature and those that had secular roots. As discussed previously, these contacts included not only those made through participation in the inter-Mennonite Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship annual conferences and special events, but also via other projects initiated by MCC's Peace Section. Mennonite Vincent Harding, who was the author of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s groundbreaking speech against the Vietnam War in 1967, had long connected Mennonites directly to both civil rights and antiwar actors, while on the local level, Bethel had faculty who had resisted the draft and participated in national marches. Yet, understanding the fabric of the most public of Bethel's antiwar activism includes examining not only new material, but a re-reading of early source material, including the earliest and most authoritative compilation of original documents and oral history interviews compiled three years after the events. The combination fleshes out the narrative and positions the paper to consider sources of and motivations for activism.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Vincent Harding's early antiwar stance connected to both his Anabaptism and the oppressed was widely distributed through an inter-Mennonite periodical. He challenged the relative ease of most I-W conscientious objectors, compared their service to the suffering Vietnamese, and then asked the readers, "Is their plight nothing to us in wealthy, un-bombed, well-fed America --- at least that part of America most of us know"? Vincent Harding, "Vietnam—Is There No Other Way? Questions, Not Answers," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, September 30, 1965, 2. King's speech, known variously as "Beyond Vietnam" and "A Time to Break Silence," was delivered at Riverside Church, New York, on April 4, 1967. The Levellers sprang from the ongoing endeavor at Bethel to create seminar courses that pushed students

Seventy-two students congregated in the cramped confines of Goering Hall lounge on September 10, 1969 in the Peace Club's first meeting of the year. By the next evening when fifty-eight assembled in the lounge, the officers elected in the first meeting had decided against a hierarchical government in favor of a shared triumvirate consisting of sophomores Kirstin Zerger Dick and Phil Unruh and freshman Stan Senner. The meeting that included appeals to "lay your life on the line" overwhelmed some students, while energizing others. In the mild chaos and competing visions remembered by those who had attended, the students nevertheless nominated a steering committee to formulate three proposals for the second meeting to be held the next evening, an approach that mirrored conventional Mennonite approaches to problem-solving, but which also reflected the approaches used in community organizing. This steering committee was composed of senior Jack Goering, sophomores Ruth Juhnke and Clinton (Clint) Stucky, and freshman Robert (Bob) Mayer. All were native Kansans and GC Mennonites, with the exception of outlier Bob Mayer who hailed from Ohio, and whose presence offered an unanticipated focus. Members of Concerned Bethel Students were elected to office, but so were students who were

academically. In 1972 Bethel historian Keith Sprunger charged his fall term class with the task of becoming junior historians by studying the Moratorium events at Bethel in 1969. He trained them in conducting oral interviews and utilizing local source material. Known as The Levellers, their final project was a printed publication, "Peace Activities of 1969 at Bethel College, or, A Peace of the ReBELLion." Because each chapter was written by a different student, and the quality is uneven among papers, individual chapters will be cited. Many of the oral interviews are extant, carefully preserved by MLA archivists on the original cassette tapes, although the recordings vary in usability, chiefly because of the original conditions under which they were recorded. I am indebted to archivist and historian John Thiesen of MLA for transferring these to files that I could use and his generosity of spirit. The Levellers, "Peace Activities of 1969 at Bethel College, or, A Peace of the ReBELLion," MLA (Hereafter, The Levellers, with individual contributors noted. The pagination begins over for each chapter in the compilation and the citation reflects that convention as given). Oral interviews are listed with full citations on first use, then with the least amount necessary for identification on second use.

not, including several freshmen. Like Peace Club leadership in prior years, including the activist year of 1966-1967, women held positions of leadership, both formal and informal.²¹⁵

Although no minutes survive from the first meeting and many of its details are lost, the meeting focused on establishing leadership and exploring potential projects. Leveller John Haury's brief recounting stated that:

[After choosing leadership], the second major point of discussion was the formulation of a project which would be constructive and beneficial to the cause of peace. In discussing this matter, it was decided that there were two possible approaches which could be used. The first involved confrontation politics whereby the group would actively challenge the system, while the second approach centered on trying to work constructively through the system. The first approach was the route which was chosen.²¹⁶

It is evident from the comments made in the course of the second meeting and later oral interviews, that there was a substantial argument between Zerger Dick's enjoinder that people needed to be ready to "lay their [sic] life on the line" and history and social studies major Jan Carpenter who challenged what felt to many like pressure tactics. By the next night at the second meeting the steering committee had formed three proposals for action, projects which potentially

²¹⁵ Zerger Dick (Salina, KS), Unruh (Harper, KS), Senner (Buhler, KS), Goering (Moundridge, KS), Juhnke (McPherson, KS), and Stucky (Burrton, KS) were all Kansas natives, while Mayer came from Ohio (Wadsworth, OH). Of the Kansans, excepting Zerger Dick, all came from a 35 mile radius around Bethel. Regarding women in leadership, history major and forensics star Jan Carpenter matched wits with Kirsten Zerger Dick over strategies and inclusivity, an exchange that was remembered in later interviews. Peace Club Meeting, recorded by James C. Juhnke, September 11, 1969, Original Tape B-3A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA; Kirsten Zerger and Stan Senner, interviewed by Fred Zerger, May 21, 1970, Original Tape B-10, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA. Kirsten (Zerger) Dick used her married surname in the Bethel yearbook, but is frequently referred to as Kirsten Zerger in various interviews. To avoid confusion, Zerger Dick will be used.

²¹⁶ There are no minutes from the first meeting and this analysis is heavily dependent on Leveller John Haury for that session. John Haury, "The Peace Club Planning for 1969," in *The Levellers*, Chapter II, 2.

offered a great deal of freedom for individuals. The first, which was later chosen, proffered some sort of yet undecided action on Moratorium Day that would then stretch to November 15 and the second moratorium, while the second proposal framed a general collective action that would be either a walk of some sort or a petition, either of which reminiscent of the original walk planned in 1966 to the Newton Post Office. The third option stated that only a particular group would either walk or petition. That the club could agree on the first proposal in a strong majority vote indicates that there was enough leeway at this point that even some of the students who had felt pressured in the previous meeting could agree. These dynamics and open framework would prevail in spite of the oft-repeated criticism regarding the Peace Club leaders that they dominated actions.²¹⁷

The second meeting that decided between the three relatively abstract proposals and continued to process the internal dynamics of those students present (and those who were absent but represented by others) was recorded by history professor James Juhnke, who attended along with economics professor J. Lloyd Spaulding, the latter the long-term Peace Club advisor since 1956. The second meeting is notable for several reasons other than the particular actions taken. First, it revealed a strategic way of approaching decision-making in its focus on general, rather than specific plans, and the directive, yet effective, logic used by Zerger Dick. Second, it evidenced an ability to respond to the challenges issued in the first meeting, articulated most pointedly by Jan Carpenter, and to accept her argument regarding the need to back off from a rigid definition of what constituted either a committed antiwar activist or someone who was against the war but not willing to embrace the more strident terms of action. Third, it explicitly

²¹⁷ Zerger Dick and Senner, interview, Original Tape B-10, MLA; Peace Club Meeting, recording, September 11, 1969, Original Tape B-3A, MLA.

articulated a hope that the other Kansas Mennonite colleges (Tabor and Hesston) would participate in the national moratorium by hosting events on their campuses, even as subsequent discussion revealed that the Tabor Student Council President said his campus would likely demur, a judgment that was later confirmed.²¹⁸

Fourth, James Juhnke's presence had two results. His tape recorder demonstrated his interest in recording the event for posterity, but his strategic asking of chiefly understated questions guided the students through campus process and helped them anticipate and undermine objections to their yet undefined proposal for Moratorium day on October 15. He asked them, for example, "are we voting on condition on getting permission [to engage in a particular memorial to the American dead], pressure can easily be brought to bear on the Peace Club." The question was not only both diffuse and direct, yet spoken in such a manner that it was almost offhand as it slurred the two thoughts together, but also one that gently advanced a potential problem. This was a particularly Mennonite means of raising a question and respecting the process of thinking through an issue. It empowered the students to re-think their actions, but left the decision in their hands. Moreover, after the official meeting was over, he and another faculty member present discussed the particular process regarding faculty approval (since the Moratorium stipulated cancelling classes) over the course of ten minutes. Students entered freely into the conversation and yet listened to the faculty explicate their thinking, patently transparent for the listening students. In the end, Juhnke and his fellow faculty member recognized that no specific approval for that day's events would be needed because it was a Student Council-controlled day without classes anyway, but that the faculty would need to be involved for other decisions. It was a

²¹⁸ Ibid.; Al Berg, former Tabor Student Body president, email message to author, October 5, 2017.

carefully couched conversation that was gentle, open, revealing of the means of process, and inviting students into the decision-making. That this approach was successful (and largely invisible) is evidenced by later interviews of Peace Club leaders who eschewed the notion that the faculty had controlled the protest events.²¹⁹

There is yet another intriguing question that hangs over the two meetings that launched the Moratorium events of 1969 and which concern the issue of sacred-secular influences on antiwar activity in general, and Bethel College protest specifically. None of the Levellers mention that being involved in the national moratorium dovetailed into any particular peace group actions. Being involved in the moratorium was fleshed out by Bob Mayer, who brought his organizing experience and contacts with others in the national moratorium leadership and community to the table and helped integrate them into the plans. That is true, yet, in the interview conducted three years later, both Stan Senner and Kirsten Zerger Dick immediately noted that the idea for the moratorium had been advanced in the first meeting by [Senner]: “Dr. Beachy,” [Zerger Dick]: “Dr. Beachy mentioned it at the first meeting. He said something about Clergy Concerned.” Bible and Religion professor Alvin Beachy had brought information issued by Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), the organization in which he was a member and to which De Benedetti attributes the credit for maintaining the strongest and most-determined

²¹⁹ Peace Club Meeting, recording, September 11, 1969, Original Tape B-3A, MLA; Zerger Dick and Senner, interview, Original Tape B-10; J. Lloyd Spaulding, interviewed by Terence Goering, April 2, 1975, Original Tape B-42A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA. Regarding faculty involvement, leader Stan Senner later answered interviewer and history major Fred Zerger’s question, “Who were the instrumental faculty members throughout the moratorium activities? Were there any that provided, you know, sort of, that if they weren’t ... there plugging away [it would not have happened] or was it totally student-initiated?” by flatly stating “no faculty members played a real significant role.” Zerger Dick and Senner, interview, Original Tape B-10, MLA.

antiwar protest stance and series of actions after the election of President Nixon. Thus, analyzing the Bethel events in total must incorporate the early influence of CALC, one of the religious bodies involved in organizing the national Moratorium and which issued not only specific suggestions for events, but also helped distribute guidelines on discipline, a statement of purpose, and suggestions for incorporating communities. Moreover, Beachy was not the only faculty member involved in religious organizations that pressed for peace and antiwar activity and whose contacts helped shape Bethel protests. English professor Anna Kreider Juhnke brought her long-term membership in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) to bear during the Bethel events, involving what Bethel students called "the WILPF ladies" in organizational tasks, sewing black armbands for marchers, incorporating a few in the Walk to Wichita, and situating the Bethel moratorium events in a larger framework.²²⁰

By the time the Peace Club met a week later, it had established the basic structure for Moratorium events, deciding on a march that emulated the original plans in 1966, but moving down Main Street from North Newton to Newton's main post office and then on to Wichita eighteen additional miles along Highway 81. Further modeling their actions on what some considered the failed peace march of 1966, they also created plans that would both preempt community anger and educate the surrounding communities about the horrors of the war. Finally, they acquired October 15, the day set aside for Student Council to manage as it saw fit, as Moratorium day. The club had also obtained an interesting twist for its local actions ---

²²⁰ Kreider Juhnke was "on and off chairman of that organization." Kreider Juhnke, interview, Original Tape B-32A, MLA. WILPF was one of the four peace organizations that political scientist Lewy later castigated in his controversial analysis of peace groups that had in his judgment become activist. Lewy, Peace; Stan Senner and Pat Albrecht Senner, interview by Jonathan Rich and Curt Goering, October 11, 1972, Original Tape B-26A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

involvement and incorporation by the National Moratorium Committee. In an intriguing conjunction that addresses the connections between sacred and secular antiwar protest, the Peace Club's new member from Ohio, steering committee member Bob Mayer, firmly situated Bethel in the midst of national Moratorium activities, a position that would both fascinate and alarm members of the campus, the community, and the Mennonite churches. The connection would result in debates about ego, the character of Mennonite-Anabaptist witness, and the nature of the public square. Yet Mayer's presence also evidences the interplay between the religious pacifist groups and antiwar organizations from the New Left.

Mayer was a forensics scholarship student, recruited by professor Ada Mae Haury for her formidable debate program at Bethel. A student activist in high school, he was involved in Students for a Democratic Society as it was morphing from a thoughtful New Left establishment-critical and justice-focused organization to its redefinition as The Weathermen, a showy exemplar for violence that enjoyed posturing and extravagant claims and which Mayer eschewed. Later trailed by the FBI, the future Bethel student hated the war, burned his draft card, --- and had early strong connections that exposed him to the historic peace churches and religious pacifism. "Some of my best friends in high school were Mennonites," and some were Quakers. Among the latter, were Mark Looney and his father John Looney, who was active in the American Friends Service Committee and so fiercely interested in peace and nonviolence that he sold his business in order to pursue them.

After the relatively long-haired Mayer chose Bethel following a trip to Kansas with a Mennonite friend, he joined the Peace Club as it began sketching out the moratorium activities. When his old friend Mark Looney now at American University in Washington DC became involved in the national planning, he called Mayer, then put national moratorium organizer Sam

Brown in touch. As a result, the Bethel freshman became the statewide coordinator for the Moratorium, responsible for contacting other institutions and making sure their plans were funneled to the national committee for the sake of publicity.²²¹

As the Peace Club brainstormed over the idea of using a bell in a solemn service that would recognize the American dead during the moratorium, a faculty spouse offered a solution that the club, Bob Mayer, and through him, the national Vietnam Moratorium Committee (VMC) excitedly listed on their master chart of local events. The idea for using a bell was Lavonne Platt's. Wife of the biology professor who had spent time in prison for refusing to register with Selective Service in 1956, she also had an activist bent, participating in the March on Washington in 1963 and offering hospitality to the endless stream of students who enjoyed meeting in the Platt home. After she conceived of the idea, Jim Juhnke contacted the local Mennonite museum and borrowed an impressive school bell that two Bethel industrial arts faculty outfitted with a heavy frame to enable its ringing by an individual standing next to it.²²²

With basic plans in place, over the next few days, the Peace Club deliberated over how best to approach the college administration and faculty and gain their support. Advised by several faculty who urged them to think in terms of strategic but incremental terms the club

²²¹ Mayer's pictures in the Bethel yearbook for 1970 depict him with hair slightly below ear level, a style already reflected by other Kansas Mennonite male students. *1970 Thresher*, 70, 85, 93. Mayer would later take a year off from his studies at Bethel first to study the Hutterites in Vienna and then to work for the War Resister's League. He eventually graduated from Bethel with a degree in history and religion. Bob Mayer, telephone interview with author, October 15, 2017.

²²² Early reports on Peace Club activities variously attributed credit to other faculty members, but the powerful symbol was LaVonne Platt's brainchild. Keith Sprunger, notes in margin of original, John Waltner, "Moratorium 1969 (October 15-17)," in *The Levellers*, Chapter III, 4; Jonathan Rich, "The Faculty," in *The Levellers*, Chapter V, 6.

reached a rough consensus about their approach. They first offered a proposal to Student Council, which, in turn, endorsed and submitted it to the faculty. During the October 7 faculty meeting, Jim Juhnke moved that the school cancel classes on October 15 so that students might study peace. The faculty approved his motion and one that approved [in principle] using a bell to recognize those who had died in the war.²²³

Art professor Robert Regier who had participated in the 1966 Repentance Walk and Mail explained how the faculty viewed the proposed activities in a later interview:

There was a relatively small group that was enthusiastically behind it ... and investing their own time in the organization of it. Then there would be a little larger group that was sympathetic to the whole thing, believed in what was behind the event, believed in what the Peace Club stood for. They maybe had some self-doubts about the appropriate means for getting to message out. There would be a relatively small group that was really opposed. They more or less kept quiet.²²⁴

Although biology professor Dwight Platt supported the Peace Club in general and joined with Jim Juhnke in presenting the motion to the faculty to support cancelling classes and setting aside a day to participate in the moratorium, his support was not a simple or reflexive endorsement. Rather, he deliberately reasoned how his individual conscience led to his support of collective action.

I was of course very strongly opposed to the continuation of the war in Viet Nam and felt that for many reasons it was wrong. And felt that if one has a conviction such as this, you can't just sit around and think about it. That in some way you have to express it, you gotta find some mode of expression. And then secondly, a number of students and other faculty *were* developing this sort of a public expression and it seemed like a legitimate thing. And, so one feels called upon to support this sort of expression if it is expressing the ideas which you want to

²²³ Bethel College faculty, Minutes, October 7, 1969.

²²⁴ Robert Regier, interview, by Jonathan Rich, December 5, 1972, Original tape B-53B, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

express in a way in which you feel comfortable expressing them, then you feel some compunction to join with others in this sort of public expression.²²⁵

By the time the faculty met and approved the Juhnke-Platt motion on October 7, the Peace Club had already implemented its larger plan. Determined to avoid the reaction by Newton to the earlier Peace Walk and Remembrance three years earlier, the Peace Club mapped out a stratagem for meeting with a wide range of the community. Beginning just after the initial meetings in September, over the next thirty days small clusters of Peace Club representatives met with church boards, ministers, public school educators, women's groups, and veterans groups, including aborted attempts with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. Explaining the goals for the moratorium, they met with a wide range of responses. Most reactions were negative, but the student representatives found some surprising pockets of support, sometimes juxtaposed against those in the same meeting. For example, student historian and Leveller John Haury described the meeting with a local Presbyterian congregation:

At the First Presbyterian Church, Jack Goering, Ruth Juhnke, and Clinton Stucky met with nine or ten of the church leaders on October 6. A general discussion on Vietnam and also about the Peace Club's activities was held. The majority of the church representatives were very much opposed to the walk. The new assistant pastor, Ralph Milligan, who had recently come to the church from the East, was gravely afraid of what would happen. He thought that there would be violence. The pastor, Louis Dale, summarized the meeting by saying "The church is just an empty banana peel from hell if it can't respect and support these kids in what they're doing."²²⁶

Mennonite churches also had their objections, sometimes supporting the students, occasionally rejecting their antiwar stances or their means of protest, and, frequently, voicing no overt

²²⁵ Dwight Platt, interview by Jonathan Rich, December 1, 1972, Original tape, B-51B, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

²²⁶ Haury, "The Peace Club," in *The Levellers*, Chapter II, 7.

objection, but asserting it by withdrawing from the church, however temporarily. Because some students approached their own congregations, it is difficult to assess what the real thinking was prior to the moratorium events. As the churches later considered means by which to address Bethel's crisis in 1970, it is apparent that the Western District Conference was struggling with a strong peace position, some of which will be considered later in this study.²²⁷

On campus, the Peace Club's internal wrestling over projects and the contested endorsement of an open structure that could incorporate those who did not support the public march bore unexpected fruit. Students who had not considered being involved, signed on to projects such as shifts for ringing the bell, acting as lookouts from the tops of campus buildings to anticipate trouble for the bell-ringers, or acting in an antiwar play, The Flag, which was staged the first night of the moratorium. Faculty, administrators, and even several townspeople volunteered to participate in a Teach-in on the day of the national Moratorium. Creating a structure that could accommodate activists who wanted to confront both the campus and town, but accepting the antiwar commitment among those who did not endorse that stance had an unexpected result. Senior Thaine Dirks expressed what Leveller Suzanne Wedel found as a common student opinion:

²²⁷ Ibid., 9; Lou Lichti, "The Mennonite Church Takes a Stand," in *The Levellers*, X, 1-115-8. This is an area that needs more research. MLA houses some interviews of local church members and clergy regarding the Vietnam War and Bethel College, but several are poor quality due either to the environments in which they were conducted or to the degradation of the recording media over time.

I wasn't sure whether it was worth alienating or getting all these people really pissed off at me; getting all these people mad, whether anything would actually be accomplished by it. [But], I needed to go for myself.²²⁸

Thus, the Peace Club and those who contended over means and inclusivity within it had inadvertently created a powerful communitarian action that recognized individual conscience and offered opportunities for peace education by the same young people that the church had lamented losing. Students who had not considered marching were excitedly getting involved, although there was by no means consensus.

By the time the faculty endorsed the symbolic ringing of the bell in theory, the Peace Club's determination had ignited a firestorm in the community and on campus, particularly with the administration. President Orville Voth and dean William Keeney scrambled to dissuade the students from taking events off campus. While both were opposed to the war, they were also increasingly conscious of the town's reactions and disapproval. Although each had participated in public demonstrations, Voth as dean in the Repentance Walk and Mail in 1966 and Keeney in an earlier action when stationed as a Pax man performing alternative service in Europe, neither approved of the means the students wanted to employ. As Keeney reflected in a later interview regarding the planned events:

The bell ringing, I did, I thought that was a kind of symbolic expression which one ought to engage in and I was very much supportive of those plans. I indicated to the group that marching was not my style. I had done it once before in Amsterdam back in 1962 or 63 in protest against the use of hydrogen bombs in [atmospheric] testing. I did some checking and in general I felt it didn't really think it changed people's minds by bringing them to conviction. It was more of a

²²⁸ Suzanne Wedel, "Student Reaction to the Peace Activities at Bethel College in the Fall of 1969," in *The Levellers*, Chapter VI, 2; Thaine Dirks, interview by John Rich and Kurt Goering, October 25, 1972, Original tape B-172C, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

pressure tactic. ... Not quite in harmony with my way of working at peace, not my style.²²⁹

He was also concerned about the potential mixed messages that a peace march might have, thus wrestling with the identification of disorder and violence with peaceful dissent. Reflecting three years later, Keeney argued,

[my issue was that people will] identify the group with those who were treasonable [who] would do it for strictly political reasons; [the march] didn't differentiate this group, particularly those who were doing it for Christian reasons, from any other group those who were marching for many other reasons, including communistic, political reasons, or simply radical protest against all authority. There were a whole bag of reasons why people were marching then and you got put in the same bag with everyone else.²³⁰

The thoughtful Keeney, like Peace Club sponsor J. Lloyd Spaulding, was not an ethnic Mennonite. Rather, he had grown up in a coal-mining family and become a Mennonite through early associations in Pennsylvania with both Quakers and Mennonites, graduated from the other GC four-year college (Bluffton), and had succeeded the august MC Harold Bender as chair of the MCC Peace Section when Bender passed in 1962. A conscientious objector, he once explained his decision to become a Mennonite: "'My decision to become a Christian and, therefore, a conscientious objector led me to become a Mennonite.'" He had already engaged in mental health reform and in helping establish an interracial church that nurtured many activists. He was a committed religious pacifist. But, he opposed anything that smacked of coercion. Over the next weeks and months, Keeney was a supportive dean to the increasingly embattled Orville Voth, but he also became what he called an "interpreter" or mediator between angry groups, whether

²²⁹ William Keeney, interview by Raymond Reimer, October 13, 1972, Original tape B-27A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

²³⁰ Ibid.

students or community, utilizing the same set of skills that made him an effective leader of the MCC Peace Section during the Vietnam War as the Section took on the difficult task of approving and sending aid to North Vietnam.²³¹

President Voth found himself in a quagmire, partly as a result of the previous year's disciplinary actions. His *in loco parentis* decisions, coupled with the highly personalized anger some Peace Club members had for him, and the changed mood of students who had returned from the Democratic Convention in Chicago juxtaposed the need for a delicate parsing of "witness" against a group of students who disputed his right and ability to do that, either for them or for the college. Even as he articulated his views of an appropriate peace "witness," later reprised during the Moratorium Teach-In, he had the unenviable task of representing the college to the community and the churches. Unable to persuade students not to proceed with plans which had now caught the eye of the national news networks, he appealed to civic leaders to respect these same means of dissent as a democratic right that should be tolerated. In a day of administrative infamy, he met consecutively with the Newton Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Newton Chamber of Commerce, and the Newton City Commission, all of which agreed with the appeal to democratic rights. The City Commission approved providing police protection, a promise made good. He was concerned about the effects on Newton and the Mennonite constituency who were making their objections known, but his job was made more difficult when the impish and obstinate business professor Bennie Bargen turned over the Bethel mailing list to the Peace Club to help them raise money. A "radical communitarian," Bargen had lived in

²³¹ Ibid.; Robert S. Kreider, "In Memoriam: William E. Keeney (1922-2006)," Mennonite Quarterly Review 81 (January 2007): 3-4; Dave Janzen, interview by Suzanne Wedel, November 2, 1972, Original tape B-65c, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

a Bruderhof commune and continued to hold strong views about the state. Thus, by October 14, and The Newton Kansan's final article about the Moratorium, the campus, the churches, and the town were primed for Bethel's long venture into the streets. Moreover, with the arrival of ABC-News' correspondent Gregory Jackson and a film crew who conducted interviews over three days, Newton's Main Street was about to become Main Street USA. But, contrary to the much-feared threatening events of the Repentance Walk and Mail on Veterans Day in 1966, the Bethel Moratorium events apparently did not attract the attention of the FBI. The long-haired, barefoot "radicals" of 1969 were apparently of no concern to the bureau. They would not generate a single report on the college as a whole until February 10, 1970, four months later.²³²

Bethel College and Moratorium Day: Entering the Public Square

Moratorium events began with a convocation held in the open air in front of the administration building, the signature structure of the campus. Student Council president Terry Unruh, who had been roughed up in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention, opened the solemn event, then turned the microphone over to Dr. Alvin Beachy, professor of religion, to set the context for the day's events and to explain in particular the meaning of the tolling of the bell. Beachy, who was an outspoken and determined opponent of the war, and who

²³² For a timeline of events, see "Chronology of Fall Peace Activities, 1969," in *The Levellers*. Concerning Borgen, see Juhnke, Small, 22; Senner, interview, Original Tape B-26B, MLA. Regarding the FBI and the Moratorium at Bethel College, the FOIA file skipped from a general request to conduct "an applicant type search" on an alleged member of the Bethel Peace Club, "his listed fellow students, also fellow students and selected faculty members," dated 9/4/68 to Special Agent Otto T. Handwerk's report on a Bethel College student who had subscribed to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) publication, "New Left Notes." FBI, "[Report] KC 77- 7913," September 4, 1968, 1-2; FBI, "[Report] KC 100-13833," February 20, 1970, 1-2. For a long-range study of FBI surveillance of Bethel College, see Keith A. Sprunger and Mary Sprunger, Mennonite Quarterly Review, forthcoming.

had fully accepted the concept of Mennonite political engagement, solemnly addressed the assembly:

We meet in this memorial service not in anger, but in sorrow. At each tolling of the bell we seek to be reminded of one of the more than forty thousand young Americans who have died in the Vietnam war This protest is directed, not toward the young men, American or Vietnamese, who have fought and died in it; but against the continuation of a policy that has already brought death to countless thousands of innocent civilians, threatens a country with total destruction, and claims more American lives and treasure with each passing day.... We who are gathered here share in this deep conviction, that the Vietnam war is wrong and as free and responsible persons we cannot remain silent.²³³

As Beachy concluded his remarks with a request that the assembly bow in silent prayer, Dean William Keeney spontaneously lowered the American flag to half-staff. He did not realize that the Peace Club had specifically asked President Voth for permission to do just that and had been denied. He noted later:

It seemed to me that the flag ought to be at half-mast in mourning and we thought about it and nobody was sure whether we could do it and I decided we should do it, so I proceeded to put the flag at half-mast since it was a service of mourning.... It seemed to me to be a very natural and appropriate act in the kind of situation in which we were mourning the dead in Vietnam.²³⁴

²³³ Beachy had earlier written a pointed letter castigating President Nixon for the war in Vietnam. Alvin Beachy, "For Whom the Bell Tolls," October 15, 1969. Peace Club files, MLA; Maynard Shelly, "For Us the Bell Tolloed," The Mennonite, November 4, 1969, 662-664. Shelly emphasized that the moratorium had been observed at other Mennonite schools by following the article on Bethel with a short overview of events at two other GC colleges. "Vietnam Vigils and Talks at Freeman and Bluffton," Ibid. Shelly received a great deal of pressure during the Vietnam War for what was described as his courageous stance in continuing to discuss the war in spite of constituency objections. David Harder, "An Editor and His Denominational Periodical, or Maynard Shelly and The Mennonite: 1961-1971," Bethel College student paper, 1982, MLA.

²³⁴ Keeney, interview, Original tape B-27A, MLA.

Bethel students and other participants later interviewed by student John Waltner said that they had approved of Keeney's action---and that it had seemed completely appropriate for a ceremony of mourning.²³⁵

Under the gaze of ABC-TV cameras, Peace Club member Pat Albrecht began the rhythmic tolling of the bell, a heavy sound that rang out throughout North Newton and well into Newton itself. Each toll represented the death of one American in Vietnam, and with more than 40,000 dead, that meant that the bell rang every four seconds, from 10:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. over the next four days. As the bell continued its doleful rhythm, those who wished to participate gathered at the Fine Arts Center for an afternoon Teach-In on the Vietnam War. A general historical overview of the war combined with the effects of the war on the Vietnamese people--- and on, in the case of the speaker from G.I. Forum, the impact on Hispanic Americans.

Among the twelve speakers in the teach-in, Alvin Beachy contested the Nixon Administration's characterization of the war, just as he had done earlier in the war when he joined other clergy to protest what the American people were being told. He later reflected on the speech in a student interview:

So what I did in this speech essentially [was] to expose the lies of the administration concerning our reason for being there and also talk about the methods we were using to fight the war which I think amounts, thought then and still do, that they amount to genocide.²³⁶

²³⁵ Waltner, "Moratorium" in *The Levellers*, II, 2.

²³⁶ Alvin Beachy, interview by Raymond Reimer, November 10, 1972, Original tape B-31A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA. Other teach-in speakers included Bethel faculty: James Juhnke, Dwight Platt, Ronald Rich, Howard Snider, David Janzen, President Orville Voth, and Dean William Keeney.

During the day, it was manifest that members of the administration, while tolerating how the students had organized the Moratorium, nevertheless were disturbed by these same means.

During the Teach-In President Voth expressed his deep concern over not just the means of protest, but the underlying nature of political actions.

I am specifically troubled when our youth confront others in the cause of peace but in the means of political persuasion. I do not mean to belittle or discourage involvement in peace efforts on a political base—but ultimately the motivation must be in the name of Jesus Christ and His gospel of hope, love, and brotherhood. Political arguments are insignificant bases for committing one's life--for finally political situations change and when a cause is won on what basis does one choose another. Or more seriously, if a cause is lost what political tenet drives us to continue to love, to live for others, or die if need be. While I believe that a moratorium is appropriate I ask still, what is our motivation? ... In conclusion then I am saying simply that in all our frantic and exciting preparation for a moratorium and a peace march, we dare not cut the roots of the Christian faith which nurtures that concern. Politicalization of the Mennonite heritage of a radical faith in Jesus Christ [creates] possibilities for misdirection if not loss of direction. The single minded attention to the brutality of war must ultimately arise out of the particularity of a commitment to Jesus Christ. And, finally the best evidence for a moral maturity is that it is a developing maturity---this means a broadening of concern but still keeping an intensity of concern and of conscience associated with questions of morality and faith.²³⁷

Voth had participated in the Teach-In associated with the earlier protest and emphasized the dehumanizing effects of the war. As dean, he had also walked to the North Newton post office and mailed his objections to Congress. But now, in the hype and glaring presence of the television networks, he could not easily endorse what seemed to be a boastful event, full of ego, and detached from the centrality of faith in Christ. When he reflected back on the events in an interviewed conducted three years later, he emphasized that he believed the Peace Club

²³⁷ Orville Voth, untitled message, Teach-in at Bethel College Moratorium, October 15, 1969. Peace Club files. MLA. (Hereafter Voth, Teach-In).

leadership was sincere about its reasons for protest. But he also believed that their reasons for protest were essentially political, rather than religious.²³⁸

The Bell

The day had started with ceremony, but its chief symbol made its presence known over the next four days, to the annoyance of many and as a means of solemn and sorrowful reflection to many. After Beachy's call for a silent prayer and Keeney's lowering of the flag, Peace Club member Pat Albrecht began the rhythmic tolling that continued for the next four days. As the volunteers who had signed on for thirty minute shifts soon realized, ringing the large heavy bell was no easy matter. Some individuals had to use both arms and a wide-arching and bending motion in order to keep a rhythm and render a toll. Others stood to the side as a way of gaining relief. Peace Club leader and organizer of the March to Wichita, Stan Senner explained how strenuous keeping the rhythm was:

Ringing the bell was, you know, a noisy experience fairly deafening and it was really hard on the arms to sit there and swing the thing back and forth and we'd try to change to the other arm without losing rhythm because we did try to keep it at a regular pace.... The 40,000 was more symbolic than actual.²³⁹

The ringers paced themselves, having adopted short phrases or mantras developed by Alvin Beachy or utilizing their own. Kirsten Zerger Dick, for example, chose a line from Quaker Thomas Kelley: "The power of Love is a part of peace." She later recalled how compelling it

²³⁸ Orville Voth, interview by Raymond Reimer, Suzanne Wedel, and Jonathan Rich, November 15, 1972, Original tape B-20A, 172.1, Oral History Collection, MLA.

²³⁹ Senner, interview, Original Tape B-26A, MLA.

was for both ringers and listeners: “[the] incessant ringing for 12 hours a day, for 4 days straight, ma[de] its message --- the terrible cost of the war --- impossible to ignore.”²⁴⁰

Students and faculty on campus or within earshot all day and night emphasized its resonant impact. Again, Stan Senner noted:

Many people said that it was quite an experience and, it really brought the number of deaths home because each toll of the bell stood for a dead person and it, uh, made it hit home when you heard the bell all day long and late at night.²⁴¹

Biology professor Dwight Platt who had refused to register for the draft and spent time in prison in the 1950s recalled how evocative the bell tolling was:

The bell ringing turned out to be a very significant sort of exercise and quite meaningful, really. It was a good symbol ... it was a continuous reminder throughout the day of the fact that, of the great amount of suffering and dying that had been going on in Vietnam. I mean you just began to think that every time that bell rang it represented another person had been killed. The thing just kept going and going and going and it was a way of making more real the sort of thing which was happening... Could I hear it in the classroom? Oh, yes, constantly.²⁴²

The bell fascinated people, but so did the idea of roughing up the pacifists at Bethel. Two faculty secured it every night, but the campus was aware of threats and potential harassment. Lookouts

²⁴⁰ The large cast-iron bell was originally in a schoolhouse in Antelope, Kansas, then the Meadow Mennonite Church of Colby, Kansas, but had been purchased, re-purchased and donated to the Kauffman Museum, which preserved Mennonite artifacts and which was located adjacent to the Bethel College campus. Historian James Juhnke had facilitated borrowing the bell for the moratorium, while Peace Club students consulted industrial arts instructors Wesley Pauls and Emerson Wiens, who made a heavy stand for the bell and then secured it before and after the start of each day’s session. Waltner, “Moratorium,” in *The Levellers*, III, 5. The impressive bell garnered a great deal of attention. The day before the Moratorium, *The Newton Kansan* allocated as many inches to describing the bell as to quoting the club’s “Statement of Purpose.” “Bethel Groups,” *The Newton Kansan*, October 14, 1969, 1. Historian Keith Sprunger discussion with Kirsten Zerger, February 2012 and email February 29, 2012 cited in Sprunger, *Bethel*, 157.

²⁴¹ Senner, interview, Original Tape B-26A, MLA.

²⁴² Platt, interview, Original Tape B-51B, MLA.

were posted in the upper floors of buildings and attempted to defuse problems in advance. Some encounters were expected, but others surprised and touched the participants.

Leveller John Waltner assessed the range of responses to the Bethel College bell ringers and found bravado, harassment, understanding, and pathos as the students attempted to anticipate aggression and maintain a nonviolent reaction. Reflecting on the interviews he conducted and the documents he examined three years later, he concluded:

It was probably due to the cool of the students that although they were often spit upon and verbally assaulted, there were never any real physical violent confrontations with the hecklers. Many bell ringers agreed that even the heckling was good because it broke a certain sense of isolation which the students felt and gave them a look at other people's points of view. Not all people who came to watch the bell ringing were bent on violent confrontation. Lauren Hiebner, one of the bell ringers recounts the story of an incident which occurred while he was ringing the bell. It was late at night. A young man came up and stood behind the bell ringer for awhile [sic]. The man was uneasy but he kept ringing the bell. Finally the young man who had been watching came up to Lauren and asked him if he could ring the bell once for a friend of his who had been killed in Vietnam. Lauren agreed and the young man stepped up and rang the bell just once and then stepped back. Lauren says that he looked at the young man and it was evident that he was crying.

As Hiebner emphasized, "that had more meaning for me than any of the other things that had happened that week."²⁴³

By the end of the day on October 15, the events seemed larger than life to many participants and onlookers. In its opening report on the national moratorium, ABC-TV News featured "a look of the land today, from one coast to the other," leading with Chicago, then moving from east to west coasts. Wedged in between students at the Catholic University of

²⁴³ Lauren Hiebner, transcribed interview, October 23, 1971, from Waltner, "Moratorium," in *The Levellers*, III, 7.

America singing “America, the Beautiful” and an early morning march in the rain across San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge by hundreds of quiet protesters, Bethel College and Newton, Kansas, appeared on the screen for ten dramatic and haunting seconds:

(Low, extended single toll) Newton, Kansas. (slowly pronounced) The Bethel College bell tolls every four seconds for Americans killed in Vietnam (low, extended toll)²⁴⁴

Following the final clip of City College of Los Angeles and its participants reading the names of those killed in Vietnam, News anchor Frank Reynolds followed the ninety second overview of the peaceful protests with equal time for a singular event at the White House characterized as violent. “The day’s calm was shattered at the White House gates” by a protest of “militant black students” who “attempted to storm the gates” wearing red arm bands and carrying a coffin. Reynolds finished the broadcast after discussion of the meaning of “moratorium” and a low-key but direct face-off between Sam Brown, one of the moratorium organizers, and Herb Klein, representing the White House and testing the waters on Nixon’s soon-to-be articulated mantra of “The Silent Majority.” Klein’s statement along with artful editing by the newscast perfectly positioned the mid-American hometown as an exemplar for the idea.²⁴⁵

ABC-TV News was not done with the Bethel College Moratorium events. In contrast to the ten seconds accorded the memorable tolling of the large bell, the agency’s reporter who had spent several days in Newton interviewing Peace Club leadership and townspeople, rolled out

²⁴⁴ [News Reports], Original tape B-1, 172.1, MLA.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. The Brown-Klein counterpoint was notable because Klein rolled out the precursor to Nixon’s signature designation for those who were his quiet supporters: “I think it’s a possibility that a lot of the American people who have been silent while the minority have been vocal will feel now that perhaps it’s time for speaking out.”

another 2.75 minutes on the small-town scene. Intoned Frank Reynolds, “Resentment was expressed elsewhere too. Here is a report from ABC’s Gregory Jackson in Newton, Kansas,

[male voice] “the hotheads that are promoting this thing would like to see us take some action against them so they as can pose martyrs”

Jackson continued,

This is a man in Kansas. He hates the war but is deeply disturbed by dissent. For him, as for so many in the country the question is: Can a moratorium do any good? Do these young people really know what they are doing? The young people in this report are from Bethel College, an old, but small Mennonite school in Newton Kansas and in this tightly conservative farm community the most radical group are members of the Peace Club. They talked the faculty into suspending classes but they are moving against the grain and they know it.

As Jackson’s cameramen panned a tightly-packed living room, they featured the rather ordinary young people, some of the men with hair below the ears:

[Unruh?]: “People that make up the town or community or culture that you live in is [sic] very aware that a deviation threatens the past and like I said before the past is a very important thing here in Kansas.” The words are disturbing to Newton whose broad quiet main street looks like a movie set. The land has been good to these people but behind it all is the nagging fact of the war. And the Peace Club has forced the issue over the past few weeks by confronting churches and civic groups in the area asking them for moratorium day support. The town like the country is deeply divided but the overwhelming majority is against the protest.

Jackson’s next clips featured the American Legion, where students had been refused admittance earlier in the month when they attempted a dialogue:

[female voice]: “All we need are a few crazies to get with these groups and [unintelligible].” [male voice]: “Well, Mr. Commander the black book, the Bible, says that you shall pray, that prayer changes everything. It certainly doesn’t say action because action leads to war and violence.” [additional male voice]: “Also this whole thing has been instigated by the communist party in the U.S. all you have to do is read any of the communist literature for the past several months and they have been promoting this thing they set the date, it’s their words. Their dupes all over the country have taken it up.”

The reporter resumed his commentary.

This old bell (toll) hasn't rung for sixty years. Now the Bethel College (toll) students are ringing it every four seconds, once for every American killed in Vietnam. But the fact is, the rally (toll) and the teach-ins on this campus today are anti-climatic. The real issue here has been joined for weeks (toll) as people have been forced to examine their personal positions on the war and what to do about it. And on this (toll) cold gray Kansas morning it's clear not many people in this part of the country think a moratorium day is (toll, toll) the answer. This is Gregory Jackson at Bethel College in Newton, Kansas.²⁴⁶

Bethel students and faculty should not have been surprised at the extended treatment given to the Newtonians who so pointedly disagreed with the planned march. By 1968, President Johnson thought that ABC-TV was the only one of the three major news networks that treated his Vietnam policies with any favor, a stance that Nixon also held.²⁴⁷

The March to Wichita

Four days after the Bethel Moratorium began and as the bell continued its tolling, marchers began the nine-hour walk from Bethel to Wichita via Highway 81. Although the majority of the walkers were students or faculty from Bethel, their companions included students from Hesston College, Tabor College, and McPherson College, the latter a Church of the Brethren school, plus high school students, ministers, parents, people from Newton and surrounding communities.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ William M. Hammond, Reporting Vietnam: Media & Military at War (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998). Locally, The Newton Kansan reported on the local events and those nationally in objective analyses without any pejorative extrapolations. "Protests Begin Peacefully," October 15, 1969, 1; "Bethel College Bell Tolling," October 15, 1969, 1; "Every State Had Some Form of Moratorium Protest," October 16, 1969, 4. The bell was mentioned in an article by the New York Times and its picture featured prominently in Life. "America Gathers Under a Sign of Peace," Life 67, no. 17 (October 1969), 34-35.

²⁴⁸ Ministers included Mennonites Melvin Schmidt (Halstead) and Wendell Rempel (Moundridge) and others from the Western District Conference office also walked. Schrag estimated that approximately 200 people participated in the walk at various points, including a

In an attempt to convey the serious nature of the Walk and to anticipate dismissal of the marchers because of their clothing, the Peace Club had decided among themselves to adopt practices that evidenced decorum. Stan Senner, who was responsible for organizing the details of the Walk to Wichita, explained the purposeful and disciplined structure regarding signage and dress. They carried only one sign, he explained:

It identified the group. And that was about it. We decided that carrying a lot of signs which we had no control over who would put what on a sign was not the sort of witness that we wanted to make. It was more of a silent, we were not supposed to be laughing and joking and having a gay old time [although for some of the younger ones it became a gay old time] In general the idea was to be sort of a silent walk and not of a lot of signs and that sort of thing.

Noting that most observers along the route in Newton simply stared, rather than making positive or negative comments, he reflected on the marchers' careful attention to how they appeared.

Although we were all urged to dress well, we didn't say no to blue jeans but we did say try to be as presentable as possible. And, I recall I put on a pair of slacks and a nice-looking coat. We looked, we did not want to look like a bunch of hippies marching, because we didn't think that fit the image and the concept we were trying to express. Many of us were long-haired, but nonetheless neat and [unintelligible (all the rest?)].²⁴⁹

One faculty participant was Harold Moyer, professor of music at Bethel, who explained why he walked even though he might not have chosen it as his particular method for protesting the war:

I felt pretty strongly that the nation needed to be aroused about the war and that while this method is questionable, it seemed at that time to be desirable to do some fairly dramatic things to demonstrate this ... I had some questions about it and was concerned that it be peaceful and legal. I think one reason why some of us in the faculty participated is so that it wouldn't be just young people, but to show that there are people of all ages that are interested and concerned. Also, by

number of elderly individuals who completed short stints. Bonita Schrag, "The Peace Walk," in *The Levellers*, IV, 1.

²⁴⁹ Senner, interview, Original tape, B-26B, MLA.

being present in it, perhaps we would help to stabilize it in case there were students that had immature reactions.²⁵⁰

After the walk which exhausted many of its participants (the indomitable Dwight Platt was the only faculty member to walk the entire distance), Alvin Beachy led a litany at the drive-in theatre that was the march's destination:

Forgive us God, for we know what we have done. When we dropped napalm bombs that consumer living human flesh, and sprayed the crops with defoliants so that food for hungry children withered on the stalk instead, we did not know that we were killing you or seeking to starve you. Open our eyes, that we may see and our hearts to understand that you are the God of life, rather than the God of death. Amen.²⁵¹

The Denomination Confronts Its Peacemaking

Denominational concerns both complicated and enriched the moratorium plans, evidencing uneasiness with both an explicit protest action and cultural issues associated with its proposers. Planned a year in advance, the GC Western District Conference was scheduled to meet from October 10-12 in Wichita. The Peace Club executive committee (Phil Unruh, Stan Senner, Kirsten Zerger Dick) and four other members attended. They presented a resolution recognizing the national moratorium and its planned local expression at the conference's college. Although their resolution was eventually brought forward by the Resolutions Committee, moved by Kenneth Lee Janzen and seconded, uneasiness soon manifested in discussion:

Resolved: That the Western District Conference adopt and accept the national Call for a Vietnam Moratorium and, in conjunction with that acceptance, endorse and actively support the specific efforts of Bethel Peace Club as it prepares to

²⁵⁰ Harold Moyer, interview, by Raymond Reimer, October 30, 1972. Original tape B-62, 172.1, MLA.

²⁵¹ "A Memorial Service in Honor and in Memory of All Americans and Vietnamese Who Have Died in the Vietnam Conflict," read October 18, 1969 at the 81 Drive-In, Wichita, Kansas. Peace Club files, MLA.

observe this Moratorium on October 15-18. We ask that this support be shown by active participation and/or by a donation of money to help finance the planned activities.²⁵²

After intense consideration, the motion was narrowly defeated by a vote of 213 to 191. The Conference then passed a resolution of generalized support for peace, commending the “constructive peace efforts of our young people” and encouraging Western District Conference churches to “arrange for a special religious service” to roughly coincide with moratorium dates:

Resolved: That as the Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonites in session at Wichita, October 10-12, 1969, we express our gratitude for all constructive peace efforts of our young people, and that we encourage all our congregations to arrange for a special religious service between October 15-19, the announced Vietnam Moratorium. This religious service is to be one of gratitude and prayer for:

- a) Our young people;
- b) All constructive efforts everywhere to end the Vietnam War;
- c) Especially for our beloved country that its entire life, especially the foreign relations, might increasingly develop on a more Christian basis.²⁵³

Western District Conference Minister Elbert Koontz, whose son Ted had been a participant in the Bethel College “Repentance Walk and Mail,” three years earlier and who was a thoughtful man in his own right, had long considered the Vietnam War. In a later interview, he explained the nature of the two votes.

They were basically good resolutions ... [but the personalities and dress of the students were off-putting to many of the people]. At the time that the first resolution was presented people were uptight pretty much emotionally about the whole issue and weren't really ready to make an objective decision and therefore they voted on how they felt emotionally rather than in a rational kind of way.

²⁵² Western District Conference, Minutes, 1969, Item 12. MLA.

²⁵³ Western District Conference, Minutes and Reports, October 10-12, 1969, Items 12 and 13; Lichti, “The Mennonite Church,” in *The Levellers*, X, 1-11; David Haury, Prairie, 220-221.

When the second resolution came to the floor, a number of people felt a little bit guilty that they had not accepted the proposal that the young people came with and wanted to make some amends and this was one way to make an amend, the [sic] accept the resolution. ... I think it was a very good thing... People had to make some choices [about] what it really means to be an Anabaptist church or a nonresistant church. ... It got people seriously thinking about the mission of the church.²⁵⁴

Within a year, the Western District Conference had an opportunity to think through its interest in college students and the denomination's school.

The March Against Death, American Memory, and A Resonating Symbol

The moratorium events in North Newton garnered a large amount of publicity, chiefly due to the ringing of the bell. The ABC-TV newscast featuring Bethel and its haunting schoolhouse bell situated in the middle of Kansas was not the only national forum to feature the intriguing symbol, with the result that the Peace Club (and the bell) were explicitly invited by Bob Mayer's contacts on the Vietnam Moratorium Committee to participate in the November moratorium. The November event, which was the largest antiwar protest in American history and considered by historian Melvin Small to be the most meaningful, was a simple march that started at Arlington National Cemetery and ended at the Capitol. Carried out in thirty-six hours of cold drizzling rain, 45,000 people represented Americans killed in the war. Quakers groups such as the American Friends Service Committee and the Quaker Action Group trained over 4,000 marshals to keep peace in spite of anticipated provocations from the ultra-left and extreme-right. Near the beginning of the route, Bethel students and their bell tolled again in a stark

²⁵⁴ The Western District Conference Minister is an official designation for the WDC chief executive and moderator. Elbert Koontz, interview, by Lou Lichti, December 5, 1972, Original tape B-50A, 172.1, MLA.

refrain. Thirty-four students participated, having carefully tended the bell during its cross-country trip. DeBenedetti describes the scene which has largely escaped American memory:

Stewart Meacham was responsible for the March Against Death, which set the tone for the whole. It had been his idea, drawn from the experience of reading the list of war dead at a rally in the spring... Late in the afternoon, led by seven drummers playing a funeral roll, the marchers left the cemetery area and crossed the Arlington Memorial Bridge in solemn single file, each person carrying a lighted candle and a placard inscribed with the name of a dead GI or a destroyed Vietnamese village. They strode silently into raw winds and a biting November rain, more than a thousand of them each hour, and on to the White House. In the wet stillness, facing blinding security lights, each citizen paused to shout the name drawn on his or her placard, and then continued in the procession down Pennsylvania Avenue and on to the west steps of the Capitol. Each in turn, the marchers placed their placards in waiting coffins and blew out their candles. Navy Second Lieutenant Donald Droz was the first of the dead to be memorialized, and his name was laid to rest that night by his twenty-three year old widow, Judy. The March continued for thirty-six hours --- in the darkness of Wednesday night, through the following day, to mid-morning Friday.²⁵⁵

The peaceful protest that assembled was the largest in American history with an estimated 500,000 people traveling in waves down the Mall the day after the March Against Death concluded. Yet, Richard Nixon's assault on the television networks had achieved a stunning result. Unlike previous protests which were broadcast live, only snippets of the events made their way onto the networks. No one watched the seeming endless processions in real-time, because the networks ignored the peaceful processions.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ DeBenedetti-Chatfield, *American*, 261-262. Meacham, a former Methodist missionary, was Peace Education Director of the American Friends Service Committee during the 1960s.

²⁵⁶ Small, *Nixon*, 190. On November 3, 1969, between the two moratoriums, Nixon had addressed the nation in what became known as his "Silent Majority" speech. He built on themes already tested by aide Herb Klein during the first moratorium newscast by ABC-TV News. Small discounts the massive number of letters Nixon claimed to have received from supporters across the nation, reporting that Republican National Convention operatives were pressed into service to bombard the White House with seemingly authentic responses when they were, in fact, sent in a deliberate fabrication. C-Span has preserved a copy of the telecast. Richard M. Nixon,

When badgered by the press about how much violence was anticipated, Mobe organizer Sidney Lens, who had appeared at the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship annual conference alongside Mennonites Paul Peachey (MC), Delbert Wiens (MB) and John Lapp (MC) at Eastern Mennonite University in 1963, exploded:

Why the hell don't you ask the man who is really committed to violence, Richard Nixon, whether he intends to continue the massacres in Vietnam? If all of us on this podium lived a thousand years we couldn't perpetrate as much violence as Nixon does in one day. Ask your questions of him, not us.²⁵⁷

Of course, as DeBenedetti observes, "the point was ... that the dissenters and not the war had become the paramount news issue."²⁵⁸

Back in Newton, the Reverend Vern Bender, pastor of a local independent church, called the local Mennonite college students' patriotism into question, extending his anger at Hesston (considered next in this study) to Bethel and Tabor. From 1969 on, Bender circled each campus periodically in his car loaded with American flags and a bullhorn as he played patriotic music and challenged the campuses to debate him. On December 15, 1969, as a guest columnist in The Collegian, he challenged the three Mennonite schools to send their "very best forensic talent" to a debate on the following July 4. None took him up on the offer.²⁵⁹

"Silent Majority Speech, November 3, 1969," C-Span, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?153819-1/silent-majority-speech> (Accessed October 27, 2017).

²⁵⁷ DeBenedetti citing Lens' autobiography, 261, 451n74. Sidney Lens, Unrepentant Radical: An American Activist's Account of Five Turbulent Decades (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980).

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Richard C. Kyle, Tabor College emeritus history professor, interview by author, Hillsboro, KS, October 28, 2008; Vern Bender, "Pastor Addresses Peaceniks," The Collegian, December 15, 1969, 5; Kurt Goering, "Publicity and New Coverage," in "Peace Activities of 1969 at Bethel College or a Peace of the ReBELLion," [1]-3. Levellers file, MLA. "Peace Marchers Converge in Washington for Protest," The Collegian, November 21, 1969, 1.

Later Reflections and Outcomes: Publicity, Reaction, and Reflections

Reaction to the Moratorium events was forthcoming, both externally and internally. President Voth was very opposed to the war, but he did not like the methods, particularly the public activities that called so much attention to the college and to the individual participants. He was chiefly concerned about the impact such actions would have on the school's finances, particularly in its attempts to recruit students and its fund-raising, but he was also worried about the meaning of the heightened publicity. Were participants more interested in the excitement of the event and its garnering national attention than the faith commitments that underlay Mennonite opposition to war? During the Teach-In on the Moratorium, which commenced after Beachy's invocation and the bell-ringing began, the president questioned his audience: "I am uneasy when I see television cameramen. To what credit is it to us that our witness makes a national show? We should not parade our witness." He soon had an earful.²⁶⁰

One of the most strident letters against Bethel activities not only made an appeal to traditional family ties and Mennonite subordination to government, but also captured the fears of disorder and cultural change. Ending with a German language appeal to his brethren, the Covina, California, writer explained:

Dear Sirs: I really had to hang my head in shame when Bethel College was flashed on our TV screen during demonstrations. So our people have joined the dissenters, hippies, dope pushers, niggers, etc. Hanoi must feel encouraged and fight harder than ever. What a tragedy that will be. You have done our boys a terrible disservice over there. I'm a soldier of World War I. Thank God nothing like this happened to us boys. I'm not a newcomer to Bethel College. C. C. Wedel was president when mother and us children ran the boarding hall in 1907-08. Uncle David Goerz was business manager. Yes, those were carefree days which

²⁶⁰ Keeney, interview; Voth interview, Original tape B-20B; Voth, Teach-In.

will never return again unless we decide to support our government. *Sonst ist alles kaput.*²⁶¹

External reactions were often caustic, aimed at the perception of disorder and irritation that the students were running the school. As will be discussed shortly, the school faced a financial crisis blamed on the protests. But, for students involved in the actions, the process itself had been creative and fulfilling, even though some would later argue about and reflect on whether or not the wide amount of publicity had generated some mixed motives.²⁶²

As members of the Peace Club later recognized, having so many activities, rather than insisting on a single set of protests, had some unintended, but positive consequences. Designing a format that included the march that satisfied activists, but including a variety of opportunities to be involved incorporated far more people than anticipated. Some who did not walk to Wichita took a shift of bell-ringing, while other attended the well-received play acted by drama majors who were not formerly involved in the Peace Club. Although the teach-in presentations garnered mixed reviews, with some finding them boring and others stimulating, they also included students and townspeople who otherwise would not necessarily have been involved.²⁶³

Three years Stan Senner reflected on the Moratorium events and whether or not they had achieved what the Peace Club had intended. His comments evidenced an interest in the community locally and an ability to exercise self-criticism.

Yes, taking them one by one. The march provided a focus for all of our activities. The community meetings, I think, were very, very valuable, but the community

²⁶¹ “A Terrible Disservice,” The Mennonite, November 18, 1969, 700.

²⁶² Thane Chastain, “Media and Vietnam Peace Protests: Actual or Acted? A Small Campus Study,” seminar paper, Bethel College, 1982. Manuscript files. MLA.

²⁶³ Zerger and Senner, interview, Original Tape B-12A, MLA.

meetings were really made possible by the fact that we were having the march. It gave us something to go and talk to them about, it gave us an issue to revolve around in addition to the war. If we had just called up churches and say hey we like to talk about the war it wouldn't have been anything, but since we were having a peace march through Newton then they were interested in listening to us talk about the war and what we were doing. So the march gave us something to focus on, the contacts with the community through various organizations and individuals, I think, were just really valuable if for no other reason than they were personally valuable education-wise. It was just a good experience to go out and talk with people who were not necessarily sympathetic to you.²⁶⁴

He then turned to the symbol that continued to resonate:

The bell ringing, I think, as far as impact and the war impact, national impact, and symbolic impact certainly was definitely the most effective thing we did. The march itself was nothing. It was the focus of the march that, if you understand the difference, the news media hardly talked about the march it was the bell they were interested in. I feel genuinely that we contributed to the whole national moratorium thing in a significant way. I guess it's debatable how much the moratoriums have done to end or prolong the war. I feel they have had a positive effect. Certainly, you certainly can't deny they have had an effect.²⁶⁵

The Moratorium, Real and Imagined Consequences, and Contested Memory

From the beginning, the Bethel College administration had feared the effects of local public activism. When protest had taken place in distant places, or students participated in Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship conferences that considered political involvement and featured speakers that included a wide gamut of positions, there was little notice. Bethel's earlier Repentance Walk and Mail two blocks away to the North Newton Post Office had drawn criticism, but also garnered supportive statements nationally. Even though it was held up as a fearful projection of what Bethel might expect if its students ventured into neighboring Newton,

²⁶⁴ Senner, interview, Original Tape B-26B, MLA.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

it also was long remembered as a meaningful protest for many of its participants and largely heralded by readers of The Mennonite.²⁶⁶

But the Moratorium events of 1969 were different. They intruded on public space, that was deliberately proximate, first through the ringing of the bell which could be heard in Newton, and then through the public walk down Main Street to Highway 81 and eighteen more miles to Wichita. Apart from catcalls and egg- or tomato-throwing, there was no violence and most onlookers simply stared. Peace Club members, faculty, and administration had followed through on their plans to meet in advance with civic and church groups to discuss the walk (that was repeatedly emphasized in The Newton Kansan as “this is not a protest-picket march”) and the community was well-apprised. But, the simple events which were situated chiefly on the campus, occupied the air for four days, and then passed through Newton on the way to Wichita had moved into a wider venue, chiefly through broadcast television. They entered the national public square and, by doing so, performed at least two tasks. They had drawn a startling attention to the war from the heartland of America and they had centered Mennonites in general in a public forum not of their choosing. By doing so, they emphasized that even in Kansas --- the state that epitomized hard-working, values-laden, rural life --- there was strong opposition to the war, and opposition that was generated because of Christian faith. Whether or not Mennonites themselves agreed with such a public witness, the religious actors at the college had taken it upon themselves to assert one, and to do so through means that sharply interrogated the idea of nonconformity. Were the assertive, relatively long-haired, blue-jeaned individuals and their “adult” companions part of an Anabaptist community seeking to be faithful? Or were they

²⁶⁶ Sprunger, 154; Koontz, interview, Original Tape B-15A&B; Teichroews, interview, Original Tape B-4; Allen Teichroew, interview by author, October 3, 2017.

simply cultural mimics, miming the questioning masses featured on the evening news, who luxuriated in Woodstock as real Americans died in Vietnam? Or, were they both, and, if so, what did that mean?

In the minds of Mennonites, the answer was yes. For those who eschewed the protests, moratorium events on and off campus were sharply attacked in personal conversations, a small number of letters to the college administration, and letters to denominational publications. Some reprised arguments made privately by Bethel administrators and faculty who disagreed with the war, but objected to anything that called attention to the individual or to the group. Others utilized two kingdom theology to make the case that Mennonites should be subject to government and that any variance was unbiblical. And others who had supported the school financially, including several major donors, made it clear that their support was now in question. As the budget crisis of 1970 loomed, it was blamed squarely on Bethel's activism, whether or not this was a straw man.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Whether Bethel's enrollment drops and funding issues were directly due to antiwar activism is still under debate, although it is largely a case of statistical trends versus institutional and denominational memory. The high college enrollments of the mid-1960s had begun to drop nationwide, a trend that is also causally debated. Some studies support a drop in male enrollment that parallels the draft and the Vietnam War, but others argue that economic issues that would manifest in the 1970s were responsible for nationwide drops. For example, Kent State University administrators "puzzled over the unexpected enrollment decline in January 1970, but part of the reason may have been students forsaking college deferments they no longer needed." Thomas M. Grace, Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 2016), 183, 338n38. R.B. Freeman, "The Decline in Economic Rewards to College Education," Review of Economics and Statistics 59, no. 1 (February 1977), 18-29. J. Peter Matilla, "Determinants of Male School Enrollments: A Time-Series Analysis," The Review of Economics and Statistics 64, no. 2 (May 1982), 242-251; The Mennonite, for example, featured an annual report on student enrollment in GC institutions and published it shortly after the Moratorium of October 1969. The statistical graph shows that all undergraduate GC schools (Bethel, Bluffton, and Conrad Grebel) had declining enrollments, whether in the U.S. or Canada, and Freeman (the only junior college in the U.S.) was holding steady. Bethel and Bluffton had similar trajectories since 1961-1962, although Bethel had experienced a sharp

Although there were mixed reports about the state of the college's health at the start of the school year after the moratorium, events quickly came to a head. The Collegian reported an optimistic picture that evidenced strong support by alumni and by the Newton community, noting that several records for giving were set in the fiscal year that included the moratorium. Alumni giving increased by 18.2 percent over the previous fiscal year (prior to the protests), and funding from the Newton "business and professional communities ... topped all earlier records" for giving. But even as these rosy details were painted, the larger picture of the bottom line found the school in financial crisis.²⁶⁸

A bailout from the denomination was not to be expected. Bethel was governed by its own independent corporation, not a denominational body that could exercise oversight and manage finances. As such, it was dependent on the relationships that Mennonites prized, at-will funding by the GC Western District Conference, and the support of individuals. At the annual meeting of the Western District Conference (GC) in October 1970, delegates heard the near-catastrophic

decline from 1960-1961, far before the first organized protest in 1966. "Student Report," November 4, 1969, 665. Three years later in interviews conducted by The Levellers, former president Voth declined to attribute the declines to Bethel activism, but rather a reflection of larger trends. Both Voth and dean Keeney both enumerated some of the reactions, Voth noting that he in actuality received very few letters objecting to the events, but that most comments were made in the course of conversations, and that some people who threatened "to never give again" in fact were not even listed on donor rolls. Voth, interview, Original tape B-20A; Keeney, interview, Original Tape B-27B; Senner, interview, Original tape B-26B. MLA. Historian David Haury argued a decade after the crisis that, although the declines themselves were not necessarily a result of activism, they included a long-term and prevailing lack of confidence conservative members of the constituency placed in the college, with this skepticism extending back into the 1930s. Haury, Prairie, 241-253.

²⁶⁸ The unsigned article was typical of news releases by the college, rather than one written by a member of the student newspaper staff, suggesting that the administration did not want to risk the loss of further students. "Contributions Surged for Fiscal 1969-1970," The Collegian, September 18, 1970, 4.

details that had been revealed and discussed at Bethel one month earlier during the annual corporation meeting. In spite of the happy numbers reported on some fronts, Bethel had ended the previous fiscal year at a \$161,000 deficit in operating expenses, a number that President Orville Voth later explained would drain the endowment within two to three years. Moreover, he reported that the school projected a \$175,000 gap for the current year, a variance due to a sharp drop in enrollment by eighty-three students on the heels of a drop of twenty-three the previous year. He offered several explanations that included Bethel's refusal earlier in the decade to accept state aid and the increasing enrollment of GC students in non-GC schools, but rejected arguments that the deficits were due to Bethel's antiwar activities. The denomination responded by backing its school in an unprecedented move.²⁶⁹

Refusing to assign blame, the Western District Conference went into special session and stood squarely behind the school for which it had no legal obligation with a bailout. Instead, four hundred delegates representing forty-seven of the sixty-four member churches of the conference approved six resolutions that included assuming the estimated deficit of \$175,000 for 1969-70 and making a commitment to more than cover the estimated operating expense Voth had projected for 1970-71. Resolution Number 5 emphasized the special nature of the assumption and the personal charge to those who had made the decision to participate in its resolution:

Resolved. That the Western District Conference assumes the estimated deficit this year of \$175,000 in operating expenses of Bethel College. This is understood to be above budget norm of giving. Be it further resolved that all those in attendance of this special session of conference make a specific financial commitment to

²⁶⁹ Western District Conference, Minutes and Reports, October 23-25, 1970, Items 1-5; "Church Colleges Face Issue of Survival," The Mennonite, October 13, 619; Bethel had set a record enrollment in 1966-67 of 543 students, a rise from 429 in 1962-63 and prior to the public escalation of the Vietnam War and call for inductees. "Schools Lose 245 Students: First Decline in Decade," The Mennonite, November 10, 1970, 686; "College Student Statistics: More in Non-Church Schools," The Mennonite, Oct 27, 1970, 653.

Bethel College as they are able, and begin the implementation of this resolution by joining one of the gift clubs before they leave the auditorium, projecting a goal of raising the \$250,000 needed for current operating expenses; then go home, resolved to secure at least two more persons to make similar commitments.²⁷⁰

In addition to deciding to accept state tuition grants, the delegates agreed that churches would help recruit students, open their doors to “delegations of Bethel College faculty, administration, and students to our church communities, our homes and churches to share what it means to be Christians of Mennonite conviction in the 1970’s,” and that the WDC and the Bethel Corporation Board would mutually implement a vehicle for better communication between the two.

As WDC conference minister Elbert Koontz emphasized in a follow-up to the special session, the special sessions included frank discussions --- and a desire to support the larger educational mission.

From the small discussion groups came many helpful suggestions, as well as some frank criticisms and desires for new directions for the college. Many expressed words of appreciation for what the college has done and is continuing to do for the church and for the young people who attend there.²⁷¹

The conference resolved, in typical Mennonite fashion, to enjoin mutuality and brotherhood and to place the issues in a larger church context. As the preface to the first resolution emphasized,

The crisis of Bethel College is within the larger context of the entire Conference and our churches. There is a general situation facing us of leadership loss, of churches failing to grow, of our youth going out into the larger community and losing their identity with the Christian heritage of Anabaptist-Mennonite interpretation.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Western District Conference, Minutes and Reports, Special Session November 27-28, 1970, 30-33; “Church Joins College in Crisis,” The Mennonite, December 15, 1970, 767; “Special Session Pledges to Provide Support for Bethel,” The Collegian, December 11, 1970, 1.

²⁷¹ Elbert Koontz, “Education in Crisis: Bethel College and the Church,” Mennonite Life, 26, no. 1 (January 1971), 3-4.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

The crisis had been averted, and a hopeful trajectory set by the large body of delegates, yet Bethel College historian Keith Sprunger framed how the campus Development Office viewed the recent events in May 1971, eighteen months after the moratorium events:

David C. Wedel, former president and now in the development office, warned that the college was rapidly losing touch with the Mennonite churches. “Bethel College lost about one-half of the Western District because of the peace witness of the Bethel Peace Club.” Church people asked Wedel, “Who runs the college, anyway? Radicals and radical professors?”²⁷³

In spite of the ire behind the scenes, it was undeniable that the conference and its delegates had stood behind the college and insisted upon its continued existence as an Anabaptist-Mennonite endeavor, an affirmation that continued to resonate.

The wounds ran deeper than realized, fueled by mixed feelings by the constituency which could not decide whether it objected more to the public display or to the protest’s opposition to American government and its policies. As far as Newton was concerned, it took many rounds of golf and soothing of feelings by the new Bethel president, Harold Schultz, who took office in 1971. Nevertheless, Bethel had been willing to take the risk, pushed by its students and faculty who were convinced of the war’s terrible footprint and justified by an Anabaptist faith that required a faithful public witness in the face of evil.²⁷⁴

Dwight Platt, biology professor and sponsor of the Peace Club earlier in the decade took a long-range view of the events, also reflecting on its consequences in an interview conducted

²⁷³ Sprunger, quoting two memoranda, David C. Wedel memo, May 4, 1971 and Steven G. Schmidt memo, reporting on a conversation with David C. Wedel, May 6, 1971. Sprunger, *Bethel*, 163, 249n125. The Wedel memo is available in the Peace Club files. David C. Wedel memo, May 4, 1971, Peace Club files. MLA.

²⁷⁴ Keith Sprunger, conversation with author, September 5, 2017.

three years later. The teacher had been absent on sabbatical for an intervening year and missed some of the mid-range fallout, but he put the protest actions in a larger framework that accepted uncertainty as he answered the interviewers staccato questions. “Did they help the college, did they divide the college, did they split the college?” His painstaking answer explicated the layers of the essential long-term view.

That’s a really hard question to answer because it probably had all those effects to some degree. And, I would say that there was some definite polarization at the time, but I also think that there was some positive effects in terms of feelings that we were making a witness and the witness was successful to a degree in creating some public discussion at least of some of these issues. As far as evaluating how much positive effect or negative effect it had on the college I find it very difficult to really say. In general it seems to me that although one looks at things like this in terms of, you have to look at strategy and their public image they create and their public effect both in terms of the college and the cause you’re demonstrating for. But in the final analysis you can’t always predict what these things are going to be and even after they’ve occurred, you can’t always analyze what has caused what. In the final analysis on something like this, you have to decide what course of action which personally seems relevant and reasonable and useful at the time and then try to follow it through in some creative fashion. And sometimes this sort of action at the time may look like it’s more negative than positive or may look like it’s more positive than negative --- long terms effects are much more difficult to analyze. And although there was community confrontation and there was some antagonism with certain elements of the community over this particular thing, I don’t know but what in the long run bringing the issue out in the open and active participation and discussion of issues may have cleared the air to some degree. I don’t know. It’s hard to evaluate. At least one would have to say that community relations of the college, for instance with the Newton community have not deteriorated over the past few years. I think they’re much better. And, although at the time, the college was not popular, probably, maybe one of the factors in the improvement has been this, there has been this frank discussion between administration, students, faculty and community on some very controversial thing like this.²⁷⁵

The former draft resister who had been willing to serve time in prison because of his beliefs, and who had, along with his wife, participated in the March on Washington in 1963, was a scientist

²⁷⁵ Platt, interview, Original tape B-51B, MLA.

by training, and one open to questions of causality and long-range effect. His long-range view of struggle against systems positioned him to reflect on strategies, while his compassionate empathy for others evidenced in his explanation for being involved in the activities and his willingness to walk with the students to Wichita, situated him as one of the foremost supporters of the next direction Bethel took in its approach to peace-making.

Politics and Peacemaking: Structural Attempts at Reinvention

Bethel students not only continued to participate in anti-war activities, but they also gave their support to structural change, including that achieved through the electoral process. They campaigned in support of James Juhnke's run for Congress in 1970, attended the joint Bethel-Hesston cultural series lecture with keynote speaker Senator George McGovern in February 1970, helped to organize a joint program on the draft by Bethel and Hesston later in the month, and incorporated Tabor and Hesston students in Bethel's May 5 rally against Nixon's bombing of Cambodia. Their final peace actions included a 150-mile "Walk to End the Draft" in Topeka, and a peace fast in April 1972, followed by a Bethel alumnus flying over Newton on May 6, 1972 and "bomb[ing]" it with anti-war leaflets.

In spite of the arduous march to Topeka and other antiwar activities, by 1973, the college climate had changed by the time professors James C. Juhnke and Anna Kreider Juhnke returned from their two-year leave to perform service in Botswana as GC Mennonite missionaries. The Vietnam War had ended, as far as Americans were concerned, and with it, most immediate concern about Vietnam. Noted the former in his autobiography published in 2011:

The student power activism of the 1960s had given way to more conventional student passivity. The student peace club in 1973-74 was a pale shadow of its glory days of agitation against the Vietnam War. More energetic was a new

student Christian club whose expressive evangelical piety (i.e. praising Jesus in the style of athletic cheerleading) seemed strange to us.²⁷⁶

After the college initiated its new Peace Studies Program in fall 1973 and a final protest (including the bell) occurred on January 27, 1974, the campus quieted down. The flag still flew as it had every day with the only exception during the Moratorium in October 1969 when the Bethel community rang the bell for three days every four seconds to commemorate the Americans who had died in Vietnam.²⁷⁷

Even though anti-war students, faculty, and administration at Bethel faced the ire of many of the townspeople in Newton, including the nearly ubiquitous Vern Bender, and had their patriotism specifically called into question by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion from 1966 to 1973, the Bethelites had continued to assert that they were indeed patriots, even as they moved beyond conscientious objection to direct protest. They pointed to the flag as a symbol of freedom, justice, and dissent, but not one that endorsed militarism. Bethel did not allow the majority culture to define what flying the flag meant and to exclude dissenters from being Americans.

²⁷⁶ Juhnke, Small, 111.

²⁷⁷ In *ibid.*, “McGovern Presents Political Views at Hesston-Bethel Cultural Series,” February 13, 1970, 1; “Local Draft Conference Discusses Alternatives,” February 27, 1970, 1; “Classes Dismissed for Day to Protest Cambodia Policy,” May 15, 1970, 1; “Bethelites Walk to End the Draft,” May 14, 1971, 1; “Peace Movement Arises,” May 12, 1972, 1; and “Peace Studies Now a Reality,” March 9, 1973, 1.

PART II: QUESTIONING NATIONALISM AND AFFIRMING NEW SYMBOLS

Chapter 3 -- Hesston College and the Question of Nationalism

Prelude

Hesston, Kansas, home of the MC Mennonite two-year junior college, also had a tradition of Mennonite service in local politics and community work, and a carefully-tended relationship with its civic populace. With a population of 1,103 in 1960 and 1,926 in 1970, the town was the smallest of the three municipalities with a Mennonite college. Enrollment at Hesston College doubled during the same decade, from 230 to 462 students and there was little hint of the financial issues that Bethel and Tabor faced during this time. It had already carved out an innovative niche for itself, adding coursework, for example, in airplane mechanics, which gave would-be missionaries or farmers important technical skills. The College had successfully blended conservative religion with basic liberal arts, while adding vocational coursework. It also faced a town that enjoyed the economic benefits of having such a school, while resting uneasily at best with its peace tradition.²⁷⁸

Hesston had been the brainchild of two large MC Mennonite families transplanted from the east to Harvey County, Kansas. Over a family meal in 1907, they charged young Anna Smith King with her fourth grade education to draft a question that could be deposited into the “query

²⁷⁸ Juhnke, *Two Kingdoms*, 80. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Census of Population (1970) Volume 1, Characteristics of the Population. Part 18, Kansas. Table 6.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973. Hillsboro had 2,441 people in 1960 and 2,730 in 1970, while North Newton, home of Bethel College, laid claim to 890 and 963, respectively. Newton, however, immediately adjacent to North Newton, had 15,439 people by 1970, up from 14, 877 in 1970.

box” used at MC Mennonite assemblies to manage inquiries not on a formal agenda. The bishop, who headed one of the two brainstorming families, took the question to the heavily attended meeting of male delegates. On the second day of the Kansas-Nebraska conference meeting in La Junta, Colorado, the “query manager” pulled King’s slip of paper from the box. “Would it advance the cause of Christ to establish a school somewhere in the West in which Bible work is made a specialty?” The carefully couched inquiry was neither proud, nor pejorative. It made no statements about the condition of Mennonite higher education or reference to underlying tensions. It simply focused on geography, and, of course, the Bible.²⁷⁹

The brotherhood already had a school, Goshen College, in Indiana, but that was over 500 miles away. Moreover, there were concerns already about the Indiana school founded only four years earlier. These issues eventually manifested in two presidential resignations in 1913 and in 1918, and ongoing crisis until 1924. Like Bethel and Tabor, Goshen played out struggles in the larger brotherhood where Mennonites faced both American fundamentalism and their own concerns, moments that historian Paul Toews calls “Mennonite versions of the Fundamentalist Crusade.” The crises were not strictly theological, but, as discussed in Chapter 1, included attempts to maintain boundaries as GC Mennonites faced American culture. Because this meant direct church control of its schools, Hesston College did not have an independent board when it was founded unlike Bethel and Tabor. From the beginning, it was a project of the MC Mennonite Church, supervised by its Board of Education and financed by the church. It was an outlet for the MC Church and the delegates at the conference quickly agreed on its potential, provided that it had “a consecrated faculty” that was “strictly in the order of the Church.” As John Sharp,

²⁷⁹ Quoted in Sharp, School, 53-58. Quote, 58.

Hesston College historian and author of the centennial history observes, Goshen's not being "in the order of the Church" led to its shutdown in 1923 for a year and a purge of part of the faculty.²⁸⁰

Sharp captures the fierce competition among Kansas towns to attract the newly proposed school. Having a college, after all, brought respect and revenue in the early twentieth century. In the case of contender Peabody in Marion County, the excited editor of The Peabody Gazette exhorted townspeople to come to a meeting to hear about the "exceptional advantages" of attracting the prospective school. Sharp described what followed:

[the editor] advised "All interested (and that means every citizen and every taxpayer)" to attend the 7:30 p.m. meeting/ Bishop F. [sic] M. Erb" would be there to present the vision. He concluded with a note of urgency" "This is a crucial matter to the town which may be so fortunate" as to win the college. At the end of the day the intentions of the Peabody group were clear. As Erb reported in his diary. They "want that school and they are going to work hard to get it. Working hard to get it meant competing with other cities in making the best offer of land and cash as incentive to bring the college to their city. Winning a college would bring prestige, revenue, and new citizens to Peabody, a city of 1,526 people. In March the editor clarified what had apparently become confused information. The new Tabor College at Hillsboro, which the nearby town of Aulne had hoped to attract, was not the same school for which Peabody was contending. That one was a "Russian Mennonite" school. The one we are "after" is a "German Mennonite" institution.²⁸¹

Although it is difficult to know exactly what the citizens of Peabody hoped for, they did not obtain it, when the "German Mennonites" (aka, the MC Mennonites who were largely fluent in English and bilingual) instead accepted the offer from Hesston, Kansas, eight miles northwest of Newton, the other finalist and home of Bethel College. From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, a choice to found yet another separate school raises eyebrows. But in the early twentieth

²⁸⁰ Paul Toews, "Fundamentalist," 241.

²⁸¹ Sharp, School, 64.

century, the brotherhoods were sharply divergent. As described earlier, the more acculturated and confident Dutch-Russians who had managed their own insular communities and political offices in Russia contrasted sharply with the Swiss-German strain that viewed the state with heightened skepticism and culture as problematic. Adding in class difference within the Dutch-Russian immigrants magnified the originally slight theological differences between GCs and MBs, an issue that will be briefly considered in the chapter on Tabor College. The result was now three Mennonite schools within thirty miles of each other.

As Hesston alumnus Joseph S. Miller described in an overview of the college's history, the divisions were real, whether or not the original author's militaristic comments to his friend were tongue-in-cheek:

Using language of the recent war [a Goshen alumnus wrote to the purged president deemed as liberal] about how they could both teach at Bethel. While at Bethel, says Burkhard, they could use Bethel as a submarine base and be within firing range of Hesston College and specifically within firing range of president D.H. Bender's office on the second floor of the Ad Building.²⁸²

Watching the Flag: Hesston College and the First World War

Hesston College did not fly the American flag as Bethel had done from its founding, nor did it display a customized pennant like Tabor did. It simply did not display any particular symbols of identity. But, six months after the United States entered the war, a group of Hesston townspeople made certain that they knew they were being called on the patriotic carpet. During a revival service during the evening of November 21, 1917, "about two dozen malicious fellows" raised a makeshift flagpole over the school's gazebo and hung an American flag from it, garnishing it with a note that threatened more harm if it was removed. After students discovered

²⁸² Quotation in Joseph S. Miller, "The View From the President's Window," Hesston College Today (Winter 1998), 4-5.

it and reported it to President D.H. Bender who had just returned from visiting conscientious objectors in army camps, he asked them to remove and carefully fold it, then discovered that one of the students had recognized the perpetrators. Based on his identifications, Bender approached the ringleader, who was a mechanic in town, returned the flag and attempted to explain that the MC Mennonite college did not fly it due to its militaristic connotations. Bender then faced the resulting ire --- and the threat of arrest --- by asking for a meeting with townspeople. Historian Sharp repeated what Bender recorded in an unpublished manuscript:

If they really wanted the college and its Mennonite faculty to vacate the town, said Bender, he and the faculty had agreed that they would make it easy for the officials by leaving voluntarily. The men apologized and condemned the mob action, assuring Bender that that was not what they wanted, because, after all, “the college had made the town.” “We want you to stay,” concluded the citizens, “but we wish you were better fighters.” Bender responded by saying he didn’t want to leave town either but Mennonites deserved to be respected for their convictions even if unpopular.²⁸³

After additional meetings, the town and gown reached a compromise, the college agreeing to fly the flag except on national holidays and during war-related commemorations. Only two months earlier, Bender had been one of the authors of the Yellow Creek Statement issued by the MC Mennonites that is considered the most forceful statement about nonparticipation in war that had been issued by Mennonites in the twentieth century. MC Mennonites were prepared to defend their consciences, lessons they learned in Kansas and elsewhere, which Bender attempted to convey in a Hesston Gazette newspaper article explaining Mennonite beliefs and denying they were slackers. Mennonites in all three of the larger brotherhoods, plus those in smaller groups, reached rapprochement with their communities or

²⁸³ D.H. Bender , “World War Experiences,” unpublished manuscript in the Guy F. Hershberger Collection, Hist Mss 1-171, IX. First World War materials, MCA-G, 2-4, quoted in Sharp, 118-119.

faced the threat of vandalism, harassment, tarring and feathering and even lynching. Many in Kansas complied by purchasing Liberty war bonds to demonstrate their loyalty, then assuaging their guilt by donating them to one of the three Mennonite colleges, all of which received substantial donations after the war ended. Hesston did not forget the threats made in 1917.²⁸⁴

By mid-century, the college had enjoyed the gentle intellect of President Milo Kauffman, who carefully helped the college navigate the challenges of WWII, and move from being a Bible school to a liberal arts college, and his successor Roy Roth, who, like Kauffman, were the last of the presidents to wear the plain coat (also called the straight coat). The school joined the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship in 1956, and its students began enjoying the annual conferences that the MCC Peace Section sponsored and which later activists at all three schools almost universally anticipated.

Finding a Path to Protest and Inter-Mennonite Cooperation

In 1966, the college's students who opposed the war had protested little on their own, but they had been involved in activities organized at Bethel. In that year, however, they founded a Peace Club and immediately organized two lectures, walked from Camp Funston to Leavenworth to protest conscription, and participated in the anti-war symposium in 1967 at McPherson, Kansas. The protest at Leavenworth in support of three soldiers imprisoned there for

²⁸⁴ Peachey, Statements, 81-82. See Bender's statement, The Hesston Gazette, March 22, 1918. For a survey of real and threatened violence against Mennonites in Kansas during World War I, see Juhnke, "Mob," 334-359. All three colleges benefitted from the war bonds their donors had purchased during the First World War. In all, Bethel acquired \$100,000 and Hesston, a new administration building that was largely financed by such donations. Orlando Harms recounted Tabor President H. W. Lohrenz' appeal for donations of bonds bought under compulsion and a MB onference session in 1917 that tabled a question regarding whether or not a child of God could buy war bonds. Homan, American, 90; Orlando Harms, A Conference in Pilgrimage: The Sory of the Southern District Mennonite Brethren Conference and Its Churches (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1992), 52.

refusing to fight in Vietnam was especially noteworthy for two reasons. First, the Bethel Peace Club was particularly articulate in its explanation for the walk, hearkening back to Mennonite history and the Hutterites who had died there during WWI, and reaffirming the need to bear witness against war:

We claim a special interest in Fort Leavenworth prison, for it was here that young men of the Mennonite church were imprisoned just fifty years ago for their refusal to fight in World War I. It was at the Leavenworth prison that two religious objectors to the war were tortured to death for refusing to put on the army uniform. We remind the world of the heroic tradition in which objectors to war stand.²⁸⁵

Second, the Bethel and Hesston Peace Clubs discovered what it was like to face physical harm during a protest, and to find some surprising allies that defended them. Peace Club member Allen Teichroew of Bethel explained that the Bethel and Hesston students had been surrounded by a mob who trapped them against a closed gate, then hemmed them in. Only a bus he described as carrying “Trotskyites from Minnesota” and a Black Power contingent from Colorado saved them by strategically maneuvering the bus between them and the counter-demonstrators. On the way out, someone heaved “an enormous rock the size of a bowling ball” at them. Thus, engaging in antiwar protest put the students in a more fluid universe than their elders might have expected, and one that included allies united against the war despite ideological differences. Bethel

²⁸⁵ The Hesston College Peace Club also referred to itself as the Hesston College Peace Concern. The terms are used as they appear in the sources, but the two refer to the same campus organization. “Hesston” report, *Peace Notes*, February 1967, 2. *Peace Notes* was the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship newsletter published irregularly by its student editors, but consistently two to three times a year. John Sharp, Hesston College alumnus and history professor, telephone interview with the author, November 9, 2008. “Words and Deeds [column listing various happenings],” *The Mennonite*, February 21, 1967, 123; the same article noted that Paul Leatherman, director of Vietnam Christian Service, had approached Billy Graham on the evangelist’s visit to the country to “express concern for the church’s involvement in and identification with the military effort in Vietnam.” Graham replied, the article noted, that he was there to preach to the troops. *Ibid.*

students Kathy Gaeddert Teichroew, Allen Teichroew, Tom Friesen, and Cheryl Ratzlaff had already experienced this in their individual and collective protests, but the Hesston students now experienced it for themselves, thus entering a larger universe of antiwar activity.²⁸⁶

By 1969, the peace club was fully organized. Eighteen Hesston students joined thirty four Bethel and thirteen Tabor students on a chartered bus to Washington DC for the annual Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship conference in March. Titled "The Peacemaker in Revolution," the event featured a mixture of peacemakers including Canadian Mennonite Frank Epp, Ron Young of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), and pacifist Allard Lowenstein, formerly of the McCarthy campaign. Although Bethel student Fred Zerger, vice president of the IPF, bitterly complained that the conference presenters were enjoining the same old approach to change, which included "playing the middle-class game," other students found the event challenging and invigorating. For example, first year student Dan Clark of Hesston, whose gadfly column, "The Cutting Edge," would regularly appear in the college newspaper the following year, attributed a particular part of his later activism at Hesston to the conference: "I was one of the Hesston students who attended IPF in Washington, DC., in spring 1969, and that exposure to speakers with [Vietnam] experience motivated me as much as anything to react as I did to Ho's death [in the later incident to be discussed shortly]." Peace Concern students who attended included those who were highly involved and visible campus actors such as editors of campus publications and gospel team participants. They were thus articulate and, in many ways, model students that could not easily be dismissed as troublemakers.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Teichroew, interview with author, October 8, 2017.

²⁸⁷ Goering, History, 38; "Students Puzzled by Views of Revolution," The Mennonite, April 15, 1969, 252-254; Dan Clark, email message to author, November 10, 2017.

In 1969 when Bethel held its moratorium events that included the “Walk to Wichita,” Hesston Peace Club students joined in. For Dwight Bitikofer, who came from a conservative MC Mennonite family in McPherson County, the solemn march was his first venture into public protest.

For me it was a kind of watershed action, a first willingness to put myself out in a public action to demonstrate my belief in the immorality of war, the call for peaceful alternatives to war.²⁸⁸

Although the Hesston College administration did not endorse public protest, they did not penalize their students for participating, nor for holding contrary opinions. As one Hesston alumna, who studied at both Hesston and Tabor, remembered, she never had to “watch her words at Hesston” like she did at Tabor. Discussions about environmental issues and simple lifestyle were not acceptable at the Hillsboro campus. At Hesston, a handful of faculty supported these interrogations and experimentation, although --- like Bethel and Tabor --- “the constituency” was used as a reason for stifling dissent and controversial public actions. In part, the violence directed toward Mennonites in general during the World Wars was not just a community memory among some Hesston college people, but an actual experience. Noted Dwight Bitikofer, whose family lived in McPherson country where there had been violence against MC Mennonites:

In general, the younger members of the faculty seemed the most supportive of protest actions. There was an administrator in my sophomore year ... who also seemed very supportive... I think in part, the older members of the faculty were concerned about getting along with the larger Hesston community and those who were not Mennonite. They were the ones with clear memory of the conflicts between Mennonites and non-Mennonites during World War II and possessed at

²⁸⁸ Dwight Bitikofer, email message to author, October 16, 2017.

least the institutional memory of the persecution Mennonites in World War I faced from their communities for refusal to buy war bonds.²⁸⁹

He also recognized that they were conflicted about the antiwar movements which were seen as largely secular actions and that students might have been involved for the excitement.

There was also a sense that they believed our willingness to protest was influenced by the drama of the secular protest movement more than our biblical beliefs in pacifism. And they were probably at least partly correct about that.²⁹⁰

Only a handful of individuals on and off campus formally endorsed antiwar activity that brought attention to the school, even though some had engaged in it themselves. The most outspoken was the college's history professor, whose double tenure preceded and post-dated the events in the fall of 1969 that focused on Hesston College as a local hotbed of antiwar activism.²⁹¹

For a brief time, Hesston accepted the brilliant iconoclastic historian Sol Yoder, who taught history at Hesston College from 1960 to 1963 and again from January 1970 to 1973. The young teacher was one of the "Concern" group participants discussed in Chapter 2 and he took the quest for authenticity seriously, whether it was his own, or that of other faculty or students. Proficient in several European languages, his specialty was Anabaptist history which he applied in his classroom and in his lifestyle. Willing to engage with students on all manners of peace and justice topics, he and his artist wife Naomi opened their home to individuals and students, for

²⁸⁹ Anonymous, Hesston alumnus, interview with author, September 27, 2017; Bitikofer, email message to author, October 16, 2017.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ Anonymous, Hesston College faculty, email message to author, October 27, 2017. Nick King, interview with author, September 30, 2017.

counseling, discussion, and singing. He especially delighted in leading songs drawn from Wobblies labor music, including “The Internationale.”²⁹²

Sol loved to teach about the labor movement of the early 1900s and loved the songs. I think I helped compile some songs he wanted the whole class to sing, which they did, reluctantly. Sol had such a clear vision of justice. He was so right about most of it, but went overboard, and most students didn’t understand.²⁹³

Some students remembered phrases drawn from songs, such as a rendition of “This Land is Your Land” that recognized Native American rights, and their delight in singing them at the Yoder home.

I loved [Sol Yoder]! Took most of his classes, sometimes went to his [apartment] with other students for discussions. He was very inspirational to me. I don't remember details except that he had us sing, "This land is the Indians', I say the Indians', this land was stole by you and me!" Or something like that.²⁹⁴

They also freely shared their possessions, with James Juhnke the grateful recipient of the Yoders’ offer to lend him their automobile during his campaign for Congress in 1970. Dwight Bitikofer was one of the students heavily influenced by history professor Sol Yoder, whose brief three-year tenure was peppered with protests and other political actions involving students: “I remember conversations about the Juhnke campaign and about Amnesty International and political prisoners with Sol and Naomi” and discussions about the Vietnam war.

I had a class with Sol Yoder [World History?]. I talked a lot with Sol and his wife, Naomi. Sol was a strong believer in a radical, Christianity. Many faculty members seemed supportive of protest, but Sol was always right in the middle of things. I think he was ostracized by other members of the faculty. There were a few faculty

²⁹² Ken Gingerich, email message to author, November 2, 2017. Once when traveling from Iowa, student Dan Clark hitched a ride with Earl Martin and Pat Hostetter, voluntary service workers in Vietnam. All three slept on the Yoders’ living room floor. Dan Clark, email message to author, November 1, 2017.

²⁹³ Randy Zercher, Emeritus Professor of Music, Hesston College, email message to author, November 1, 2017.

²⁹⁴ Cheryl Ramer, interview with author, October 12, 2017.

members who, while pacifist, were very much opposed to peace marches and protests.²⁹⁵

Yoder's teaching occasionally engaged his students in unconventional means, some of whom enjoyed them. Bitikofer remembered, for example, an antiwar tax demonstration on April 15, 1970 that was an extension of one of his history classes:

In the spring, I participated in an April 15 anti-war tax demonstration in front of the IRS office in Wichita. I remember I carried a sign that read: "God Damns War -- Withhold Taxes." ...this was with Sol Yoder and several other members of his class (World History, I think).²⁹⁶

The demonstrations were not frivolous, or simply emulating protest couched as secular. Rather, Yoder's quest was for a radical Christianity that derived from the early church, which in the eyes of Bitkofer, put him "always right in the middle of things." Bethel professor Anna Kreider Juhnke, who along with her husband, historian James C. Juhnke, attended the same church as the Yoders, echoed that assessment, noting his positive contributions:

And then we had another prophet in our midst --- Solomon Yoder --- who taught at Hesston College and he also would stick his neck out with quite strong statements against the war ... he was in our Sunday school class and when Jim ran for Congress he was something of a counselor and a gadfly and a conscience during that whole campaign and was a very good supporter of us as well.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ James C. Juhnke, "Clashing Symbols in a Quiet Town: Hesston in the Vietnam War Era," Kansas History, vol. 23, no. 3 (Autumn 2000), 152; Dwight Bitikofer, email message to author, October 13, 2017; Bitikofer, email message to author, October 14, 2017.

²⁹⁶ Dwight Bitikofer, email message to author, October 14, 2017.

²⁹⁷ Bitikofer, email message to author, October 13, 2017; Kreider Juhnke, interview, Original Tape B-32A, MLA. The notion of "prophet" was commonly understood as a valid function in MC Mennonite (Old Mennonite) congregations, Cheryl Ramer, interview with author, October 12, 2017; Joe Eck, "Prophets Spoke on Politics" [Letter to the editor], The Mennonite, October 20, 1970, 642.

After Juhnke was defeated in his bid, much to Yoder's disappointment, and the war was winding down only for Americans with 280,000 troops still in Vietnam, the Hesston professor explained his radicalism in early 1971,

The same questions are up for review now as presented themselves during the Reformation: What is the relation of church to society, of church to state (the power structure)? But are the answers the same? The cutting edge moves on and the symbols change. Nowadays nobody will suffer for baptism—who cares when he is baptized, how he is baptized, or if he is ever baptized? Today the church will, however, suffer for its social witness, its response to the social-ethical issues of war, racism, poverty, and caring for God's creation. And what is today's sacrosanct symbol, which one dare not touch? Surely not baptism—perhaps the nation's flag? Again, nowadays it is not likely that the disciple will suffer the death penalty. But he will suffer psychological isolation, and he will have to lay on the line his standard of living, his job, his career. How can we hope then to stand up to the powers let loose on us? I see it only in the strength of the faithful brotherhood. To be deprived of this support is tragic.²⁹⁸

Reflecting on Albert Einstein's pacifism and yet his dashed hopes that the German people would stand up to fascism, Yoder made his point with ironic humor, quoting Einstein's late in life assessment: "If I had to do it all over again, I think I would become a plumber." (Immediately he received a telegram from the president of the International Brotherhood of Plumbers naming him an honorary member.)" But, Yoder continued,

I think it was the disappointment of a noble soul which moved him to say further: "Most people won't even sacrifice their jobs for their convictions, let alone their lives." What is the importance of the Anabaptist movement for us? Only by the strength of my brothers do I find the strength to stand firm for truth and righteousness in obedient response to God.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Sol Yoder, "Being an Anabaptist Today --- By a Mennonite Who Is Trying to Become One," *Mennonite Life*, 26, no. 1 (January 1971), 7-8.

²⁹⁹ Yoder, "Being," 8. His fellow member of the Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship announced his candidacy for Congress in the same issue. James C. Juhnke, "A Mennonite Runs for Congress," *Ibid.*, 8-11.

After Yoder departed for a study leave in order to pursue his doctorate and never returned, Yoder's minister in the early 1990s reminded him of the event in which the history professor had led "several hundred Hesston students marching not to chapel or classes or to the dining hall, but to downtown Hesston to protest the Vietnam War. At the front of the demonstration, as if the Pied Piper of Hamelin, was Solomon Yoder, Jr."

I asked him about this story that took place over 25 years ago. Sol told me that he thought that back then he felt the Mennonites of Hesston needed shaking up and he was prepared to serve as the leader. The students had written protest letters and were *en masse* personally delivering their letters to the Hesston Post Office. Again, many community people in Hesston, including Mennonites, found the student protest very upsetting. Sol explained the community's response by claiming that Hesston may have been mostly Mennonite, but it was also mostly a Goldwater Republican kind of town.³⁰⁰

This account, however entertaining, must be taken with a grain of salt. Originally a speech presented at the annual Partner Dinner on February 7, 1998, following the re-dedication of the Alliman Administration Center, the reflection it clearly exaggerated events in Hesston. There is no evidence of any march or walk involving "several hundred Hesston College students" at any time, although the protest at the Hesston Post Office in February 1970 attracted Hesston, Bethel, and Tabor students.³⁰¹

Miller's reminiscence is an interesting exercise in memory, yet its clearly overstated observations on events in Hesston and some of the actions of Sol Yoder nevertheless maintain

³⁰⁰ Miller, "View," 3, 9.

³⁰¹ I am indebted to Dan Clark and Jean Widmer Clark for their particular insights on an earlier draft of this manuscript. Dan Clark, email message to author, November 10, 2017. Ellen Kroeker, email message to author, November 15, 2008.

part of the essence that the instructor brought to his students, the campus, and the community at large --- and the campus' desire to retain that image.³⁰²

Yoder's disappearance from academia eventually to the Netherlands where he translated original Anabaptist works remained a mystery, with many students and faculty believing he had been forced out. Yet, he thought he was being a faithful witness in the midst of a devastating war, a concern that meshed with many in his brotherhood as they considered the theological concerns raised by the war in late 1969.

The MC Mennonite Church Takes a Surprising Stand

The MC Mennonite Church issued a historic statement in August 1969 when in Turner, Oregon, it had considered the pleas of three Goshen College students for the Church to support draft resistance. The position moved beyond the traditional conscientious objector stance to the promotion of non-cooperation -- that is, not registering for the draft or not complying with government policies to facilitate the registration of others. The latter included sit-ins to block the entrances to draft boards and not revealing the whereabouts of draft resisters. Among those who supported the appeal was George R. Brunk II, son of the founder of the conservative magazine Sword and Trumpet, and the same man who had appeared five years earlier opposite Lieutenant General Hershey at Tabor College. The General Assembly of the Mennonite Church (MC Mennonites) concluded that resistance was "also a legitimate witness" and pledged assistance to those who made the choice not to cooperate. Although the decision was considered by some to

³⁰² Miller's account was published in the popular campus organ designed for re-distribution to alumni and prefaced by the college president.

be hasty, it nonetheless stood. This was the first time in two hundred years that a Mennonite conference went on record as endorsing non-cooperation with a military draft.³⁰³

Two Mennonite ministers in Hesston supported those making this choice, one of which was Gideon Yoder of the Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship where the Juhnkes were members (and which Sol and Naomi Yoder would join on their return to Hesston). Kreider Juhnke described the minister's endorsement of noncooperation:

Well, Gideon was quite a prophet. He got into trouble with some members of the church for saying that he would resist the draft if he were young again. We had some fairly cautious members of the church. I don't know if we had any prowar members, but certainly some who thought it was inappropriate to protest or rock the boat.³⁰⁴

Hesston students anticipated the decision. Hesston College Journal editor Eli Savanick had earlier in the year endorsed both protest and noncooperation when he joined with other national student leaders to sign a letter pledging their opposition to the war. The dormitory resident assistant explained, "I did it because I cannot agree with the war at all," and arguing that what he had done was a "traditional Mennonite stand."³⁰⁵

Among those who chose to resist or non-cooperate at Hesston were two leaders of the Peace Club from 1968-1972 and the vice-president of the student government, the latter an

³⁰³ MC General Conference, 36th Session, August 18, 1969, Turner, Oregon. AMC I-3-5, 14 CPSC, Walton Hackman file, Minutes and Reports, 1965-1969, Box 70, Folder 70/29 1969-71. MCUSA. The statement is more easily obtained in Peachey, Statements, 84; Melissa Miller and Phil M. Shank, The Path of Most Resistance: Stories of Mennonite Conscientious Objectors who did not Cooperate with the Vietnam Draft (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982), 228-229; Paul Toews, Mennonites, 324-326.

³⁰⁴ Kreider Juhnke, interview, Original Tape B-32A, MLA.

³⁰⁵ Dan Clark, email message to author, November 4, 2017; Hesston College Journal, February 4, 1969, 2-3.

individual who had never considered any sort of protest. Dan Clark, raised Methodist, but with parents who became Quakers, came to Hesston because of its peace convictions. In an interview conducted by a student at Iowa Mennonite School in 2005, Clark explained part of his journey:

When we were children (I am the eldest of four), our parents taught us to dislike violence and question the "need" for war, whatever justification might be put forward. They praised Gandhi and others who "fought" and "won" over armed and violent opponents without resort to killing, even in self defense. I remember such stories as early first grade and lots of it by third grade. As Methodists, we were not members of a traditionally pacifist church, but we learned, from our father especially, about Christians who "served" as conscientious objectors.³⁰⁶

Like Bethel economics professor J. Lloyd Spaulding, a Methodist committed to pacifism, the elder Clark found little understanding of his position, although, unlike Spaulding, he was not imprisoned for his stance during World War II. His son had mixed feelings about his father, especially about his lack of military service.

I'd better say more about my Dad. He was older than the fathers of most of my peers and was not in the military during World War II. He'd been a teacher and lay minister and--under influence of Quakers he met while at seminary--had told his draft board in Boone, Iowa, that he would carry a stretcher or drive an ambulance but would not train with weapons or use them. Whether or not he was formally deferred, they left him alone rather than deal with his lone objection. It seems he wasn't much aware of the Civilian Public Service program for war objectors such as Mennonites and Quakers. Privately I admired Dad and considered him unique and very smart, but--well, how do you brag about a "service" record like that?! Kind of embarrassing, huh?³⁰⁷

He soon found himself in a heavily Mennonite and Amish community in Iowa when his family moved, discovering that he was increasingly sympathetic to the Mennonite stance:

When I was 15, we moved to the Iowa City area and landed in Washington County among the Amish and Mennonites. Whole communities that didn't send their men to be soldiers was a new thing! Attending public school, I took an

³⁰⁶ Dan Clark, interview by Rachel Halder, May 18, 2005. Shared by permission from private collection.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

interest in "them" and sometimes took their side in discussions behind their backs. I considered the criticisms and complaints of my fellow "English" (how odd to labeled so) about those cowardly Mennonites who wouldn't serve the country but were reputed to hold all the best land and were probably richer than they let on. I made friends among "them" and learned the critics were wrong mostly. During my junior and senior years [in high school], I grew increasingly sure of my opposition to the Vietnam War and increasingly forthright as a peace advocate. A Mennonite friend and I visited our intended colleges in Kansas together, and I ended up bailing out of mine, the Presbyterian one, and enrolling at his, the Mennonite one. I was joining the peace people.³⁰⁸

Clark was ambivalent about the draft at first. Nixon had been elected on his promise to end the war ("Peace with Honor"), and the first year Hesston student registered, affixing a letter to his form explaining that "I might withdraw my participation when I fe[el] braver." Because he was not a member of a Historic Peace Church, he bided his time and became involved in the antiwar movement, recognizing its divisions, but also concluding that the traditional peace "witness" by Mennonites in which alternative service was performed under the provisions of Selective Service was not enough of a stance. These were the same arguments the Goshen students used when they appealed to the MC conference in Turner, Oregon, and the MC Church agreed to support any of its men who took such a stance of noncooperation.

From rural Kansas I was studying what I could learn of antiwar activism around the country and identifying myself with The Movement. Whenever I could affirm my preferences, I stood with Christian and secular pacifists (more, for example, than with anarchists or New Left socialists). Amid the Mennonites, I was gravitating toward their radicals who said "nonresistant" civilian alternative service was too puny a peace witness. I applauded "draft resisters" who said any cooperation with Selective Service simply helped the war continue.³⁰⁹

After attending a camp for draft counselors, Clark returned his card to his draft board. He was now in stark violation of the law and eligible both for a prison term and up to a \$5,000 fine.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

Bethel graduate Dennis Koehn served such a penalty for his choice, but when the draft board reclassified him as 1-A, Clark said he “chickened out,” even though he had by then participated in a number of events as a draft resister. After wavering, garnering a student deferment, and then challenging his punitive reclassification successfully, he finally followed his convictions by not cooperating. Eventually, Selective Service dropped his case. He was too much trouble, the war was winding down by the time his appeals had gone through, and the draft was abandoned. He explained why he had not left for Canada and his reasons for opposing the war, even though his antiwar protests with Hesston gave Selective Service more incentive for denying his case.

I briefly considered going to Canada, but living among Mennonites helped me decide I was about stopping the war, and I wasn't about running away or hiding or blending in. I also decided I wasn't asking the war-making government to certify me moral enough to be exempt from killing.³¹⁰

Clark, the Mennonite-by-choice, had refused to cooperate, but so did Nick King, who hailed from conservative MC Mennonite roots in Yoder, Kansas, where his grandfather had founded the local Mennonite church. King, who arrived a year after the Bethel moratorium events and the protests held at both Bethel and Tabor in the spring of 1970 against the invasion of Cambodia, followed Dwight Bitikofer as chair of the Hesston peace club. Beginning in his freshman year, he actively demonstrated along with other Hesston students in front of the post

³¹⁰ Clark later reflected on his activities and the dilemmas men in his community faced and the false dichotomy between “resisters and warriors.” “I had friends and relatives in the war, and I've compared notes at length with two cousins. One was pictured in the Des Moines Register during the 1970 Cambodia incursion, while I was in student government getting the flag removed from the campus flagpole at Hesston. The other was an almost-CO who enlisted in hopes of avoiding Vietnam but found himself there anyway, jumping from helicopters in “search and destroy” missions. Afterwards we found our perspectives were similar; it was not about warriors vs. war resisters. One of my best friends, very active in the peace movement, had been a platoon leader of airborne rangers. He shared his stories, but he would not go see the movie “Platoon” with me. Been there done that, he said.” Ibid.

office, attended Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship conferences with Bethel and Tabor students, and helped design local peace projects funded by Showalter grants issued through IPF. In his case, being involved in a summer “Peace Team” with three Bethel College students, “had a profound effect” on him. The group, which included activists Patty Shelly, Lois Preheim, and Dennis Koehn, traveled to churches where they talked about peace, performed skits, and preached, leading to sharpened convictions about the draft. Both King and Koehn resisted the draft, with the latter serving time in the federal prison in Englewood, Colorado (while president of the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship). After King sent his draft card to Kansas Senator Pearson, who returned it with a note that “[King] couldn’t do that,” King headed to Peru as a missionary, again returning his card. As he later learned, the card was mailed to “Nick King, Lima, Peru” where it presumably made its way to someone else.³¹¹

The third resister considered in this snapshot of male draft resisters at Hesston College was an unlikely participant, even more than King. Thinking about any sort of involvement other than student government was not on his radar. But, for Lonnie Buerge, going to Hesston deepened his understanding of Anabaptism. Coming into contact with students from Ohio, Indiana, and Kansas, he realized that his understanding of conscientious objection had been shallow and something simply accepted as a matter of form in his home church in Missouri. Even though he had grown up as a conservative Mennonite, he did not fully comprehend the

³¹¹ When King returned to his home church to ask for their support of his position, however, the church refused to give it to him, in spite of the MC Mennonite decision in Turner. Yoder, Kansas, was also the center of Amish settlement in Kansas. King, interview with author, September 30, 2017.

nonresistant position in relation to war. His action, taken on the eve of his graduation from Hesston was definitive, however, based on his religious convictions against killing.³¹²

In the spring of 1970, I returned my draft card to the draft board. I tore it up and instead of just throwing it away, I mailed it back to them. Nothing came of it and [they] then mailed me another one but it was again a start to see[ing] opportunities to resist.³¹³

As it did for many who destroyed their draft cards, he remembers the event as if burned into his brain:

It was a warm stairwell

cold dark foxholes

it was quiet and safe

machine guns screaming death

the choir was preparing

the draft boards had been gathering

the card, the card connecting

the dead, the dying, the doomed

the card in the back pocket

the card in the hand

³¹² Lonnie Buerge, interview with author, October 30, 2017.

³¹³ Lonnie Buerge, email message to author, October 27, 2017.

then it was done³¹⁴

The young musician who was a member of the school choir and a Hesston College gospel team that travelled to churches where the group played music, performed dramatic skits, and offered brief reflections on scripture, had moved beyond an easy acceptance of a 1-O classification in which he was protected as a member of a Historic Peace Church, and instead resisted cooperating with a system that waged war. Like Nick King, he did not care if they pursued him or not.

The Long Vietnam War Comes to Hesston College

Hesston heavily emphasized recruitment of international students and had a significant population of “missionary kids” and former overseas relief workers. The campus chaplain had served with the Mennonite Central Committee. The result was a campus “sensitized to the devastating effects of the war,” according to historian Sharp, Hesston alumnus and participant-observer of some of the events.³¹⁵

Mennonites had been in Vietnam since 1954, serving as aid workers with Mennonite Central Committee, missionaries with MC Mennonite missions, or as voluntary service workers engaged in a variety of educational, development, or medical projects, a story more fully discussed in the chapter concerning Tabor College. Among those were Hesston College graduate Earl Martin (1963) and Pat Hostetter Martin, she having been there since 1966. Pat Hostetter had entered Pax Service in Vietnam at the same time as her more prominent sibling who will appear

³¹⁴ Lonnie Buerge, Poem written about the tearing up of his draft card; Lonnie Buerge, email message to author, October 31, 2017.

³¹⁵ John E. Sharp, email message to the author, November 11, 2008.

in the next chapter. She was a canny observer and wrote long, detailed letters to her brother and family about what she heard and saw as a teenager and young adult, first in the United States, and then in Vietnam. Early in 1966, she attended a commissioning service for Dr. Atlee Beachy at the Harrisonburg City Church of the Brethren in which two men who had just returned from Vietnam were the featured speakers. After describing the effects of the war the men had observed, she reflected on the Hostetters' upcoming Pax Service:

So Doug it's a poor situation we're getting ourselves into and who knows how much longer the war and destruction will last---six or eight years possibly, the military men say. It seems almost hopeless to piece together people's lives they're still in the midst of destruction. But, it's like Atlee Beachy says--- we're going into Vietnam to take the presence and compassion of Christ with us so this in itself will be hope for some.

She then turned to more personal concerns:

The prospect of Vietnam does bring with it though the possibility of a "untimely" death which doesn't really scare me. I guess it's the realization that there's a greater force within than any of these without. "A man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying, he ought only to consider whether he's right or wrong."³¹⁶

In Vietnam, she met and married Earl Martin in 1967, a man who later was one of four Mennonites to stay in the country as the war ended. Their story in brief explains why their speaking tours brought the war home to Mennonites, including the conservative conferences in the east, and to college students at Hesston.

Not only could they speak to the suffering of the Vietnamese in the war, like long-term missionary Donald Sensenig did. The latter described the horrific pain of children badly burned by napalm, but as Pax workers expected to navigate the war under the gaze of the U.S. military, the Martins also spoke to systemic issues their audiences usually had not considered. They were

³¹⁶ Pat Hostetter to Doug Hostetter, January 31, 1966, Douglas Hostetter Papers, 9/1, MCUSA.

well aware of the pressure to play on “the U.S. team,” the view by the U.S. military that aid workers and missionaries were in Vietnam to solve problems in the community and to provide the psychological arm of “winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.” The encounter Earl Martin had with an army colonel near the Quang Ngai where the couple lived encapsulated the pressure that had always been present, but which was emphatic with the U.S. determination to win the war. Martin and some other MCC Pax men decided they wanted to clarify who they were and what they were doing with the local army officers:

We explained who we were and why we were helping the refugees --- a humanitarian operation out of motivations of Christian love. Then the colonel took his turn. Martin remembered his words clearly. ‘You’ve told me what you do. Now let me tell you what I do. My job, to put it starkly, is to kill the enemy. The more Viet Cong we kill the better,’ the U.S. military man said. The colonel, however, wasn’t finished. ‘That’s not all, of course. We are also here with a mandate to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. And that is where you some in, with your work in the refugee camps. We are glad you are part of “the team.”’³¹⁷

What the colonel said had been expressed to MCC and other aid workers in both explicit and metaphorical terms since 1954. It unsettled those who heard it, but almost overwhelmed the moral sensibilities of those who heard it when their countrymen were now directly responsible for much of the misery. When the furloughed couple spoke to Mennonite groups, they presented a picture that was far more complex than Mennonites considered in their generous humanitarian aid. By 1972, MCC had approved sending medical aid to North Vietnam, a decision heavily informed by the Hostetter and Martin reports, and conformed by MCC representatives. The

³¹⁷ Don Sensenig could not contain his emotions during a conversation about what he and his wife had seen as missionaries working with injured children and displaced families. Don Sensenig, conversation with author, Akron, PA, June 19, 2014; Earl Martin, quoted in David Edward Leaman, “Politicized Service and Teamwork Tensions: The Mennonite Central Committee in Vietnam, 1966-1969, History Senior Seminar Paper, Goshen College, 1985, 1-2.

decision met with some opposition, but it also resonated with enough Mennonites to be endorsed. These were among the stories the couple brought to Hesston College in 1969, shortly before the first moratoriums and on the heels of a memorial by Hesston College students that was soon viewed as a notorious protest.

When Ho Chi Minh, leader of North Vietnam, died on September 3, 1969, five Hesston students sprang into action. Phil Blosser and Dan Kanagy, both children of missionaries to Japan, along with three others, decided to emphasize his passing by making a three-by-five foot Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) flag, with its yellow star on a red background. Dan Clark and Jean Widmer purchased the fabric from a local shop, Bill Hess's Hesston Variety Store, and Phyllis Emerson sewed the flag. On September 5, "very early in the morning," the five met at the campus' flag pole. The American flag that had flown over the college ever since local Mennonites had been harassed and beaten during World War I, had been taken down for the night. Blosser offered a few words and they then held a moment of silence before hoisting the DRVN flag to half-mast. It stayed there until morning, when a student on the way to breakfast briefly acquired it for his dormitory room until the flag's owners retrieved it and re-installed it at half-mast on the pole, where it remained until college chapel worship. Administrators then lowered the flag, returning it with the stipulation that it not be flown again. Former Dean of Students John Oyer declared that to fly such a flag on an American flag pole was at the least "an act in poor taste" and perhaps even illegal, an opinion echoed by others, according to the college newspaper account of the event.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Dan Clark, email message to author, November 1, 2017; Jean Widmer Clark, email message to author, November 1, 2017; "North Vietnam Flag Flies Briefly," Hesston College Journal, September 23, 1969, 1; Sharp, interview with author, November 9, 2008; Sharp, School, 300-303.

The concerns raised by the five students were amplified five days later by the scheduled appearance of Mennonite service workers Earl Martin and Pat Hostetter Martin on September 10. On campus as part of a speaking tour before they returned to Vietnam, the first-hand experiences of the Vietnam Christian Service workers who had already served a three-year term reinforced what the students had done. After presenting a vivid account of the war and suffering in Vietnam via slides and their own reflections, the pair emphasized that continued U.S. presence was obstructing the creation of peace in the country, rather than diminishing the conflict. Standing before the chapel attendees, Martin wore a black armband, while Hostetter-Martin wore a black patch affixed to her dress both to symbolize mourning and to model Jesus' teaching to love the enemy. Martin's call for a period of silence was, in the words of the Hesston College reporter covering the event, "a more dramatic phenomenon" than the perhaps more inflammatory raising of the flag five days earlier.³¹⁹

In the view of historian James Juhnke, the protest involving the DRVN flag might have stopped there, except that the Reverend Vern Bender got involved. The same man who would shortly demand a debate with Bethel, Hesston, or Tabor representatives found a crusade by which he might expose what he deemed the "Hanoi-Kremlin pseudo peace endorsements of the Bethel and Hesston College peace clubs." Bender bought large ads in The Newton Kansan that resembled handbills and directed people to Hesston's un-patriotic sanctioning of Ho Chi Minh as "the George Washington of Vietnam":

VIET CONG FLAG

7 HOURS OVER HARVEY COUNTY ON CAMPUS FLAG POLE!

HEAR

³¹⁹ "North Vietnam," 1.

CONFESSION OF THE ENEMY FLAG RAISERS!
THE LIE THAT GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS AN ATHEIST!

How a Professor Cries Out in Agony: “The Peace Club is on Trial”

A blistering Washington’s Day Expose of the Peacenik March on His City!

HEAR IT ALL!

7 p.m., Sunday, February 22, 1970 in

The People’s Church³²⁰

The resulting brouhaha found Bender on a search and destroy mission for the DRVN flag, and he used the occasion as an opportunity for more patriotic flag waving as he circled the campus, then toured the county, in a station wagon outfitted with loudspeakers, American flags, and a sign mounted on a rack atop the car that read: “PEACE (?) MARCHERS REFUSED TO SURRENDER VIETCONG FLAG.” For the MC Mennonites who eschewed publicity and who largely still favored simple dress as an act of humility, the attention was bad enough. In light of the denomination’s history of persecution, the blaring noise and garish signs directing people to Hesston was in sharp contrast to the MC Mennonites’ survival as “The Quiet in the Land.”³²¹

Moreover, Bender’s focus on the American flag in the course of his harassment raised a sore point for the Hesston College Mennonites --- and others --- sensitive to its militaristic connotations, a point more fully considered shortly. MC Mennonites in both Virginia and

³²⁰Juhnke, “Clashing,” 147. Replication of the advertisement in The Newton Kansan. The advertisement included nearly triple the amount of text in this brief depiction. The Newton Kansan, February 20, 1970, 12. Although the student protesters emphasized that the flag was a DRVN flag, Bender and other detractors insisted on the highly pejorative moniker “Viet Cong” instead.

³²¹ Juhnke, “Clashing,” 147-148; Sharp, email correspondence, November 11, 2008.

Pennsylvania had raised ongoing questions since the 1920s about the theological implications of pledging allegiance and raising a salute to a national flag, and several faculty were acutely disturbed. Nevertheless, the college continued to confront the war and the patriotism that surrounded it by allowing student protest, even if the campus administration did not endorse it as a means of witness.³²²

Demonstrations and Counter-Demonstrations: Re-Visioning America, Re-Visioning Disorder

Hesston hosted its own “National Mobilization” events in November 1969, with the chapel program featuring pro- and anti-war speakers and the initial parts of a “dramatic dialog” that culminated in December. Members of the Hesston College “Peace Concern” joined the Bethel Peace Club in various activities, including the march to Wichita on October 17, 1969 that ended the Moratorium events and which affected Dwight Bitikofer so profoundly. Tabor students then took part in Hesston’s march a month later, when the “Peace Concern” led a protest walk down the town’s Main Street to the local Post Office, actions reminiscent of the first Bethel anti-war walk in North Newton. This was the march later described by Joseph Miller with Sol Yoder as “Pied Piper,” although in fact, faculty, members of the community, and MC Mennonite minister Jerry Weaver of the Whitestone Mennonite Church walked without Yoder in what was

³²² David L. Weaver-Zercher, "Between Two Kingdoms: Virginia Mennonites and the American Flag," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70, no. 2 (April 1996): 165-190, and John Perry, "Not Pledging as Liturgy: Lessons from Karl Barth and American Mennonites on Refusing National Oaths." *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 76, no. 4 (October 2002): 431-459.

described as an orderly procession. In October, the club also organized a forum devoted to a discussion about whether a Christian college should fly the American flag.³²³

Like counter-demonstrations held nationwide and characterized as “Rally Round the Flag” events, the town soon had its own response to the college’s protests. Nationally, such rallies held throughout 1970 culminated on July 4 when God and Country were blended on “Honor America Day” in Washington DC, an event highlighted by Billy Graham’s appearance and interfaith morning services at Lincoln Memorial. In Hesston, the event held five months earlier in late February promised to hold the same melding. Framed as the dedication of a new flagpole outside the municipal hall built in 1968, event organizers included local dignitaries, a representative from McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a flag donated by Representative Garner Shriver, and the high school band. A bugle sounded, the flag was raised, and “Hesston men” fired the traditional salute followed by the band’s rendition of the national anthem. The Methodist minister opened and closed the formal program with an invocation and benediction, MC Mennonite minister Peter Wiebe sandwiched into the midst of the event as the dedicatory speaker. The staging was set for the celebration of community, albeit one with significant issues underlying its daily life. Master Sergeant Corckum from McConnell asked his approximately one hundred listeners whether they could ever “fly the flag too much?” and “Can we read the Bible too much?” Wiebe then stepped to the podium,

³²³ “Hesston,” Peace Notes, December 1969, 5. As noted earlier, Sol Yoder had not yet arrived on campus in spite of later recollections.

expected to give a rousing dedication of the flag, which had flown briefly over the federal Capitol and had been supplied by Congressman Shriver.³²⁴

Instead, Wiebe deconstructed the town's underlying assumptions by using the flag as a different kind of symbol than one associated with military might and political authority. He began inauspiciously, eschewing his usual extemporaneous speaking to read from the written remarks he uncharacteristically had prepared:

We have gathered here in a celebration of the blessings God has allowed us to enjoy in our country. The Flag which we have raised over Hesston, and shall fly over our city in coming years, will have much to say to us. I would like for you my fellow citizens to think with me few moments about what it might symbolize.³²⁵

And, then, he continued, "The American flag is to be a symbol of the best for which the American people stand. We have come to this country from almost every country in the world, in search of the freedoms that all people desire and deserve." The scene was set for what the now-present Sol Yoder feared would be a celebration of civil religion.³²⁶

Instead, the minister issued not only a direct criticism of the town's domestic attitudes toward a low income housing project, but also a pointed critique of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, coupled with remarks advocating an expansive, patriotic, non-nationalistic use of the American flag. He first turned to the town's racial issues, symbolized for townspeople as the fear of a badly needed low-income housing project"

³²⁴ "Lions Club Flag Pole Dedicated February 23," Hesston Record, March 5, 1970, 2. The action reflected flag etiquette of not flying a flag at night.

³²⁵ "The major part" of the minister's remarks were later published in the Hesston Record. Peter Wiebe, "The Symbol of Our Country," Hesston Record, March 5, 1970, 2.

³²⁶ Sol Yoder's thoughts and his interaction with Wiebe were reported by James Juhnke and were based on interviews. Juhnke, "Clashing," 148-149.

We have, in Hesston, hopefully, agreed on low-cost housing; we have agreed to have a safe and free community. If this flag flies over Hesston and we do less than this for our underprivileged millions, then it is a sham, a farce, it ought to be torn down.³²⁷

He then moved on to American militarism and the meaning of nationalism, while obliquely attacking domestic injustice that was not only a national issue, but a local one:

I don't like to see the flag fly on a military base in another country. I have a feeling we do not belong there, and history in Vietnam and elsewhere is proving how badly mistaken we have been in our military efforts. Our threats today are the inside ghettos Communism takes over where social ills are not met by the country. The best way to fight communism is in determining to live up to all that we have promised in the Declaration of Independence.... Not a narrow patriotism or nationalism—but a new and international spirit needs to emerge. We need to be loyal to America, but as citizens of the world. . . The flag is not a whip for lining people up.³²⁸

In his conclusion, the pastor asked his somewhat stunned audience to join him in “the army of the Lord,” under the “Commander in Chief [who] is the Man of Sorrows, the Prince of Peace.”

As the audience moved into a recitation of the pledge of allegiance, followed by a closing ceremony and lowering of the flag, Wiebe instead remained silent, folding his hands behind his back and bowing his head as if in prayer.³²⁹

For Hesston student Lonnie Buerge, the dedication of the flag was his first protest against the war:

It was the fall of 1968 when I started at Hesston. Vietnam was an issue but most of us had student deferments and, frankly, it seemed a long way off at that time. However, that sense of isolation soon started to crumble around us as the protests and the stories of the war came to us. The burden of knowing that there was so

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Lonnie Buerge, email communication to author, October 27, 2017. On Tabor student involvement in the Hesston walk, Ellen Kroeker, email communication to author, November 13, 2008. Juhnke reported on the ceremony and excerpts of the speakers' remarks. James C. Juhnke, “Anabaptists at the Flagpole,” *The Mennonite* (April 13, 1971), 242-243.

much suffering while we enjoyed our college years weighed on some of us. The first time that I recall doing any form of protest was at a dedication of a new post office in Hesston at which Peter Wiebe spoke. He was pastor at Hesston Mennonite church at that time. I recall turning around backwards as the flag was raised. It was a small gesture and I was alone there but it was my own first step to begin to see that we had a chance to state our beliefs and we needed to do it.³³⁰

Wiebe's references to racial issues also resonated with the student government vice-president who later recalled that the campus itself could barely address them.

Racial tensions were starting to be felt on campus and I recall listening to black students and how lonely and angry they felt. I recall asking for patience and calm and now I regret asking for any time of patience since we have made so little progress since then.³³¹

By the time he was ready to graduate, he had not only engaged in a conscious act of protest, but come to understand the deeper implications of resistance in both real and symbolic forms.

Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the subsequent killing of four protesters at Kent State University in Ohio hit home for the conservative Mennonite from small-town Missouri.

Later that spring, the Kent State shootings took place. I recall going as a member of student government to ask the administration how we were going to respond. I was told that we were not. I told them there was no way I was going to let that happen and so [I bought and] we placed 4 plants at the front of chapel that day and asked that the chaplain mention the plants as symbols of the dead students. I recall that we rang the bells after chapel and the community complained about the noise. Now, that seems so small and insignificant but it was another step.³³²

Chaplain Lederach who had outwitted Vern Bender's attempts to create a lasting symbol, was initially reluctant to tender a transitory remembrance of those who died as a result of dissent.

³³⁰ Lonnie Buerge, email message to author, October 27, 2017.

³³¹ Lonnie Buerge, email message to author, October 27, 2017.

³³² Buerge, email correspondence with author, October 27, 2017; interview with author, October 20, 2007.

Although the chaplain changed his mind because of Buerge's persistence, the town was ready to complain about the bell ringing. Even such brief actions were viewed as disorder.

Flags on American Soil: Loyalties and Kingdoms at Hesston College

Vern Bender eventually acquired the charred remains of the Vietcong flag in an event charged with both melodrama and dark humor. In February, five months after Hesston Peace Concern member raised the Vietcong flag, Hesston College Chaplain John Lederach met with Rev. Bender to discuss a resolution to his demands. He was unsuccessful. Bender was determined to make an example of the "Vietcong flag," reportedly planning to burn it in front of the Newton County Courthouse by which the earlier moratorium participants had filed on their "March to Wichita." And, the MC Mennonite, who opposed public protest, but who also had strong convictions about nationalism, was as determined to keep such a symbol out of the firebrand's hands. Arriving at Lederach's home in Hesston with two veterans in tow, Bender stormed back to Newton when the chaplain refused to give him the flag. Upon Bender's angry departure, Lederach suggested that they burn the flag as traditionally performed on captured "enemy flags," a process successfully completed with gasoline and a lighted match. The chaplain gathered the charred remains, gave them to the two veterans, and then gave the abandoned victors a ride home to Newton. Bender kept the fragments on display under glass at his church for many years and occasionally asserted his authority in the community by taking them with him to local events.³³³

³³³ "Burn Flag at Hesston Confrontation," Hutchinson News, February 26, 1970, 17; "Viet Cong Flag Burned at Hesston," Newton Kansan, February 26, 1970, 1; Sharp, interview, November 9, 2008; "Burned Flag Remnants Open for Public Display" advertisement, The Newton Kansan, February 27, 1970; Juhnke, "Clashing," 147-150.

Although Vern Bender had retrieved what he considered a valuable symbol of the disruptive actions occurring at Hesston College and Bethel College, the Hesston students still debated the presence of an American flag on campus. The Campus Community Congress finally decided on May 1, 1970 that the school should not fly the flag, but the decision was quickly overturned by the administration that stated in an official "Flag Policy Statement," that indeed it would. The policy was written in classic two kingdom language, which also made a bow to the original statement issued by Bethel College at its founding. The decision was "consistent with our Anabaptist heritage" because it recognized the separation of church and state in America:

We fly the flag because the United States government tolerates dissent and makes a serious attempt to respect personal convictions, and because the United States from early colonial times has welcomed religious dissenters of every type.³³⁴

Thus Hesston College's administration had re-interpreted the contemporary use of the flag as a nationalistic symbol in favor of its representation of minority dissent, although historian Sharp noted the real reason for its restoration to the flagpole was "alleged student and community disapproval."³³⁵

Local anger was focused on whether or not Hesston flew the American flag, but it also included the larger activism regarding racial issues and antiwar protests, actions the community saw as disorder. James Juhnke conducted interviews with both Sol Yoder and Peter Wiebe and learned that each had received threatening telephone calls from a prominent individual whose voice they recognized. As the celebration of "Honor America Day" was taking place in the nation's capital, Peter Wiebe received a telephone call. "I want you to know that we are going to

³³⁴ "Flag Policy Statement," Hesston College Journal, May 19, 1970, 1.

³³⁵ Sharp, interview, November 9, 2008.

run you out of town. Two things we don't need in Hesston are long haired people and Blacks.” Wiebe remained in his position before resigning January 1, 1972 to take an appointment at a different Mennonite church. Sol Yoder was likewise threatened at a future date and encouraged to leave not just town, but the continent, as the caller offered to buy him a plane ticket to Africa where he might join the Bethel historian James Juhnke who was in Botswana on a service appointment.³³⁶

After seventy members of the Hesston College community helped the Hesston Methodist church with a service project, the local animosity died down. Sometime following commencement in 1970, after the students left campus, the flag disappeared into the back of Chaplain Lederach's desk.

I noticed early one morning that the folded flag was on the bench outside my office. Someone from the maintenance staff, after taking it down the night before, had apparently left it there. . . . I saw it, picked it up and put the flag in the back of my bottom desk drawer. . . . That day the flag did not fly over the campus. As I remember, no one seemed to notice! Several times toward the end of that year the question was asked, “What happened to the flag?” No one seemed to know. I did not say anything. The reality was that it became a non-issue. The year ended and nothing was said. . . . To me, this little story illustrated how at times, making things into such a big issue could have divided the faculty and campus, but a quiet intervention kept the issue from becoming divisive and destructive.³³⁷

According to Sharp, neither the faculty nor President Laban Peachey (himself a descendant of conservative MC Mennonite dissenters who refused to salute the flag) had been in favor of flying the flag and so did not press the issue. During the spring of 1971, after finding the flagpole lying on its side several times, the maintenance department removed the pole and, eventually, the concrete foundation. Hesston now flies no flags except in the cafeteria, where flags of all the

³³⁶ Juhnke, “Clashing,” 51.

³³⁷ John Lederach to James Juhnke, May 12, 1999 cited in Juhnke, “Clashing,” 151.

nationalities of current students are on display. The college had quietly reasserted its nonconformist stance without calling attention to its decision, but it also placed the American flag alongside those of other nations, thereby reaffirming its view about nationalism.³³⁸

While Hesston students continued to participate in Bethel protest activities, they also conducted their own. The college's student-led "Peace Concern" organized an anti-war film series. History professor Sol Yoder initiated a variety of actions, including a procession around campus in 1971 with a coffin-shaped box. By 1972, the campus was quiet.³³⁹

The Vietnam War forced the members of the MC Mennonites at Hesston to come to terms with the flag, and they had concluded that it was a symbol of nationalism, which could not be compatible with a Christianity that extended throughout the world. Moreover, the use of the stars-and-stripes in a war that was increasingly seen as an unjust exercise of American might was incompatible with the Mennonite Church's basic stance on peace. In spite of its association with minority voice and dissent, it could not be flown in good conscience. The MC Mennonite desire to quietly live on good terms with the national government had been jolted by the Vietnam War. For Hesston College, the American flag demanded an allegiance it could not give in good conscience, and so the school discontinued flying it, except alongside other flags representing student nationalities.

³³⁸ Margaret Wiebe, Hesston College librarian, conversation with author, Wichita Kansas, Fall 2007. Also, Sharp, interview, November 11, 2008.

³³⁹ Sharp, email. The notion of "prophet" was commonly understood as a valid function in MC Mennonite (Old Mennonite) congregations, Cheryl Miller Ramer, interview with author, October 12, 2017; Joe Eck, "Prophets Spoke on Politics" [Letter to the editor], The Mennonite, October 20, 1970, 642.

The college tolerated its student dissent and the often iconoclastic vision of Sol Yoder and others who agreed with his vision of prophetic faithfulness. In spite of the town's ire, the college supported its students, even if administrators and faculty had to be pushed to do so. It also supported projects that healed some of the sharpest rifts between the town and gown. But it was also willing to engage in its own highly symbolic actions that opposed society's militaristic claims. In spite of its attempts to meld with the local culture, by 1970 the college was willing to discontinue its use of a particular national symbol, focusing instead on the loyalties that Peter Wiebe had explored in his speech during the flag dedication: "We need to be loyal to America, but as citizens of the world."

PART III: STRUGGLING WITH CONFLICTED VISIONS

Chapter 4 -- Tabor College and Unresolved Tensions

Prelude

Tabor College was established in 1908 to provide higher education for Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren. Its location was chosen after a competitive bidding process with four Kansas communities offering their reasons why the college should choose them. Hillsboro overwhelmingly won over second place Aulne after 207 individuals pledged \$7,003 and offered the following: twenty-eight lots; six churches including a Mennonite Brethren church; a law that prohibited the sale of intoxicating beverages; and a “clean German town of from 900 to 1,000 inhabitants, with ... prospects from another passenger train with East-West connections.” The original building was dedicated on September 16, 1908. The college did not fly an American flag as Bethel and Hesston had done from their early years, but instead it hoisted a large triangular pennant with “Tabor College” written on it.³⁴⁰

After a suspicious fire destroyed the original building on April 30, 1918, leaving the 200 students without classrooms and lingering questions about the nature of the fire, the school rebuilt. Although the German-speaking population had been pressured during World War I to buy war bonds, to avoid speaking German, and to display the American flag, it was never concluded that the fire was due to arson, and its memory has been contested. On the one hand, there were insistent stories from several individuals, which were passed down through families,

³⁴⁰ Peggy Goertzen, “Birth of a Vision: Our Own School,” in Tabor College: A Century of Transformation, 1908-2008, ed. Douglas B. Miller (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2008), 11-12; Peggy Goertzen, Director of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, interview with author, Hillsboro, KS, October 3, 2008.

that the fire was deliberately set. On the other hand, the college history maintains that it was likely due to an unfortunate accident with the furnace. The local history of Hillsboro implies as much in its account of the fire, although it omits the caustic comments about the war by the Mennonite editor of Hillsboro's German-language newspaper, Vorwaerts, which drew criticism locally and within the state. Moreover, anti-German feeling ran high enough in Marion County that during the war, a member of the first Tabor College graduating class of 1915, fled with his family to Canada. Receiving a draft notice, and then learning that vigilantes were searching for him, he and his family hid with relatives, then departed to Saskatchewan after his father quickly sold the farm. Regardless, Tabor still did not fly the American flag until later in the century. To date, no one knows at what point the college installed a flag pole in front of the Lohrenz Administration Building and began to fly the national banner. One long-term Hillsboro resident, former administrator (1954-1956), and college board member for seventeen years (1964-1981), recalled, "The flag was flown inconsistently. It was flown for long periods of time, then not at all." By the time of the escalation of the Vietnam War in 1964, the national banner was raised and lowered every day.³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Goertzen, Birth, 27; Raymond F. Wiebe, Hillsboro, Kansas: The City on the Prairie (Hillsboro, KS: Multi Business Press, Inc., 1985), 72; "Big Fire Loss: Tabor College," Marion Record, May 2, 1918, 1. Regarding the conflicted interpretation of the fire, anonymous long-term Hillsboro resident, conversation with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 15, 2016; Juhnke, "Mob," 334-250; Juhnke discovered angry reactions in Kansas City, Topeka, and Marion, the county seat and a town with a reputation that had little use for Mennonite pacifists. Juhnke, Vision, 211-212; John A. Toews is more nuanced, although leaves the reader to draw conclusions about the impact of the newspaper articles. John A. Toews, History, 288; C.C. Regier, professor of history at Bethel College offers an important clue in one of his letters when he wrote in September 1918 that it was easier to comply with the demands of the Loyalty League "than to erect a new college building." Paul Toews, quoting Delores Reimer, "Jacob Frank Balzer and the Experience at Bethel College, 1913-1918" (student paper, Bethel College, 1974). Paul Toews, "Fundamentalist Conflict in Mennonite Colleges: A Response to Cultural Transitions?" Mennonite Quarterly Review 57, no. 3 (July 1983), 249; Harry Bennett, long-term resident of Marion, email message to author, September 13, 2016. For the story of the pacifist

Tabor was founded with high hopes that it would be a liberal arts college that would position its students to excel in academics and in service to the church. As its first president, biologist H. W. Lohrenz articulated it, Tabor was founded

to offer a liberal arts education in a Christian setting, to prepare young men and women for spiritual leadership in the church, and to provide a program of vocational training. It was the special concern of the Association, of the Board, and of the teachers that the school be a seminary of real Christianity, where the spirit of prayer could prevail and where souls could become better grounded in the spiritual life.³⁴²

As far as the church was concerned, the college was centered in the ideal environment.

According to historian Richard G. Kyle, Hillsboro was the “heart of the Mennonite Brethren world” between 1925 and 1947. The town itself had only 2,000 inhabitants, but it was home to several denominational offices, including the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions, the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, and three Mennonite Brethren congregations, including the largest in the denomination, Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church. There were also two Krimmer Mennonite Brethren congregations that would unite with the parent denomination in 1959. It was a focused environment, with the best the brotherhood had to offer.³⁴³

who moved his family to Canada, see Dale Suderman, “A View From Afar: Hillsboro, Home of ‘The Simpsons,’” Hillsboro Free Press, August 15, 2007, 2. Regarding the college’s practice of flying the flag, Raymond C. Schlichting, interview with Peggy Goertzen, Hillsboro, KS, November 2, 2008. Schlichting also had been a Civilian Public Service conscientious objector in World War II.

³⁴² Wesley J. Prieb, "Tabor College (Hillsboro, Kansas, USA)," in Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Tabor College \(Hillsboro, Kansas, USA&oldid=121780](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Tabor_College_(Hillsboro,_Kansas,_USA&oldid=121780) (accessed October 30, 2017).

³⁴³ Richard G. Kyle, “Years of Crisis and Transition (1932-1956), in Tabor College, ed. Miller, 66.

As far as the liberal arts vision was concerned, the constituency remained conflicted. Early graduating classes had a high proportion of those who went on to graduate school and achievements in the sciences, the arts, education, and religious service, but the constituency remained suspicious of these high-achieving graduates and how they could fit within the needs of the church. Tabor embodied the tensions and narrowness evidenced by the denomination itself. When recent Russian émigré and future seminary president, J. B. Toews, arrived to start school in 1931, he found the local churches to be both insular and clannish, with Mennonite Brethren churches unable to cooperate with other Mennonites, such as the General Conference Mennonites. The groups had split before coming to the United States and still could not resolve their differences. Noted Toews, “The social and spiritual gap between the various Mennonite church communities reflected a kind of spiritual narrowness.”³⁴⁴

Like Bethel, Tabor encountered heavy pressure from American fundamentalism, particularly acute on not only the attempt to defend Biblical authority, but also to defend the culture against the intrusions of “modernism.” In Kansas, both schools endured the penetrating gaze and extraordinary influence of second wave fundamentalist Gerald B. Winrod, whose polemics against communism resonated particularly well with Mennonites whose families had either recently fled Russia or who had relatives there. His exhortations to clean living and temperance were especially welcomed by those whose fellowship in the Old Country had been rent in part by alcohol, but his incorporation of dispensationalism resonated especially with Mennonite Brethren whose history included an embrace of end-time thinking. For Tabor and

³⁴⁴ J.B. Toews, *JB*, 67-68. Toews was not a typical undergraduate. He had fled Russia in 1926 and arrived at Tabor with four years at the University of the Ukraine and graduate work at the University of Amsterdam. Classified as a first-year student because he lacked proper documentation, he observed Tabor’s dilemmas from 1930-32.

Bethel, however, Winrod's focus on Mennonites as reliable allies created stress that was almost catastrophic. For Tabor, in particular, fundamentalist pressures resulted in its adoption of a ten-point doctrinal statement. The 1927-28 catalog explained why it now published the credo: "Because of the many-sided inquiries as to where Tabor College stands doctrinally in these days of modernistic and fundamentalist contention, it seems appropriate to give the following statement."³⁴⁵

According to historian Paul Toews' analysis, during this time Tabor lost four young faculty who had the intellectual acumen to set a different trajectory for the college. All Tabor alumni from those early promising graduating classes, they initially persisted for the sake of the potential vision. P.S. Goertz was one of those, and Toews explains what happened:

At the beginning of his last year, he wrote to his mentor, Kenneth S. Latourette at Yale, requesting an alternative job. Tabor had become unacceptable because "there is no little opposition to real scholarship such as a first class college should encourage. A narrow spirit of Fundamentalism is hard at work. No teacher, though evangelical and warm as well as Christo-centric, will be safe on the faculty if he accepts any results of modern scholarship."³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵ George R. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Toews interacts with Marsden's argument, agreeing with his more nuanced interpretation of fundamentalism and developing the argument that Mennonites both adapted pieces that enabled them to Americanize, while resisting first wave fundamentalism's attitudes toward war and "the constricted language of [biblical] inspiration," Paul Toews, "Fundamentalist Conflict," 241-256, quotation from 246. For pressure on Kansas Mennonites, see James C. Juhnke, "Gerald B. Winrod and the Kansas Mennonites," Mennonite Quarterly Review 43, no. 4 (October 1969): 293-298 and Robin Deich Ottoson, "Defending the Faith: The Impact of Gerald B. Winrod on the Mennonite Brethren in Kansas, 1925-1947," forthcoming publication; 1927-28 Tabor College Catalog, 10.

³⁴⁶ Paul Toews, "Fundamentalist," 253-254. The other three promising young scholars were Adolph Franz, M.S. Schlichting, and P.E. Schellenberg, the latter later returning to be president.

Like Bethel, Tabor was governed by an independent corporation, in Tabor's case chiefly because the brotherhood did not want the financial commitment required to maintain the college. After budget could not be met in 1931, the school dropped its junior and senior years, thereby becoming a junior college and losing four of its senior faculty. A last-ditch effort transferred the school to the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America and the General Conference of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren. In order to reorganize, the college closed from 1934 to 1935 and, after offering the presidency to four individuals who declined, settled on A. E. Janzen who agreed to assume the office. He remained in the position until 1942. He loved Tabor and he was an ardent dispensationalist who looked to Israel as the clock of prophecy and who struggled with focusing Tabor as a liberal arts college rather than a Bible college. His fondest hope, he related in his memoirs, would be that the school would be a training ground for missions.³⁴⁷

The community itself remained insular, with the shift from German to English evidence of some of the acculturative differences between GCs and MBs in Kansas. According to Paul Toews, "the transition came on the heels of World War I. For MB Mennonites the transition came during World War II and through the 1940s. The delayed language transition reflects a larger pattern of cultural insularity." In Hillsboro, the language issues are still remembered by those alive in the 1950s and 1960s as sources of division.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Deich Ottoson, "Defending," 14.

³⁴⁸ Paul Toews, "Fundamentalist," 253. Two long-term residents of Hillsboro, one GC Mennonite and one Methodist, remember how contentious the language issue was in daily life when shopping. Sylvia Abrahams, conversation with the author, Summer, 2017 and Charlotte Kennedy Takahashi, Summer, 2017.

After Peter E. Schellenberg assumed the presidency of the college in 1942 and attempted to strengthen the liberal arts model, the school was once again roiled by demands that he combat modernism. He was the first president with a Ph.D. and he was the first to resign after nine years of pressure about his discipline (psychology), and even his character, charges some of his accusers later regretted. The rest of the decade was spent trying to regain footing --- and deciding whether or not --- or how --- to embrace the Anabaptist identity that had now been under explicit discussion by MC Mennonites and GC Mennonites for almost ten years. As discussed in Chapter 1, the MBs remained suspicious of inter-Mennonite cooperation, and with the loss of P.C. Hiebert to Sterling College during the shutdown of the early 1930s, they keenly experienced the intellectual and spiritual isolation that such interaction would help overcome. Hiebert continued to represent MBs with Mennonite Central Committee, but it is easy to surmise that his no longer living in Hillsboro within easy range of denominational offices did nothing to ameliorate the suspicion with which MBs continued to view MCC once the substantial aid to their brethren was concluded after the war. Only a handful of individuals and the routine meetings of the Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems fostered sustained inter-Mennonite discussions locally. By 1962 when a consultant considered whether or not the three Mennonite schools in Kansas could possibly unite, the prospect of joining with Tabor was seen as impossible.³⁴⁹

The Long Vietnam War Comes to Hillsboro

In 1963, the college inaugurated a new president who would take the school through the political and cultural changes of the 1960s until his resignation in 1980, but before he arrived, the

³⁴⁹ “Report of the Commission, 1962,” Vern Preheim papers, MLA.

college found itself uniquely positioned to engage the Vietnam war through the presence of a new member of the faculty and the recent formation of the project that vetted conscientious objectors for the denomination. Each situated the school in larger contexts, one international, and one national. Yet the impact of each on Mennonites, Tabor College, and its students was widely variant over the long 1960s. In particular, the founding of the alternative service program discussed later evidences the struggles that Mennonite Brethren faced within their own singular brotherhood and the inter-Mennonite cooperation one of their founding fathers had so carefully and lovingly cultivated.

Vietnam Through a Detailed Lens: Acts of Mercy, Mennonite Memories, and the Travels of Delbert Wiens

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) remained a fledgling organization with a tolerance for the unconventional. Founded in 1920 by representatives of nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ “brotherhoods,” the association born out of relief efforts after World War I in France and Germany had since its inception --- even before its formal founding --- immediately incorporated Kansas Mennonites, including those associated with all three of the Mennonite colleges in the state and their local churches. As described previously, MCC generated intense interest and fervent involvement by American and Canadian Mennonites. Pressed with urgent appeals to focus on relief in Russia, MBs and GCs in central Kansas often knew first or second hand of the suffering, because many still had extended families there. For those who did not, the reports of famine, epidemics, atrocities of revolution and counter-revolution, and stranded kinsmen gripped those who arrived in Hillsboro in July 1920 to hear the report of the *Studien Kommission* from Russia. After five years of intensive efforts at relief and immigration assistance, members of the ad hoc group hesitated, then kept delicate lines of communication in place, which later allowed

MCC to function as an inter-Mennonite group without directly competing with denominational or conference organizations.³⁵⁰

By the early 1950s, when MCC was established as a clearinghouse for Mennonite men fulfilling conscientious objection or alternative service, there were decidedly mixed feelings about performing the Pax service other Mennonite men were doing in Europe. Earlier, MB men serving in CPS camps during World War II had resisted the denomination's attempts to separate them from other Mennonites, an encounter Wesley Prieb described in his popular biography of P.C. Hiebert. He wrote,

During the CPS era, some Mennonite Brethren wanted to place their volunteers in separate camps for spiritual nurture. Hiebert helped conduct a survey among Mennonite Brethren camps; the overwhelming consensus was: "Don't separate us." They had learned to know and appreciate other Mennonites in the camps.³⁵¹

But these interests did not extend either to serving in Europe during the 1950s post-war reconstruction projects that had provided for a rich collaboration with European pacifists or to performing work that did not come with a paycheck. Former CPS worker Prieb recorded Hiebert's lament that

the enthusiasm and support for voluntary service among the Mennonite Brethren was less than Hiebert had hoped for. He once said to his conference, "Our brethren do not seem to grasp the importance of VS."³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Mennonite conferences were quite diverse and often shared little fellowship with each other, "Some influential Mennonites feared such meetings where one could be unequally yoked with other Mennonites who did not dress, speak, and act as one did ... MCC was not a marriage born of affection but a cautious contract born of necessity," Robert S. Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: The MCC Experience*. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 22, 21-41. Even nearly 100 years after the first aid shipments, the thrift stores in Hillsboro and Newton frequently carry family histories and self-published biographies that detail the sufferings in Russia (the Ukraine).

³⁵¹ Prieb, *He Gave*, 111.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

But, the alternative service that leveraged many men out of their rural and sectarian cocoons into a wider cultural universe included some who later became members of the Tabor faculty and administration, including business manager Raymond Wiebe, board member Raymond Schlichting, English professor Wesley Prieb, Bible and religion professor Clarence Hiebert and part-time communications instructor Dwight Wiebe, who also began leading the MB, the latter two working in postwar Europe as Pax men. The sixth man who joined them briefly as the Vietnam war was being escalated by Kennedy was a live wire from the MB enclave of Corn, Oklahoma. The cultural isolation and apolitical stances that Mennonites preferred were soon challenged by the experience of Vietnam, and one of the chief Mennonite actors was the iconoclastic Mennonite Brethren Delbert Wiens.

Changing the Culture: Delbert Wiens

As the French began evacuating from Vietnam in March 1954, MCC Director Orie Miller made plans to act, hustling a naïve twenty-three year old with a bent for independent thinking and improvisation through processing for a passport and visa. As Wiens explained sixty years later, “I had been hoping that God wanted me in Germany [to fulfill my alternative service as a conscientious objector], and I wished devoutly that it had been God who had spoken to me instead of Orie because, as I muttered to myself, ‘With God it would have been possible to argue.’”³⁵³ By August, Wiens was in Vietnam, with a charge to “establish work in a means

³⁵³ Delbert Wiens, “My Saga: “In” and “Out,” in A Dangerous Mind: The Ideas and Influence of Delbert L. Wiens, ed. W. Marshall Johnston and Daniel J. Crosby (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 253.

consistent with MCC's goals -- In the Name of Christ." MCC was thus the first North American Protestant relief agency to enter the country.³⁵⁴

Wiens hit the ground running, determined to organize relief efforts to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding the south from the north, designated communist only a scant two months earlier. Within weeks and through the widespread contact the voluble Mennonite was able to make with USAID workers, he not only comprehended the herculean relief task at hand, but also discovered a wide range of contradictions in what was happening:

Only a small number of the refugees had any clear idea why their lives were being torn apart. Most of them were village peasants whose parish priests had heeded the orders of higher-ups to bring them to a northern port so that the U.S. Navy could transport them south.³⁵⁵

Scrambling to implement MCC's typical approach to refugee assistance, he immediately worked on Operation Reindeer, designed to distribute clothing and food to as many as possible. He soon pressed those at headquarter in Akron, Pennsylvania to re-orient shipments of supplies, eschewing wheat, butter and cheese (traditional Mennonite forms of relief that he discovered the Vietnamese were feeding to their pigs) in favor of oil, rice and dried milk powder.

Interspersed with his witty embrace of what it would realistically take to shuttle supplies ("with only a motorbike ... this will require 5,000 trips to deliver the reindeer packages alone") were more sober reflections about motives, corruption, the murky boundaries of non-military aid, cross-cultural issues, political manipulation and instability. These not only reflected his growing understanding of the entanglements that were already present in Vietnam in 1954 --- but also

³⁵⁴ Kreider and Goossen, 139.

³⁵⁵ Delbert Wiens, "Report for the Month of October," October 26, 1954, 1. MCC Wiens, Delbert, 72/3. MCC Archives, Akron, PA (Hereafter, MCC).

concern for MCC's constituency. Originally sharing his daily diary entries with those at headquarters, he quickly hedged what he would share if the home office published his detailed entries as he discovered had been done by an overly-eager publications manager. Regarding his journal entries, he emphasized, "for goodness sake, don't send them to the Executive Committee," a charge he would abandon for the sake of candid exchange as MCC leadership began to understand the complex picture that emerged and carefully guarded what was distributed for publication.³⁵⁶

By November, he expressed his cautious hopes that MCC might obtain U.S. FOA (Foreign Operations Administration) funds to augment relief work, a hope that was realized when MCC's John Byler signed the contract for MCC to distribute packages bearing the FOA emblem. As FOA provided office space, MCC operated as it had before, as if it were an independent agency able to purchase and distribute supplies with government money. But interspersed with his energetic and hopeful observations, there were ominous hints of an atypical relief situation. As Wiens mulled over whether General Hinh or President Diem would prevail politically, he watched the effects of corruption: "the officials are spending money like salesmen on an unlimited expense account. Nor is it used wisely. But things are being done." He also observed what seemed to be incongruities among the refugees, ranging from their characterization as more than 90 percent Roman Catholic in a country at large of only 5 percent,

³⁵⁶ Ibid. He and co-worker Adam Ewert lamented being "forced to pay a man the equivalent of an MCC worker's monthly allowance for a half day of interpreting." Ibid, 2.

to the perceptive scrutiny that in some areas being proposed by the U.S. government as areas for relief, that in fact, the refugees were dependents of army personnel who needed no assistance.³⁵⁷

Through his contacts in Diem's office, he also discovered in 1956, that Diem was not quite sure whether to allow Mennonites to consider founding medical missions and leprosariums. According to Diem's secretary, the President hesitated at Mennonite involvement: "I don't know whether we should approve this project or not. [Mennonites] are in some kind of trouble with the army at home. They refuse to join their army."³⁵⁸

Ironically, over the next four years, Wiens and MCC discovered the implications of a close relationship with the U.S. government. On the one hand, by providing relief funds and materials, MCC realized that it was allowing itself to be used for potential military investment, and on the other hand, it knew its efforts were significant for many of the refugees who did not have other resources.

I have heard that USOM is not to start any new projects after all ... it seems they are running out of money ... this could mean that Mr. Collins (or rather general) plans to curtail the U.S. contributions to the economics of the country and divert to military buildup. This has been hinted, but it is forbidden under the Geneva agreements.

Wiens' observations in late November 1954 hinted at the mixed motives and the presence that would remain for the next twenty years. And, as he exchanged candid letters with MCC headquarters, he built a standard of transparency and trust that enabled the creation of a realistic picture of what was occurring in Vietnam, that later enabled members of the Peace Section in

³⁵⁷ FOA was created in 1953 and headed by Harold Stassen. Delbert Wiens, to William T. Snyder November 12, 1954, 3. MCC Corr. "Indo-China Office, Sept-Aug 1955," MCC.

³⁵⁸ Delbert Wiens, to Orie Miller, August 25, 1956. MCC Corr. "Indo-China Office, Dec-Aug 1956," MCC.

particular to apprehend the situation and to greet the U.S. government descriptions with a exceptionally informed skepticism.³⁵⁹

When MCC deliberated over how best to meet long-term needs in Vietnam, and shifted some of its attention to medical services in 1957, Mennonites in the U.S. and Canada were aware of not only the needs, but also the ever-present state of war. And, on May 30, 1962, when Mennonite Pax man Daniel Gerber and two others were abducted from a leprosarium by Viet Minh guerrillas, never to be released, the incident was but one in a long stream of reports from the field in Vietnam. The Mennonites in North America were well aware of the war long before many Americans, while MCC leadership had a thorough picture of the entanglements Wiens had earlier explicated.³⁶⁰

After returning from Vietnam, an exhausted Wiens recovered himself first by taking the long way home via steamers and overland excursions, then pursuing a masters in divinity from Yale, followed by a last minute call to the local Bible academy in his family's former stomping grounds in the Mennonite Brethren community of Corn, Oklahoma. The worlds could not have been more markedly different, but he concealed his insecurities and adapted to both, ever the improviser. Accepting appointment at Tabor College in 1962 as "media man" and part-time instructor in English, he soon found himself teaching "Introduction to Philosophy" when the philosophy professor was killed in an automobile accident shortly before the term started. His service there lasted less than three years before he entered the PhD program at the University of

³⁵⁹ Delbert Wiens, to MCC Assistant Executive, Secretary William T. Snyder, November 24, 1954, 1. Delbert Wiens to Mr. Byler, November 11, 1954, 2. MCC Ibid. Delbert Wiens to Mr. Byler, November 11, 1954, 1. MCC Ibid.

³⁶⁰ "No Word on Kidnaped [sic] Workers in Vietnam," The Gospel Herald, 55, no. 27 (July 3, 1962): 607. The other two workers were Archie Mitchell and Dr. Eleanor A. Vietti.

Chicago. But, he had left his mark on both the Mennonite Brethren school and the town through oblique marks that addressed foundational issues rather than direct political action.³⁶¹

Wiens' short-lived presence at Tabor College forced some of the highly conservative students to relinquish their narrow views of the world, particularly on civil rights and world issues, to think in complex terms, and to question their quietist approach to activism. As one former student explained:

I consider the unique ways in which [he] interacted with and influenced us ... Having scootered, sampled, sipped, and supped his way through much of Asia, Europe, and the States, Dr. Wiens was to become an *habitué* of Tabor's student cafeteria, and, later, our new student Union. Teaching took place not only in the classroom; it was ubiquitous.³⁶²

For the students who had been reared on a combination of Anabaptism and dispensational theology, Wiens challenged them on presuppositional grounds.

“[He] played cognitive hardball. His classes challenged us to ask the hard questions, postulate answers, and act upon our convictions with vigor... We found ourselves in positions to tolerate ambiguity, although sometimes we “wiggled out.”³⁶³

In the highly patriarchal world of the Mennonite Brethren, it is compelling that Wiens included gender in his critique of foundational issues at Tabor. Although these have yet to be explored, it is intriguing to know that women at Tabor in the late 1960s after his departure became some of the most articulate and assertive antiwar protesters on campus. “Invariably, in surveying the pre-

³⁶¹ Wiens, “My Saga,” 259-263.

³⁶² Faith Nickel Adams, “A Living Braid of Social Justice” in Johnston and Crosby, 73.

³⁶³ Ibid.

feminist era, anyone interested in cultural change would want to know what comprised the education of young women at Tabor... Wiens was a feminist ahead of his time.”³⁶⁴

In the town of Hillsboro no one to date directly attributes their subsequent protests to the influence of Delbert Wiens, but compelling evidence gleaned from the church records of the largest GC Mennonite church in town suggests otherwise. First Mennonite Church, which had focused many of its energies on a new church building, had nevertheless also concerned itself with civil rights issues, with several families hosting youth from Chicago’s South side for two weeks. In 1964 shortly after Wiens gave a missions presentation, the church abruptly allocated half of its annual “Lenten folder” missions budget to Vietnam. Wiens had found a ready listener. Later described as one of the staunchest anti-Vietnam war protesters in town, the high school biology teacher and member of that church was one of the deacons responsible for funding the project. His strong influence on students who became some of the most articulate protesters at Bethel College in nearby Newton, has been emphasized in oral interviews recorded in the decade after the war. Thus Delbert Wiens remains one who argued the peace position, contended for conscientious objection, pushed his students to choose an Anabaptist approach to thinking and living, and dis-assembled the provincial mindsets of students as the war escalated before he left Tabor in 1965. He left a strong impression on students, including some of the first individuals to question the war in biting editorials. But he did not directly protest or foment protest.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ “The Messenger,” [First Mennonite Church newsletter], 6, no. 6. First Mennonite Church (Hillsboro) church newsletters, MLA, Bethel College; Ted Koontz recorded interview, 1972, MLA, Bethel College; “Wiens was always in trouble with the townspeople because he always had the right word [to argue] for conscientious objection,” Anonymous long-term Hillsboro resident, interview with author, November 15, 2008. The interview was conducted on the condition of anonymity. In regard to his impact on students, including the cadre of young males who lived in housing they called The Abbey of Theleme, see David L. Brown, interview

MCC left a second footprint that engaged the long Vietnam War at Tabor College, although this was even more indirect and by default. Although his presence had the potential to extend the direct witness to the horrors of the conflict and the complicated entanglements that were enacted in the small country, there is little evidence that he engaged in such analysis. Rather, the optimistic, gregarious Dwight Wiebe offered the kind of involvement that Mennonite Brethren approved. He maintained a classic separation between the two kingdoms and thereby cooperated with the U.S. government in order to protect their young men from military service. But what was an essentially quiescent interpretation of the separation between politics and the church became increasingly problematic as the decade continued under the pressures of the war, not only for young MBs, but their denomination and its service program.

Conscientious Objection, Christian Service, and Conflicted Beliefs: Institutional and Personal, But Not Political

One man who was determined that non-resistance be recognized in theory and demonstrated in practice was Dwight Wiebe, the director of the Christian Service program for the Mennonite Brethren from 1960 through 1975. The project, which was located in Hillsboro, Kansas, at the edge of the Tabor College campus, originally vetted all Mennonite Brethren men who chose conscientious objection, although it also arranged assignments for service-minded young MBs. Wiebe and his assistants appointed them to projects throughout the United States per the strictures of Selective Service in which men could not be detailed to projects within 150 miles of their homes. The work included careful record-keeping, monitoring of assignments,

with author, September 27, 2017; Keith Harder and Judy Priebe Harder, interview with author, September 11, 2017; Dale Suderman, "Cynicism as Therapy: Seeing the Log in Our Own Eye," in Cynicism and Hope: Reclaiming Discipleship in a Postdemocratic Society, ed. Meg E. Cox (Cascade, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 47-48.

scouting of prospective new unit locations and tasks, and the ability both to justify postings and navigate draft boards attempting to reclassify these Mennonite Brethren objectors.³⁶⁶

Although much of the work was bureaucratic in nature, Wiebe was no stooge for bureaucracy. He was a committed non-resister who had won the national Intercollegiate Peace Speech Association competition in 1949, then performed alternative service himself during the 1950s after he completed college. One of the youngest attendees at the Winona Lake Conference in 1950, Wiebe was the sole delegate for the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, a smaller group that had arrived in Kansas with the larger migration from Russia in the 1870s and that merged at the end of the decade with the Mennonite Brethren. From 1954-1957, he served in Europe as the MCC European Pax Relief Director in Germany, where he met his future wife. Returning to MCC headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania, he then directed I-W Services and Voluntary

³⁶⁶ The MBs had made good on their desire to directly supervise their alternative service workers, rather than having MCC oversee the welfare of individuals. The result was the Christian Service Program, assigned to the MB Board of General Welfare and Public Relations which proceeded to emphasize the program's benefits for the brotherhood itself. Although the program had been specifically designed for I-W and general voluntary service, in its 48th session of the General Conference in 1960, the denomination dropped its earlier designation in favor of the more general name: "In order to meet our conference needs in the 1960 's we will discontinue the use of the program names of Voluntary Service and I-W Service. Rather, we will introduce the name Christian Service for all our conference personnel into these categories since we are convinced that this program can only be effective if our conference young people recognize a sense of Call into Christian service and accept the responsibilities of representing Christ and the Mennonite Brethren Church while in service." "Introducing the Christian Service Program of the Mennonite Brethren Church," 3. "Christian Service Beginnings & History and Reports, 1964-1967," Reports to Conference and Committees, 1964-1967, folder 5, A250.6, Christian Service files, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno Pacific University, Fresno, CA (hereafter CMBS-F). The Christian Service Office was housed at 315 S. Lincoln St., adjacent to the college campus, within the Board of General Welfare & Public Relations until 1967 when the Board merged with the Board of Foreign Missions and to become the Board of Missions and Services. "A New Look for I-W: Dwight Wiebe, the New Director of I-W Services," The Christian Leader, September 6, 1960, 13, 19; "Dwight Wiebe Leaves Legacy of Service," The Christian Leader, (February 2000), 31, 33.

Service for the large and complex clearinghouse for all Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren in Christ assignments for two years, where he remained until 1960 to accept the directorship of the Mennonite Brethren operation in Hillsboro. In all, he brought a sharp dedication to nonresistance, a firm grasp of how I-W units functioned, and a strong commitment to encouraging young MBs to give two years toward Christian service, whether they were performing alternative service as conscientious objectors or not.³⁶⁷

Hitting the ground running in 1960, Wiebe threw himself wholeheartedly into his new charge as Director of Christian Service, both in designing the newly conceived program and in

³⁶⁷ Dwight Wiebe, "Peace Orations: Winners in National Speech Contests: 'What Matter of Me Are We?' [and] Albert Kroeker, "'This Diminishing World,'" Tabor College Bulletin, 3, no. 3 (March 1950), 2-6. Wiebe did not attend a denominational college, preferring instead to attend and graduate from Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, chiefly because neither MB school was accredited in the late 1940s. The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren hailed from the Crimea and were adamantly opposed to participation in politics. Regarding the shift from MCC, the movement of responsibility for I-W assignments and direct oversight of individual men from MCC to the denomination was a long-discussed topic among Mennonite Brethren beginning in the mid-1950s. The ability to oversee the spiritual life of their servicemen was the paramount consideration according to minutes from the meetings of various MB bodies during the decade. MCC continued to serve as the overall vetting agency for Mennonite alternative service in relation to NSBRO (National Interreligious Service Board for Religious Objectors) and Selective Service, approving project locations and descriptions, but moved the detailed oversight to the denominations like the Mennonite Brethren who chose to oversee their own men. Wiebe brought his considerable experience from overseeing MCC I-W and Voluntary Service men (and women) to his position at denominational headquarters in Hillsboro, Kansas. What Wiebe thought *in toto* about the pressures exacted by nationalism on the Christian Service Board during the Vietnam War is difficult to discern at several points and requires a great deal of reading between the lines. Few of his personal papers have been preserved and since his tenure at both the Christian Service Board and Tabor College (where he served a half-time appointment for four years as communications instructor and debate coach) ended in 1975, many pieces are missing. It is unfortunate not to have more records preserved from the ardent nonresistant who was also determined that alternative service opportunities be a distinctive form of Christian witness. Nevertheless, the Christian Service program records have been preserved and carefully processed at the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies at Fresno Pacific University and document his actions within the program, including some of his thoughts about the nature of witness.

administering it. In addition to a half-time appointment as speech and debate instructor at Tabor, he was also charged with immediately developing the strictures of the program. Under the jurisdiction of the MB Conference, its policy handbook explicitly spelled out the goals the Mennonite Brethren had in mind for the continent-wide alternative service program. “The purpose and objectives as spelled out in The Christian Service Policy Handbook are as follows”:

a. In relationship to those served by the Christian Service Program

- (1) to present the Gospel of Christ through a personal witness and service so that those served by the Program may come to know Christ as their personal Savior. To participate in the fellowship of the church and assist the local Mennonite Brethren Church or mission board in establishing and developing a Mennonite Brethren Church.
- (2) To witness to the love and power of God by serving in obedience to His commands.
- (3) To extend love and technical and material assistance to needy people regardless of race, creed or color.

b. In relationship to those who serve under the Christian Service Program

- (1) To give people involved in the Program the opportunity to share the Gospel of Christ with those who do not know Him and to nurture a fellowship of believers in the community where the worker serves.
- (2) To give the worker an opportunity for personal witness which utilizes his vocational or professional training for the outreach of the Gospel.
- (3) To provide an apprenticeship experience for young people of the Mennonite Brethren Conference to help them mature in their Christian life and commitment.
- (4) To make possible an educational experience which will acquaint young people of the Mennonite Brethren Conference with various phases of its power.
- (5) To expose young people of the church to the great cause of missions at home and abroad with the hope that it will challenge them to a call to missions and the ministry of the church after they have completed their Christian Service.
- (6) To give participants an opportunity to personally decline the materialistic and selfish philosophy of our society and to express their commitment to the Lord in their service to mankind in a life of sacrifice and service.
- (7) *To give the participants an opportunity to serve their country and society in a positive ministry as a witness for peace in a world torn by strife, suffering and war.* [italics mine]

c. In relationship to the constituency

- (1) To transmit a Christian witness which expresses the faith, doctrines, and commitment of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

(2) To serve as an organ of the Mennonite Brethren Conference by which it can fulfill part of its responsibility to God and to Christians who want to be obedient to Christ's command to witness.

(3) *To create an opportunity for the expression of the biblical doctrines of nonresistance which will encourage young men to serve sacrificially and creatively during their period of alternative service* [italics mine].³⁶⁸

The Handbook specified age requirements for alternative service (eighteen domestic and twenty years of age overseas) and that the notion of alternative service was a kind of “calling” that was sacrificial and focused on serving God by helping others: “The worker should willingly and joyfully accept the challenge to serve the Lord in the program and be willing to forego personal preferences and accept necessary restrictions to further effectively the cause of Christ and help meet the needs of men.” Moreover, the volunteer must be a baptized member of his church and be able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the Bible “‘to give an answer’ for the ‘reason of hope.’” Should he have any deficiencies in his ability to “witness,” the Service Board would give him remedial help for his weaknesses.³⁶⁹

By the late 1960s, Christian Service assignments largely paralleled those described earlier and administered more directly by MCC:

The Mennonite Brethren Conference is operating a program in eight states in the west and mid-west as well as in three provinces. The type of work that has been done is: teacher, radio work, secretary, hospital work, maintenance, church work, child and day care, clerk, physical therapy, recreation, newspaper editor, counsellor, social and welfare work, cook, housekeeper, soil technician, old folks home, book rack evangelism, youth clubs, correctional work, computer programmer, and dial-a-meditation. The Canadian work, in proportion to other VS programs, is quite substantial in terms of numbers, relative to the single

³⁶⁸ The Christian Service Policy Handbook (Hillsboro, KS: Board of General Welfare and Public Relation, 1961), 2-3. The Christian Service program was transferred to the Board of Missions and Services in 1967, when the Board of General Welfare and Public Relations merged with the Board of Foreign Missions in an attempt to better integrate overseas missions into the board structures.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

church agencies. They have an active program in Nova Scotia, mostly in the field of education. They also have some volunteers in British Columbia, working in various areas of those already mentioned, and in Manitoba doing church work and assisting in the Mennonite Brethren Conference office.³⁷⁰

One of the stated objectives was to have the men live together in close proximity, being assigned to units that would reinforce Christian growth and fellowship and that would meet some of the doctrinal aims MBs had found lacking in the MCC-administered postings. Unless men were assigned to projects that could easily be overseen by church bodies, Wiebe doted on the volunteers under his care, visiting them and attempting to oversee their general welfare. He especially pressed for the spiritual life of his men, insisting that they be members of the churches and actively involved in their local MB congregations. As he noted later to one would-be man searching for an alternative service assignment, the Christian Service program had high expectations for its men, urging them to devote the time they had leftover after the forty hour work week required by the program to serving their local churches. What Wiebe discovered, however, in his many journeys to oversee the men engaged in alternative service, reflected the uneven realities of men in their late teens and twenties. Many had moved from their stated addresses, and even thought they were largely conscientiously serving in their work assignments, most were not devoting their non-work hours to the hoped-for sacrificial upbuilding of the brotherhood.³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Domestic Service Project Descriptions (Hillsboro, KS: Christian Service Office, 1967); Wiebe's copiously detailed report on April 6, 1967 is typical of his pastoral approach to the CS units and his reflections to his board on the meaning and impact of their service appointments. Dwight Wiebe, "Report on the Christian Service Administrative Visit: March 28 through April 5," memorandum to staff, April 6, 1967. Christian Service, Correspondence of Executive Secretary and Secretariat, mailings, 1967, folder 10, A250.6 Christian Service files, CMBS-F (hereafter, CS Correspondence, year, folder, CMBS-F). Don Isaac, who oversaw 1-W assignments at Fresno Pacific University on behalf of Dwight Wiebe and as part of his duties as

By the end of 1966 and the early impact of Vietnam, the Christian Service program had more than doubled in the first eight months of the year, with ninety two men assigned in projects from Kinshasa (Congo) and Nova Scotia to Chicago and Denver. Most were engaged in teaching, hospital work (chiefly in veteran or mental health), or working with correctional programs for youth. Of these, forty-two were receiving I-W credit.

The Christian Service Program has doubled its personnel on the field in the first eight months of 1966 bringing the years [sic] end total to 92. The Board maintains regular contact with another 150 young men performing their alternative and military service. In the year 1966 the personnel Office of the Christian Service program has corresponded with over 400 persons. Of these the-Board has accepted over 100 persons as approved candidates and has assigned over 60 workers in this period.³⁷²

Wiebe's report highlighted the training new workers received and the commitments the new workers were making:

Two full-scale Christian Service orientation schools were held in July and August, 1966. A total of 47 workers attended and were commissioned. Aside from the excellent sessions attended, this time provided several days of close fellowship with people of like interests. Practical discussions followed, how to live on \$10 a week, economic differences they would encounter, their role in a church situation aside from their regular assignments, adjustment to cultural shock to be bridged because of a foreign language, strange (to us) customs and manners, how to live amicably with unit members thrown together through circumstances, etc. -- in short, how to put FAITH INTO ACTION.³⁷³

One month after Bethel students and faculty had walked in their first march, the Repentance Walk and Mail, and The Mennonite was still fielding dismissive or supportive letters about their

business manager at the school, said that Wiebe trusted the arrangement and did not hover over his charges as was seen in the independent units. Don Isaac, telephone conversation with author, October 16, 2017.

³⁷² Dwight Wiebe, "Christian Service 1966 Highlights," January 4, 1967, 1-2. CS, Correspondence, 1967, folder 10, CBBS-F.

³⁷³ Ibid.

actions, the Christian Service Office was declaring a means by which young men could resist war and display faith in action --- through alternative service through the Christian Service office in Hillsboro. For the first time, Wiebe mentioned the Vietnam War, noting that his offer of a filmstrip on "Vietnam" had met with "an enthusiastic response" by the churches. He closed his report on Christian Service by noting that it had two positive outcomes: men could "make a contribution on a Christian service level and at the same time they are encouraged to donate part of their earnings to help alleviate suffering in Vietnam. Nearly 200,000 American troops were now in the small country."³⁷⁴

The question, as the ardent nonresistant had enjoined to the Central District Ministerial Conference meeting in Onida, South Dakota, five years earlier, was "what belonged to Caesar?"

First he turned to the Bible:

The apostle Paul clarifies this in Romans 13. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher power, for he is the minister of God to thee for good, for he beareth not the sword in vain. Wherefore ye must needs be subject for conscience sake. Toman [sic] 13:1-5. There can only be one interpretation of this passage and Peter Chapter 2 which is in keeping with the rest of the Scriptures. The Christian is to be obedient to the government in power. Christians are to be good citizens insurrectionist. Nowhere is the Christian instructed to adopt the principles of the State. Christ never teaches that the end justified the means. The authority of the State is limited. If the State were to decree that all citizens should reject God, as in Communist Russia, could one obey the state and still be a Christian?"³⁷⁵

Then, he moved to the government position, considering whether or not obedience to the government included not entering the military:

Since the United States Government recognizes the position of conscientious objectors to war as a valid Christian position can we as a church do less?

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.

³⁷⁵ Dwight Wiebe, "Biblical Basis of Nonresistance and Its Implication and Strategy as it Effects [sic] the Mennonite Brethren Conference," Central District Conference, February 29, 1961, 4-5. Dwight Wiebe file, CMBS-H.

Certainly no Christian is disobedient to the government because he qualifies for the valid provisions of alternative service for conscience sake such as are provided by the 1-O position. This position releases the committed Christian from the duty of killing for the sake of his government which is contrary to the motivating force of the Gospel of Love.³⁷⁶

It is easy to be critical of Wiebe and what he and others might have brought to MB campuses in Hillsboro and Fresno, yet he was not facing a crowd simply interested in alternative service. He faced a crowd that was deciding whether obeying the government meant active military service or noncombatant service and who did not necessarily agree that even alternative service was an active witness. As will be discussed, Mennonite Brethren in the town that had been “heart of the Mennonite Brethren world” did not think much about protest and many did not think about alternative service.³⁷⁷

In 1966, as in 1961, Wiebe and his denomination focused on alternative service as the valid form of witness. Even a man as committed to nonresistance as the Christian Service director did not see questioning government policy, much less countering it, as a valid form of witness. It simply was not an option. Even as he wrote the reports for the middle part of the decade, he was already at the edge of an encounter with the government that received national attention, a story that backgrounds the heightened fears of protest at Tabor College.

Tabor College and Its Innovations: Delights in Modernity

In 1964, the College had a new president, Roy Just, who had been thoroughly examined by the Mennonite Brethren Board of Reference and Council chaired by Reverend Marvin Hein of

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ The practice of nonresistance in relation to military service (and other variables), had begun to erode by the 1972 Harder and Kaufman survey for both MBs and GCs. Harder and Kauffman, Anabaptists, 114-117, 328-332, 336-343.

Hillsboro. He had faced review, in spite of two apologies to his church in Fresno, California, for what was characterized as his “disruptive Sunday School teaching.” The charges made clear that Anabaptist beliefs were being challenged by those who advocated for evangelicalism (or even fundamentalism). The challenges ranged from Just’s views on the noncombatancy that had been problematic for many Mennonites to a desire that he endorse the increasingly popular organizations and speakers enjoyed by evangelicals. Moreover, he challenged his Sunday School listeners to think through complicated questions.

He had a powerfully negative opinion of noncombatant military service and did not support the nondenominational ministry Youth for Christ, both of which cast suspicion on him ... The concerns over Just’s ambivalence toward evangelical organizations, dancing, and evangelism were exacerbated by Just’s refusal to provide definitive answers to discussion questions at Sunday School.... Just also never mentioned upcoming Billy Graham meetings. [One individual] testified to the Church Council that Just had, at a public meeting, criticized the Mennonite Brethren position against smoking tobacco and dancing. What Just said was that if a prohibition existed against smoking tobacco and dancing, there should be one on overeating. [The accuser] concluded “A professor who questions smoking or dancing doesn’t have [a] close relationship to the Lord. I gathered he was looking for license [to behave immorally.]” [He] also considered Just overly concerned with relief work [instead of Christ]. The real issue for the Church Council was how to ban Just from teaching. In order to pass such a sanction, they needed a reason, and according to the testimony, they did not have a compelling one. They finally settled on “unrest in the class.” It was proposed that Just be suspended from teaching Sunday School for one year. The affair ended with the Church Council accepting Just’s repentance for his abrasive teaching style [when he thought people gave lazy or unreflective answers] and affirming that he was an evangelical.³⁷⁸

The sociologist’s response to the criticisms was to accept the presidency of Tabor College when it was offered to him.

³⁷⁸ Brian Froese, California Mennonites (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 3-77.

Only twelve years earlier, Tabor had gone through a brutal time when President Peter Schellenberger had been the target of various angry constituents, faculty, and board members as he attempted to define the school as a liberal arts institution rather than as a Bible college based on certain millennial beliefs. The school was confident, but edgy. Just was considered politically astute and well aware of the impact a constituency could have on a school. He was also extremely alert to community disapproval. Granted accreditation by the North Central Association in 1965, Tabor was ready to experiment --to a point.³⁷⁹

By the 1960s, Tabor's student newspaper, The Tabor College View, had editors ready to challenge their fellow students and the administration. They published a thinly veiled allegory about communism and American nationalism in Vietnam in November 1963, the first of the Mennonite colleges in Kansas (and North America) to do so, alongside edgy church-state editorials written by columnist Dale Suderman throughout 1963 and 1964. Lampooning fundamentalist evangelist Billy James Harges and former Major General Edwin Walker, who teamed together in an anti-communist lecture tour called Operation Midnight Ride, Suderman blasted their appearance in Wichita and their politicization of the gospel, and he pushed Mennonite students to become critical thinkers, rather than passive receptacles: "Down with *'Die Stillen im Lande.'*" Likewise, Tabor student Bob Harms mixed sarcastic advice to would-be Student Council leaders to use "the all-purpose Tabor election platform: favor God, motherhood, the flag and Tabor" with biting editorials aimed at the contest between President Lyndon

³⁷⁹ Lynn Jost, "A Time of Stability and Growth," in Tabor College, ed. Miller, 118. In regard to Just's political abilities, Keith Harder, Tabor College alumnus and former student body leader, interview with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 20, 2008.

Johnson and opponent Senator Barry Goldwater in which he challenged his fellow students to think through their political beliefs.³⁸⁰

Tabor began participating in the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship in 1955 and routinely sent from three to five students to its annual meeting. It hosted the conference in 1955 and again in 1962, the former incorporating Tabor faculty on a panel that discussed “Political Responsibility and Non-Resistance,” and that featured English professor and later acting President Wesley Prieb, who challenged students not to use nonresistance as an excuse to disengage from social problems. Seven years later, in 1962, the keynote speaker was Bethel dean and physicist Albert Meyer, who addressed “The Nature of the Christian Church and Radical Pacifist Action.” This was the last Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship meeting that Tabor sponsored during the Vietnam War. However, the college was by no means isolated from issues about conscientious objection and Selective Service. As noted previously, it housed the denomination’s Christian Service Program just a block west of the Tabor library and under the direction of Dwight Wiebe, who also taught speech at the school. Although Wiebe had organized the Hershey-Brunk forum in 1962, and supervised the alternate service assignments for approximately 140-160 men, one of his chief assistants noted the lack of concerted discussion, programs, or protests regarding war and peace during the Vietnam era as discussed

³⁸⁰ In The View, see Suderman, “Perusal,” February 1, 1963, 2, and Dale Suderman, “Miscellaneous: Die Stillen im Lande,” March 20, 1964, 2. “Die Stillen im Lande” = “The Quiet in the Land” is a traditional moniker used by others and within Mennonite circles to describe themselves. In *ibid.*, see also, Dale Suderman, “Misc.,” March 20, 1964, 2; Howard Jost, “Montage: Vietnam, the Beautiful,” November 14, 1963, 3; and Bob Harms, “Cacophony,” October 8, 1964, 2. Research to date indicates that the Jost editorial was the first editorial or article to mention Vietnam by any of the North American Mennonite college student publications. Note also, David Roth, “Engaging a Politicized World: Goshen College Record Coverage of the Vietnam War, 1964-1974.” Goshen College History Seminar Paper, 1998, 2-3.

earlier. Wiebe's goal was to encourage men to register and to serve alternative service, but he did not favor further action that might result in protests against the war.³⁸¹

Instead, a minority of Tabor students raised questions that were troubling them and the nation. Harms brought home to Tabor students what being a peacemaker meant when he soberly described the Stanleyville Massacre in the Congo and the narrow escape of conscientious objectors Jon Snider and former Bethel student Gene Bergman, the latter performing alternative service there as a "Pax-man." Editor Harms referred students back to the Honors' Committee's recent recommendation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Cost of Discipleship and its injunctions for Christians to live their faith as peacemakers even at the cost of their lives. He taunted them with: "Costly grace? Good will toward men? Maybe if a few more of us would catch the spirit of these two young [conscientious objectors] who asked nothing more than a chance to help at any price, these words would not seem so empty after all." During the fall of 1965 when he was editor of The View, Harms challenged students to break out of their apathy. The View featured a report by Bethel student Clayton Koppes, who described the November 27, 1965, "March on Washington" and the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam. The former was the antiwar protest that, combined with the revelations about napalm and Dow Chemical's recruitment on college campuses, energized the Bethel students who engaged in their first protest walk that was curtailed due to community disapproval and threats of violence. After ninety Bethel students, faculty, and single board member walked from Bethel to the North Newton post office the following year in their "Repentance Walk and Mail," they returned to a campus where

³⁸¹ Peace Notes, June 1955, 1-2, and February 1962, 1. Bob Suderman, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 12, 2008. The Christian Service Program coordinated conscientious objection service for Mennonite Brethren who chose it as an option.

speaker John Swomley delivered his talk over the sound of planes buzzing the campus. But, at Tabor, there was no venturing, even barely, into the public square.³⁸²

After publishing numerous articles designed to raise consciousness about the larger society and the world, Harms lamented Tabor students' lack of interest in global issues: "Our world view is a unique one. The center of the earth is Wichita. Slightly off center is the Tabor Campus. Off toward the periphery is the world, which consists of rural and suburban middle-class America. With a world view like this it is no wonder that I was recently asked why we wasted View space on Vietnam." His successor as editor, Dave Klaassen, found the same parochial mentality as Harms had observed. Klaassen pointedly challenged the Tabor community to look at what was happening in Vietnam and to be an active peace witness in line with its Anabaptist heritage. He caustically commented, "When war and the attendant issues of morality and ethics hold the nation's debates the time seems ripe for the Mennonite to state his case and expect an audience. But locally the silence echoes through the halls. It is broken only by the sounds of students struggling to defend their deferments."³⁸³

Tabor students faced some of the same issues Bethel had, but with a twist. They were far less confident of support from the administration and the faculty. Columnist Loren Jost challenged the Tabor administration and students alike when he insisted that there were limits to the school acting *in loco parentis*, including the college's censorship of articles in student publications. He appealed to his fellow students to recognize that their membership in the

³⁸² Bob Harms, "Cacophony," The View, December 10, 1964, 3. In *ibid.*, Clayton Koppes, "How to Talk Peace and Influence Others," November 11, 1965, 2.

³⁸³ Bob Harms, "How to Catch an Aruton," November 11, 1965, 2; and Dave Klaassen, "Vietnam and We," April 29, 1966, 2.

National Student Association (NSA) encouraged critical thinking and responsibility, not conformity. For activists, issues about student rights began to dovetail with protest about Vietnam, but for those contemplating activism, the threat of losing a deferment by being called on the carpet by the campus administration kept them from even considering protesting, an anxiety not shared by Bethel or Hesston males. As the demand for soldiers expanded, pressure grew on the local draft boards with the authority both to revoke student deferments or to reclassify problematic conscientious objectors. Simple violations of student rules, as well as protests, could result in a revocation, a foreshadowing of the punitive reclassification that was aimed at recalcitrant anti-war protestors in 1967. The tensions simmered at Tabor as students fielded rumors that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had come to campus to investigate deferments and that male students from Oklahoma were being targeted for reclassification by eager draft boards there. Violating the more stringent rules for student life at Tabor was grounds for a report to the student's draft board and his subsequent loss of a deferment, although there is little evidence that such actions were taken. Nevertheless, the conjunction between the violation of student life standards and the possibility of being drafted added to the quiescence of Tabor males.³⁸⁴

Thus, in the fall of 1966, as Bethel planned its first Peace Walk, Tabor continued its regular activities. Reporter Becky Aaron cynically recommended that instead of leaving campus every weekend, as 84.5 percent of students indicated they did in a recent survey, they should,

³⁸⁴ Loren Jost, "Viewpoint: The Individual Speaks," *ibid.*, January 6, 1966, 3. On fear of losing a deferment because of behavioral issues, see Bob Ewert, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 11, 2008.

“For a late afternoon date, watch the flag being lowered in front of the Administration Building. All the color, spectacle, and excitement of this performance will be yours absolutely free.”³⁸⁵

Tabor was not as inactive as it appeared. Before his departure to the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, the formidable Delbert Wiens, chairman of the Bible department at Tabor in 1963-64, was “always in trouble with the townspeople” because of his peace stance and his commitment to Anabaptism. According to a long-term Hillsboro resident, Wiens always had the “right word to counter an argument,” particularly when the case was being made that Mennonite Brethren should give up their distinctive nonresistant stance on war, including the refusal to bear arms in combat.³⁸⁶

His colleague in the department, Clarence Hiebert, also posed problems for those who celebrated American nationalism. Hiebert, a Canadian from Winnipeg, composed lectures that challenged students to think about peace. One of the most popular courses on campus was his Sermon on the Mount class, for which he prepared a new series of lectures every year. These in particular helped those students who had grown up with dispensational theology to re-think the Sermon’s peace injunctions as not being limited to an end-time epoch in history, but to interpret them as integral statements about Mennonite peacemaking and nonresistance. The professor later led the challenges in the late 1970s and the 1980s to remove the American flag and to replace the singing of the “Star Spangled Banner” with that of “America, the Beautiful,” but, in the mid-to-late 1960s, he was still developing his thinking. He had, however, together with

³⁸⁵ Becky Aaron, “Hillsboro Swings!” The View, February 2, 1967, 3.

³⁸⁶ Anonymous long-term Hillsboro resident, interview with author, November 15, 2008. The interview was conducted on the condition of anonymity.

Marvin Hein, the pastor of Hillsboro's largest Mennonite Brethren Church, removed the American and Christian flags from that church's sanctuary. They have never returned.³⁸⁷

But in late 1966, Hiebert was focused on teaching and mentoring of individual students, although his inclusion of Bob Harms in a Minneapolis consultation on Vietnam, "Faithfulness to Christ in Situations of International Conflict," and his involvement on the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section Board, indicated his sympathies for global, not national, concerns. Hiebert would be instrumental in the creation of the Pax Education Program in the Congo and Latin America within two years.³⁸⁸

In spite of letters such as those written by Bob Harms to The View, students sympathetic to a peace position were at a loss concerning how to take action. When the newspaper's writer and photographer Howard Jost and two other students attempted a protest, they were quickly deflated. Harms reported what happened. As the three sat on the Tabor lawn holding signs opposing the war, Elmer Flaming, president of the Hillsboro Bank,

... and his son-in-law [an end-of-the-world radio and television evangelist] came along and invited the three students to join them for a free dinner at a local restaurant. At the dinner, [they] tried to get the three students to abandon their opposition to the war by using arguments such as the claim that more people were killed in automobile accidents in the U.S. every year than were killed in Vietnam,

³⁸⁷ Ferne Hiebert, widow of Clarence Hiebert, Tabor College Bible professor and interim president in 1994-95, interview with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 15, 2008. Don Ratzlaff, Tabor College alumnus and editor of The Hillsboro Free Press, interview with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 14, 2008. Mrs. Hiebert said her late husband had attributed his broadmindedness to his father, who described himself not as a national patriot, but as "Ich bin Alianz gesinnt" = "I am broad (expansively, inclusively) minded."

³⁸⁸ "MCC Consultation Called," The View, November 10, 1966, 3.

so Vietnam was no big deal. The students were not convinced, but they enjoyed the free meal, and they never staged another protest.³⁸⁹

Noted Harms in a recent communication, “While there were some of us at Tabor prior to spring 1968 who were concerned about the Vietnam war and tried to keep informed about what was going on across the country, there was little or no activism on the Tabor campus because of the feeling that most Tabor students had no interest in these issues.” Even those who attempted to protest, however, could not sustain it.³⁹⁰

Tabor students evidenced both their sympathies with the Republican Party (92 percent affinity) and their ignorance about the basic nature of nonresistance and conscientious objection. The local campus poll taken in late 1965 had 65 percent approving of U.S. policy in Vietnam, with 80 percent of the males approving. Only 40 percent of the latter, however, were willing to fight there. Meanwhile, the denomination was struggling to issue a statement on political participation. During the November 1966 General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, the group ignored the war, but it formally approved guidelines for political involvement. Passed with some dissent, the last (and pointedly separate) recommendation was “we believe that ‘super-patriotism’ and ‘militant nationalism’ are unbecoming to a Christian.” As we will see

³⁸⁹ Bob Harms, reporting on a conversation he had with Howard Jost, email message to author, November 14 and November 18, 2008.

³⁹⁰ Bob Harms, Tabor College alumnus, “Former Editor Harms Criticizes Vietnam Policy,” *ibid.*, February 16, 1967, 2. Harms, email message to author, November 6, 2008. Historian Richard C. Kyle noted that Flaming’s son-in-law was a popular and influential dispensationalist author who attended Parkview Church, the former Gnadenau Krimmer Mennonite Brethren congregation, and confirmed that both he and Flaming were “very conservative,” interview by author, Hillsboro, KS, November 18, 2008.

shortly, it would take nearly three more years before the Mennonite Brethren issued a carefully hedged statement on Vietnam.³⁹¹

While Tabor never officially sponsored any formal and public peace events on campus after the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship and Brunk meetings in the early 1960s, and had only a handful of chapel services focused on war and peace, students and faculty continued to participate in the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship and Mennonite Central Committee projects off-site. The new organization of the Tri-College Cultural series and the shared programs of the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas addressed the unwillingness to talk about political issues in the classroom — or in town. In particular, Bill Moyers' lecture in 1967 at Hesston received more appreciation from Tabor students in the college newspaper than that posted by Bethelites. "How long," said Moyers, "has it been since you've rationally explained the settlement that you believe the United States could find acceptable in Vietnam and Asia." Senator Mark Hatfield's tele-lecture served as the October 18, 1967 chapel, as students sat and listened to the speakerphone. The View columnists Al Berg and Keith Harder challenged students to answer questions about Vietnam, and they continued to amplify in subsequent editorials the presentations made by such outside speakers as Philip Drath of the American Friends Service Committee in December 1967 chapel services, but there were still no protests either on or off campus in Hillsboro. Some of this was about to change, however.³⁹²

³⁹¹ On the campus poll regarding Vietnam, see "Point of View," The View, September 14, 1965, 2. "Political Statement Approved," *ibid.*, December 8, 1966, 1.

³⁹² Anonymous long-term Hillsboro, KS residents who are Mennonite Brethren and who favored the Anabaptist peace position, interviews with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 15 and 16, 2008. Burton Buller, "Moyers Speaks at Hesston," The View, November 9, 1967, 1.

Tabor's Student Power Movement was seen at the time as akin to the formation of a Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) local chapter, but its discussions gave students the impetus to change dress codes, mandatory chapel, and rules for room searches. By changing the rules for student life, Tabor students removed part of the threat of being reported to draft boards for behavior that could result in the loss of a deferment. The National Student Association (NSA) membership also offered a further means to associate with others considering protesting or who were already active in it. Former student body president Al Berg recalled caravans of like-minded students from Bethel, McPherson College, and Tabor traveling to national meetings of the National Student Association in San Diego and El Paso. The results of these and other trips to Bethel College to hear James Juhnke were reported in The View and evidenced in later Tabor activism.³⁹³

The Wittenburg Door, a public forum for comments, posters, anti-war poetry, and arguments, became an active repository for student opinion. An actual door in the main hallway of the administration building, it was a bulletin board for free-speech (excepting vulgar comments). At one point in the late 1960s, it was painted like an American flag to protest the war, but repainted at the administration's insistence. Students who protested through their words and later through their actions made extensive use of it. It featured anti-war poetry, some of

³⁹³ Jack Braun, Tabor College emeritus professor of communication, interview with author, November 12, 2008. Although there continued to be a question about whether an SDS chapter was actually formed or whether it was the administration's interpretation of the student organizing, research collaborates that there was no such organizing, although it was casually discussed. Regarding NSA trips and the impetus for changing behavioral codes on campus, see Al Berg, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 13, 2008; Phil Kliwer, email message to author, October 15, 2017. Regarding trips to Bethel and interaction with James Juhnke, see "Point of View," The View, November 9, 1967, 3.

which was later read at a coffeehouse in Goshen, Indiana, then published in a Denver newspaper. But the administration's lack of more substantive support baffled some Mennonite students. One student protester of 1968 summarized the thoughts of other early activists when she wrote:

I don't think my anti-war stance was appreciated much by the administration either. That genuinely puzzled me since we supposedly were conscientious objectors. I was very much into our Anabaptist heritage and was angry that Tabor seemed to have forgotten that heritage while Bethel and other Mennonite colleges were on the forefront of the protest against the Vietnam War. I want to emphasize for all of us war protesters, it was genuinely an outgrowth of our faith and deep abiding belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ, and of our Mennonite heritage which had always stood up to governments and war-mongering.³⁹⁴

The contrast between the activities at Bethel and Goshen, GC Mennonite Church and MC Mennonite schools respectively, with the lack of support by the Tabor administration, perplexed the articulate Mennonite Brethren students who thought their Anabaptist beliefs were also consistent with protest.³⁹⁵

In 1969, students staged a "sit-in" to protest an Interterm exam and then boycotted chapel services to force the use of contemporary music. Although these actions were some of the first organized protests against the administration's policies, they were portrayed by some students as harmless, almost frivolous exercises. In contrast to the frustrations behind these and with larger issues, the College yearbook, The Bluejay, portrayed Tabor's activism as a relatively reassuring

³⁹⁴ Butch Gerbrandt detailed the use of the Wittenburg Door. Butch Gerbrandt, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 12, 2008. Gerbrandt was also a member of "The Brethren," a group of student leaders who dressed in mock "Old Mennonite" garb and appeared at sports events to harangue the opposition with Bible verses. Poet Liz Black saw her anti-war poetry recognized in additional settings. Liz Black (formerly Betty Kliewer), Tabor College alumnus, email message to author November 12, 2008.

³⁹⁵ Goering, History, 17-35; Steven P. Miller, "Mediating Revolution: The Goshen College Peace Society and the New Left," Goshen College Senior History Paper, Goshen College, 1999.

one to those who would read the annual. Quoting St. Francis de Sales's approach to labor, the 1967 volume also reported that "a wave of three-day student demonstrations swept Tabor for the 15th annual year. These demonstrations were not in disapproval, but in approval of a concept – student sponsored Work Days." Thus, "protest" at Tabor was characterized as only the kind that resulted in students spending their spring breaks cleaning homes, typing letters, chopping wood, or working on a farm, and then donating the money to the student council improvement fund. No one needed to worry that the campus was involved in any of the actions going on across the nation. Rather, these were students who spent their energies raising money for the school.³⁹⁶

Tabor students lacked the overt approval of the administration or faculty to initiate or create the kinds of actions held at either Bethel or Hesston. No one led Taborites to the South to march for civil rights as had Dwight Platt at Bethel, or to engage in public symbolic actions and discussions like Sol Yoder did at Hesston. Despite the comments made in the early 1960s by the now-absent Wiens and the ongoing presence of Hiebert who cautiously addressed peace issues, it was up to the students themselves to organize -- which they did. They held discussions around the flag pole, including one "that was a very open discussion by both sides -- students who thought there was a need to speak against the war and those who thought that peace was a private, not a political issue." At another point during 1967 or 1968, a group of students who planned to lower the flag to half-staff were met by others. Again, there was no physical

³⁹⁶ Although the Tabor centennial history states that students staged antiwar protests, there are no antiwar protests documented in the publication. The protest documented in the history concerned the interterm exam. Jost, "A Time," in Tabor College, ed. Miller, 119, 138n103. The 1967 Tabor Bluejay, 35. Workdays were an annual event during which students were hired out to the community and alumni, who then donated money toward student-selected improvements on campus.

confrontation. Knowing that infractions against rules for student conduct could compromise their conscientious objector status, some male students were reluctant to become involved and to press the issue.³⁹⁷

The reality of the war was on their doorstep, sharply evident in the Life magazine article that featured the black-and-white photographs of 261 GIs killed in Vietnam in one week. The photo essay designed to call attention to the humanity, “to look into the faces” behind the numbing statistics of the dead included one who had lived within ten miles of the campus. The last face that looked back at the reader was that of “Robert L. Boese, 22, Army, Pfc. Marion, Kansas,” twelve miles east of Hillsboro.³⁹⁸

Yet, an attempt to organize a peace march through town in 1970 was foiled by banker Elmer Flaming “who simply said, ‘no.’” Flaming, who attended the second-largest Mennonite Brethren congregation in town, was used to wielding power in the town and in the church, where he leveraged his financial clout to control clergy and to stifle objection on a variety of issues throughout the community. Perhaps being stymied was somewhat a relief. Several students who

³⁹⁷ With respect to discussions around the flagpole, John Quiring, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 11, 2008; concerning the plans to lower the flag, Berry Friesen, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 10, 2008, and in regard to concerns about rules infractions, Burton Buller, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 10, 2008 and Bob Ewert, Tabor College alumnus, email message with author, November 11, 2008.

³⁹⁸ “Yet in a time when the numbers of Americans killed in this war--- 36,000--- though far less than the Vietnamese losses, have exceeded the dead in the Korean War, when the nation continues week after week to be numbed by a three-digit statistic which is translated to direct anguish in hundreds of homes all over the country we must pause to look into the faces. More than we must know how *many* we must know *who*.” “Vietnam: One Week’s Dead,” Life, June 27, 1969, 20-32. I am grateful to long-term Marion resident Harry Bennett, who called this portrait to my attention. Harry Bennett, email message to author, September 13, 2016.

had participated in activities at Bethel and Hesston frequently talked about what “abuse would occur if they held an anti-war march in town [Hillsboro].” Nevertheless, the combination of a small town, a faculty and administration unwilling or unable to provide leadership for students who wanted to oppose the war, and the man who headed the First National Bank was a powerful combination to repress the kind of public dissent that was peacefully occurring at other Mennonite institutions.³⁹⁹

If the anti-war students had hoped for a denominational statement similar to those issued by the GC Mennonite Church and the MC Mennonites, they were disappointed when in August 1969 the Mennonite Brethren General Conference refused on technical grounds to tender a resolution on noncooperation. Although the Canadian Conference had issued strong statements on the peace position, including a re-affirmation of nonresistance and alternative service in 1968, the 1969 General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren representing both Canadians and Americans explicitly chose to defer action on a resolution until 1972. When the Mennonite Brethren Pacific District was pressed two months later in November 1969, the resolution that was adopted focused on “responsible Christian citizenship,” and “selective service [as] a

³⁹⁹ Concerning Flaming and his actions from 1965 to 1972, anonymous long-term Hillsboro resident and faculty spouse, conversation with author, Hillsboro, KS, November 3, 2008 and Paul Penner, Tabor College alumnus, interview with author, Hillsboro, KS, October 20, 2008. In later years, Flaming demanded that President Roy Just stop Tabor math professor, Frank Brenneman, a member of the MC Mennonites, from holding a sign protesting the movement of military equipment through town. Frank Brenneman, professor emeritus, interview with author, February 25, 2009. Regarding student concerns if they protested, Berry Friesen, Tabor College alumnus, email correspondence with author, November 11, 2008. The first major history of Marion County had this to say in 1972: “The First National Bank remains the major financial institution in Hillsboro. It’s [sic] total resources increased from \$3.3 million in June 1960 to \$9.5 million in April 1971. E. W. Flaming [is the] president.” Sandra Van Meter, Marion County, Kansas: Past and Present (Hillsboro, KS: MB Publishing House, 1972), 143.

recruiting agency” that was morally neutral (“It is not necessarily a vehicle of destruction. For those who desire, it can become an agency for positive Christian service and the peace witness by accepting alternative service”). The conference expressed a willingness to “extend a spiritual ministry” to those who held a position of noncooperation, but there was no explicit stance against the Vietnam War or language that might be construed as offensive to the Nixon Administration. It instead explicitly recommended “a study be carried on during the next triennium on the subject of involvement in war and that a resolution be presented at the 1972 convention.” It would take nearly four more years before formal consideration of a thorough peace position on the war in Southeast Asia. A subsequent resolution a week later by the Southern District Conference held less than 50 miles away from Hillsboro in Buhler, Kansas, emphasized Mennonite Brethren respect for government. The denomination simply reinforced what was already taking place at the Christian Service Program office of Dwight Wiebe, the organizer of the Hershey-Brunk forum. Young men who were drafted were given alternative service assignments. Opposition to the government was simply not a denominational option.⁴⁰⁰

At Tabor, The View editor Galen Buller expressed his disappointment in the Mennonite Brethren’s unwillingness to provide leadership on and off campus: “This is sad, because now the group, and our governing board at this institution still have no official stand on this vitally important issue.” Although students recalled meetings at the homes of Bible and religion professor Harms, English professor Prieb, English professor Katie Funk Wiebe, and band director (and later dean) Larry Feil, they found only sympathetic ears, rather than articulators or

⁴⁰⁰ John E. Toews, “Mennonite Brethren Statements on War and Peace in North America,” in The Power of the Lamb, ed. John E. Toews and Gordon Nickel (Winnipeg, MB: Kindred Press, 1986), 163-173.

exemplars of protest. In the estimation of one student leader, these faculty were well aware that they might encounter difficulties from the administration.

I viewed faculty like Clarence Hiebert, Wes Priebe, and Larry Feil as the voices for Anabaptist tradition and intellectual integrity. They hosted private events at their homes, but I think the few activist students also guessed that they were under pressure from Tabor leadership as well. One wonders what it might have been like had the leadership supported faculty and students in their explorations and concerns.⁴⁰¹

Only the itinerant speakers appearing in chapel supported the students' questioning. Among these was Doug Hostetter, a former Mennonite Central Committee community development worker in Vietnam, who appeared in a new chapel series on peace, war, and non-resistance in late 1969. His lecture was a catalyst for some of Tabor's most outspoken activists, but the administration remained silent. Nevertheless, Hostetter's impact was far-ranging, for Tabor students and for other Mennonite college students who could still recall elements of his speech at nearly fifty years later.⁴⁰²

MCC's Surprising Re-Appearance: The Long War Returns to Tabor

Doug Hostetter had impeccable conservative Mennonite credentials. His father was B. Charles Hostetter, the prominent MC Mennonite Church speaker on "The Mennonite Hour," a

⁴⁰¹ Anonymous Tabor alumnus, email message to author, October 8, 2017; Phil Kliever emphasized that Katie Funk Wiebe encouraged him to write an antiwar article and submit it for publication to The Christian Leader where it was published, and then re-printed in The Mennonite. Phil Kliever, email message to author, October 11, 2017.

⁴⁰² Galen Buller, Tabor College alumnus, "Conference of M.B. Churches Meet: 'So What?'" The View, September, 26, 1969, 2. Ellen Kroeker, Tabor College alumnus, email correspondence to the author, November 11, 2008. Regarding Doug Hostetter's speech on the Vietnam War to other Mennonite college students, see First Mennonite Church survey respondents from Goshen College and Freeman Junior College, in MC Ministries Council, First Mennonite Church Survey, May 10, 2015. The survey was composed and administered by the author and approved in advance by the MC Ministries Council.

renowned popular radio program that featured music, sermons, general programs on holy living, and readings from Scripture. Raised in a household where his father still wore the plain coat and collar, the junior Hostetter attended a Mennonite high school where he played basketball, participated in the literary society, held various leadership positions (including the presidency of the local Young People's Christian Association), and was listed repeatedly on the honor roll. In 1966, he had just completed two years serving as president for Virginia's Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF), the organization described by one pastor as "a wholesome way of meeting the needs of youth [that] ... gives them recognition and a creative outlet for Christian energy."⁴⁰³

Sporting a flat-top haircut, the young Mennonite was the tall, well-mannered, squeaky clean epitome of American young manhood in early 1966. Recently invited to the United States Senate Fourteenth Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast by Senator Frank Carlson of Kansas, Hostetter was also enjoined to participate in a "young men's leadership seminar" following the breakfast. With nearly 200,000 men in Vietnam, civil unrest spreading throughout the South and urban areas elsewhere, and less than two weeks before Senator William Fulbright and the Senate

⁴⁰³ Pat Hostetter, later Pat Hostetter Martin, who appeared earlier in this study, was also a Pax volunteer who left for orientation by MCC in Akron, Pennsylvania at the same time as her brother. Her anticipated service was not highlighted in various publications to the extent that her brother's was. "Mennonite Hour," GAMEO; "Senior: Doug Hostetter," Windsock (September 29, 1961), 4. Windsock was the newsletter of Eastern Mennonite High School in Harrisonburg, Virginia, one of the largest and most prominent communities of MC Mennonites in the United States. It had a seamless system of Mennonite education, which both younger Hostetters had attended. "President Leaves for Viet Nam Service," Virginia Conference Youth Courier (June 5, 1966), 1. Hostetter, MCUSA 14/1; James Fairfield, "MYF Emphasis Week Scheduled," Virginia Conference Youth Courier (June 5, 1966), 1. Doug Hostetter had spent the summer between his junior and senior years, "working on a farm and market along a busy Pennsylvania highway. My job consisted of anything from serving at a chicken-corn-soup supper to helping take down evangelistic tents... I am glad for a school year in which to recuperate." Douglas Hostetter, "My Job Last Summer," [undated print publication]. Douglas Hostetter papers, 14/1, MCUSA archives.

Foreign Relations Committee directly challenged the Johnson administration by calling for and initiating public hearings on Vietnam, Carlson voiced his hopes.

This is to provide an opportunity for you to discuss together how to better develop a leadership led by God. It is our earnest hope that we can, in this way, add sustenance to a spiritual renaissance throughout our country.⁴⁰⁴

The Senator from Kansas who would soon question Secretary of State Dean Rusk why the U.S. had deemed the war of crucial importance when its allies in the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) extended little appreciable aid to the project did not have his head in the clouds. And neither did the young invitee, who soon disembarked in a different world.⁴⁰⁵

Doug Hostetter landed in Vietnam determined to meet the full demands of being a Pax man. Eschewing a posting in Saigon or other small cities where he might enjoy the protection of the U.S. army, he headed for Tam Ky, a small hamlet near the coast and just south of the border with North Vietnam. Mastering the language, he lived in humble circumstances, sharing the food and perils of the Vietnamese with whom he lived. He started a sewing project, worked with literacy, and looked for ways to initiate community development. He endured the shelling and gunfire aimed at the hamlet for the next three years by determinedly remaining with the people of Tam Ky, excepting a forced hiatus of a month to be discussed shortly. He was soon to be called on the carpet by an irate U.S. army colonel.

Hostetter had arrived in Vietnam shortly after MCC's Peace Section had called for an urgent meeting on Vietnam in November 1965. The Peace Section had already sent a letter to

⁴⁰⁴ Letter from Senator Frank Carlson to Douglas Hostetter, January 18, 1966 on Senate letterhead. Douglas Hostetter papers, 9/1, MCUSA archives.

⁴⁰⁵ Joseph A. Fry, Debating Vietnam: Fulbright, Stennis, and Their Senate Hearings. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield: 2006, 70.

President Lyndon Johnson on June 4, pressing for a negotiated settlement and enjoining him “[to enter] into unconditional discussions with whomever necessary to halt hostilities” and they had sent physician and former medical missionary MC Willard Krabill on an extensive journey through the country where he had once lived. The war had now escalated with over 200,000 troops in the country. As this study has described, some Mennonites who eschewed politics were now entering into it, in part because of their movement into the culture and in part because they had engaged for more than a decade in observation and analysis about the unending war and its miseries.⁴⁰⁶

The young Pax man knew that MCC was taking a tough stance on the conditions in the country and on the ongoing escalation, but he was also a keen observer determined to live his faith in service without compromise. At times this put him in conflict with other missionaries and members of Vietnam Christian Service (VCS), including other Mennonites who had decided that staying in the country required a wide range of accommodations to the U.S. military, their parent denominations, or their own safety.

Doug Hostetter had carefully cultivated extensive relationships with the people in Tam Ky and his fluency in their language had enabled conversations that touched on difficult and nuanced topics, including his opinion of antiwar sentiment in the U.S., topics frequently raised by students in the area. He had also offered shelter to four young American soldiers who ended up being AWOL Marines looking for a way to escape the killing they were being charged to do. Most of what Hostetter did was well within the objectives of the agency which briefly incorporated MCC objectives, but when he took the Vietnam Christian Service charge to “show

⁴⁰⁶ “Memorandum to Members of the Peace Section Executive Committee,” November 15, 1965, MCC Peace Section Executive Committee, 1963-1969, MCC.

no national partiality” by taking emergency food and relief supplies behind NLF-controlled lines and then refusing to share intelligence about people in Tam Ky, the local colonel exploded. Seeking to have the Mennonite transferred permanently, VCS instead furloughed him for a month, then allowed him to return. Hostetter continued to experience the war through the eyes of the Vietnamese, living precariously through such events as the Tet offensive, when DRVN soldiers bypassed the house where he lived.⁴⁰⁷

When Hostetter returned to America in 1969, MCC Peace Section’s John Lapp invited him to participate in section discussions, soon appointing him as a representative and sponsoring him on a lecture tour of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ colleges. It was during this time that he made his appearance at the three Mennonite schools in Kansas where his presentation at Tabor galvanized the small group of antiwar protesters. Ellen Kroeker, who was one of the antiwar apologists in the early 1970s, not only found her voice to protest, but also donated money to Hostetter’s tour. Although Tabor students found little support for the kinds of protests taking place at Bethel College and Hesston College, Kroeker agitated both on and off campus.⁴⁰⁸

Tabor students had heard Doug Hostetter’s stunning first-hand account of the war and the suffering taking place --- and they wanted to act. Instead, they had been pressured not to protest

⁴⁰⁷ Leaman, 36-39. Doug Hostetter letter to his parents, September 14, 1968, 1-2, Douglas Hostetter papers 4/5 MCUSA.

⁴⁰⁸ Ellen Kroeker, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 11, 2008; Myron L. Toews, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 16, 2008. Ellen Kroeker, email message to author, November 15, 2008. Chuck Neufeld, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, February 27-29, 2009. Ledger sheet of donors, during college speaking tour], Doug Hostetter papers, 1971, Box 216, MCC; Hostetter’s impact on Mennonite college students was significant. In a survey conducted in Hillsboro, KS in 2015, two of the twelve respondents singled out his lectures at Goshen College in Indiana as key to their development as antiwar activists.

by a town and a president concerned about the reaction of the constituency. Even when peace club leader Canadian Chuck Neufeld had been physically threatened at gunpoint, the administration could not venture into a response. Antiwar activist and missionary kid Phil Kliewer described what happened:

Chuck Neufeld, Student Council President, was vocal enough that he was known for his views even outside of the Tabor community. One evening when he went to pick up his wife, Bonnie, from work at the hospital, some Mennonite farmers from out of town held him up at gunpoint as he waited outside the hospital. As Bonnie walked to the car she quickly assessed the situation and cheerfully invited everyone to come talk over some pie she had baked that morning. They dropped their guns and went for the pie. In the two years I was at Tabor, Chuck was perhaps the central character against the war. At least, he was the only one I recall who was seriously harassed, although not by a draft board. He was Canadian, else he may have been harassed by the draft board.⁴⁰⁹

Yet, there was no response, either to the war, or now to the violence that threatened antiwar activists on campus.

By April 1970, student columnist Berry Friesen sharply commented:

I assume that some conscientious objection still exists in some diluted form at Tabor. However, this witness of conscience in regard to Vietnam and militarism has been absent from Tabor's leaders as well. Faculty members have held the peace about the war in a very uncommendable way. And President Just has defined Tabor's position as one of opposition to civil disobedience and support for President Nixon's interest and concerns for peace ... it is a question of expressing objection or joining Nixon's silent majority.⁴¹⁰

If Tabor students had hoped their denomination would take a stance on Vietnam as had the General Conference Mennonite Church and MC Mennonites, they were disappointed. They had no formal support from either the denomination or the administration and faculty.

⁴⁰⁹ Phil Kliewer, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, October 11, 2017.

⁴¹⁰ Berry Friesen, Tabor College alumnus, "Conscience, the Silent Majority, The View, April 17, 1970, 2.

Moreover, the conference could not even find it within itself to engage the host of cultural, racial, and economic issues that pressed for attention. As the popular magazine distributed to every Mennonite Brethren household lamented,

One could not help but feel that we were not meeting our Christian responsibility in our world of unrest when nothing was said about the unrest in that world. No word regarding the Christian's responsibility to government, Vietnam, race, the draft, the city ghettos, campus unrest, birth control, and the population explosion, organ transplants, and the endless causes of unrest can hardly be called "Christian Responsibility."⁴¹¹

The issues that pressed on young people preparing for life and service, could not obtain a formal denominational hearing. Rather, discussion centered on the church growth projects Mennonite Brethren had in mind as they contemplated what they called the "Decade of Enlargement," a plan by which the conference could double in size.

The tensions came to a head in spring 1970, when a counter-demonstration was organized in response to an on-campus protest led by students in reaction to the shootings at Kent State that killed four students. Invited by Chuck Neufeld to speak at a peace rally on May 7, professor of history Jim Juhnke from Bethel College, addressed a group on the Tabor College lawn. As Juhnke described it in his memoir,

The town of Hillsboro and Tabor's Mennonite Brethren constituency were shocked that the protest movement had come to their placid conservative town ... While I spoke, the Hillsboro Chief of Police, Eldo Flaming, listened from his police car parked on the street beside the green. In 1954 Flaming and I had been in the same catechism and baptism class at the Lehigh Mennonite Church. Now we were on opposing sides of a national fracture... Flaming took notes as my speech took aim at President Nixon. "The President promised peace and then gave

⁴¹¹ Orlando Harms, "General Conference 'Christian Responsibility' ... Words or Deeds?" Christian Leader, 9 (September 1969), 5.

us a bigger war. Nixon is a liar!” The rally ended without incident, but its reverberations continued in the coming weeks.⁴¹²

Tabor students Barry Friesen and Phil Kliever also spoke at the rally, but afterwards, it was Juhnke who heard from the Chief of Police, whose letter to the history professor arrived the next day in North Newton telling him not to return to Hillsboro and threatening him with an investigation by the FBI:

[He] blasted] my “anti-Americanism,” “hairy ideas,” and “empty mouthed malarkey.” He enclosed a message by J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, rallying “the entire citizenry to disclaim and reject recent outrages in the streets and in the courts against the law.” I wrote a return letter to Flaming arguing there was “nothing anti-American about political dissent ... [in the tradition of] Patrick Henry, Abraham Lincoln, William Jennings Bryan and many others.”⁴¹³

Within two weeks, Juhnke also received a visit from Tabor academic dean, Abe Konrad, who appeared in person at Bethel to say that “he had to withdraw the invitation for me to teach there in the fall.”

He was deeply embarrassed by what he had to say. He had earlier invited me to teach an American history class in the fall of 1970. Now he had to break that agreement. The Tabor peace rally, and my speech in particular, had created a backlash among Main Street citizens in Hillsboro. The president of the First National Bank, E. W. Flaming, was a major financial contributor to Tabor. He had told Tabor’s president, Roy Just, that he and many others would stop giving if Juhnke taught at the school. Considering the circumstances, [Konrad] and I had a friendly conversation. I appreciated his effort to deliver the painful message in person.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² Juhnke, Small, 75; Juhnke, email message to author, December 10, 2008.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*; Juhnke, Small, 75-76.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

If the loss of the opportunity to teach at Tabor was calculated to harm Juhnke, it had little of its intended effect. As he explains, “Not long after that, I decided to file as a candidate for the Kansas 4th District congressional seat held by Garner Shriver. That campaign took nearly all of my time that summer and fall. I would have had to withdraw from the Tabor invitation on my own if I had not already been disinvited.”⁴¹⁵

But the Tabor peace club soon experienced the ire of Hillsboro. Between seventy and 100 people assembled to “Rally Round the Flag” directly in front of the college’s administration building and within close proximity to its main entrance. Although neither The View nor the Hillsboro Star Journal recorded it, the event chiefly attracted townspeople and featured men in uniform, including a color guard from the American Legion. When Tabor students reacted, some of the participants from the town were irate. Recalled Kliewer (who still has the sharp image of the man’s face from whom he seized the microphone in his memory),

I don’t recall who all crashed the stage and grabbed microphones besides me, but several of us did, which really lit off the veterans... [they] asked for our names so that [they said] they could pass them on to the FBI. We criticized the Nixon administration and Nixon personally, which they considered treasonous.⁴¹⁶

Again, banker Flaming was “terribly upset” that any public protest was occurring, as was a major donor.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Phil Kliewer, email message to author, October 11, 2017.

⁴¹⁷ Myron L. Toews, Tabor College alumnus, email message to author, November 16, 2008. Ellen Kroeker, email message to author, November 15, 2008. Chuck Neufeld, Tabor College alumnus, email messages to author, February 27-29, 2009.

The threat of involvement by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was ever-present at Tabor, so much so that it appeared as a chimera. Male students repeatedly named rumors about campus surveillance and “especially about the Oklahoma boys,” yet there was no firm evidence that this had happened. Only a letter in a file in an archive noted that the school had no evidence that was applicable to a case the FBI was attempting to investigate. It was a near argument from silence. Yet, evidence exists that during most of the 1960s, Tabor administration knew that not only was an individual under investigation, but that the case would take so long to resolve that he would move from being a student to being an alumnus. His case demonstrated that the rumors were not simply imaginings. Moreover, his case forced the Christian Service Board and the denomination to wrestle with what a Mennonite Brethren identity really was.

Lost Mennonite Brethren Memories & The Curious Case of the Oklahoma Objector: *In Loco Parentis*, Selective Service, and Denominational Angst

Tabor student Jerry Penner was one potential conscript who pursued the legal means of dissent described by historian Richard Moser --- as a conscientious objector. Hailing from the Mennonite Brethren enclave of Balko, Oklahoma, he discovered that not only did he have to face a rigorous local draft board determined to deny his application, but he also had to endure perhaps the even more penetrating gaze of his brotherhood, its college, and the denominational office in Hillsboro, Kansas. His story is particularly significant because it is the likely source for the strong belief, particularly among Tabor College students during the Vietnam War, that they were under scrutiny by the FBI, and that the Oklahoma men were particularly vulnerable because of their zealously patriotic draft boards. But, Penner’s case evidences not only a fear of external agents, but internal actors as well, including both town and gown. Moreover, the story illustrates why the student free speech and rights movements were significant players in the arguments

about *in loco parentis*, even on campuses which would have been expected to support conscientious objection as a matter of the faith tradition.⁴¹⁸

What became a six-year struggle that interrupted his college enrollment, found him sentenced to five years in a federal penitentiary for refusing to accept induction into the armed services, and saw Mennonite Brethren denominational authorities offer initially reluctant support for his position, began innocuously. Following the standard procedure that all Mennonite groups had recommended that their young men follow to meet the terms of the Selective Service Act of 1948 and its derivatives, Penner had dully registered with Selective Service in 1964 and claimed conscientious objection, thereby requesting a 1-O classification (conscientious objection to any military service). Like most Oklahoma draft boards that were notorious for their opposition to conscientious objectors, Local Board No. 4 in Beaver County, Oklahoma, denied Penner's request and instead classified him as 1-A-O (noncombatant duty). Appearing in person before his local board, Penner unsuccessfully appealed his new classification directly, a decision that the State Appeals Board upheld. Supported by the National Interreligious Service Board for Religious Objectors (the successor to NSBRO that the Historic Peace Churches and others had formed in response to World War II), Penner then unsuccessfully petitioned General Lewis B. Hershey's Presidential review board. Not only did the board refuse to recognize his conscientious objection, but also reclassified him to 1-A, completely eligible for full military service as a combatant.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Moser, New, 90-91. In regard to the mysterious source of the rumor that Oklahoma men were under particular scrutiny by their local draft boards and the FBI, numerous Tabor informants mentioned the fears, yet could not name actual events or individuals, in spite of the extremely tight-knit community and layers of kinship among many of the students.

⁴¹⁹ Although the legislation is commonly called the Selective Service Act of 1948, it has had several amendments to its content and modifications to its name, first renamed the Universal

Subsequently receiving a notice to report to Oklahoma City for induction into the army on August 2, 1967, Penner reported, but refused induction. Brought to trial for his refusal, he was sentenced on November 8, 1968, to five years in a federal penitentiary. Two years later, in February 1970, the 10th U.S. Court of Appeals upheld his conviction in the district court and his 1-A classification. Appealing with the help of the MCC Peace Section which assisted him with finances, legal counsel, and an amicus curiae brief, Penner was eventually represented by Marvin Karpatkin, a New York attorney who was general legal counsel for both the American Civil Liberties Union and the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors and who took the case to the Supreme Court. Advised by U.S. Solicitor General Erwin N. Griswold that the case had been built from unreliable FBI reports that portrayed Penner as insincere in his religious convictions, the Supreme Court accepted his recommendation that the Court of Appeals decision be reversed and that the case be remanded to the district court for dismissal. On June 29, 1970, Penner had finally been recognized as a conscientious objector.⁴²⁰

But what had happened in the first place? Why was a member of a Historic Peace Church under trial for his opposition to military service on the basis of conscience?

Military Training and Service Act in 1951, then the Military Selective Service Act of 1967 and, finally, the Military Selective Service Act in 1971. In spite of NISBRO Executive Secretary J. Harold Sherk's vigorous and thorough defense of the Mennonite Brethren objector, Hershey's board ruled against him and then reclassified the young man as I-A. Sherk's appeal to Hershey recapitulates the NISBRO interactions with the college and with the denominational office headed by Dwight Wiebe. J. Harold Sherk, to General Lewis B. Hershey, January 31, 1967. Christian Service, Draft and Peace Witness: Individual 1-W Cases, file 101, A250.6, Christian Service files, CMBS-F. Two months after Penner refused induction and his case began to work through the courts, General Hershey and President Johnson collaborated in October 1967 in punitive reclassification or revoking of deferments for those seen as resisting or interfering in the draft, a decision that included religious objectors. Flynn, The Draft, 215-216.

⁴²⁰ Karpatkin had earlier represented Leroy Garber in an Amish religious freedom case in Kansas in 1967.

What was reported to Mennonites through press releases and prayer requests from Mennonite Central Committee's Peace Section and what was recounted in the national press, were consistent, although with more flair and detail in the latter. Penner came from a family with strong beliefs in nonresistance and had been born in Staunton, Virginia in 1945 during his father's service in a CPS camp there. He had been raised in the Mennonite Brethren enclave of Balko, Oklahoma, but when he later attended Tabor College and registered duly for Selective Service with the local draft board in his home state, he faced two situations that were problematic. On the one hand, he faced a highly nationalistic Oklahoma draft board in a state notorious for its attempts to avoid granting conscientious objectors classification. On the other hand, he had engaged in activities that were later portrayed by the presidential review board as demonstrating his religious convictions were insincere. Penner had not retracted his belief in conscientious objection and an adamant refusal to kill an enemy. But he had, according to FBI reports garnered from interviews with unidentified classmates, engaged in "smoking, drinking and carousing with girls while at Tabor College." His reputed actions flew in the face of conduct endorsed by his brotherhood and also violated the strong behavioral standards endorsed by the college.⁴²¹

⁴²¹ "Objector's Draft Defiance Upheld," (AP report, lacks citation, likely is Selective Service newspaper, The Register, or Selective Service News, June 1970.) Christian Service Files clipping, CMBS-F. Violations of rules for behavior were standard reasons for dismissal or suspension, a means by which a man who was not a conscientious objector in the HPC tradition could lose a student deferment, one reason that college students opposed *in loco parentis* rules that could see them easily charged and dismissed with violations of conduct. Evidence in college records of disciplinary charges or action were highly prejudicial when a case was reviewed. By 1967 and the introduction of punitive reclassification, even HPC members who were staunch conscientious objectors and classified as 1-O were under scrutiny as well. There is evidence that the college attempted to protect Penner when the FBI attempted to garner information from a particular administrator who was cannily evasive, a conclusion also supported by the FBI's use of reports garnered from "classmates" rather than from college records. Joel A. Wiebe to J. Harold Sherk, January 26, 1967; Dwight Wiebe to J. Harold Sherk, January 30, 1967; Sherk to

Mennonites throughout North America, however, did not hear the flashy details later reported in the Associated Press newspaper article, although the final report issued by MCC offered a simple statement that objectively quoted the Solicitor General's argument to the Supreme Court. Instead, they heard the story of his conviction and became active witnesses to Penner's contested conviction. In a MCC News Service release on April 3, 1970, the MCC Peace Section's associate executive secretary issued a three page article that detailed Jerry Penner's situation just prior to his appeal to the Supreme Court. "The Right of Appeal: A Time for Testing" described why the case was important to Mennonites, why an appeal was not a lawsuit to which many Mennonites would object as coercive --- and also enlisted its readers in his defense. It couched its appeal in language that the larger brotherhood could appreciate:

The sentence was appealed in the U. S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals where the lower court's decision was sustained. The only remaining recourse is an appeal to the United States Supreme Court. Such an appeal is not exercising the legal process for one's own advantage and benefit, such as in collecting a bad debt, nor is it filing a suit against the government. Rather, the appeal is simply asking the Supreme Court to review a decision or sentence of a lower court to ascertain that the intent of the law has been fully appreciated. Realizing the far-reaching consequences for the church and for conscientious objectors, the Alvin Penner family and the Mennonite Brethren Church through its general secretary, Henry H. Dyck, have requested the MCC Peace Section to assist them in making the decision of whether or not to appeal the case. Up to this point the Penner family personally has covered all the expenses involved, which have been quite extensive. A petition of certiorari (a writ of a superior court to call up the records of a lower court) had to be filed within 30 days. However, a 30-day extension of time has been granted by the Supreme Court. This extension ends on May 5, 1970. Such a petition must present the arguments which are unique to this case and which have not been previously considered by the court. The cost for the preparation of such a petition alone, with no assurance that the case will be heard

Hershey, January 31, 1967. Christian Service, Draft and Peace Witness: Individual 1-W Cases, A250.6, file 101, Christian Service files, CMBS-F.

by the Supreme Court, will be several thousand dollars (which, incidentally, shows why the poor cannot afford the due process of the law for justice).⁴²²

Mennonites from across the tradition sent donations to help the Penner family and within three months their hopes were realized. U.S. Solicitor General Ervin Griswold's assessment of Karpatkin's argument agreed that justice had been miscarried, and even in a particularly punitive manner. When MCC's Peace Section issued its follow-up news release, it breathed a sigh of relief and a prayer of thanksgiving, even as it hinted at the various undercurrents in play:

In the conclusion of the petition ... the attorney asked the Supreme Court to rule as to whether "a conscientious objector must be a saint, or whether it is sufficient to be an ordinary man who is, by reason of religious training and belief, conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." Penner's conviction rested largely on the basis of rather fragmentary and undocumented evidence contained in an FBI report which alleged that he did not hold to some of the basic tenets of the Mennonite faith. Last week in a completely unexpected and unprecedented action the United States Solicitor General Ervin N. Griswold, in writing his recommendations to the Supreme Court, said that the Penner case was an obvious miscarriage of justice and in fact likened it to the Sacco Vanzetti Case, a case where guilt was supposedly established and execution was carried out largely because of strong public feelings--only to have some concrete vindicating evidence uncovered after the execution. The Solicitor General whose responsibility it is to support the government's conviction came to the defense of Jerry Penner and recommended that the Court of Appeals decision be reversed and that the case be remanded to the District Court for a dismissal of indictment. Attorney Karpatkin said that this statement by the Solicitor General was in his practice and to his knowledge unprecedented. The Supreme Court in its final action for the 1970 Spring Session reviewed the case and stated that there had been an obvious error in the conviction They decided not to hear the case but to simply order the recommendations of the Solicitor General. On Monday, June 29, 1970, the United States Supreme Court issued the following very terse order: "On the basis of a confession of error by the United States Solicitor General and of an independent review of the record, the petition for writ of certiorari is granted, the judgment of the Court of Appeals is vacated and the case is remanded to the United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma with

⁴²² MCC News Service releases were distributed to all MCC denominations and were routinely published in their popular denominational organ, thus achieving a particularly wide distribution to laity. Walton Hackman, "The Right of Appeal: A Time for Testing," MCC News Service (April 3, 1970), Christian Service, II. Correspondence, Dwight Wiebe, A250.6, CMBS-F.

instructions to dismiss the indictment." The Supreme Court's decision annuls the lower court's conviction and completely dismisses all criminal charges against Jerry Penner. After six years Jerry Penner has been acquitted, justice rendered and prayers answered. The family has borne almost the entire financial load of about \$10,000; persons wishing to share in this expense with the family may channel contributions through the MCC Peace Section. This was, after all, a decision which will be of benefit not only to Jerry Penner, but to all conscientious objectors.⁴²³

For several years afterwards, the case remained in the memory of the brotherhood. Contributions continued to trickle in to MCC which were then forwarded to Penner and his family. The case that the National Interreligious Service Board for Religious Objectors had feared might erode basic protections for beliefs about participation in war had been dismissed even under the pressure of public patriotism. The Supreme Court, by accepting Griswold's recommendation, upheld conscientious objection and defused an attack that had used questionable evidence and reasoning against a particular objector. Yet, the six years it took for Penner to achieve recognition for his original declared stance was a cautionary note, however nebulous, for not only other Mennonite Brethren in general, but also Tabor College men, particularly as the demands of the Vietnam War increased.

Moreover, the case throws into sharp relief the protections afforded students at Bethel College, where students successfully argued for smoking privileges on campus in several designated areas, versus the behavioral stipulations under which many Tabor students chafed. The case is intriguing as an exercise in memory and questioning why something so significant to the history of nonresistance among college students --- and Mennonites --- has been largely forgotten. Yet it also represents the agony of a family under scrutiny as they saw their son

⁴²³ Walton Hackman, "Penner Case Acquitted and Prayers Answered," MCC News Service, July 2, 1970, 3-4.

classified, then re-classified into a position expressly against his beliefs about killing, and then placed under a lens that called his sincerity into question. Penner performed his subsequent alternative service at the Prairie View mental health facility in Newton, Kansas. But he did so apart from the Christian Service office.

Why was it so difficult for the college initially to defend him? The school faced the same dilemmas as the denominational Christian Service office run by Dwight Wiebe. For each, behavior was a strong indicator of Christian commitment and variations from strict standards called a person's faith into question. The college had emphasized clean living since its inception, with its deans of men and women alert to violations, practices that were common in Christian higher education, but that also, in other forms, were standards enforced as the *in loco parentis* rules so despised and increasingly opposed in American higher education. These values were an almost essential part of the college's identity and to deny behavioral criteria was to deny a significant part of that identity.

Moreover, on paper, the Mennonite Brethren were eager to demonstrate their respect for government and to cooperate in whatever way they could. At the same time, President Roy Just's decision in 1964 not to re-establish a 1-W unit on campus despite the earnest entreaties by Dwight Wiebe and influential others enabled the school to more easily maintain separation from the U.S. government, including potential Selective Service scrutiny. It also avoided an explicit identification with conscientious objection. The action was an adept maneuver by the college's new administration. In the short run, the college was able to sidestep the FBI's attempts to finger Penner as someone with a disciplinary problem. In the long run, the school avoided a confrontation in which it might publically have defended the essentials of conscientious objection and a concomitant peace position. Yet Dwight Wiebe was baffled by Just's reply. Was

it not an ideal situation for the college --- to house a project at Tabor College that granted conscientious objector credit to men who were working on school projects?⁴²⁴

J. Harold Sherk's reply handwritten on the back of Just's letter evidences that Just was making a decision that more completely protected the integrity of conscientious objectors --- and the essentials of a peace witness --- than a project that benefitted the brotherhood.

I don't know Roy Just's reasons for his views about 1-W men on the campus. As you know, a number of men have served in similar situations, but a number of thoughtful men question the propriety of using 1-W men in any church school on the ground that the church would not have a school except primarily in its own interests. The balancing factor is the service which the school gives to the general community.... Thoughtful church men as well as Selective Service people have been in disagreement on this matter.⁴²⁵

On the one hand, Just successfully kept the college from particular legal obligations and scrutiny by Selective Service. But, on the other hand, it meant not sponsoring a project that would have provided cheap labor and young men committed to the Mennonite Brethren vision working on campus. Was his a decision more in line with Anabaptist thinking? If so, why did the college come under the thumb of the very community that Sherk described?

Finding Faith, Raising the Flag: Conflicted Loyalties and the Intensified War

Student Phil Kliewer could not believe that the brotherhood was so unwilling to stand behind its peace commitments. A missionary kid from Zaire he clearly remembered watching the

⁴²⁴ Just's letter to Wiebe is measured, carefully cloaked as a reply to an earlier conversation: "I believe that my personal conversations with you in this regard are sufficient amplification for you to understand how we feel." Roy Just, to Dwight Wiebe, February 27, 1964, "Christian Service, Kansas: Hillsboro, Tabor College, 1959-1975, A250.6, Christian Service files, CMBS-F.

⁴²⁵ J. Harold Sherk, to Dwight Wiebe, undated reply on the verso of *ibid.*

survivors of the Stanleyville massacre that Bob Harms had enjoined Tabor students to ponder when they considered discipleship.

I was in Congo during 1964, and went to the airport in Kinshasa to count friends among the survivors of the massacre as they came out of C-130 aircraft. We didn't know how things had unfolded in the end there until survivors came off the airplanes and told their stories. A couple of the Paxmen as well as others spoke in various settings about what happened, and one told of playing dead, so that must have been Bergman. Amazing stories. I didn't know him or Bob [Harms] then, but I did meet Bob later on our way to a peace conference.⁴²⁶

Working on the Juhnke campaign in the Summer of 1970 and considering the lack of response by Mennonite Brethren to the war, Kliewer argued his case in the popular MB magazine The Christian Leader, then saw it reprised in The Mennonite. He asked Mennonites if the extent of their witness was simply personal conscientious objection or if they had a larger witness to violence as he believed his Anabaptist forefathers had:

These people were radical. By radical, I mean something drastic and extreme — without regard to personal pleasure and well-being. We are looking back at the radical commitments of the early Christians and of our Mennonite fathers and wondering whether Mennonites are radically committed, today. At present, we see the Mennonites making good commitments in areas of social concern. We see Mennonites making good commitments to other persons' relationships with God. We see Mennonites making good commitments among themselves and God. But what happened to our radical commitment to oppose violence? Did this commitment end with the alternative service act? People tell me that the government recognized us by legislating the alternative service program and respect us for our good use of it. That is all very fine, except that the recognition and respect has not gone much further than this. Were we only looking for recognition and respect?

Instead, he pushed the readers to consider the witness of the early church and its refusal to commit violence.

Obviously, our sincere but meager attempts to oppose the violence of our government has posed no real problem to the government. If we continue to enjoy

⁴²⁶ Phil Kliewer, email message to the author, October 15, 2017.

the comforts of social endorsement of our present position of indifference toward violence, Menno's dove may never again find a home with us. With this in mind, what am I asking of the Mennonite church of 1970? ... Generally, I ask that we look back to Jesus and the early Christian church and, without living in the past, be as radical in our time as they were in theirs. I ask that we look back to our Mennonite fathers and, without living in the past, be as radical in our time as they were in theirs. I ask that we not only have a faith, but that we become the faith that is within us. Therein lies the fusion of faith and works.⁴²⁷

Kliwer's letter elicited responses by three letter writers, all of whom disagreed with his interpretation. The most pointed argued that the Tabor student needed to rethink radicalism": "Please, Phil, in your Bible studies, yield your thinking to the Holy Spirit. Certainly, then you will see that the early Christians were not 'radicals' or rebels." Clearly, Kliwer was on the wrong theological track.⁴²⁸

By the time the Nixon administration began the intensified bombing of North Vietnam in December 1972, Tabor students had lined the grassy mall area with white crosses. They had been unable to protest formally in town, but they now saw, ironically, hundreds of teenagers who had arrived for the annual Tabor Youth Conference encouraged to march through Hillsboro with picket signs proclaiming evangelistic messages such as, "Jesus Christ Today," "Jesus People Unite," "Jesus Saves," and "Give Jesus a Chance," a march that featured prominently in the college yearbook. Yet activists such as Ellen Kroeker refused to let her faith be framed only in these terms. As did other Tabor students, she believed it demanded a response to the war. One of the organizers of the protest that had been countered by the Rally Round the Flag demonstration, she asked to make an announcement in chapel. She instead criticized the

⁴²⁷ Kliwer, Phil. "Did the Cat Get Menno's Dove?" The Mennonite, October 27, 1970, 657-658.

⁴²⁸ O. R. Fretz, in *ibid.*, November 17, 1970, 707.

bombings, then held onto the microphone as administrator Joel Wiebe approached to take control of the situation. She “quickly announced a prayer” and prayed, foiling the attempt to stop her speech. She was subsequently upbraided by the leader of an evangelical group on campus for “using prayer as a manipulative tool.” Student activists who attributed their conclusions about protesting the Vietnam war to their Mennonite Brethren faith had seen their hopes of walking through town and mailing letters as had been done at Bethel and Hesston thwarted. Yet they also saw that the purely evangelical messages encouraged by the student life organizers of the youth conference were not only acceptable, but encouraged. Nevertheless, activists like Ellen Kroeker were accused of using religion to manipulate a political protest.⁴²⁹

While Tabor began flying the flag intermittently during the 1970s, the issue was revived over the next two decades after the end of the war. Clarence Hiebert and other members of the faculty contested the national symbol, insisting that Christians were “world citizens.” They also questioned the singing of the “Star Spangled Banner” on campus, which was routinely done at sporting events. An attempt at compromise in the late 1970s resulted in the flagpole being moved to what was then the periphery of the campus, away from the “spiritual and intellectual focus” of the Lohrenz building, the signature classroom, chapel, and administration edifice. In 1981, the Board of Trustees recommended that “we fly the flag on campus regularly.” Although it is outside the direct scope of this analysis, the arguments presented evidenced that Tabor remained conflicted about national symbols --- and its own loyalties.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ The 1972 Tabor Bluejay, 38. Ellen Kroeker, email correspondence with author, November 11, 2008.

⁴³⁰ The compromise was informally called “The Prieb Compromise” after the man who advocated for Anabaptism and yet who was adept at keeping peace on campus. Regarding the flag and MB memory, see President Vernon Janzen Memos & Correspondence, 1980-1983.

As the Vietnam War came to a close for Americans, Mennonite Central Committee held its annual meeting on the Tabor campus in 1974. The questions loomed large and yet the minutes are chiefly silent. Only part of the meeting can be teased from other sources. Yet, the encounter was significant as the war closed. At issue was whether or not MCC should continue sending medical and material relief to North Vietnam (areas including the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) and the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG). The meeting grew heated as those Mennonites of Dutch-Russian ancestry whose families had survived communist rule in Russia early in the century argued against sending any aid to communists, while others contended that Mennonites had sent relief to areas "In the Name of Christ" that they could not control. Distribution was not always as tidy as contributors desired. Yet, behind the exchange was the larger question: who is our enemy? Could Mennonites agree to now heal the wounds of war? And, where did their citizenship lie? In the local community or state? Or in a world citizenship that occupied a far larger public square?⁴³¹

The college struggled to align itself with these larger imperatives, agreeing to do so when it involved evangelism and visions of mission, and attempting to implement curricular innovations that would attract and retain students. But in the short run, there was little room for

"Rational for Flying the U.S. Flag on the Tabor Campus in the Area Southwest of the Gymnasium Entrance." CMBS Tabor Register I.D.:2:11. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Hillsboro, KS. Although the flag was not always flown, it is interesting to note that the memo states: "Tabor College has never quit flying the flag and acknowledging national respect. Though flying the flag on the flagpole in front of the main administration building was discontinued some years ago due to maintenance problems, the flag has continued to fly and the national anthem has continued to sound forth in our gymnasium and our stadium at major athletic events attended by the public."

⁴³¹ MCC, Minutes of the Annual Meeting, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1974, 3. MCC Annual Meetings. MCC; Kreider and Goossen, Hungry, 154-155; Dyck, memorandum to Executive Office, April 3, 1975, 1-2. MCC, Vietnam, 1975, 190/26, IX-6-3. MCC.

the realities of a war in Vietnam. Neither the brotherhood nor the college leadership was able to risk the debate in which the other schools and their brotherhoods engaged. In spite of the ongoing attempts to prove they were loyal American citizens, they did not support their young people who needed a place for dissent. Instead, both faith and a rigorous and questioning patriotism was hedged by the conformity of a small town. In this case, Anabaptism was subsumed by the desire to survive.

Chapter 5 -- Conclusion

Reflecting on the twentieth anniversary of the Free Speech Movement, Berkeley historian Leon Litwack in *California Monthly* (December 1984) commented on what he saw as the ongoing attempts during the 1980s to re-cast the 1960s as a time of immoral disruption and social chaos:

What is happening now in the Reagan era, is that people are trying to reinterpret the sixties as a period of excess: We over-reached ourselves; the war on poverty was misguided altruism; the civil rights movement demanded too much too fast; the movement descended into apocalyptic fantasy; the counter culture died from an overdose; the antiwar movement made us soft and flabby; I don't agree. I think few generations cared more about this country. It was a generation that opted for the highest kind of loyalty. It defined loyalty to one's country as disloyalty to its pretenses, a willingness to unmask its leaders, a calling to subject its institutions to critical examination. That, to me, is real patriotism.⁴³²

Litwack's comments parallel what American religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom had not completely articulated, but which was embedded in his argument about the 1960s as the end of American Puritanism. He saw the decade as a time of disorder --- not only the disorder that President Richard Nixon used in his campaign in favor of "law and order" and which has remained in American memory as the chief characteristic of the decade, but also the disorder of injustice that underlay the fierce and remembered public discontent. For Mennonites, these questions intersected with the anxieties raised as a result of their persecution for their antiwar beliefs, first in the two World Wars, and then, postwar in the uneasy patriotism of the Cold War. They attempted to negotiate enough of a common identity to gain the protection of the U.S. government during the wars, but, in fact chose different paths to realizing their beliefs. These were dependent not only their views of polity, but their acculturation to American Christianity,

⁴³² Leon Litwack, "Facing the Issue: 20 Years Later," *California Monthly* 95, no. 2 (December 1984), 16.

and in particular evangelicalism. While two of the groups directly engaged the “Anabaptist vision” that was both an attempt to define and appropriate a theological heritage and a means by which to engage what it meant to be a people of “peace” in the twentieth century, the third struggled even to keep the connections in place that enabled discussion, disagreement, and consensus. In spite of the shared experiences of Civilian Public Service camps and the attempts by Mennonite leadership to create a common understanding of a peace witness, the ability to engage in dialog and respond to internal and external pressure varied by denomination --- and by their colleges.

This evaluation of the impact of the long Vietnam War on Mennonite colleges in Kansas reveals an attempt to come to grips with both kinds of disorder and to decide which narrative is the one most endorsed by denominations that had only recently emerged from what were called brotherhoods. The tension between communal harmony and the challenge of identity formation issued by the “Anabaptist Vision” within each group was manifested in different ways. On the one hand, the three colleges in Kansas, shared common views about a radical Christianity rooted in the early church, but on the other, each struggled with how that was demonstrated --- both internally and externally. Was it essential to be a witness and, if so, what kind of witness? How did the public square fit into their beliefs that they were a peculiar people, and particularly in their historical opposition to war?

In spite of the common visions each had articulated in favor of the liberal arts and the kind of inquiry that was necessary to intellectual and spiritual growth, in practice they formed campuses that approached learning in different ways --- and teaching peace as an outcome of Mennonite identity in starkly variant manners. Although these resulted from denominational decisions, which included the impact of external forces such as American fundamentalism, they

also were dependent on local factors. In part, for the GCs and the MBs, this was not only due to congregational structures of decision-making that diffused centralized authority (and the creation of theological vision), but also derived from the largely self-contained, self-governing community structures in Russia that enabled a self-referent autonomy. The GCs in their more expansive vision and alliance with other progressives faced outward. The MBs struggled with whether or not they wanted to interact with other Mennonites, even as they embraced aspects of American fundamentalism (then evangelicalism) that paralleled their own interests. For all three brotherhoods, how they taught peace was an outgrowth of their interactions with their local communities. The colleges both formed and were formed by the towns in which they were situated. Because each had chosen its own location and geographical setting, how the town served the gown and how the gown served the town was a complex combination of variables, a process that was further complicated by American warfare.

From a social science perspective, this study affirms the importance of ideal or cultural factors as motivators in social change. In this case, each college drew on its vision of itself and how it looked at peace using the resources available through peace actors on campus, the denomination, its local community, and the willingness to take the risks necessary to manage conflict. Yet they all derived additional justifications for their decisions from outside influences and whether or not they perceived those influences as a disorder to be embraced or one to be rejected. These included the antiwar movement (both sacred and secular streams within it), the reports of Mennonite service workers and missionaries in Vietnam, denominational views of political involvement, their loyalties as Americans, and the towns in which each was situated.⁴³³

⁴³³ Kniss, Fred, "Ideas and Symbols as Resources in Intrareligious Conflict: The Case of American Mennonites." *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 1 (1996): 7-23.

DeBenedetti's argument that "the experience refined in civil rights was critical in positioning radical pacifism within the changing peace movement" in the early 1960s is evidenced in part by some pieces of the Kansas Mennonite college engagement with culture. Antiwar activists among faculty and students at Bethel drew from their experiences with the civil rights movement, as did those at Hesston. The incident at Nashville's Allen Hotel during the annual Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship in 1961 put Mennonite ideas of nonresistance to the test and disabused future faculty at Bethel of the notion of simply a personal peace. Likewise, the participation of Bethel faculty and students in civil rights movement demonstrations and the insistent eloquence in word and deed by activist Vincent Harding incorporated students from all three colleges in the larger peace movement.⁴³⁴

The schools and denominations also evidenced both the dilemma of antiwar witness and the entanglements of the sacred and secular antiwar movements. Faculty at all three campuses had performed conscientious objection through Civilian Public Service camps, Pax, or Voluntary Service, thus participating in what each brotherhood considered appropriate Mennonite witness. While MBs continued to maintain that the best form of witness was through the denomination's alternative service program, both GCs and MCs stretched beyond simple job placements as the only valid witness. The MCs issued a historic statement supporting those who saw noncooperation as the means to stay untangled from a warfare society, while the GC college

⁴³⁴ Although DeBenedetti focuses on "radical pacifism" as the use of Gandhi's nonviolent direct action by groups such as FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation), CORE (Congress on Racial Equality), and SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), he also includes the early efforts by Quaker individuals and groups such as the newly formed SPU (Student Peace Union) both to address disarmament and to engage in an immediate, highly personalized contact with one of Chicago's black ghettos. DeBenedetti, American Ordeal, 40-43.

tacitly endorsed that same witness even when it involved prison, with both faculty and students serving prison time as a more faithful witness to a system of war.

Moreover, a careful reading of those who chose to protest, particularly those at Bethel, reveals that both religious and secular pacifism influenced their actions. Reflecting the complex mix of individuals and actors that were among the first to protest and then those who sustained protest finds the religious pacifists of Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom as significant influences, with Mennonite Central Committee (particularly, its Peace Section) educational projects that put students directly in touch with Vietnam Service workers an additional influential actor. Likewise, the War Resisters League, brief encounters with Students for a Democratic Society, and, as the Bethel peace club discovered, badly needed assistance from the Black Panthers and a bus of Trotskyites, were among the secular pacifist connections. The most significant influencers, however, were the Quakers and Mennonites, either as individuals or, particularly in the case of the former, in organizations like the American Friends Service Committee. Thus, the study indicates that it is too easy of a conclusion to simply state that the colleges were emulating national movements and secular actors.

Tabor, unlike Bethel and Hesston, could not resolve its tensions. While the GC Mennonite Church and MC Mennonites had responded to the escalating war and the growing conviction that the U.S. government was demanding an allegiance the church could not give, the Mennonite Brethren were torn. Even as the GC and MC Mennonite discussions were by no means univocal, the Mennonite Brethren tabled a decision. They apparently could not act decisively. Although Hesston College enrollment continued to grow, both Bethel and Tabor

struggled financially. The former's woes were attributed to its activism in 1968 and 1969, but the denomination made an unprecedented move not only to guarantee and pay its debts, but also to help actively recruit students, thus flying in the face of those who were critical of Bethel's activism. The result was that Bethel was able to continue anti-war activities, to begin to repair relationships with the town and with its larger constituency, and to establish a new Peace Studies Program as part of the college curriculum. For many, the college remained suspect even as its denominational conference moved to support it. Hesston achieved a stance in line with denominational nonconformity, quietly resolving the conflict over the flag by removing it as a sovereign national symbol and maintaining that the state could not take precedence in matters of conscience and divided loyalties.

Examining this contested ground as it played out at Tabor College during the Vietnam War offers a counterpoint to the assertion that the Mennonite Brethren easily yielded to the larger religious or national culture. Yet, it also raises questions about the extended meaning of non-resistance so artfully reinterpreted by the MC Mennonite Church and by the GC Mennonite Church and whether the larger church environments in the three towns were able to contribute to this engaged or even activist re-interpretation.

In Hillsboro, the appearance of the highly influential banker in the Tabor story suggests that the college was under pressure to conform to the community. It was the only one of the schools in which townspeople were allowed to hold a counterdemonstration on campus. Had the Mennonite Brethren been certain of their theological stance, perhaps they would have taken the risk both to anger the community and then attempt to repair relationships as was done in both Bethel and Hesston. That decision would assume the group's vision was not conflicted. But it was. The Mennonite Brethren were torn as the other fellowships were: between private and

public peacemaking, between piety and social concern, and between keeping the peace within a congregation and disturbing it. Unlike Bethel and Hesston, whose leadership had recast the definition of patriotism to encompass ideas about justice and freedom that were consistent with an Anabaptist heritage, Tabor floundered. The questions proffered at the Hershey-Brunk forum in 1962 had been framed simply: “Survival And Religious Freedom” by Hershey, and “Survival ... Christian Witness” by Brunk. Tabor could only choose “Survival” and because of that ambivalence refused to make a decision on the war, or in doing so, raise disturbing questions about its own identity. It was caught between its Anabaptism and the pressures to conform to the community, local and national. It could not risk redefining patriotism and it could not risk removing its symbol altogether. The flag was down, then up, then erratically flown, then flown not at all, then flown, but with a caveat. Two schools could make a clear commitment to Anabaptism, but the third made no commitment and hence aligned itself with the majority culture.

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Appendix A - Interviews and Correspondence

Interviews and correspondence are in the possession of the author, including those conducted under the stipulation of anonymity. Notes and files will eventually be deposited with the Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS unless otherwise stipulated by the respondent.

INTERVIEWS

37 Interviews

CORRESPONDENCE

58 sets of correspondence, chiefly email

Appendix B - Mennonite Immigration to the United States

1.	Lower Rhine to Germantown (1683-1702)	200.00
2.	Swiss and Palatine Mennonites to Eastern Pa. (1707-56)	4,000.00
3.	Swiss and Palatine Amish to Eastern Pa. (1738-56)	200.00
4.	Alsace-Lorraine, Hessian and Bavarian Amish to Western Pa., Ohio, Illinois, Iowa (1815-60)	2,700.00
5.	Swiss Mennonites to Ohio and Indiana (1817-60)	500.00
6.	Palatine Mennonites to Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa (1825-60)	200.00
7.	Prussian Mennonites to Nebraska and Kansas (1874-60)	300.00
8.	Russian Mennonites to the prairie states (1874-80)	10,000.00
9.	Russian Mennonites to Reedley, California (1930)	256.00
10.	Scattered individuals (second half of the 19th century) from Germany, Switzerland, France, and Russia to states west of the Mississippi	200.00
		18,556.00

John A. Toews, History of the Mennonite Brethren Church (Fresno, CA: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Church, 1975), 131. Toews cited data from Mennonite Encyclopedia, IV, 777 ("with slight revisions"). Toews, 449n6.

Appendix C - Timeline of Related Events (Selective)

	Vietnam	Asia	United States	Other Nations	Kansas	Military Draft	Kansas Mennonite Colleges (and Denominational Action)
1940						FDR signed Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 which established the Selective Service as an independent govt agency	
1940s	Vietminh fight Japanese						
1954	Vietnam partitioned						MCC begins work, aid in S. Vietnam via Delbert Wiens, et. al.
1961			<i>Bay of Pigs operation in Cuba failed</i>	<i>Berlin wall erected Aug 1961</i>			
1962							Tabor College hosts annual IPF in March
1962 (mid-year)	American advisors in Vietnam increased from 700 to 12,000						
1962 (May 30)	Mennonite Pax man Daniel Gerber & two others abducted from CMA leprosarium near Ban Me Thuot; none ever seen again						widely reported in Mennonite press
1962 (Sept.)							Tabor College hosts forum with Hershey and Brunk attended by 2800-3000
1963							
1963 (fall)	12,000 American advisors		<i>\$400M for Vietnam</i>				Dwight Platt (Biology professor at Bethel) and family walk in March on Washington
1963 (Nov. 2)	Ngo Dinh Diem assassinated						Howard Jost, "Montage: Vietnam, the Beautiful," <i>The View</i>, November 14, 1963, 3; FIRST Mennonite college statement on Vietnam
1963 (Nov. 22)			<i>JFK assassinated</i>				
1963 (Dec.)	15,000 American advisors in Vietnam		<i>\$500M in aid to S. Vietnam during the year</i>				
1964							
1964 (August)			<i>Tonkin Gulf resolution</i>				
1964 (Oct.-Dec.)		China explodes 1st atomic bomb					
1964 (October)			<i>LBJ continues to reject raids against N. Vietnam</i>				

	Vietnam	Asia	United States	Other Nations	Kansas	Military Draft	Kansas Mennonite Colleges (and Denominational Action)
1964 (Nov.)			<i>LBJ beats Goldwater</i>				
1965	S. Vietnam government unstable						
1965 (Feb.)	Operation Rolling Thunder (sustained bombing N. Vietnam)						
1965 (March)	First American troops in Vietnam at Danang						Bethel students and faculty in civil rights march in Montgomery, Alabama; then march in Topeka for fair housing; in November join protest in DC
1965 (December)	Nearly 200,000 American troops in Vietnam						
1966							
1966 (January)			<i>14 Senators signed letter to LBJ to cease air strikes against N. Vietnam & to push for diplomatic solution</i>				GC and MC Peace and Social Committees publish joint issues of <u>The Mennonite</u> and <u>Gospel Herald</u> on Vietnam; IPF annual meeting at Bethel in March 1966
			<i>LBJ resumed bombing; RFK broke with LBJ</i>				
1966 (June)			<i>Johnson meets with Kosygin for 2 days</i>				
1966 (Nov. 11)							Bethel Peace Club sponsored "Repentance Walk and Mail" in North Newton; VFW holds parade in Newton
1966 (December)	Nearly 400,000 American troops in Vietnam						The Mennonite editorial on Mennonite Church not risking its reputation; supports Bethel PC students
1967							
1967 (January)							13 members of the Bethel Peace Club participate in march at Leavenworth; includes Hesston students and students from 5 other states on January 7
1967 (April)							Bethel PC holds "Supper of Sharing" on April 15, in conjunction with The Mobe
1967 (Oct.)			<i>LBJ infuriated by 50,000 protestors in DC</i>			Hershey implements "punitive reclassification" for resisters	
							Bethel holds Vietnam Teach-In November 28-30; 5 faculty and Maynard Shelly
1967 (Dec.)	Dak Soon massacre (NLF) -- 250+ civilians killed						GC Council of Boards recommends medical aid to N. Vietnam
	Nearly 500,000 American troops in Vietnam						
1968							MCC office opens in Washington, DC
1968 (January)		Pueblo seized by North Korea					
1968 (Jan.-Sept.)	Tet Offensive						
1968 (Feb-March)			<i>Westmoreland req. 240,000 additional troops</i>				

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1968 (March)	My Lai massacre (U.S.) -- approx. 345-500 unarmed civilians killed						GC holds Peacemaker workshops in Newton-Hesston
1968 (April)			<i>MLK, Jr. assassinated (Memphis)</i>				Kansas Council of Churches meets on Vietnam
1968 (May)							50th anniversary of WWI CO in Hesston celebrated
1968 (June)			<i>RFK assassinated (Los Angeles)</i>				Lorraine Ave. Church in Wichita establishes VS unit
1968 (August)			<i>Democratic National Convention (Chicago)</i>				
1968 (Sept.)							Joint Mennonite exhibit at Kansas State Fair on 6 themes, incl. Vietnam
1968 (Oct.)							Western District Conference begins to consider selective CO
1968 (Nov.)			<i>Nixon elected over Humphrey & Wallace</i>		<i>2 large Vet Day marches in Lawrence: pro- and con-</i>	Billy Graham appeals for exemptions for 4,000 Campus Crusaders	
1968 (Dec.)	540,000 American troops in Vietnam						4 Bethel males suspended & expelled for smoking. Western District finalizes language in support of selective CO position
1969							
1969 (March)							MB conference rejected student statements on draft resistance
1969 (March)							the three colleges attend IPF annual meeting
1969 (May)							Bethel holds a reading of the war dead on the last day of classes (organized by Jim Juhnke)
1969 Summer			<i>Vietnam Moratorium Committee formed</i>				
1969 (August)							MC General Assembly statement at Turner, Oregon, "non-coop. as valid witness"
1969 (Sept.)	Ho Chi Minh dies						Bethel students, admin meet with Newton city officials, Menno churches to gain acceptance for march to Wichita; Hesston PC pledges 20-30 participants; Hesston students hoist DRVN flag on campus; Vern Bender flag crusade
1969 (Sept.)							Earl Martin and Pat Hostetter Martin chapel program at HC
1969 (Oct.)							
			<i>Vietnam Moratorium Committee names Bethel student Bob Mayer as</i>				Bethel student Bob Mayer named Kansas coordinator for the moratorium by the national committee

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			<i>coordinator for the Moratorium for Kansas</i>				
1969 (Oct 7)							Bethel faculty agree to support Student Council proposal for Moratorium events
1969 (Oct 10)						Hershey refused to quit; reassigned by Nixon	GC Western District Conf. accepts "total noncooperation with Selective Service" by individual conscience, but opposes protests
1969 (Oct 13-15)							Bethel holds Moratorium events and Walk to Wichita; Hesston holds Moratorium events (John Lapp MCC Peace Section in chapel,; coffee house pro-war speaker; dramatic dialogue; memorial-commitment service)
1969 "late"							Doug Hostetter appears in Tabor chapel; is on lecture circuit for MCC
1969 (Nov)			<i>Nixon "Silent Majority" speech (Nov. 3)</i>				HC students & faculty march to Hesston Post Office; 525 Mennonite students and VS workers march in MOBE & DC Peace march (34 Bethel students), "March Against Death" (Nov. 13-15); MCC in Chicago called alternative service into question (Nov. 20-22); Pacific District (MB) re-affirms Selective Service system and support for government MB Southern District affirms support for government MB Pacific District 'spiritual support" for resisters
1969 (Dec.)	480,000 American troops in Vietnam					First lottery draft held	Hesston PC sponsors debate in flying US flag
1970							
1970 (March)		Nixon [secretly] bombs Cambodia					
1970 (April)		Nixon invades Cambodia				<i>KU Student Union set on fire, April 20, 1970</i>	
1970 (May 7)			<i>4 protesters killed at Kent State University</i>				James Juhnke accepts invitation to teach at TC that fall (1970); speaks at outdoor protest rally on Cambodia at TC; Juhnke threatened by police in HB; Dean withdraws invite.
							Tabor students hold flag protest and townspeople hold counter-protest, "Rally Round the Flag"
1970 (May 28)			<i>Nixon appears at Billy Graham rally at Univ Tenn</i>				
1970 (June 4)			<i>Billy Graham & Bob Hope announce Honor America Day, with Hope emphasizing Rally Round the Flag for all Americans</i>				

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1970 (July 4)			"Honor America Day" in Washington DC, highlighted by Billy Graham & interfaith morning services at Lincoln Memorial				
1970 (Dec.)	280,000 American troops in Vietnam						
1971							
1971 (April)			Vietnam Veterans against the War				
1971 (Dec.)	140,000 American troops in Vietnam						
1972							
1972 (Feb.)		Nixon to China					
1972 (Nov.)			Nixon re-elected over George McGovern				
1972 (Dec.18-29)	"Christmas bombing" of N. Vietnam						Bethel College funds Peace Studies program
1973						All volunteer military	
1973 (Jan.)	cease fire signed in Paris		Nixon secretly promised \$4.7B in 'war reparations'				
1973 (March)	Last American troops leave Vietnam						
1973 (April)	Last American POWs released in Hanoi						
1973 (Nov.)			Congress overrides Nixon's veto of "law limiting the president's right to wage war."				
1974							
1974 (August)			Nixon resigns				
1975							
1975 (April)	Saigon falls	Phnom Penh falls to Khmer Rouge					
1978	Vietnam invaded Cambodia						

