

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

‘A Pure Fellowship’: The Danger and Necessity of Purity in White and
African-American Mennonite Racial Exchange, 1935-1971

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of History and Religion

By

Tobin Miller Shearer

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

June 2008

© Copyright by Tobin Miller Shearer 2008
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

‘A Pure Fellowship’: The Danger and Necessity of Purity in White and
African-American Mennonite Racial Exchange, 1935-1971

Tobin Miller Shearer

“How did the Civil Rights Movement bring about change?” In answer to that question, this dissertation argues that the splintering of purity rhetoric within the intimate environments of home and sanctuary both inhibited and empowered white and African-American religious practitioners to seek social change. To make this argument, this project follows the purity-focused activity of white and African-American Mennonites through the long civil rights era. Building on the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, this dissertation focus on Mennonites’ multiple expressions of purity – defined here as a cultural value that orders society by defining group boundaries – through racially focused clothing restrictions, marriage practices, interracial congregations, evangelism initiatives, and service programs. Based on oral histories, photographs, diaries, and denominational records, this work demonstrates how purity values changed over time. The record of this change reveals how religious actors shifted their attention from maintaining racially untainted blood in the 1930s, to bolstering homogeneous fellowships in the 1940s, to protecting female chastity in the 1950s, and then to managing a splintered religious rhetoric in the 1960s. That rhetoric reveals a set of theologically expressed purity forms – in religious, sexual, racial, and ethical manifestations – alongside a rule-based purity heuristic

focused on establishing protective group boundaries. This study thus reveals a striking continuity: the danger and necessity of purity remained interlocked for four decades. Each time an expression of purity attracted African Americans to the church, another purity expression blocked their entrance.

The argument advanced by this dissertation thus repositions the existing historiography of the Civil Rights Movement by shifting attention away from the public drama of street marches and civil arrests and toward the quotidian negotiation of family meals and evening devotions. Because their convictions forced them to make daily decisions between racial engagement and separatist conviction, Mennonites offer unique insight into the social tensions introduced by religious belief. In the intimate environments of living rooms, porches, sanctuaries, and offices, commitments to racial egalitarianism received bracing challenge. Through interrogation of these sites, I show how change was prompted in the streets but realized in the home, church, and work environment.

*To the African-American and white Mennonites
who struggled to build an interracial church
in a segregated society*

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	8
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	11
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	13
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION – THE DANGER (AND NECESSITY) OF PURITY: PLACING RELIGIOUS VALUES IN MENNONITE AND CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY	17
2. PURITY IN TIME: AN OVERVIEW OF WHITE AND AFRICAN- AMERICAN MENNONITE EXCHANGE, 1918-1971	35
1918-1943 – Separation Era: Deliberate Segregation, Overt Participation in the Racial Order, Initial Resistance	37
1944-1949 – Era of Evangelism: Church Planting, Segregation Debates, Spectacle.....	39
1950-1955 – Hershberger Intervention: Organization, Purity, and Correction	43
1956-1962 – Pastoral Era: Promise, Integration, and Calls to Action.....	50
1963-1965 – Harding Ascendancy: Crisis, Movement Traction, and Debate.....	54
1966-1971 – Era of Minority Ministries Council: Rise and Reaction to Black Power	57
3. “FOR THE PURIFICATION OF MY SOUL”: REFRAMING WOMEN’S RESISTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES RACIAL ORDER.....	62
4. “IT MUST BE THE PURE STUFF”: FRESH AIR RURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AS CIVIL RIGHTS INOCULATION, 1950-1971	121
5. MOVING BEYOND CHARISMA IN CIVIL RIGHTS SCHOLARSHIP: VINCENT HARDING’S SOJOURN WITH THE MENNONITES, 1958-1966	166

6. FROM POLLUTANTS TO PURIFIERS: INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND THE MENNONITE CHURCH, 1930-1971	219
7. INTEGRATED HOURS: RACIAL INTEGRATION AND BLACK POWER IN TWO CHICAGOLAND MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS	262
8. A CONVERSATION ABOUT MONEY AND VIOLENCE: REFRAMING THE BLACK MANIFESTO, 1965-1971	323
9. CONCLUSION – ‘A PURE FELLOWSHIP’ REVISITED: UNPACKING THE DANGER AND THE NECESSITY OF PURITY	387

Appendix

1. MENNONITE PRESS TITLES ON RACIAL THEMES, 1940-1971	410
2. LIST OF MENNONITE STATEMENTS ON RACIAL THEMES	432
3. BLACK MANIFESTO TO THE WHITE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND ALL OTHER RACIST INSTITUTIONS	455
4. LIST OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS	466
AUTHOR VITA	469

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although I wrote this dissertation in the solitary confines of a Northwestern library carrel with a gorgeous view of Lake Michigan and in a cement-block sunroom sometimes shaded by an overcup Oak tree, I also wrote in the midst of a crowd of interlocutors and supporters. The naming of these friends and colleagues does not erase my debt to them, but it does acknowledge their support and critical feedback.

I begin first with deep appreciation for the co-chairs of my committee, Josef Barton and Cristina Traina. Their persistent feedback, careful prodding, and gracious collaboration – both with me and with each other – modeled the best intellectual formation the academy has to offer. In addition, Sarah Taylor and Fred Kniss have given feedback and counsel along the way and shaped the project by offering their unwavering support, reading my monthly progress updates, and believing that I could write this history.

Many others have read and responded to portions of this work. Members of the Northwestern History Department's dissertators group, run by Michael Sherry, prompted me to write for an audience who knew very little about Mennonites and to do so with the best prose I had to offer. Thanks in particular to my American history cohort members: Charlotte Cahill, David Davidson, Michael Green, Marygrace Tyrrell, and David Sellers Smith. Several Mennonite scholars offered perspicacious commentary including Jeffery Gingerich, Felipe Hinojosa, Steve Nolt, and Regina Shands Stoltzfus. I am also grateful for the counsel and feedback from members of the Center for African-American History's dissertators group

including Justin Behrend, Janaka Bowman, Sarah Blackwood, Katy Chiles, Carole Emberton, Erik Gellman, Kamasi Hill, Kate Masur, Sarah Mesle, Mshai Mwangola, Jarod Roll, Crystal Sanders, and Dana Wiener. The camaraderie and interdisciplinary feedback from Jonathan Adler, Michelle Albaugh, and Lisbeth Goble also helped me think outside the disciplinary boxes in which I spend my days. The commentary and feedback offered by members of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Illinois, about a chapter that opened their internal story to external scrutiny was likewise invaluable. Thanks in particular to careful readers, encouragers, and providers of access to church records like Steve Buchtel, Don Burklow, Grace Burklow, Laura Devine, Mike Devine, Norma Devine, David Ewert, Karen Ewert, Ken Hawkley, Louise Hawkley, Dolores Mares, Jerry Mares, Bonnie Neufeld, Chuck Neufeld, Mertis Odom, Dave Suter, Marlene Suter, Keith Wilson, Jane Voth, and Mary Ann Woods.

I have also benefited from the expert knowledge of many archivists. I am particularly grateful for the leads that Carolyn C. Wenger at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society offered me, for similar guidance from Dennis Stoesz at the Mennonite Church archives in Goshen, Indiana, and for counsel from John D. Thiesen at the Mennonite Church archives in Newton, Kansas. Jim Lehman offered expert counsel at the Virginia Mennonite Conference archives in Harrisonburg, Virginia, as did Harold Huber and Nate Yoder in the archives of Eastern Mennonite University in the same city. Likewise, Lamar Myers gave me unfettered access to the record room in the basement of Eastern Mennonite Missions in Salunga, Pennsylvania. Erin Miller and Joe Springer from the Mennonite Historical Library housed at Goshen College not only included me in their coffee break but sent race-related material my way because they thought it would be helpful (and it was).

Forty-five individuals participated in oral history interviews that informed and helped shape this project. Thanks to all for your focused attention, ready trust, and willing reflection. A complete list of participants is included in the appendix.

I received funding to make this project possible from a variety of sources. The Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment-funded program for the study of American religious institutions based at Louisville Seminary in Kentucky, provided me with a year's worth of support. I also received a two-year Presidential Fellowship from Northwestern University that allowed me to concentrate my energies full-time on this project. Northwestern's History Department, Religion Department, Department of African-American Studies, Internet Technologies Humanities Committee, and Graduate School contributed to this project through a variety of travel, research, and technology grants.

Other friends, colleagues, and acquaintances offered support in concrete and more intangible ways. Thanks to Neeraja Aravamudan, Michelle Armster, Rick Derksen, Jeanette Jazkula, Kate Mesler, Thulani Moore, Michael Nichols, Lora Walsh, and James Logan. To the cadre of proofreaders who helped catch typos, grammatical errors, and issues of punctuation – thanks. That means you Charlotte Cahill, David Davidson, Marci Frederick, Michael Green, Suzanne Lavere, Kate Mesler, Cheryl Miller Shearer, David Smith, and Lora Walsh.

Finally, I owe a deep debt to my family. For transcribing manuscripts, for listening to me drone on about Mennonites and race at the dinner table, and for providing me with much joy by stopping in my office to tell me something about your days at school, thank you Dylan and Zachary. For paying the bills, listening to my doubts and uncertainties, laughing when I got overwhelmed, and keeping me grounded, thank you, Cheryl. You are amazing.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMC	Archives of the Mennonite Church USA located on the campus of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana
CESR	Committee on Economic and Social Relations, a national committee of the (Old) Mennonite Church
CHM	Commission on Home Ministries, the domestic service board of the General Conference Mennonite Church
CMC	Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Illinois
CPSC	Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, a committee of the (Old) Mennonite Church
EMBMC	Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the Lancaster Conference's mission agency
EMM	Eastern Mennonite Missions, the mission agency of the Lancaster Conference of Mennonite Church USA, located in Salunga, Pennsylvania
EMU	Eastern Mennonite University located in Harrisonburg, Virginia
GC	the General Conference Mennonite Church denomination
LMHS	Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania
MB	Mennonite Brethren denomination
MBM	Mennonite Board of Missions, the former mission board of the (Old) Mennonite Church
MBMC	Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and older name of MBM
MC	Mennonite Church denomination (also OMC)
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee, the relief and development organization of the Mennonite family of churches located in Akron, Pennsylvania

MDS	Mennonite Disaster Service, a disaster response organization of the Mennonite family of churches
MLA	Mennonite Library and Archives of the Mennonite Church USA located on the campus of Bethel College, Newton, Kansas
NCC	National Council of Churches
OMC	(Old) Mennonite Church denomination (also MC)
PSC	Peace and Social Concerns, a shortened form of CPSC
SCCO	Study Commission on Church Organization, a committee tasked with examining (Old) Mennonite Church organizational issues in the early 1970s
VS	Voluntary Service

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1	Nettie Taylor, circa 1961.....	17
2	Pruitt-Igoe Housing Complex, circa 1961	18
3	Bethesda Mennonite Church, circa 1961	33
4	Mennonite Press Coverage, Periodization, and Significant Race-Related Events: 1940-1971	36
5	Ruth Peachey, Estella Land, Lewis Madden, Paul Yoder, 1947.....	43
6	Rowena and James Lark, circa 1947	44
7	Rosella Reimer, Jeanette Richert, Lois Musselman, and unnamed children from Gulfport, Mississippi, 1947.....	45
8	Rowena Lark and Fannie Swartzentruber with Homer and Nancy Swartzentruber, 1939.....	69
9	Ernest and Fannie Swartzentruber, circa 1935.....	70
10	Gay Street Mission vacation bible school, 1939	76
11	Roberta Webb and daughters, Nancy, Peggy, and Ada, circa 1940s.....	83
12	Rowena and James Lark, circa 1947	89
13	James Lark, circa 1947	91
14	Ruth Peachey, Estella Land, Lewis Madden, Paul Yoder, 1947.....	92
15	Ada Webb, 1949.....	94
16	Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Kimbrough, circa 1953.....	99
17	Roberta Lark and bible club members, circa 1953.....	100

18	Roberta Lark and sewing circle members, circa 1953.....	101
19	Rowena Lark, 1956.....	105
20	Claudia Watkins and Lee Heights Sunday school class members, 1961.....	107
21	Mrs. Lewis, Nancy Lewis, Earl F. Lewis, Frank Lewis, and Roberta Webb, 1961	108
22	Peggy and Billy Curry and children, 1961.....	109
23	Seymour family, 1962.....	110
24	Vincent, Rosemarie, and Rachel Harding, 1963	113
25	Elvin Martin, Mrs. Elvin Martin, Betty Gwinn, and Macon Gwinn, 1970	115
26	Mose Brown, Malachi Brown, and Willie Brown, circa 1934.....	129
27	Evelyn Jason, Marion Jason, and Norma Jason, circa 1934	130
28	Albert Potts, 1961	137
29	Unnamed Camp Landon workers and Gulfport, Mississippi, kindergartners, 1960	138
30	Moundridge, Kansas, Fresh Air group, 1960.....	139
31	Goessel, Kansas, Fresh Air group, 1960.....	140
32	Stanley Voth, Albert Potts, Eugene Voth, Linda Voth, Elmer Voth, 1961	141
33	Unnamed Fresh Air hosts and guests, 1965	146
34	Unnamed Camp Hebron guest, 1964.....	148
35	Unnamed Fresh Air prospective participants, 1965	149
36	Unnamed Gulfport, Mississippi, Fresh Air participants, 1969	155
37	Margie Middleton and her daughter Karen, 1977	157

38	Delton Franz, Elmer Neufeld, Ed Riddick, Glen Boese, and Vincent Harding, 1959.....	174
39	Vincent and Rosemarie Harding, 1962.....	180
40	Unnamed Camp Landon worker and Gulfport, Mississippi, children, 1962	182
41	Gulfport, Mississippi, Camp Landon unit, 1960	183
42	Vincent, Rosemarie, and Rachel Harding, 1963	188
43	Spiritual Life Conference flier for Rev. Vincent Harding, 1963.....	189
44	Truman Brunk, Nelson Kauffman, and Peter Ediger, 1964.....	210
45	Andrews Bridge Sunday School class, circa 1940s.....	227
46	Unnamed members of Andrews Bridge baptismal class, circa 1940s.....	228
47	Unnamed Gladstone Mennonite Church Voluntary Service Unit members, 1953	232
48	Gerald and Annabelle Hughes, 1954.....	235
49	“The Mennonite Churches and Race” participants, 1959.....	242
50	Lee Roy Berry, 1968.....	249
51	A sample of Chicago Mennonites, 1953.....	270
52	Vincent Harding and Delton Franz, 1957	273
53	Community Mennonite group portrait, circa 1959.....	276
54	Margaret Harder, Joyce Goertzen, and unnamed Woodlawn neighborhood children, 1964.....	291
55	Martin Luther King, Jr., and Delton Franz, 1965	293
56	Jesse Jackson, Delton Franz, and other church dignitaries, 1970	303
57	Curtis Burrell, 1971	305
58	Larry Voth and Community Mennonite members, circa 1960s.....	306

59	Paul G. Landis and John W. Eby, 1964	329
60	Urban Racial Gathering participants, 1965.....	331
61a	Lancaster Conference Peace Committee letter in response to the Black Manifesto, 1969.....	346
61b	Ibid.....	347
62	John Powell, 1969.....	355
63	Nettie Taylor, Susie Smith, June Swartzentruber, Louis Gray, Rowena Lark, 1957	387
64	Tony Miller, Luis Gonzales, and Ronald Johnson, 1981.....	400

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION – THE DANGER (AND NECESSITY) OF PURITY:
PLACING RELIGIOUS VALUES IN MENNONITE AND CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY

Nettie Taylor found a “pure fellowship” at Bethesda Mennonite Church in the late 1950s. An African-American resident of St. Louis’s Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project, Taylor had worshipped in a Baptist congregation for several years (see Figure 1). Upon encountering this Mennonite congregation – whose members, she said, cared for each other in good and bad times – Taylor joined the church. Over the next four years, she also recruited twenty new members from inhabitants of the project’s 2,870 apartments (see Figure 2). In Pruitt-Igoe’s fifty-acre field of segregated housing, African-American church leaders James and Rowena Lark had founded the congregation in 1956.¹ Before the end of the following year, pastor Hubert Schwartzenruber, a white Mennonite, took over leadership. Situated within a structural remnant of



Figure 1: Nettie Taylor, circa 1961 (Nelson E. Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City." *Gospel Herald*, June 6 1961, 516-17).

American apartheid – planners had originally designated Pruitt Project for African Americans,

¹ Katharine G. Bristol, "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Keith L. Eggener (New York: Routledge, 2004), 355.

Igoe for white – Taylor worked with Schwartzentruber to create a church where African Americans could, in Taylor’s words, “come and learn to love white people.”² In her commentary, Taylor made clear that the unblemished integrity of Bethesda’s white Mennonites drew her to embrace the church.

Taylor’s description of Bethesda resonated with her Mennonite contemporaries’ hopes for racial integration. When she referred to a “pure” fellowship, Taylor used an adjective favored by promoters of the Mennonite doctrine of nonconformity. Church leaders had



Figure 2: Pruitt-Igoe Housing Complex, circa 1961 (Nelson E. Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City." *Gospel Herald*, June 6 1961, 516-17).

long based their appeals to separate from society on the religious value of purity in hopes of encouraging congregants to remain unsullied by worldly influences. By the time of Taylor’s 1961 testimony, white Mennonite leaders had begun to apply nonconformity to African-American missions. In written and verbal testimony, they affirmed that the community excelled in race relations – whether in service ventures, rural Fresh Air hosting stints, or church plants like Bethesda – in part because they did not conform to the racially conflicted society around them. White Mennonite leaders believed that by upholding the doctrine of nonconformity to the secular world they could avoid the taint of racial prejudice and thereby attract African Americans

² Nelson E. Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City," *Gospel Herald*, June 6 1961, 517.

to a community free of racism. As a new decade opened, Taylor's words supported those white Mennonites who agreed that the Mennonite church was a "pure fellowship" writ large.³

Yet seven years later another Mennonite offered bitter critique of that "pure fellowship." Time spent volunteering at Woodlawn Mennonite in Chicago, a congregation also located in a struggling African-American community, had radicalized Mark Wagler. In contrast to Taylor's earlier celebration of the unsullied fellowship she found at Bethesda, this young white racial activist lambasted the Mennonite fellowships that had raised him and sent him to serve. In a pique of prophecy, Wagler accused white Mennonites of sustaining racially homogeneous congregations – both African-American and white – based on a belief in "century-old racial purity" while, at the same time, feeling "purified" by the service he offered African Americans.⁴ From Wagler's perspective, white Mennonites compromised their integrity by financing African-American missions while discouraging African-American service recipients from entering white homes and congregations. Wagler's 1968 diatribe, offered at a time when African-American Mennonites had begun to enter church-wide leadership, again drew on the religious value of purity but emphasized the destructiveness of that principle in contrast to Taylor's earlier enthusiastic embrace of its benefits.

Taylor's and Wagler's comments introduce the essential themes of the Mennonite race relations story during the long civil rights era.⁵ Between 1935 and 1971, white and African-

³ Throughout this study, "the Mennonite church" – with a lowercase "c" – refers jointly to the (Old) Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite denominations. Quotations that mention "the Mennonite Church" – with an uppercase "C" – reference the (Old) Mennonite Church denomination.

⁴ Mark Wagler, "White Guilt and Black Power," *The Mennonite*, April 30 1968, 308.

⁵ I join a growing cadre of historians who take a long view of the civil rights era starting in the 1930s and extending through the 1970s. See, for example, Kevern Verney's excellent summary

American Mennonites from the East, South, and Midwest responded to human need, shared living space, and came together for worship. In the midst of their interactions, white congregants shifted their attention from maintaining racially untainted blood in the 1930s, to bolstering homogeneous fellowships in the 1940s, to protecting female chastity in the 1950s, and then to managing a splintered religious rhetoric in the 1960s. Those shifts involved overlapping and at times contradictory discussions of religious separation, sexual relations, racial segregation, and ethical integrity. As white and African-American Mennonites strived to achieve equitable race relations through the three-and-a-half decades of this study, the danger and necessity of purity remained interlocked. Each time an expression of purity attracted African Americans to the church, another purity expression blocked their entrance. This study of Mennonites thus answers the broader question of how the Civil Rights Movement brought about change by arguing that the splintering of purity rhetoric within the intimate environments of home and sanctuary both inhibited and empowered white and African-American religious practitioners to seek social change.

The Mennonites studied in this work expressed their commitment to purity in multiple forms. Most generally, I treat purity as a cultural value that orders society by defining group boundaries.⁶ White Mennonites and African-American converts defined their church community through at least four purity expressions: religious, sexual, racial, and ethical. For example, white

of this approach to the long Civil Rights Movement: Kevern Verney, *The Debate on Black Civil Rights in America*, ed. R. C. Richardson, *Issues in Historiography* (Manchester: Manchester University, 2006).

⁶ I base this definition on the work of Mary Douglas. See: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 2002 ed. (New York: Routledge, 1966), xi, xviii, 2, 3, 5, 44, 45, 85. While, as noted below, I expand on Douglas's work to identify multiple purities, *Purity and Danger* stands as an exemplary piece of scholarship that Douglas built upon and nuanced over the years.

leaders and congregants alike promoted religious purity through a nonconformity doctrine that called Mennonites to separate from sinful worldly influences. Under the umbrella of that doctrine, they also encouraged sexual purity – the state of uncompromised sexual conduct as defined by a heterosexual, male-dominated hierarchy – by establishing rules for women’s clothing and idolizing women’s chastity. Those same leaders and congregants in turn debated racial purity, defined here as a belief in the inviolacy of distinct, biologically determined racial groups, in discussions about interracial relationships between white women and African-American men. While engaged in such debates, white Mennonite leaders claimed a spotless record of racial egalitarianism by asserting their ethical purity, the state of complete consistency between word and deed. As will become evident, African-American Mennonites professed many of the same values, but often applied them in ways unanticipated by their white religious cohort. This study will show how, through expressions of and responses to these four purity forms, white Mennonites helped widen a racial gap even as they attempted to bridge it.

White and African-American Mennonites make evident the interlocking relationship of the danger and necessity of purity. For example, the ethical purity of white Mennonites, as expressed in integrity of word and deed, at times proved attractive to African Americans. Purity thus became necessary for successful evangelism because, like Taylor, some African Americans sought out “pure” fellowships. At other times, the danger of purity surfaced as beliefs rooted in a nonconformist vision of religious separation combined with the legacy of American racial myths. White Mennonites expressed this volatile combination in racially inconsistent application of nonconformist clothing restrictions, for example, that encouraged white Mennonites to maintain racial distance from the very African Americans whom they sought to befriend and invite into fellowship. Despite Taylor’s glowing testimony, African-American women and men had to

confront overt racism in the church during the same era in which her praise appeared in print.

By following Mennonites' negotiation of the terrain between the temptations of separation and the hazards of engagement, the role of purity within a religious community comes into sharp relief.⁷

⁷ Historians of the American Mennonite experience have frequently paid attention to the theme of separation from society. Few, however, have dealt directly with the subject of purity. Those who explore issues of separation fall into three primary groups. The first group, typified by mid-twentieth-century historians, privileges the idea of religious separation from society in their work. A second group of more contemporary scholars argues that Mennonites have always been interlaced with society and therefore downplay the separatist framework. Fred Kniss, however, argues for a third option. He notes the religious distinctives of the Mennonite community that resulted in historically traceable separation from society while also noting the "flexible, fluctuating, and porous" boundaries that maintained that separation. See: Fred Lamar Kniss, *Disquiet in the Land: Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 189. This study builds on Kniss's work by holding in tension white Mennonites' frequent claims of separation from society alongside evidence of their close participation in the racial thought, attitudes, and practices of the secular world around them. Rather than stick with a simple dichotomy between society and religious community, this study widens the focus to include the multiple forms of purity identified above. Both groups of historians, those that privilege separation and those that do not, elided purity from their respective works due to the minimal attention they paid to racial themes. Only after paying close attention to how white Mennonites spoke about themselves and articulated their faith experience as racial actors did I become aware how consistently purity concepts emerged in formal and informal discourse. I thus suggest that additional work needs to be done on how concepts of purity have shaped white Mennonite identity, gender relations, class constructs, and theological commitments to supplement and nuance the work in this dissertation on purity and race. For evidence of the separatist motif as the guiding interpretive framework in Mennonite histories, see the following mid-twentieth-century works: C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1941); C. Henry Smith, "Mennonites in America," in *Mennonites and Their Heritage: A Handbook of Mennonite History and Beliefs* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964); and J. C. Wenger and Harold Stauffer Bender, *The Mennonite Church in America, Sometimes Called Old Mennonites*, vol. 2, *Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966). Two latter-twentieth-century scholars likewise privilege a theme of separation: Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); and Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, 4 vols., vol. 4, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996). For evidence of those who downplay separatism, see: James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America 1890-1930*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, 4 vols., vol. 3, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1989); Richard K. MacMaster,

Such deliberate negotiation makes Mennonites ideal subjects for a study of racial and religious purity because of a record of theological debate, a close and responsive social network, and a dictate to separate from a sinful world even while giving faultless service to it. Other religious communities that focused on separation, like the Shakers for instance, did not have the same record of racial engagement.⁸ Other white-majority religious groups involved in African-American missions, like the Methodists, did not promote social separation.⁹ Furthermore, Mennonites left a record of intense theological debates over civil rights activism, debates that did not take place to the same degree among Quakers, another historic peace church.¹⁰ Finally, a limited number of racial exchanges affected a disproportionately large percentage of the Mennonite community. When a member of a rural church in Goessel, Kansas, traveled to Gulfport, Mississippi, the ripples of contact reached as far as Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Fresno, California; and Sarasota, Florida. By comparison, the large size and top-heavy bureaucracy of the Presbyterian Church mitigated the influence of grassroots interracial contact. A white group that wanted to serve African Americans but experienced internal, widespread conflict in doing so

Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790, vol. 1, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1985); and Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America*, 4 vols., vol. 2, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1988).

⁸ While Shakers came to oppose slavery by 1830, they continued to employ slave labor until emancipation. Few African Americans joined their ascetic communities. See: Henri Desroche, *The American Shakers: From Neo-Christianity to Presocialism*, trans. John K. Savacool (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), 231-32.

⁹ Peter C. Murray, *Methodists and the Crucible of Race, 1930-1975* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 78, 115.

¹⁰ Members of the Society of Friends were generally in accord in their support of the Civil Rights Movement. The Black Power Movement proved more challenging to them as a community. See: Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1985), 212.

reveals historical changes obscured in less conflicted, more socially integrated, or larger religious communities.

The changes that arose from Mennonites' penchant for religious separation and racial engagement turned on a dichotomy of black versus white.¹¹ The binary opposition of black and white has from the earliest stages of racial formation in the United States linked individuals placed in either group.¹² As European political and cultural leaders constructed the notion of race, they contrasted the normative white group with Africans that they then described as black.¹³ That linkage has in turn fostered notions of white purity juxtaposed against the perception of black immorality and degradation.¹⁴ Indeed, the concept of a white race holds little meaning or definition absent a black race against which to mark white racial boundaries.¹⁵ As Monica

¹¹ A focus on African-American and white interaction offers particularly rich material for a discussion of purity in the United States. Alongside this study, current and forthcoming studies of Mennonite missions among Native American, Latino, and Asian-American communities have and are revealing important, new histories of tumult, gracious acceptance, oppression, and resistance. See in particular Jeff Gingerich's sociological work: Jeffery Phillip Gingerich, "Sharing the Faith: Racial and Ethnic Identity in an Urban Mennonite Community" (Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2003). Look for upcoming historical analysis by Felipe Hinojosa (University of Houston) on Mennonite Brethren mission activity in South Texas and the Mexican border region, ethnographic and theological study of African-American Mennonite women by Regina Shands Stoltzfus (Goshen College), and theological analysis of the history of white Mennonites and race by James Logan (Earlham College).

¹² Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 4-43.

¹³ Ian F. Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 29.

¹⁴ Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), 39; Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1996), 198.

¹⁵ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*, Vintage Books ed. (New York: Random House, 1998; reprint, June 1999), 124-97.

Beatriz deMello Patterson has noted, “[O]nce we have defined the Other, we inadvertently reveal ourselves.”¹⁶ The exchanges between white Mennonites and African Americans reveal in stark detail how black-white racial pairing has fostered contradictions within the religious community. White Mennonites expressed purity commitments in racialized environments where fellow citizens deemed them cleaner, wiser, and superior to those they sought to invite into fellowship. As a result, the white proselytizers often failed in their mission to serve and evangelize African Americans. Study of thirty-five years’ worth of these black-white exchanges within the Mennonite community reveals a new history about the use of purity to further racial goals.

The Mennonites in this study thereby call into question three bodies of scholarship: Civil Rights Movement historiography, Mennonite historiography, and the theoretical tradition in religious studies inspired by Mary Douglas’s work on purity. For example, this dissertation’s close examination of the danger and necessity of purity repositions the existing historiography of the Civil Rights Movement by shifting attention away from the public drama of street marches and civil arrests and toward the quotidian negotiation of family meals and evening devotions.¹⁷

¹⁶ Monica Beatriz deMello Patterson, "America's Racial Unconscious: The Invisibility of Whiteness," in *White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America*, ed. Joe L. Kincheloe, et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 120.

¹⁷ My choice to examine the civil rights era from the perspective of living rooms and church sanctuaries was prompted in part by three scholars. Charles Eagles has called for new writing about the Civil Rights Movement that incorporates religion and pays more attention to the movement’s opponents. By attending to a religious group like the Mennonites who at times actively opposed the goals of the Civil Rights Movement, I thus respond to his initiative. I have likewise attempted to follow his lead in looking past 1968, developing a new chronology of Mennonite race relations history, and remaining detached enough to see both the strengths and weaknesses of those I study. See: Charles W. Eagles, "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era," *The Journal of Southern History* 66, no. 4 (2000): 816, 35-40. Likewise, I am indebted to the work of Robert Orsi for his call to pay attention to “lived religion,” the exercise of religion in homes and workplaces alongside church sanctuaries and temples. See: Robert A. Orsi,

Because daily activities so often left Mennonites at the juncture between racial engagement and separatist conviction, they offer unique insight into how change came about in households and congregations where few ever painted protest signs. As African-American Mennonite women wore prayer coverings to establish their membership in the church, they did so during meals with their white female co-believers. When white rural Mennonite families brought young African-American children into their homes in a bid to best civil rights demonstrators, they faced their own unrealized personal prejudice. White Mennonite family gatherings where African-American sons-in-law joined the picnic table for the first time put claims of color-blind love to the test. Through interrogation of these sites and others, I show how change was prompted in the streets but realized in the home.¹⁸

"Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion," in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed. David D. Hall (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997). Finally, Robin D. G. Kelley's attention to daily acts of resistance by working class African Americans in the Jim Crow South has helped me shift my gaze from street marches to dining room tables and family devotions. See: Robin D. G. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *The Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (1993).

¹⁸ Along with Alisa Harrison, I concur that historians of the civil rights era have accepted a public-private dichotomy and thus missed the contributions of women in home environments. See: Alisa Y. Harrison, "Women's and Girls' Activism in 1960s Southwest Georgia: Rethinking History and Historiography," in *Women Shaping the South: Creating and Confronting Change*, ed. Angela Boswell and Judith N. McArthur (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 244-45. I have purposefully avoided the Habermasian framework of public and private spheres, however, because the intimate encounters between white and African-American Mennonites took place in a wide spectrum of settings including the home but also encompassing more traditionally semi-public settings like Sunday morning worship services. While I privilege the home-based encounters, I pair them with congregationally based exchanges because I attend first to the intimacy of the contacts before the space in which they took place. Among the Mennonites studied here, conversation and contact could be just as intimate and intense at a church-wide meeting or Sunday school class as in the living room. Through this home-centered analysis, I thus open up new insight into intimate environments glossed over by otherwise exemplary civil rights scholars such as the following: Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black*

Study of the danger and necessity of purity within these intimate environments furthermore challenges bifurcated Civil Rights Movement scholarship that often gives pride of place to African-American or white people but seldom attends to both. I bring together the experiences of both white and African-American actors to provide a more complete picture of the role of religion in the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁹ The white and African-American women featured in Chapter 3 show how interracial relationships mattered as much as legislative lobbying in bringing about change. In Chapter 4, African-American girls and boys hosted in white Mennonite homes demonstrate that children who had never participated in a street march still helped transform the American racial order. Vincent Harding, the subject of Chapter 5 who was like Taylor attracted to a “pure” Mennonite fellowship, proved most effective in transforming white Mennonites’ approach to social activism when he straddled white and African-American communities. In Chapter 6, the African-American men who married white Mennonite women illustrate how purity-driven evangelistic efforts brought about as much change as did endeavors to overturn anti-miscegenation laws. Further still, the integrated congregations examined in Chapter 7 show that such faith communities challenged prevailing assumptions about the possibility and political import of worshipping across racial lines. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the responses of white and African-American Mennonites to the Black

Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

¹⁹ In order to better explicate the nuances of the interventions I make into bifurcated historical scholarship, I have chosen to place a more detailed discussion of the attendant literatures at the beginning of each chapter.

Manifesto, a militant demand for racial reparations presented by Black Nationalist activists to white Christians and Jews. This chapter demonstrates how violence and money sustained interracial conversations within the religious community that led to unexpected results in church and society. Taken together, these chapters reveal the socially significant insight made possible by close study of white and African-American religious actors interacting in homes and church buildings.

This project likewise repositions existing Mennonite historical scholarship by explaining why white racial egalitarians found their missions and evangelical work among African Americans so fraught with contradiction. Historical works currently emphasize how white Mennonites accepted existing racist norms, copied other Protestants' race-relations efforts, and stumbled over the problem of how best to apply church doctrine amid the barriers of culture, language, and rural location.²⁰ Such narratives miss the point that even though they replicated other mission programs' racial biases, white Mennonites brought a personal warmth and focused intensity in keeping with their stated intentions that drew the admiration of the public around them. For example, a national Lutheran staff member called the 1955 Mennonite race statement "the best that I have seen."²¹ News reports in Pennsylvania from 1963 proclaimed that "the Mennonites have been more helpful than any other single church group" in responding to

²⁰ See for example this thorough study of Mennonite mission: Theron F. Schlabach, *Gospel Versus Gospel: Mission and the Mennonite Church, 1863-1944*, *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1980; reprint, 1998), 42, 58, 242. Schlabach is joined in his emphasis on the derivative, culture-bound nature of Mennonite race-relations initiatives by the following authors: Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties*; and Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*.

²¹ Andrew Schulze to Guy F. Hershberger, July 22 1955, St. Louis, Missouri, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 14.

African-American poverty.²² Martin Luther King, Jr., set aside an entire day in the midst of his relocation from Montgomery to Atlanta to learn about Mennonite service efforts.²³ In 1967, New York Representative James H. Scheuer extolled the “ingenuity” of “robust,” self-sacrificing white Mennonite volunteers who ran a non-profit sandwich shop in Harlem.²⁴ This project moves beyond a depiction of white Mennonites as derivative, parochial, racial fumblers to emphasize the complex and often contradictory historical forces that led a people of such widely affirmed integrity to struggle so mightily in the racial arena.

The complexities of Mennonite racial history thus provide a context in which to reevaluate religion scholars’ approach to purity. Mary Douglas laid the foundation for much of contemporary scholarship on this cultural force.²⁵ In her earlier work, Douglas emphasized the ordering function of purity in the midst of the same kind of chaos and change that Mennonites experienced in the twentieth century. As a means to advance her functional argument, she demonstrated how cultural groups develop classification systems to respond to anomaly.²⁶

²² Marvin Miller, "Churches and Social Agencies Work in Slum Area with Little Success," *New Era*, October 16 1963.

²³ Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 8, 2003.

²⁴ Loren Lind and James H. Scheuer, "The Glad Tidings Mennonite Church Makes Living a Little Bit Easier for Poor," *Congressional Record - House* (1967): H1367-H68.

²⁵ Douglas’s theories prove prominent, for example, in these representative samples of contemporary religious scholarship on purity: Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah: Was Jesus Indifferent to Impurity?*, *Coniectanea Biblica. New Testament Series* 38 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2002); Christine Firer Hinze, "Dirt and Economic Inequality: A Christian-Ethical Peek under the Rug," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 21 (2001); Marcel Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz, *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus*, vol. 2, *Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series* (Boston: Brill, 2000); Barrington Moore, Jr., *Moral Purity and Persecution in History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁶ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, xi, xviii, 2, 3, 5, 44, 45, 85.

Douglas maintained that those means of classification, as in the case of racial designations in the United States, set up categories of purity and impurity that one can only apprehend by examining them in relationship to each other.²⁷ Social actors maintain the relationship between the purified community and the impure outer world, Douglas observed, by marking purity boundaries through cherished doctrines such as nonconformity, initiation rites like baptism, and visual identifiers such as Mennonite prayer coverings.

Douglas's insightful theory has nonetheless led to a difficult impasse. Most religionists writing in Douglas's tradition have analyzed boundary-setting moments such as those in which Mennonites served and were served across racial lines by focusing on either the racial dynamics or the religious elements, the sexual tensions or the ethical motivations. Although more recent calls for proper contextualization have brought period and place together with form and function, scholars have continued to approach the study of purity with a unitary framework.²⁸

²⁷ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 10.

²⁸ For examples of contextualized studies of purity, see: Susan S. Bean, "Toward a Semiotics of 'Purity' and 'Pollution' in India," *American Ethnologist* 8, no. 3, Symbolism and Cognition (1981); Suzette Heald, review of *Leviticus as Literature* (Mary Douglas, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999), *Journal of Ritual Studies* 18, no. 2 (2004); Kathleen O'Grady, "The Semantics of Taboo: Menstrual Prohibitions in the Hebrew Bible," in *Wholly Woman, Holy Blood: A Feminist Critique of Purity and Impurity*, ed. Kristin De Troyer, et al., *Studies in Antiquity and Christianity* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003); Hyam Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and Its Place in Judaism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Kathleen L. Spencer, "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis," *English Literary History* 59, no. 1 (1992). For work that attempts to further Douglas's insight into the ordering capacity of purity, see: Albert James Bergesen, "Rituals, Symbols, and Society: Explicating the Mechanisms of the Moral Order," review of Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*; Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, *The American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 4 (1978); Allan Millar and John Riches, "Interpretation: A Theoretical Perspective and Some Applications," *Numen* (1981); and Amy Mullin, "Purity and Pollution: Resisting the Rehabilitation of a Virtue," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no. 3 (1996). Each of these works employs a unitary, chronologically static framework to analyze purity.

Consequently, in the case of the Mennonites studied here, contextualization of purity has only served to point out that nonconformity doctrine mattered in addition to religious costume, and that race and gender likewise were important. Few have met the challenge of examining how these disparate factors interrelate; fewer still have traced how those forces change over time. Thus, only rarely have religion scholars examined the relationships among multiple purity forces at work in a given boundary-crossing moment or tracked those relationships across time.

Douglas nonetheless gestured toward a path through this impasse. Scholars assumed that religious actors expressed and received purity concepts univocally. By referring to the presence of “purity rules,” Douglas countered that assumption by suggesting the possibility of a plural approach.²⁹ One can likewise infer a plurality of purities from Douglas’s presentation of purity as a malleable force operant within a given social group. Her treatment already allowed that meanings and definitions of purity may shift and change over time. These implicit assumptions then open up conceptual space to examine how multiple manifestations of purity act and react as social groups exchange ideas and intermingle across group boundaries.³⁰ As noted above, Mennonites’ long record of engagement across racial lines, their visible embodiment of a doctrine of nonconformity, and their daily debate over how to apply purity ideals provide an

²⁹ Douglas, "Response to Reviews of *Leviticus as Literature*," 187.

³⁰ The authors I have encountered who come closest to the approach I take to multiple purities in this work are Ann Taves in her linkage of purity and spirituality (Ann Taves, "Spiritual Purity and Sexual Shame: Religious Themes in the Writings of Harriet Jacobs," *Church History* 56, no. 1 (1987): 60); Marcel Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz in their articulation of physical pollution, cultic impurity, and internalized guilt (Poorthuis and Schwartz, *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus*); and Starhawk in her fictional description of a Christian fundamentalist group ordered around the principles of “Moral Purity, Family Purity, Racial Purity, and Spiritual Purity” (Starhawk, *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (New York: Bantam, 1993), 272). I am indebted to these latter authors for the idea of multiple expressions of purity that guides my analysis of Mennonite racial interaction.

ideal opportunity for tracing multiple purity strands through an extended period. The examination of white and African-American Mennonites thus advances Douglas's work by identifying distinct expressions of purity and the means by which they change and interact over time.

This study of multiple expressions of purity in white and African-American Mennonite exchange reveals one final point: all social boundaries exact a human cost. Many theorists have noted that categories for dirt, verbal abuse, madness, and biological contagion contribute to social stability by ordering the world.³¹ The ability to identify clean spaces, appropriate speech, sane minds, and healthy bodies allows individuals to act and respond rationally to a disordered, alien, and unpredictable world by distancing, containing, and controlling it. Yet that social and cognitive process of ordering and responding remains critically misunderstood when scholars ignore the human cost involved in maintaining such order. That human cost takes many forms. In the Mennonite case, even as purity concepts defined a positive identity for white Mennonite egalitarians, those same ideas marginalized African Americans and women. Concurrently, white Mennonites paid a less obvious price in exchange for their support of purity ideas. They lost new members, fellowship opportunities, and personal and corporate integrity. Existing historical scholarship offers little insight into these multiple and overlapping damages. In short, even though some purity expressions opened the door to egalitarian contact, others reinforced racist

³¹ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, xi, 2, 5, 44; Edwin Ardener, review of Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, *Man New Series*, 2, no. 1 (1967): 139; Dominick LaCapra, *History and Reading: Tocqueville, Foucault, French Studies* (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 124-68; Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 1965), x, 285-89.

barriers. Thus, at the most fundamental level, this project demonstrates that group boundaries based on purity can harm societies as much as help them.

* * *

The chapters that follow expand on the themes introduced above and articulate the manner in which religious, sexual, ethical, and racial purities, among others, encouraged and blocked African Americans' movement into the Mennonite church.³² Each chapter draws on photos, oral histories, published articles, public and private letters, memos, minutes, and diaries to tell the multi-stranded story of Mennonite experiences with race and purity.

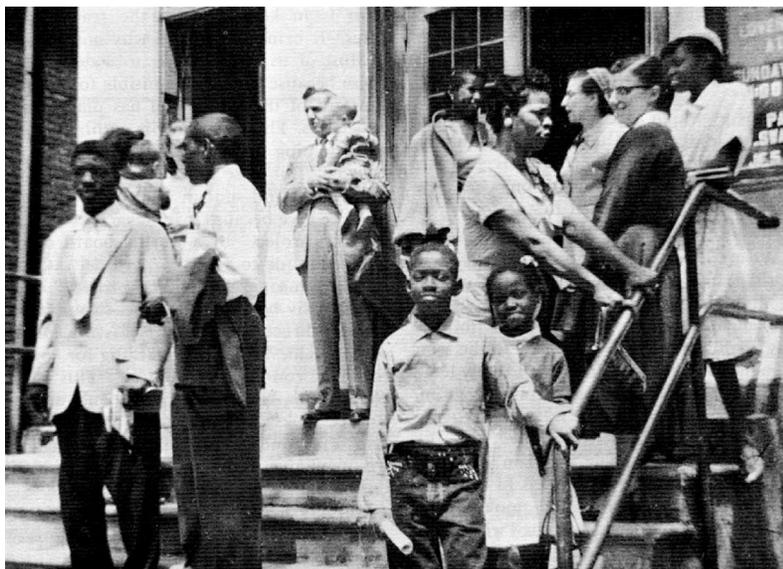


Figure 3: Bethesda Mennonite Church, circa 1961 (Nelson E. Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City." *Gospel Herald*, June 6 1961, 516-17).

Nettie Taylor introduced this complex story with a reference to purity. When Taylor described the “pure fellowship” she encountered at Bethesda Mennonite in 1961 St. Louis, she offered no explanation for her choice of adjective. Perhaps the group of white and African-

³² Although the narrative weight of each chapter rests in specific periods that progress chronologically through the breadth of this study, I return in subsequent chapters to many of the same periods in order to best tell the stories of the historical figures that drive each section. In this sense, I embrace diachronic structure in each individual chapter while recognizing the importance of narrative repetition across chapters. I base this narrative approach on the work of Paul Ricoeur. See: Paul Ricoeur, "The Human Experience of Time and Narrative," in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

American Mennonites who worshipped each Sunday in the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project personified an earnestness she did not elsewhere encounter (see Figure 3). Taylor may have also implied that her congregation represented a unified experience despite a racially diverse membership. She might have simply chosen a theological referent familiar to the visiting church executive with whom she spoke. Regardless of her reasons for employing the term, Taylor evoked purity in a community that had long practice in calling and being called by that name. Although later self-proclaimed prophets like Mark Wagler and his compatriots at Woodlawn Mennonite would disdainfully note the deleterious effects of the Mennonite community's love affair with purity, that same commitment to pure separation and service had attracted many African Americans to join the church. For Mennonites between 1935 and 1971, purity proved simultaneously beneficial and destructive to negotiations of race relations both inside and outside the church.

CHAPTER 2
PURITY IN TIME:
AN OVERVIEW OF WHITE AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN MENNONITE EXCHANGE,
1918-1971

The religious order that Nettie Taylor found so attractive among Mennonites in 1961 St. Louis and that Mark Wagler found so objectionable from his base in 1968 Chicago emerges out of interlinked histories of purity and race relations that span the twentieth century. Six periods mark distinct changes in Mennonite race relations during this era. The years from 1918 through 1971 trace an arc of history that begins with deliberate segregation and moves through the promise of integration to the harsh and disillusioning realities of broken assurances (see Figure 4). Although this dissertation focuses on the period from 1935 through 1971, the following overview of post-World War I Mennonite history provides important background to the study as a whole.¹

¹ The periodization I offer here leans heavily on the work originally developed by J. Denny Weaver in his insightful treatment of Mennonite written materials on race. See: John Denny Weaver, "The Mennonite Church and the American Negro" (paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1970), AMC - I-3-3.5 Box 11 John Horsch Mennonites History Essay Contest. Denny Weaver: *The Mennonite Church and the American Negro*. Although I have renamed and expanded the evidentiary base for each of the periods and made slight adjustments to some of the beginning and ending dates, the basic framework comes from Weaver's work.

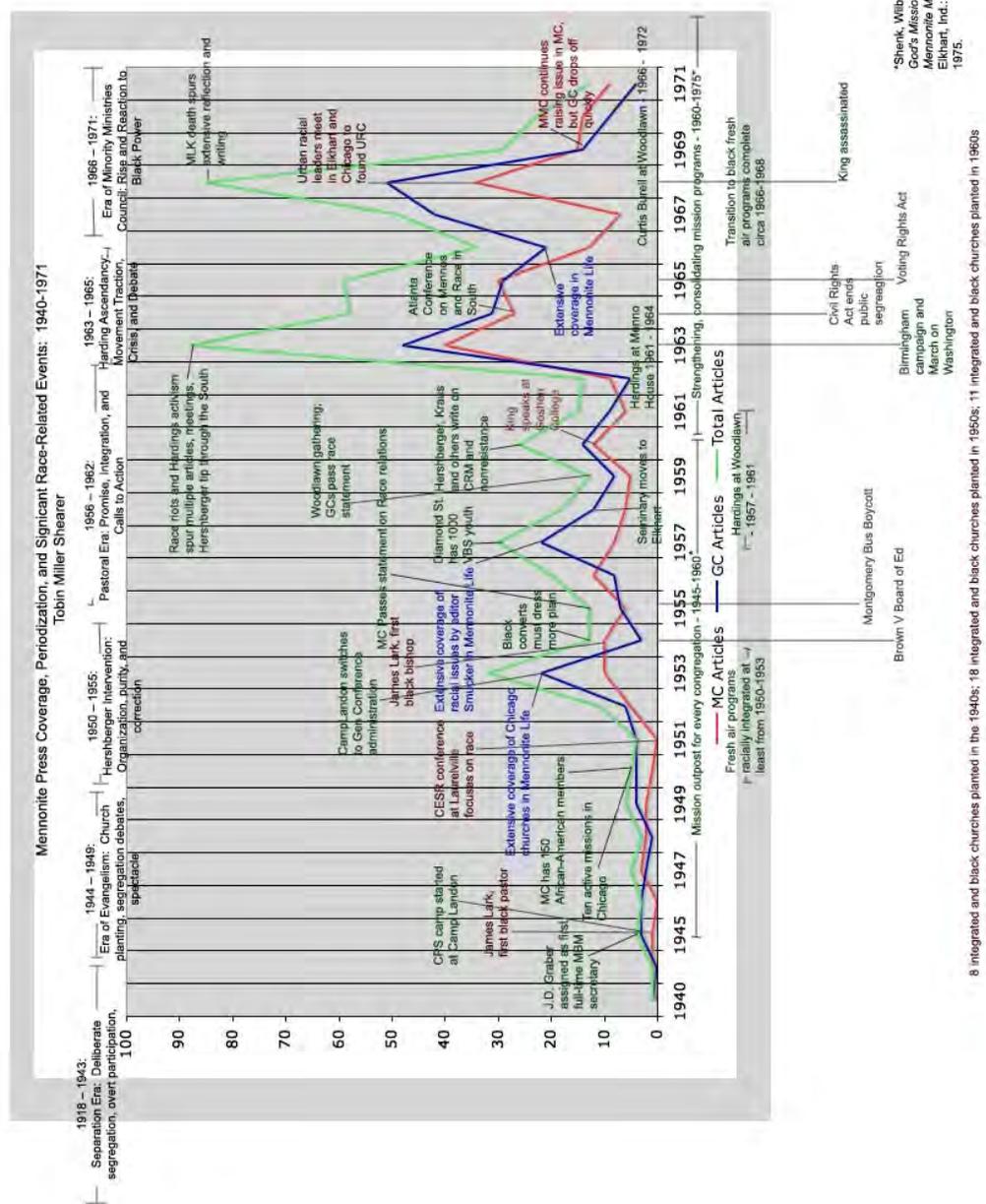


Figure 4: Mennonite Press Coverage, Periodization, and Significant Race-Related Events: 1940-1971 (Article statistics tabulated from author’s study of race-related articles published in *The Mennonite*, *Gospel Herald*, *Christian Living* and *Mennonite Life* between 1940 and 1971. Period descriptions from author’s study. Periodization based on Weaver, John Denny. "The Mennonite Church and the American Negro." paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1970).

"Shenk, Wilbert R. "Forward." In *Being God's Missionary Community: Reflections on Mennonite Missions 1945-1975*, 9-15. Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Board of Missions, 1975.

8 integrated and black churches planted in the 1940s; 18 integrated and black churches planted in 1950s; 11 integrated and black churches planted in 1960s

1918-1943 – Separation Era: Deliberate Segregation, Overt Participation in the Racial Order, Initial Resistance

From the end of World War I through 1943, Taylor would not have been welcome at most white Mennonite churches in the United States. She, like other African Americans who had ventured into white Mennonite congregations, would have instead been shunted to one of the “colored missions” opened in this period. At Broad Street Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Pennsylvania mission churches in Lancaster, Philadelphia, Reading, and Steelton, Mennonite mission workers made deliberate decisions to segregate their urban mission efforts, usually after having attempted racial integration. For example, after holding integrated summer bible school classes “for a number of years,” church workers in Philadelphia reported in 1936, “It was thought best to have a separate work for the colored.”² The energy for African-American-focused mission that led to these segregation decisions arose primarily within the (Old) Mennonite Church, the larger of the two denominations that figure in this study.³ Overall,

² Merle W. Eshleman, "Mission for Colored, Philadelphia," *Missionary Messenger*, February 16 1936, 11.

³ The (Old) Mennonite Church was the larger of the two denominations during the period of this study with 88,947 members in the United States as of 1971. (Old) Mennonite Church congregations were clustered most heavily along the eastern seaboard, particularly in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and in the Midwest in Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa. Culturally, white members of this community most typically harkened back to Germanic-Swiss roots and tended toward more strict interpretations of church doctrines in the area of distinct dress and practices such as the holy kiss. Likewise many constituent groups belonging to or connected with the (Old) Mennonite Church denomination employed strong bishop-centered authority structures. By contrast, the General Conference Mennonite Church counted only 36,458 members in the United States as of 1971. Congregations from the General Conference were clustered most heavily in Kansas and Nebraska, but were also found in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Iowa. Members of the General Conference came from similar Germanic-Swiss roots as did members of the (Old) Mennonite group but also included a large contingent of Mennonites with cultural heritages in Prussia and southern areas of Russia. The General Conference polity was more congregationally autonomous, less defined by distinct dress codes, and, while committed to missions, worked more extensively among Native American and Latino communities in the United States. This

Mennonite church members wrote about racism as if it were an external problem not present in the church. The writers declared that Mennonites had only to avoid racial epithets and hatred to keep racism from entering their faith community.⁴

Most white Mennonites in this period thus accepted the racial norms of their day in both the North and South. Despite articles cautioning against such action, overtly racist acts were relatively common. Most dramatically, the Virginia Conference acted to segregate church sacraments by race in 1940. Three years later, Daniel Kauffman, white Mennonite editor of the (Old) Mennonite Church national weekly the *Gospel Herald*, drew upon eugenic thought when he warned his readers about the danger of “hordes of colored (and renegade white) races” overwhelming white Christians who used birth control.⁵

Yet at the same time, others within the church challenged such ready acquiescence to racial subordination by protesting segregation policies and advocating for African-American converts. In the early 1940s white mission workers Ernest and Fannie Swartzentruber vehemently objected to the Virginia Conference’s segregation decision, a stance that eventually led to their dismissal. In 1943, another white mission worker, Sem Eby, advocated on behalf of an elderly African-American woman who had been denied access to a retirement community run by Mennonites in the village of Welsh Mountain, Pennsylvania.⁶ Likewise, new African-

project attends to racial dynamics in both communities, notes the particularities of each, and yet contends that the racial experience of African Americans within both denominations was strikingly similar for the span of the middle three decades of the twentieth century.

⁴ Weaver, "The Mennonite Church," 19.

⁵ Daniel Kauffman, "Editorial," *Gospel Herald*, January 7 1943, 865.

⁶ Orie O. Miller, "Sixty-Third Quarterly Meeting of E.M.B. Of M. & C. And Lancaster Conference Board of Bishops Held at Chestnut Street, Lancaster Church," January 2 (Eastern Mennonite Board of Mission and Charities, 1943).

American converts such as Roberta Webb and Rowena and James Lark carved out a space for themselves within the church through protest and social networking.

The simultaneous acceptance of and resistance to racial norms during this period rarely drew on purity discourse. Although Mennonites referred to purity as a religious and sexual value, they did not yet employ purity rhetoric to maintain or challenge the racial segregation so prevalent in the church at that time. For example, C. D. Esch, a white medical doctor and member of the (Old) Mennonite Church, delivered a plenary address on sexual purity at the 1929 annual national conference in which he railed against sexual impropriety, called for conversation devoid of racy innuendo, and supported self-control and modest attire.⁷ At no point did his address touch on racial purity or the threat of African-American male encroachment. Authors also employed religious purity metaphors without attention to race. A 1933 article in *The Mennonite*, the General Conference national news magazine, included an appeal to “[m]ake our hearts pure.”⁸ Such concern for both sexual and religious purity dovetailed with a strong emphasis on the Mennonite church doctrine of nonconformity that called for separation from the world’s influences and made occasional references to holiness, a frequent corollary to purity.⁹ The community cherished purity but had not yet brought that value into conversation with the racial dynamics soon to affect much of the church.

1944-1949 – Era of Evangelism: Church Planting, Segregation Debates, Spectacle

⁷ C. D. Esch, "Christian Standards of Social Purity," in *Mennonite General Conference Report, 1896-1937* (Scottsdale, Pa.: 1929).

⁸ "Friendship with Those of Other Races," *The Mennonite*, July 20 1933, 9.

⁹ Sanford C. Yoder, "The New Testament Teaching on Separation and Non-Conformity," in *AMC* (Goshen, Ind.: circa 1940), AMC - Hist Mss 1-162 Box 14, Sanford C. Yoder 1879-1975, Articles, addresses, Folder: "The New Testament Teaching on Separation and Non-Conformity" 14/29.

Mennonites during the next six years read reports about churches planted within African-American communities, listened to debates over the problem of how best to respond to racial diversity in the church, and peered at the spectacle made of new converts. Largely due to stronger mission agencies and the energetic and visionary leadership of African-American Mennonites James and Rowena Lark, eight new African-American and racially integrated congregations appeared across the country by the end of the 1940s.¹⁰ The center for this new growth and evangelism shifted from the East to the Midwest as the Larks founded Bethel Mennonite in Chicago in 1944; James Lark became the first ordained African-American minister in the Mennonite church the following year. In Ohio and Illinois, regional conference bodies expressed new interest in planting integrated churches that then bore fruit in the founding of Lee Heights in Cleveland and Rockview in Youngstown in 1947. Although the General Conference denomination did not show the same interest in church planting among African Americans at this time, individual white members ministered to impoverished African-American families in Gulfport, Mississippi, at the Camp Landon mission site.

Yet the question of racial segregation remained unsettled even as some white Mennonite leaders took initial steps toward integration. In Pennsylvania, the Lancaster Conference's Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions continued to segregate mission work in Steelton in 1944 and decided to segregate the Newlinville mission in 1946.¹¹ In the Virginia Conference, segregated

¹⁰ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 172.

¹¹ The (Old) Mennonite Church consisted of regional governing bodies such as the Lancaster and Virginia Conferences. The Lancaster Conference, the largest and most populated of the conferences, did not officially join the (Old) Mennonite denomination until 1971, although it did maintain a number of fraternal ties prior to that date. The Lancaster Conference extended its reach up and down the East Coast from New England through to Florida. The vast majority of

sacraments remained in force and the Conference-run Eastern Mennonite College refused admittance to Ada Webb, daughter of African-American convert and Broad Street member Roberta Webb, in 1947. Yet other Mennonites cracked through the segregation. In 1948 the Eastern Board recommended ending segregation in all of their retirement communities.¹² Although not enforced for years to come, the Lancaster Conference's recommendation paralleled the Virginia Conference's decision to admit African Americans in 1948 and Ada Webb's enrollment at Eastern Mennonite the following year.¹³ Debates over segregated congregations and sacramental practices continued through this period, but tentative signs had begun to emerge that someone like Taylor would be welcome at a few more Mennonite institutions.

Concurrent with these small changes, church press editors presented African Americans as spectacles for their readers. Editors of regional conference magazines and national press accounts highlighted photos of mission work with African Americans in Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia and wrote captions that pointed to the novelty or exoticism of African Americans relating to white Mennonites.¹⁴ Through this period,

the Lancaster Conference congregations, however, clustered in and around Lancaster County in southeastern Pennsylvania.

¹² On September 14, 1948, the Eastern Board decided to recommend to the joint board that "the care of our aged members in our several institutions be without race discrimination" at the suggestion of the Colored Workers Committee. See: "Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities Executive Committee Meeting Mellinger's Meeting House," September 14 (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1948), 1.

¹³ "Administration Committee," September 20 (Eastern Mennonite College, 1948), Eastern Mennonite University Archives, Box II-B-4, John R. Mumaw Collection Box 27.

¹⁴ On this point, I disagree with J. Denny Weaver's finding. He notes that during the period from 1945 to 1949 church press reports gave only low profile attention to African-American missions. (Note slight difference in periodization. I begin this period in 1944 with the founding of Bethel Mennonite in Chicago.) See: Weaver, "The Mennonite Church," 23. Examination of regional

the (Old) Mennonite Church's annual yearbook highlighted this novelty by identifying African-American mission stations with the parenthetical label "(Colored)."¹⁵ Likewise, a photo of a wedding at Broad Street Mennonite church in Virginia appeared beneath the caption, "A Mennonite Colored Wedding" (see Figure 5).¹⁶ A picture of James and Rowena Lark dressed in distinctive Mennonite plain attire appeared above the terse title "Zealous Larks" (see Figure 6).¹⁷ A 1948 photo caption described "boys and girls with ... big black wistful-looking eyes ... so polite and orderly" but yet not knowing "what it is to play a real live game" (see Figure 7).¹⁸ The novelty of Mennonite mission to African Americans underlined a final message of the period, that the solution to the sin of racial discrimination lay in saving the souls and improving the physical condition of the African-American community. Press attention emphasized the spectacle of that ministry rather than racial subordination within the Mennonite community.

Despite this focus on racial spectacle, some Mennonites began to worry about connections they saw others making between racial and religious purity. A few church workers recognized that white Mennonite church leaders' continued equation of religious purity with separation from the world around them could complicate efforts to bring African Americans into

press reports shows, however, that African-American Mennonites like James Lark were already receiving significant attention from church leaders and mission boards during these five years.

¹⁵ Daniel D. West, "What About Our Negro Missions," *Missionary Messenger*, January 1946; Ellrose D. Zook, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory 1946* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1946). The practice of designating congregations with the parenthetical "(Colored)" label had begun to dissipate by 1950 and was discontinued entirely as of 1956. See: Ellrose D. Zook, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory 1956*, vol. 47 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1956).

¹⁶ Stanley Shenk, "A Mennonite Colored Wedding," *Gospel Herald*, December 2 1947.

¹⁷ "Zealous Larks," *The Missionary Guide* circa 1947.

¹⁸ "This Scene Shows the Playground Supervision...", *The Mennonite*, February 24 1948.

the church. For example, writing from her work assignment at the Philadelphia Colored Mission, white “sister worker” Emma Rudy wondered in 1945 whether the doctrine of separation had “some bearing on small memberships” at the various African-American missions.¹⁹ Four years later, another white missionary, Harry L. Kraus, challenged the ideology of racial purity when he declared, “There is no such thing as a pure race.”²⁰ In both of these examples, the connections between discourses of religious and racial purity remained underdeveloped, but they nonetheless established a framework that would continue to complicate mission efforts in the coming years.



Figure 5: Ruth Peachey, Estella Land, Lewis Madden, Paul Yoder, 1947 (Stanley Shenk, "A Mennonite Colored Wedding," *Christian Missions: A Monthly Supplement to the Gospel Herald*, December 1947).

1950-1955 – Hershberger Intervention: Organization, Purity, and Correction

As the 1950s opened, many white Mennonites recognized that new converts like Taylor were there to stay. A new level of organization, overt and deliberate attention to articulating the

¹⁹ Ruth G. Erb and Abraham L. Gehman, "From Our Negro Stations," *Missionary Messenger*, January 1946; Emma H. Rudy, Abraham L. Gehman, and Esther K. Lehman, "From Our Negro Stations," *Missionary Messenger*, January 1946.

²⁰ On May 10, 1949, Harry L. Kraus also wrote in the *Gospel Herald*, “Within our own fellowship we constantly hear the cry, ‘Keep the Nigger in his place,’ or, as the more refined say, ‘The colored person is all right as long as he stays in his place.’ My friend, those are bloody words. Those words have cost the lives and happiness of thousands of our dark-skinned brothers. . . . One tenth of the population in America is colored. Why don’t the figures carry over for the Mennonite Church in America? Why have we neglected and ignored the Negro and his problems? Is there not prejudice in the church?” He also appealed to unity and love. See: Harry L. Kraus, "Will You Dare to Be Christian?" *Gospel Herald*, May 10 1949, 495. He was one of the few white authors to raise questions about Mennonite engagement in racism during this period.

importance of religious and racial purity, and corrections of past grievances typified a period in which white activist and scholar Guy F. Hershberger played a critical role. The period also showed evidence of debate over the problem of how to respond to racial issues. Denominational and congregational leaders no longer concurred that focused evangelism and provision of material resources would suffice. This lack of consensus expressed itself in debates over whether nonviolent campaigns like the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott contradicted Mennonites' doctrine of nonresistance.²¹ In short, discussions about race in the Mennonite church intensified.

Stronger institutions supported such race-focused conversation. As 1950 opened, the (Old) Mennonite Church counted only 150 adult African-American members on its rolls, but white Mennonites' interactions with African



Figure 6: Rowena and James Lark, circa 1947 ("Zealous Larks." *The Missionary Guide* circa 1947, 16).

Americans increased through eighteen African-American congregations and new home-based mission programs.²² Most centrally, the Lancaster Conference began to send African-American children and youth into congregants' homes for short summer stays through a Fresh Air rural hosting program enacted by the Colored Workers Committee in 1950. Although white children at first outnumbered African-American and Latino children, program sponsors prioritized ministry

²¹ Weaver, "The Mennonite Church," 31.

²² Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church*, 172. The figure of 150 African-American church members did not include infants, children, youth not yet baptized, or regular participants who had not yet officially joined the church. Actual African-American participation was most probably in the neighborhood of a thousand on a given Sunday during this period.

to African-American children, and the program soon reflected that emphasis. The Woodlawn Mennonite congregation in Chicago also founded a General Conference-based Fresh Air program during this period. In addition to home-based ministry, the Lancaster Conference's Eastern Board expanded their witness "to the colored" in 1950 and soon after started a racially integrated home for the elderly in Philadelphia.²³ Meanwhile leaders from the General Conference began to administer the Gulfport, Mississippi, Camp Landon service program in 1953, thereby lending stability and legitimacy to the longest-running African-American mission effort in the denomination. Such organizational attention brought new resources to previously cash- and resource-strapped mission stations.

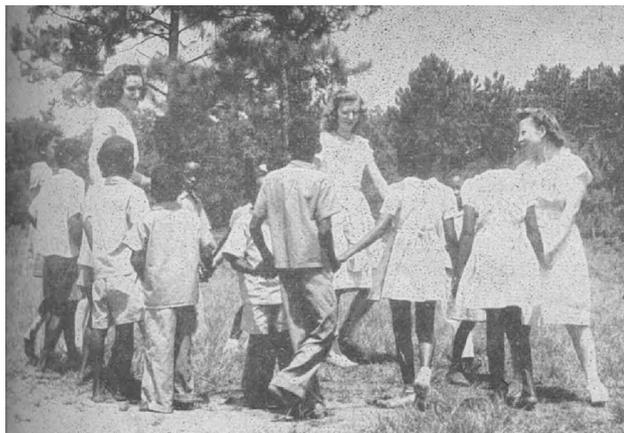


Figure 7: Rosella Reimer (left), Jeanette Richert, Lois Musselman, and unnamed children from Gulfport, Mississippi, 1947 ("This Scene Shows the Playground Supervision...." *The Mennonite*, February 24 1948, 15).

National conferences also lent new authority to race relations ministries. In particular, gatherings organized in 1951 and 1955 by the Committee on Economic and Social Relations

²³ On October 26, 1950, the Lancaster Conference's Eastern Board and Bishop Board discussed the executive committee's "concern for counsel and advice on how to expand our witness and service in the work to the colored and for colored members" and referred the action to sub-committee. See: Orie O. Miller, "Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities and Lancaster Conference Bishop Board East Chestnut Street Meeting House," October 26 (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1950), 1. On March 8, 1954, the Lancaster Conference's Eastern Board established the Philadelphia home for the aged and declared that it was open to "male and female guests irrespective of race." See: Robert W. Good, "Forty Years on Diamond Street: A Historical Research of Diamond Street Mennonite Church and Mennonite Mission to Philadelphia" (Paper, Eastern Mennonite College, 1982), 21, I-3-3.5 JHMHEC 1985-6 35/5, Good, Robert W., "Forty Years on Diamond Street: A Historical Research ..."; "Eastern Mennonite Board Executive Committee Meeting 3/6/54," March 6 (1954), attachment.

under the leadership of Guy F. Hershberger garnered the church's attention. The former event, held at Laurelville Retreat Center in western Pennsylvania, concluded with a call to "abolish" racial segregation and discrimination "wherever it may exist within our brotherhood."²⁴

Although segregation at many mission stations continued despite such egalitarian calls, women like white mission worker Leah Risser raised objections to racial divisions at the Steelton, Pennsylvania, station and elsewhere long before local administrators finally put an end to mission segregation.²⁵ This national and local public naming of Mennonite racism opened the door to more extensive discussion during the 1955 Hershberger-initiated conference on the campus of Goshen College. Although clearly responding to the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, conference organizers nonetheless dealt forthrightly with a broad range of racial issues inside the church based on carefully crafted, biblically informed presentations. Local and regional leaders bolstered this bold acknowledgement of the church's problem of racial subordination by rescinding the Virginia Conference's segregation policy.

In the midst of this organizational upswing, church leaders increasingly connected religious purity rhetoric to the body and through the body to racial purity. Most centrally, Mennonites who wrote about the church's nonconformity doctrine during this period centered on the body and employed the language of purity to do so. A 1950s era tract equated women's purity with the wearing of a covering.²⁶ During the same era, a manual for the Mennonite Board

²⁴ "Statement of Concerns of the Study Conference on Christian Community Relations," July 24-27 (1951), 4, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 2, Folder 35.

²⁵ William Yovanovich, "Leah Risser, Ahead of Her Time," *WMSC Voice*, November 1990, 7.

²⁶ Clarence Ramer, the author of the tract, expressed the connection between the covering and purity most clearly by writing, "It becomes a sign to men and angels of her purity obtained through the cleansing power of the blood of Christ." See: Clarence J. Ramer, "Woman's Veiling," (Herald Press Tracts), 8, LMHS - Box: Glad Tidings, Folder: [loose in box].

of Missions and Charities called upon missionaries to embrace a pure and “unspotted life” marked by separation from all bodily amusements and social engagement.²⁷ Writing in 1953 stressed the importance of sexual purity.²⁸ Two years later, national and conference-level nonconformity statements called for purity of speech, purity of sexual abstinence, and purity evidenced in women’s attire.²⁹ Writing on race likewise centered on the body. Authors like Paul Erb (1952) interested in promoting racial union asserted that it is impossible to know whether one is of “pure racial blood.”³⁰ As Mennonite authors and church leaders articulated their core beliefs about separation from the society around them, they made the body the primary site and symbol of that separation.

This bodily emphasis took two forms in the first half of the 1950s. To begin, white Mennonite mission workers responded to body-focused purity doctrines by enforcing dress and grooming codes far more strictly among African-American converts than among their white counterparts. While pastors and mission workers used doctrinal statements and Sunday school lessons to instruct African-American women to wear the distinctive Mennonite prayer covering and cape dress, church leaders also enforced male grooming restrictions with particular intensity.

²⁷ *Our Standard for Missionaries*, (Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, circa 1950).

²⁸ John T. Neufeld, "Challenge of City Missions," *Mennonite Life*, April 1953, 58.

²⁹ Male leaders enjoined white women not to allow their bodies to “violate the principles of Christian holiness, purity, modesty, and economy.” See: "Declaration of Commitment in Respect to Christian Separation and Nonconformity to the World," August 26 (Mennonite Church General Conference, 1955), 3-4, AMC - I-1-1 Mennonite General Conference Statements Box 6, Folder: #11, Declaration of Commitment in Respect to Christian Separation and Nonconformity to the World, 1955; "Declaration of Commitment," 3,6; South Central Mennonite Conference, *Statement of Christian Doctrine, Church Practice and Personal Witness with the Constitution and Discipline of the South Central Mennonite Conference* (Hesston, Kansas: South Central Mennonite Conference, 1955).

³⁰ Paul Erb, "Interracial Marriage," *Gospel Herald*, June 24 1952, 611.

For example, during this period more than one Mennonite bishop required an African-American man to shave his moustache before baptism.³¹ In one instance, a bishop took an African-American man into a separate room and cut off the man's moustache with a child's blunt safety scissors.³² Likewise, during a 1954 Colored Workers' Committee meeting participants responded to the query, "[D]o we ask our new mission members to dress much plainer than members of home congregations?"³³ The white mission workers in attendance decided in the affirmative. They stated that stricter requirements were a "blessing rather than a hindrance."³⁴ By their own account, white Mennonites in the Lancaster and Virginia Conferences as well as other regions of the (Old) Mennonite Church thus emphasized purification of African-American converts through dress and grooming restrictions.³⁵ As borne on the bodies of black women and

³¹ Although the objections to moustaches in this era arose from a concern about the association of this grooming choice with the military, the bishops' rigorous enforcement appears to have been racially triggered.

³² References to this instance at Newtown Gospel Chapel, Sarasota, Florida, appear in three separate oral history interviews: Michael Shenk, interview with author, Harrisonburg, Va./Evanston, Ill., March 19, 2003; Dave Weaver and Sue Weaver, interview with author, Gulfport, Miss., May 26, 2005; Paul Zehr, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 1, 2003.

³³ "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1953-1957," (1953-57), [104], EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964: File: Four numbered notebooks.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ White converts also received instruction in the importance of wearing nonconformist dress. As the sources cited here make evident, however, white mission workers enforced those requirements for African-American converts with a relatively greater degree of intensity. Other examples of enforced dress and grooming requirements include: Norman Derstine, "Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord," (Trissels Mennonite Church, 1955), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-17 John L. Stauffer collection General Files H-Z BOX 6," Folder "Nonconformity"; William M. Weaver to author, January 30 2003, Halifax, Pa; William M. Weaver to author, January 30 2003, Halifax, Pa; Peggy Curry, interview with author, Harrisonburg, Va., March 29, 2005.

men, the religious discourse of purity had begun to intermingle with the racial discourse of pollution.

The period from 1950 through 1955 also saw an enmeshing of multiple purities through an intense focus on interracial marriage. Debates in the church press focused on social rather than theological objections to couples marrying across racial lines and typically used the example of a black man marrying a white woman.³⁶ Such examples revealed much. The authors first assumed that white Mennonite women embodied both sexual and racial purity and were therefore desirable to all men.³⁷ The writers also accepted the notion that white men were uninterested in impure African-American women despite centuries of evidence to the contrary.³⁸ The women's sexual interests did not register on authors who assumed both African-American and white women passively accepted male advances.³⁹ This admixture of racial, religious, and sexual purity concerns carried a potent message. The writing and discussion of the period implied that a Mennonite woman could not remain pure and separate from the world if she

³⁶ See for example: D. W. B., "Do You Want Your Daughter to Marry a Negro?" *The Mennonite*, October 28 1952; Erb, "Interracial Marriage"; Levi C. Hartzler, "Race Problem Unnecessary," *Gospel Herald*, February 8 1955. As will be discussed at length in Chapter 6, even the 1955 (Old) Mennonite Church statement on race relations hedged support of interracial marriage with social rather than theological references: "[T]he social implications of any proposed union should receive careful attention" (Mennonite General Conference, "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations," August 24, 1955 (Mennonite General Conference, 1955), [6]).

³⁷ I am here indebted to the work of Ann Taves for her insightful exploration of the sexual body in the American religious tradition. See especially, Ann Taves, "Sexuality in American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 28, 41, 56.

³⁸ John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 14; Renee Christine Romano, *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 5.

³⁹ Thanks to Christina Traina (Northwestern University) for adding this insight.

married an African-American man. Thus, when Gerald and Annabelle Hughes celebrated their interracial marriage in 1954 and the Ohio Conference leaders refused to extend ministerial credentials to Gerald the following year, the consequences of that particular commingling of purities became starkly evident.

1956-1962 – Pastoral Era: Promise, Integration, and Calls to Action

Taylor's pronouncement about the pure fellowship she encountered in St. Louis in 1961 typifies the period from 1956 through 1962. More than any other era in the twentieth century, this seven-year stretch held great promise for the hope of racial integration and the possibility of fresh engagement with racial justice. Pastors like Vincent Harding, Delton Franz, Vern Miller, and Orlo Kaufman played dominant roles during a time when organizational interventions from the previous period bore much fruit.

The promise loomed large in the church's periodicals and public pronouncements. Articles touted the large number of African-American children attending vacation bible school programs at mission churches like Diamond Street Mennonite in Philadelphia. In 1959, four years after their (Old) Mennonite counterparts had done so, the General Conference Mennonite Church passed a racism statement. The Lancaster Conference bishops followed suit in 1960. Fresh Air programs continued to proliferate as the Lancaster Conference leaders increased their promotional efforts in 1958, and Camp Landon staff started their own program in 1960. New and continuing African-American leadership also came to prominence as James and Rowena Lark moved to St. Louis in 1957 to plant yet another African-American congregation, Bethesda Mennonite, where Taylor found a home; Billy Curry took ordination vows as a deacon in the Virginia Conference in 1961; and James Harris spoke on the doctrine of separation to other members of the Colored Workers Committee in Lancaster in 1962. Amid this activity, numerous

groups from the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite denominations traveled to talk with Mennonites in the South and to learn of African-American struggles for justice.⁴⁰

This programmatic and theological activity received further support from integrated ministry sites. In particular, Harding and Franz at Woodlawn Mennonite in Chicago garnered the attention of their General Conference denomination and the entire North American Mennonite community. The two men hosted a race-relations conference in 1959 that featured the most racially diverse slate of speakers the church had yet encountered. Likewise, racially integrated congregations such as Bethesda in St. Louis, Lee Heights in Cleveland, Newtown Chapel near Sarasota, and Good Shepherd in the Bronx received much attention. With the blessing of their congregation, Vincent and Rosemarie Harding left Woodlawn in 1961 to move to Atlanta, where they founded and led the integrated Menno House. This center for support of the Civil Rights Movement increased the Hardings' already significant profile as Vincent traveled extensively throughout the church and gave a speech at the 1962 Mennonite World Conference. On the local level, a previously all-white congregation in Markham, Illinois, received its first African-American visitors. Integration had come of age.

Church leaders concerned about the integrity of a community known for its peace stance and, increasingly, its racial egalitarianism began to advocate directly for involvement in civil rights activity. Guy Hershberger brought Martin Luther King, Jr. to Goshen College in 1960, the same year that he, Norman Kraus, and other authors penned more than twenty-five articles on the Civil Rights Movement and nonresistance. In his 1962 address to the Mennonite World Conference, Harding invited Mennonites to come to Albany to "share the experience" of being

⁴⁰ Weaver, "The Mennonite Church," 33.

arrested with him.⁴¹ Although hardly a matter of consensus, during this period of promise the prospect of mass engagement with social evil seemed possible to at least a few leaders in the church.

Yet a seam of sobering withdrawal and limitation runs through the pure fellowship that Taylor found so attractive. For instance, several leaders pointed out that nonconformity doctrine supported racial separation by encouraging Mennonites to remain aloof from social strife. In 1959, Harding stated, "We must confess that we have let a doctrine of separation become an escape from responsibility to our brother men."⁴² On the same occasion, Eugene Stoltzfus noted the contrast between bold proclamations about nonresistance and tepid support for a nonconformist "stand on the race problem."⁴³ Furthermore, white Mennonites had confirmed a tendency to withdraw in the face of racial strife the previous year when leaders of the General Conference seminary moved the school from a troubled African-American neighborhood in south Chicago to the suburban, small-town environs of Elkhart, Indiana. Harding captured this impure seam in his 1962 World Conference address when he said, "[W]e let our Mennonite culture become our God, and we refuse to accept outsiders in to our fellowship."⁴⁴ Harding and a few of his contemporaries called on the church to understand the dangers of separation from the racial struggles of the world around them.

⁴¹ Vincent Harding, "The Christian and the Race Question," August 6 (Mennonite World Conference, 1962), 3, AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

⁴² Vincent Harding, "The Task of the Mennonite Church in Establishing Racial Unity," in *Archives of the Mennonite Church* (Goshen, Ind.: 1959), Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/1.

⁴³ Eugene Stoltzfus, "Which Side of the Road?" *Gospel Herald*, May 26 1959.

⁴⁴ Harding, "The Christian and the Race," 3.

Despite the attempt by Harding, Stoltzfus, and others to harness purity doctrine for egalitarian ends, some Mennonites continued to employ racialized purity metaphors that undercut the promise of the period. Although protests against interracial marriage and articles debunking the idea of a pure race diminished in this period, authors continued to link religious purity with racial constructs. In 1960, a constituent wrote to Guy Hershberger in support of segregation. The correspondent explained that Christ's "pure love" kept the races separate because God had created "pure" racial groups as defined by "pigment of hair, skin etc." and "blood content."⁴⁵ One year later, an article in *Christian Living*, a monthly (Old) Mennonite magazine, described a white voluntary service worker as "clean-cut" thanks to "sturdy parents and a pure life."⁴⁶ Even young children encountered somatic purity metaphors. A vacation bible school speaker at a Mennonite church in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1962 told a story about a boy named Tom who "gave his heart to Jesus and the blood washed it white and pure as snow."⁴⁷ Although often presented in metaphorical form, the religious value of purity nonetheless came back to the body and so re-introduced race and sex. Embodied color-coding linked to purity doctrine thus came to emphasize rather than diminish the racial hierarchy of the day at the very

⁴⁵ "... segregated geographically, socially and matrimonially, defining their boundries [sic] and habitations, (surely he did not give all them that which he had taken away from them possibly none of them, for he gave some more talents than others, and never under heaven has he claimed that all are equal, he gave some one pigment of hair, skin etc. ... and bade each to occupy what he had given them (KNOWING that that was the only way to keep them pure, Christ loves purity and Christ wants all his creatures to remain pure, for he loves all with the same pure love) until he comes." See: J. Gordon Simpson to Guy F. Hershberger, [none given] 1960, Mulberry, Fla., AMC - I-3-7 CESR 7/39 entitled "Martin Luther King" - (Guy F. Hershberger's evaluation of MLK).

⁴⁶ J. Daniel Hess, "That Amazing Voluntary Service," *Christian Living*, July 1961, 4.

⁴⁷ "Record of Summer Bible School South Seventh Street Mennonite Church 1954-1966," (South Seventh Street Mennonite Church, 1954), [055-56], LMHS - Box: South Seventh Street, Reading, Summer Bible School Records 1954-66, Folder: [Grey and Red bound notebook].

time when new African-American voices had begun to challenge white supremacy in the church.

1963-1965 – Harding Ascendancy: Crisis, Movement Traction, and Debate

The brevity of the period from 1963 through 1965 belies the far-reaching impact of the intense activity of this three-year stretch. Urban racial rebellions, summer protests, the Montgomery civil rights campaign, and Mennonite response to these events captured the attention of the church. Race-focused articles in the church press reached an all-time high in 1963, as more than eighty-five reports, editorials, profiles, and opinion pieces explored the racial turmoil in the nation. Because of the Hardings' involvement in the Montgomery campaign, Vincent's prolific pen, and his ability to employ Anabaptist theological terms, every church leader in both the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite denominations had to deal with his critique if they wanted to address race relations in the church. In the remaining two years of the period, Harding continued to frame much of the debate about the manner in which the church should respond to the crisis precipitated by the Civil Rights Movement.

The church responded to national crisis by hosting meetings, sponsoring tours, passing statements, and emphasizing service initiatives. Activists and church leaders hosted six race-focused gatherings in Kansas, Indiana, Georgia, Missouri, Virginia, and Ohio. Harding spoke at the first four, called for the fifth, and was quoted at the sixth. In each setting, participants debated how best to respond to the Civil Rights Movement. In answer, some poured their energies into challenging vestiges of segregation inside the church. Guy Hershberger, Vincent and Rosemarie Harding, Peter Ediger, and Vern Preheim – church leaders from both the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite Church – toured the South and invariably discussed congregational segregation even when their original intention had been to evaluate Camp Landon's service

program. Others responded by passing statements, an action taken up by at least four different Mennonite groups in 1963 alone. Mennonites also publicized white service volunteers assigned to African-American communities, often in service to African-American children. For example, editors of the Lancaster Conference's promotional newsletter, *The Volunteer*, abruptly began to feature many more photos of white volunteers interacting with African-American service recipients.⁴⁸ First and foremost, Mennonites responded to the civil rights crisis by intensifying existing service and mission activity among African Americans.

In addition, a degree of organized political activism found traction in the church. In 1963, Church peace executive Ed Metzler called all local peace committees to take new legislative action in response to the example set by Vincent and Rosemarie Harding. General Conference editor Maynard Shelly and pastor Lynford Hershey traveled to Mississippi in 1964 and took part in demonstrations there.⁴⁹ That same year, Mississippi jailers severely beat Eli Hochstedler, a young white Goshen College student then studying at Tougaloo College who had become involved in several civil rights demonstrations.⁵⁰ Members of both Woodlawn and Community Mennonite congregations in the Chicago area participated in marches led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Finally, in 1965, Mennonites from throughout the East and Midwest attended meetings held

⁴⁸ In 1963, the ratio of African-American to white service recipients pictured in *The Volunteer* was 2:13. By 1965, the ration had switched to 9:5. In the following years, through 1969, the ratio stayed at or about four photos of an African-American service recipient for every one photo of a white service recipient and, in 1966, the ratio maxed out at 6:1.

⁴⁹ Maynard Shelly, a frequent editorializer on race issues, traveled to support the freedom movement the summer of 1964 along with Lynford Hershey. See: "Northern Ministers Work for Southern Civil Rights," *The Mennonite*, March 24 1964. He later wrote proudly about the experience. See: Maynard Shelly, "Editorial," *The Mennonite*, March 24 1964.

⁵⁰ Eli Hochstedler, "I Went to Jail," *The Mennonite*, June 30 1964. Surprisingly, Hochstedler's experience received only scant attention in the church press and was not referred to by church leaders in any of the meetings held that year or in subsequent years.

in Youngstown, Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri, where participants offered cautious but deliberate support of civil rights involvement. Without a doubt, some members of the church became actively involved.

Yet other Mennonites opposed such active support. The majority of Mennonite church members simply did nothing, neither actively opposing nor engaging with civil rights activism. Others took more deliberate oppositional stances. The Lancaster Conference's bishop board, for example, continued to oppose involvement in civil rights demonstrations throughout the period. In 1965, an article by white Mennonite Sanford Shetler in the *Gospel Herald* opposed civil rights involvement outright and called for Mennonites to stay away from demonstrations of any kind even while declaring his opposition to racial segregation.⁵¹ Shetler joined a sizeable contingent of church leaders who raised theological objections to demonstrations and street marches because such tactics, even when strictly nonviolent, still coerced change. They professed a belief that love alone should compel people to repent. That same year, a member of a racially integrated congregation in Harlem declared, "A church of largely white members located in a Negro community in contemporary America offers potentially greater gains for the claims of Christ than does [sic] ten civil-rights marches led by Rev. M. L. King, Jr."⁵² The debate over the Civil Rights Movement was far from settled.

This short period of intense focus on race corresponded with the renewed use of purity metaphors both to advance and to prohibit an egalitarian racial agenda in the church. In 1963 *The*

⁵¹ Sanford G. Shetler, "Is This Our Task?" *Gospel Herald*, July 20 1965.

⁵² "Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church: Self-Analysis of Congregation in Response to Questionnaire Titled 'Some Questions to Ask When Describing a Church'," September 10 (Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church, 1965), 10, LMHS - Paul G. Landis New York-Seventh Ave.

Mennonite editor Maynard Shelly sought to encourage faithful service by writing about holiness and purification at the end of a long year of editorializing on racial themes.⁵³ That same year, white church worker Harold Regier wrote from his base in Gulfport, Mississippi, about the importance of self-purification and the “purifying resources of the Christian faith” in mounting nonviolent campaigns.⁵⁴ Such motivational uses of religious purity stood in stark contrast to other uses of the ideal. For example, in 1964 a book on the prayer veil emphasized the purity of the white covering, the very kind of color-coded, racially suggestive metaphor that two other authors critiqued as they pilloried Mennonites’ use of purity to support racial separation.⁵⁵ Thus, as a religious value, purity continued to motivate Mennonites to question their involvement with a racist world and to encourage anti-racist devotion and action throughout the church, even as it was cited to discourage involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and to justify barring African Americans already considered racially impure by the society around them. The danger and necessity of purity was never more apparent than at the point where leaders and grassroots members debated the problem of how they would respond to the ever more evident racism in the church and throughout the country.

1966-1971 – Era of Minority Ministries Council: Rise and Reaction to Black Power

⁵³ Maynard Shelly, "Editorial," *The Mennonite*, December 31 1963.

⁵⁴ Harold Regier, *Ibid.*, July 23, 484.

⁵⁵ “Arthur M. Climenhaga points out that white is a recognized symbol of purity. A black veil ‘is worn by some, although the objection to it is that it gives a somber feeling instead of the lighthearted joy that white promotes’ ...” See: J. C. Wenger, *The Prayer Veil in Scripture and History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964), 25; Edith Lovejoy Pierce, "Race Prejudice," *Youth's Christian Companion*, June 7 1964, 1; Harold R. Regier, "The Bible Teaching on Race: A Paper Presented at the Conference on Race Relations of the Mennonite Churches in the South," February 25-26 (Camp Landon, 1964), 12, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 214, Reports, misc.

From 1966 through this study's finish in 1971, the Minority Ministries Council emerged in the (Old) Mennonite Church as a prophetic voice for change both emboldened and debilitated by the rhetoric of black power. During this period, warmly affirmative comments about white Mennonites' engagement with African Americans – such as those offered by Taylor in the previous period – gave way to harsher, more accusatory commentary like Wagler's 1968 criticism of Mennonites who felt vicariously purified by his service among African Americans. In this more politically contentious period, the rhetoric of purity dissipated at the same time that the majority of white Mennonites disengaged from racial activism in the church.

Three historical developments gave rise to the Minority Ministries Council. First, white Mennonite magazine editors turned their attention to the Black Power Movement. In 1966, several authors introduced black power themes of racial autonomy and power analysis in largely pejorative terms. Their commentary about black power, however, set the stage for African-American Mennonites like Curtis Burrell, Gerald Hughes, Lee Roy Berry, and John Powell to gain new power in the church as they and their white allies noted how few African Americans sat on church boards and committees. The 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King and subsequent urban turmoil likewise increased interest in racial issues as numerous authors lamented the loss of a nonviolent leader and revisited themes unaddressed since the previous round of racial rebellions in 1963. Most importantly, however, in 1969 Powell confronted (Old) Mennonite Church delegates in Turner, Oregon, with a call based on James Forman's Black Manifesto that asked the church to invest significant financial resources in programs for racial justice. Powell and his colleagues in the Minority Ministries Council then used the promise of substantial funding to challenge the racist practices they encountered within the white Mennonite community.

Direct and vociferous critiques of white Mennonites' racism led to African-American withdrawal and increasing criticism of the Council's efforts by white Mennonite leaders and constituents. In 1967, Harding returned from partial exile to address the Mennonite World Conference on the topic of the church's nonviolent peace witness in an age of revolution. His speech both galvanized and divided the delegates as they listened to him criticize white Mennonites' "power of whiteness."⁵⁶ The positive voices initially raised in response to Harding's critique began to disappear in the wake of rising Black Nationalism and continued appeals for financial support of the Minority Ministries Council. Although the volume of articles on racial themes in the church press spiked to a five-year high in 1968, by 1971 they had fallen back down to levels not seen since the early 1950s (see Figure 4). On the heels of this rapid withdrawal, white church executives ostracized Minority Ministries staff members, and a survey revealed that a majority of Mennonites in the United States did not yet support racial integration.⁵⁷ By the end of the period, the Minority Ministries Council had received less than a tenth of the two and half million dollars originally sought. Without finances to support its prophetic critique, the organization soon collapsed.

Minority Ministries' rise and fall paralleled a similar cycle of attention to purity. In 1966 and 1967, church periodicals featured fewer and fewer articles on racial themes. In the same two-year span, few authors employed purity metaphors or doctrine in their writing. Publications on racial themes increased almost threefold in 1968, however, in the aftermath of Martin Luther

⁵⁶ Vincent Harding, "The Peace Witness and Revolutionary Movements," *Mennonite Life* 22, no. 4 (1967): 164.

⁵⁷ Simon Gingerich and Lynford Hershey, "Minutes Counsel and Reference Committee for Minority Ministries Education," March 5 (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: Cross Cultural Relations 1971-1972, Lyn Hershey.

King's assassination. Multiple authors and speakers addressed the idea of racial purity.⁵⁸

Through the remainder of the period, as white Mennonites again turned away from racial concerns, use of purity metaphors likewise declined. In 1969, a few articles and church statements discussed religious and sexual purity in the Old Testament and challenged the equation of whiteness with purity, but by 1971 only one author still invoked racial purity.⁵⁹ Thus, as leaders of the Minority Ministries Council and other outspoken racial activists like Harding began to leave the church, the language of purity – whether racial, religious, or sexual – dramatically declined. The correlation suggests that, at least at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the rhetoric of purity dissipated once the threat of critique from vociferous African Americans diminished. For the time being, purity in its multiple manifestations had become quiescent.

The chapter that follows relates the story of two Mennonite women through much of the history reviewed here. Rather than an overview, however, the narrative of Fannie Swartzentruber and Rowena Lark reveals a particular path through this history of Mennonites' engagement with race and purity. On that path, the two women found a way to claim their status as Mennonites despite assumptions made about their respective gender status, ethical action, racial identity, and

⁵⁸ Guy F. Hershberger, "[Hershberger Notes at Race Conference]," (1968), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 38; William E. Pannell, "Somewhere in the Middle," *Christian Living*, September 1968, 22; Harold Regier, "Intermarriage, Riots, Black Power," *The Mennonite*, September 10 1968, 555; Mark Wagler, "White Guilt and Black Power," *The Mennonite*, April 30 1968, 307, 08.

⁵⁹ "The Crossroads Bible Church (Mennonite) Our Statement of Faith," (Crossroads Bible Church (Mennonite, 1969), from Sue Williams personal holdings; John Powell, "The Urban Racial Council," *Missionary Messenger*, September 1969, 14; Gingerich and Hershey, "Counsel and Reference Committee."

religious separation. The danger and necessity of purity becomes especially evident in the lives of two women who confounded white male leaders and defied the expectations of their time.

CHAPTER 3

“FOR THE PURIFICATION OF MY SOUL”:
REFRAMING WOMEN’S RESISTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES RACIAL ORDER

Rowena Lark cared deeply about purity. In a December 1945 letter to Fannie Swartzentruber, Lark assured her white friend and fellow church planter that life’s difficulties acted as “God’s machinery for the purification of my soul.” Lark faced many challenges as she and her husband James ministered in Chicago at Bethel Mennonite, the first and, by 1950, the largest Mennonite congregation led by African Americans.¹ Lark viewed all her trials – from her husband’s ill health to overt ecclesiastical racism – as opportunities for God to remove impurity from her life. In her post, Lark gently implied that Swartzentruber would be purified through struggle.² Yet reeling from the abrupt termination of her assignment at the Gay Street Mennonite mission in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Swartzentruber finished reading her African-American friend’s letter and returned to caring for her flu-sick children. Perhaps she wondered what impurities remained in her own weary soul.

The variously tragic and hopeful story of the manner in which these two religious women and their contemporaries negotiated race, gender, and purity from 1935 through the end of the 1960s reframes women’s resistance to the United States racial order. Swartzentruber and Lark

¹ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 76, 172.

² Rowena Lark to Fannie Swartzentruber, December 25 1945, Chicago, Ill., AMC, Hist. Miss 1-738, Fannie Yoder Swartzentruber Collection, Rowena Lark Letters 1941-1967, Folder SC.

begin by offering a story of interracial collaboration arising from religious practice. Although other social groups have at times also fostered cooperation across racial lines in pursuit of common goals, Christian communities have often raised the expectation that such interracial cooperation should be the norm rather than the exception.³ Even though rarely realized in United States church history, the expectation has nonetheless brought African-American and white Christians together. Scholars of religion have studied high-profile events such as when eighteenth-century Moravians worshipped across racial lines in eastern Pennsylvania, when early twentieth-century Pentecostals gathered at Azusa Street in Los Angeles representing many different racial groups, and when white and African-American Christians worked together at Koinonia Farm in Georgia in the latter half of the twentieth century.⁴ It is unfortunate that those same scholars have ignored interracial partnerships that, while less visible, significantly affected their religious communities and, quite often, lasted much longer than the high-profile encounters.⁵ Lark's and Swartzentruber's story also demonstrates the particular resilience of

³ Brian Kelly and others have identified, for example, interracial collaboration in labor unions. See, for example: Brian Kelly, *Race, Class, and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-21* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

⁴ Tracy Elaine K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997); Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecost between Black and White: Five Case Studies on Pentecost and Politics* (Belfast: Christian Journals Ltd., 1974).

⁵ Concern for focused analysis and a sensitivity to unearthing the stories of racially oppressed communities that were themselves often ignored have nonetheless obscured the manner in which interracial teams worked together inside religious communities. By giving place of privilege to a particular racial group, scholars of religion have missed the richness and complexities of sustained interracial relationships. Religion scholars have, for example, typically examined 1) how African-American congregations interacted with civil rights groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; or 2) how white religious groups decided whether to join or oppose civil rights initiatives. For an excellent example of this first group, see: Adam Fairclough,

women's relationships across racial lines. As other scholars have noted, women played a key role in sustaining and advancing the Civil Rights Movement.⁶ The narrative that follows adds to this growing body of scholarship by demonstrating the complex ways in which two women in a long-term interracial relationship negotiated religious and political changes during the long civil rights era. Together Lark and Swartzentruber built a relationship across racial lines that led to a different kind of freedom struggle, one marked by distinct yet intertwined responses to

To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987). For an example of scholarship focusing on the manner in which majority-white church groups dealt with internal racial dynamics in the middle of the twentieth century, see: Peter C. Murray, *Methodists and the Crucible of Race, 1930-1975* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004). One notable exception to this pattern of segmentation is found in the arresting work of Christina Greene. See: Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

⁶ See for instance the history of women in the Civil Rights Movement in the following texts: Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Catherine Fosl, *Subversive Southerner: Anne Braden and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Cold War South*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Dorothy I. Height, "'We Wanted the Voice of a Woman to Be Heard': Black Women and the 1963 March on Washington," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); John A. Kirk, "Daisy Bates, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the 1957 Little Rock School Crisis: A Gendered Perspective," in *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith, *Crosscurrents in African American History* (New York: Garland Pub., 1999); Alice G. Knotts, "Bound by the Spirit, Found on the Journey: The Methodist Women's Campaign for Southern Civil Rights, 1940-1968" (Dissertation, Illiff School of Theology/University of Denver, 1989); Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith, "Gender and the Civil Rights Movement," in Ling and Monteith; Belinda Robnett, "Women in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee: Ideology, Organizational Structure, and Leadership," in Ling and Monteith; Mary Stanton, *Journey toward Justice: Juliette Hampton Morgan and the Montgomery Bus Boycott* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006).

oppression.⁷

The multiple strands of Lark's and Swartzentruber's intertwined relationship arose from many sources. As women they shared links in the domestic sphere of cooking and birthing. As mission workers they poured their life energies into bringing African-American converts into the church. Both also wore plain attire in public, a practice that offered an immediate connection among those so dressed. In addition to wearing the covering while washing dishes, evangelizing new believers, and leading others to do the same, Swartzentruber and Lark also allied with each other as female leaders in a male-dominated church. Although, as this chapter will show, the two women exercised leadership differently, they both took risks and made new ventures uncommon in their era. These multiple strands, no less significant for remaining obscure to those around them, tied them together through the course of a lifetime.⁸

Swartzentruber's and Lark's interwoven narratives also explain the reasons for women's resistance to the United States racial order. Most centrally, the relationships themselves called the women to take risks and lead others in new strategies. Swartzentruber was dismissed from

⁷ I am encouraged in part to take up the study of the two women at the center of this chapter by comments made by Darlene Clark Hine when encouraging white and African-American "women historians to engage in 'crossover history' as a first step in coming to understand each other and thus to see with greater clarity the points of intersection." See: Darlene Clark Hine, *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub., 1994), xxix. Although I am a male historian, I trust that my effort to cross over into the study of two women – one white, one African-American – answers Dr. Hine's call in the spirit it was offered.

⁸ Virginia Woolf's poetic description of lives deemed insignificant helped shape my attempt to frame the lives of Swartzentruber and Lark as worthy of study and attention despite those who ignored them or forgot them after they died. See: Virginia Woolf, "The Lives of the Obscure," in *The Common Reader* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925). I am likewise indebted to the direction set by subaltern studies in registering the historical significance of the lives of those otherwise ignored. See: David Ludden, ed., *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*. (London: Permanent Black, 2002).

her appointment at Gay Street Mennonite Mission because she protested not being able to take communion with her friend Lark. Lark stayed in the church despite numerous encounters with Mennonite racism because she had found friends like Swartzentruber. Yet relationships alone do not explain the multiple motivations for resistance evident in the women's lives.⁹ Religious convictions as expressed in purity values also account for why the women spoke up, walked out, and stayed within the church. Swartzentruber cared deeply about demonstrating purity of intention through her testimony and action. Lark ordered her dress and speech around religious purity. These purity expressions acted in various ways upon the women. At times they pulled both women out from society by defining them as separate from an impure world. That movement away from the world could bring them together as they shared dress styles and head coverings. The nonconformist impulse could, however, push them apart as they sought racially appropriate means to counter oppression in the church. Their different kind of freedom struggle was thus marked by various and at times contradictory efforts to purify themselves and their church.

Interracial relationships and religious conviction also led women to resist the racial order by appropriating religious costume. As feminist scholars have argued successfully, social groups

⁹ This chapter's focus on relationships and religious conviction as primary motivating forces for resistance to racial oppression adds to the rich documentation of other motivations for women's resistance such as the importance of community, desire to break free of gender hierarchy, concern for family, integration of the private and public, and political commitments. The following authors have contributed significantly to that documentation: Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina*; Hine, *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History*; Jones, *Labor of Love*; Kirk, "Daisy Bates, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the 1957 Little Rock School Crisis: A Gendered Perspective"; Debra L. Schultz, *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Traci C. West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*, 1st ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

often mediate control through dress requirements.¹⁰ Arguments about dress-mediated control, however, ignore the cultural significance of dress requirements and head coverings within the African-American community.¹¹ As the following narrative will make evident, the African-American women who chose to wear the Mennonite prayer veiling made their decision in a religious milieu significantly different from that of white women. Rather than making an uncomplicated switch from one kind of head covering to another, African-American converts carefully negotiated, in concert with their white female allies, a highly symbolic mode of dress.¹² In short, African-American women wore the covering in order to claim a purity resource

¹⁰ See for example the following authors, the majority of whom follow and apply the work of Foucault: Linda B. Arthur, *Religion, Dress and the Body, Dress, Body, Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 1-6; Sandra Lee Bartky, "Body Politics," in *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Iris Marion Young (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000), 326; Susan Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: A Feminist Appropriation of Foucault," in *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan Bordo (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 15; Alison M. Jaggar and Susan Bordo, *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 4-5. For Foucault's work on the subject, see: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 24, 136. Independent of Foucault, Mary Douglas also recognized the ways in which the body represents society writ small. For further explication of Douglas's treatment of the bodily practices paralleling social structure, see: Sheldon R. Isenberg and Dennis E. Owen, "Bodies, Natural and Contrived: The Work of Mary Douglas," *Religious Studies Review* 3, no. 1 (1977): 7.

¹¹ Gwendolyn S. O'Neal, "The African American Church, Its Sacred Cosmos and Dress," in *Religion, Dress and the Body*, ed. Linda B. Arthur (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 127, 29.

¹² On a related point, Pamela Klassen makes a convincing argument that nineteenth-century African-American women in the African Methodist Episcopal church used dress standards nurtured in the church to establish their authority and significance in the racist world outside the church. Although I pay attention to the manner in which African-American women used dress to establish their belonging inside the church, the underlying strategy remains the same. See: Pamela E. Klassen, "The Robes of Womanhood: Dress and Authenticity among African American Methodist Women in the Nineteenth Century," *Religion and American Culture* 14, no. 1 (2004).

modeled by white Mennonite women.¹³ The record of the struggle to negotiate that claim runs through both Lark's and Swartzentruber's lives from 1935 forward and marks a previously unexamined form of racial resistance.

The narrative told in this chapter finally opens new vistas into the history of American Mennonite experience. The few studies that have attended to racial issues among Mennonites have again paid more attention to men than to women.¹⁴ By foregrounding male experience in the Mennonite history of race relations, scholars have missed the reasons that African-American women joined the church. When undergirded by a value like ethical purity, lifelong interracial relationships brought African-American women into a church that rarely welcomed them as equals. Likewise, women featured in this chapter vociferously criticized racial discrimination in the church, did so earlier than many of their male counterparts, and took action to sustain and

¹³ African-American women in the church have long used clothing to express religious commitment and establish themselves in society and the church. This tradition may be part of the reason that women like Lark, Webb, and others agreed to accept the strict clothing requirements of the Mennonite Church. They already had experience in doing so, albeit not in the same form or in as publicly visible a manner, in the churches from which they came. For additional discussion of African-American women and dress see: O'Neal, "The African American Church, Its Sacred Cosmos and Dress." For a more extended discussion of the manner in which Mennonite African-American women used clothing to express agency and resist oppression, see: Tobin Miller Shearer, "Coverings, Cross-Dressing, and Evidence of Agency: African-American Mennonite Women in a Different Kind of Freedom Struggle, 1935-1970," (forthcoming).

¹⁴ Paul Toews' description of Mennonites and the Civil Rights Movement, for example, foregrounds key male figures such as Vincent Harding, Guy Hershberger, and Martin Luther King, Jr., but leaves out the witness and contributions of the women featured in this chapter. See: Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, 4 vols., vol. 4, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996), 256-61. Likewise, Leroy Bechler places far greater emphasis on James Lark than he does Rowena. See: Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church*, 49-54. One exception to this male-dominated historiography is found in the work of Louise Stoltzfus. See: Louise Stoltzfus, *Quiet Shouts: Stories of Lancaster Mennonite Women Leaders* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1999). She gives voice to the experience of women in Lancaster Conference and highlights the contributions of African-American leaders such as Mattie Cooper Nikiema of Diamond Street Mennonite Church in Philadelphia.

support interracial fellowship with an integrity often missing in male-dominated programs.¹⁵

At the most fundamental level, however, Mennonite women transformed religious notions of purity through their actions and embodied resistance to the most oppressive forms of racial subjugation in their day. With their bodies and their words, women in the Mennonite church thus built a pure foundation on which race relations in the community both thrived and faltered.¹⁶

* * *

Swartzentruber and Lark reflected a mutual commitment to purity and the church on the side of a nameless road in 1939 (see Figure 8). In a picture taken two years after the pair had begun working together at the Gay Street Mission in Harrisonburg, Virginia, the two women stand relaxed and comfortable in each other's presence. Swartzentruber holds her young son Homer while her daughter Nancy chews her fingers.



Figure 8: Rowena Lark and Fannie Swartzentruber with Homer and Nancy Swartzentruber (held by Fannie), 1939 (Rosa Mae Mullet, "Broad Street Church in Review Part IV." *Missionary Light*, July-August 1961, 8-10).

¹⁵ This chapter's focus on two women in an interracial relationship is not meant to negate men's sustained and deeply-felt relationships. Figures that will be particularly important in later chapters, such as Curtis Burrell and Hubert Swartzentruber (no relation to Fannie Swartzentruber), John Powell and Lynford Hershey, and Vincent Harding and Delton Franz, also represent interracial relationships by men that were sustained over time and mutually supportive. Fannie Swartzentruber's and Rowena Lark's relationship is, however, representative of a depth of relationship and mutual appreciation that was atypical among men in the Mennonite church particularly during the late 1930s and through the 1940s.

¹⁶ This study of Lark and Swartzentruber centers on the (Old) Mennonite Church rather than the second largest Mennonite denomination in the United States, the General Conference Mennonite Church, because the first group was far more active in their evangelism of African Americans than was the second denomination, especially during the 1930s and 1940s. General Conference race relations efforts figure more prominently in later chapters of this work.

Lark, almost identical in height if not complexion to Swartzentruber, stands slightly behind her. Both women smile, their covering-clad heads cocked at opposing but symmetrical angles. Swartzentruber and Lark appear as comfortable in each other's presence as in the nonconformist clothing that they wore.

Such distinctive costume had come to mark Mennonite women in the eyes of the society around them. The prayer covering in particular garnered attention within and without the church. With origins in the Palatinate folk custom of eighteenth-century Europe, the covering took on particular religious significance in the late nineteenth century as church leaders began to treat it as an ordinance definitively linked with religious purity.¹⁷

Swartzentruber and Lark wore prayer caps on a daily



Figure 9: Ernest and Fannie Swartzentruber, circa 1935 ("Ernest and Fannie Swartzentruber" (Harrisonburg, Va.), black and white. Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)").

basis in a practice that only two decades previously had been limited to church services and times of prayer (see Figure 9).¹⁸ Although daily wearing of the covering dissipated the farther

¹⁷ Melvin Gingerich, *Mennonite Attire through Four Centuries* (Breinigsville, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1970), 123; John A. Hostetler, "The Historical Development of the Devotional Covering in the Mennonite Church," in *AMC* (Goshen, Ind.: 1956), 5-8, AMC - Hist. Mss. I-172 Box 5, H. Ralph Hernley Collection, Data, Menn. M.-Z. Misc., Folder: 5/3 Papers re the Devotional Covering; John C. Wenger and Elmer S. Yoder, *Prayer Veil* (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, 1989 [cited May 8 2007]): available from <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/p739me.html>.

¹⁸ Gingerich, *Mennonite Attire*, 131. Two years prior to the 1939 photograph of Fannie and Rowena, a leader in Franconia Conference only a few hours travel to the north in Pennsylvania noted that the practice of wearing the covering "all the time" was considered a recent development. See: J. C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (Telford, Pa.: Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, 1937), 27.

west one traveled, (Old) Mennonite Church publications in the East from the 1920s forward uniformly supported the covering as a visible sign of separation from society and women's submission to men.¹⁹ Swartzentruber and Lark thus marked their church membership and doctrinal commitment by donning the covering every day.

The women's similar religious attire paralleled a mutual passion for African-American missions that sprang from their strong relationship. Swartzentruber's eldest son recalled that his parents visited with Lark and her husband James in the midst of the Swartzentrubers' move from Delaware to Virginia in late 1936.²⁰ Soon after arriving in Virginia, Swartzentruber and her husband Ernest again called upon Lark, but this time asked her to join them in a more formal working relationship. In early 1937, the Swartzentrubers invited Lark to assist them in their ministry to African Americans in the northeast corner of Harrisonburg.²¹ Although Lark could not help her friend in the matron's daily responsibilities of corresponding with donors, teaching Sunday school, conducting home visitations, and orienting new workers, Lark could periodically travel to Harrisonburg from the Washington, D. C., area to help lead the labor intensive summer vacation bible school program. With the support of the Virginia Mennonite Conference Mission

¹⁹ Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*, 59.

²⁰ Homer Swartzentruber, interview with author, Shipshewanna, Ind./Evanston, Ill., May 19, 2005.

²¹ Ernest L. Swartzentruber and Fannie Swartzentruber to *The Gospel Fellowship*, March 13 1941, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

Board, the Swartzentrubers extended an official invitation to “the colored sister from Washington” to assist them in their summer labors.²² Lark enthusiastically accepted.

The mission post where Lark and Swartzentruber labored followed a pattern established previously in the North. A burgeoning interest in missions and evangelism, often driven by a desire to replicate other Protestant denominations’ evangelical efforts, energized Mennonites across the church by the end of the nineteenth century.²³ As mission attention turned toward the city in the 1930s, white Mennonite mission workers quickly discovered that they would have to deal with race.²⁴ Almost without exception, Mennonite missionaries then attempted integration before choosing segregation.²⁵ For example, the congregation that eventually came to meet at South Christian Street in Lancaster first met in 1933 at a location two blocks away from the Vine Street host congregation. Although evangelists from Vine Street had initially invited African-American converts into their congregation, white church leaders later decided to start a separate congregation “because of racial conditions and a feeling that the colored people of the

²² "The Executive Committee Met at E.M.S. December 19th 7:30 P.M. Others Present Were J. L. Stauffer, Ernest Swartzentruber, Samuel Shank, Harry Brunk and Ernest Gehman," December 19 (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities, 1938), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-D-1 Box 1 Board/executive Minutes 1904-1969 RESTRICTED," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes 1931-1949 complete."

²³ Theron F. Schlabach, *Gospel Versus Gospel: Mission and the Mennonite Church, 1863-1944*, *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1980; reprint, 1998), 34, 42.

²⁴ Jeffery Phillip Gingerich, "Sharing the Faith: Racial and Ethnic Identity in an Urban Mennonite Community" (Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2003), 52-53.

²⁵ A primary exception to the pattern of integration followed by segregation occurred in the Welsh Mountain region where Lancaster Conference leaders focused on African Americans from the beginning and kept that focus through the bulk of their involvement there. See: John Landis Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference*, ed. Steven M. Nolt, 39 vols., vol. 39, *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 2001), 722.

community constituted a need.”²⁶ The first pastor of the segregated congregation remembered that they separated by race because “the white folks were dropping out and soon the colored race would win.”²⁷ In the same way, the Philadelphia Colored Mission in 1935 also started a separate mission for African Americans only two blocks away from the first white mission.²⁸ Although African-American children had attended the mission’s summer outreach program for several years, in 1936 the white mission workers wrote, “[I]t was thought best to have a separate work for the colored.”²⁹ As if distancing themselves from the decision to segregate, these northern white Mennonites wrote of their decisions in the passive voice, striking a note of uncertainty about the moral direction they had set.

These already conflicted Mennonite mission workers in the North thus made the decision to segregate prior to their southern counterparts. Under the leadership of superintendent Moses Slabaugh, mission workers held services first for white participants and then for African Americans at the same location in 1936, more than three years after mission workers had fully segregated the Lancaster mission.³⁰ When mission workers decided to move the white services to a separate building, they again couched the action in passive terms by noting that the shared

²⁶ Alta Mae Erb, *Studies in Mennonite City Missions* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1937), 35-36.

²⁷ Joseph S. Lehman to Virginia Weaver, 1968, Lancaster, Penna., LMHS - Box: South Christian Street, Now Crossroads Cong., Folder: Correspondence.

²⁸ Erb, *Studies in Mennonite City Missions*, 44.

²⁹ Merle W. Eshleman, "Mission for Colored, Philadelphia," *Missionary Messenger*, February 16 1936, 11.

³⁰ John S. Weber, "The History of Broad Street Mennonite Church 1936-1971" (senior thesis, Eastern Mennonite College, 1971), 7-9, Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)."

facility “was found to be unsatisfactory.”³¹ By the time the Swartzentrubers took on formal responsibilities at Gay Street in 1938, white participants had long since moved to a building on the west side of Harrisonburg.³² The same pattern of integration followed by segregation recurred throughout the church for the next fifteen years. Swartzentruber, Lark, and hundreds of mission workers like them thus accepted deliberate segregation as part of the cost of doing mission work in both the North and the South.

Yet that price of acquiescence did not stop Lark and Swartzentruber from coming together across lines of age, life experience, and race. Raised in the Amish community until her parents joined the relatively more liberal Mennonite church, Swartzentruber had long expressed sensitivity to those on the margins of society. Relatives recalled how Swartzentruber became aware of ethnic prejudice when a young girl of Italian heritage joined their family.³³ Early exposure to prejudice directed at her adopted sister may have motivated Swartzentruber to take up the unpaid Gay Street matron responsibilities even while caring for the first two of the seven children she should eventually bear.³⁴ Rowena Lark had already been a part of the (Old) Mennonite Church for more than a decade when the Swartzentrubers contacted her. Lark first

³¹ Ernest Swartzentruber, "History of the Colored Mission of Harrisonburg, Virginia," *Missionary Light* 3, no. 2 (1943): 1.

³² "The Executive Committee of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities Met in Informal Meetings from Time to Time and Transacted Business as Follows," October 6 (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities, 1936), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-D-1 Box 1 Board/executive Minutes 1904-1969 RESTRICTED," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes 1931-1949 complete."

³³ Harold Huber and Vida Huber, interview with author, Harrisonburg, Va., March 29, 2005.

³⁴ Weber, "Broad Street History," 11; J. Eby Leaman, "YPCA Report, Missions," October 31 (Eastern Mennonite College, 1937), EMU archives, Box "II-G-1e Box 1 YPCA Incls. Dates 1926-42 Folders A-Z," Folder "Missions 1926-1942."

began attending Rocky Ridge Mennonite Mission near Quakertown, Pennsylvania, after she and James moved to a farm in the vicinity of the church in 1927.³⁵ When the family relocated in 1935 to Cottage City, Maryland, close to where Lark taught in the public school system, she and James joined the Brentwood Mennonite congregation.³⁶ Through her witness and visits from Rocky Ridge members, her husband James had joined the church as well.³⁷ By the time the Swartzentrubers recruited her, Lark had adopted the prayer covering and cape dress as her daily attire in a move few other African Americans had yet chosen to make. In 1938, at forty-six and twenty-seven years of age respectively, Lark and Swartzentruber joined together in ministry at Gay Street as fully conformed Mennonites.

The two women worked together each summer with ever greater ease. A 1939 photo from one of Gay Street's first vacation bible schools shows Lark and Swartzentruber flanking the front doors of the mission station in front of a group of approximately sixty African-American children (see Figure 10).³⁸ The two women smile tentatively in the back row as they both tilt their heads slightly to the side. In several photos taken during this time period, Lark and Swartzentruber demonstrate similar ease in each other's presence though subtly mirrored body

³⁵ Hubert L. Brown, "The Larks: Mission Workers," in *1991 Mennonite Yearbook and Directory* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1991), 9.

³⁶ Linda Lyons, "A Mother's Love: Female Influences Passed Down from Generation to Generation" (Georgia State University, 2001), [5], AMC, Hist. Miss 1-566, James and Rowena Lark Collection, "A Mother's Love, Linda Lyons," Folder 1/0b; Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church*, 50.

³⁷ Brown, "The Larks: Mission Workers," 9.

³⁸ Gay St. Mennonite Mission (Harrisonburg, Va.: 1939) Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)."

postures.³⁹ Such mutual comfort reflected the initial success of the mission program. A large group of vacation bible school participants, despite some discipline problems, represented a promising start for the mission.⁴⁰ As Lark would later testify, “These were glory-filled days when we labored together for the Master.”⁴¹ The women continued to grow closer as they supported each other in ministry.⁴²

Members of the Virginia Mennonite Conference soon began to hear much more about Lark than they did about Swartzentruber. Already during her first year of contact with the small group that gathered at Gay Street, Lark received positive affirmation and a few suspicious looks as



Figure 10: Gay Street Mission vacation bible school, 1939 ("Gay St. Mennonite Mission" (Harrisonburg, Va.: 1939), black and white. Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)."

³⁹ For example, another photo of a vacation bible school group arranged in front of the Gay Street mission was featured in a 1943 issue of Virginia Conference's *Missionary Light*. In this photo, the two women again stand close to each other and smile at the photographer, their heads slightly tilted at the same angle. See: Ernest Swartzentruber, "History of the Colored Mission of Harrisonburg, Virginia," *Missionary Light*, April 1943.

⁴⁰ Ernest L. Swartzentruber, "Mennonite Mission for Colored," (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1941), 1, Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

⁴¹ Rosa Mae Mullet, "Broad Street Church in Review Part IV," *Missionary Light*, July-August 1961, 9.

⁴² The warmth evident in Swartzentruber's and Lark's relationship can also be attributed to the mutual experience of misogyny they encountered from men in the larger church. Although the women could have chosen to turn against each other in the face of male domination and diminishment, they chose to cooperate and support each other instead.

she sang solos during evening meetings.⁴³ While Mennonites in the area enjoyed four-part a cappella singing, solos received disapprobation for the prideful attention they invited. In his 1939 report to the annual meeting of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the sponsoring body for the work at Gay Street, Ernest Swartzentruber made specific mention of only one name. He referred to Rowena Lark, the “colored sister from Cottage City, Maryland,” who had assisted in the vacation bible school program.⁴⁴ Swartzentruber remained in the background.

The Swartzentrubers’ decision to highlight Lark’s leadership stood out from other mission reports in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Whereas the Swartzentrubers drew attention to Lark’s gifts as an evangelist, other mission workers emphasized that they relied on material goods to draw in potential converts. Personnel at the South Christian St. mission, for example, “counted on the relief work” to encourage “gratefulness and confidence which could afterwards be entered with the Gospel.”⁴⁵ At that time, everyone who received bags of potatoes had to attend Sunday school at South Christian Street for the privilege. At Gay Street, Swartzentruber also reported on “food, live chickens, religious books, and clothes and bedding” given to local

⁴³ Weber, "Broad Street History," 13.

⁴⁴ "The Annual Meeting of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities Met at the Springdale Church, Upper District, August 1st 1939 at 1:15 P.M.," August 1 (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities, 1939), 66, Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-D-1 Box 1 Board/executive Minutes 1904-1969 RESTRICTED," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes 1931-1949 complete."

⁴⁵ Anna Margie Lehman to Virginia Weaver, November 18 1969, Harrisonburg, Va., LMHS - Box: South Christian Street, Now Crossroads Cong; Folder: [unmarked white folder].

families.⁴⁶ In contrast to the South Christian St. workers, however, Swartzentruber did not make distribution of the goods contingent upon church or Sunday school attendance.⁴⁷ She and her husband relied much more heavily on Lark than they did on live chickens and fresh bedding.

Swartzentruber's relationship with Lark and other African-American women in Harrisonburg prompted her shock and dismay when leaders from the Virginia Conference segregated their communion services in late 1940. From early in the twentieth century, the Virginia Conference leaders had maintained an uneasy stance regarding African-American converts. In 1909, African-American members had been baptized by a congregation in Virginia and then invited into segregated services two years later.⁴⁸ By the mid-1920s other congregations had replicated the same pattern of cautious acceptance into church membership followed by the establishment of segregated services and Sunday schools.⁴⁹ The governing Conference body, however, had not established an official position by the time Swartzentruber and Lark came into the public eye. In response to the growing fellowship at Gay Street, the executive committees of both the Virginia Conference and its mission board met on Armistice Day in November 1940 to determine "definite policies to govern relationships between the colored and white in Mennonite

⁴⁶ Fannie Swartzentruber to Lower District Sewing Circle, April 15 1943, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

⁴⁷ For example, in a 1943 letter to donors, Fannie referred to Rowena and several other African-American workers who worked at the mission in various church programs. See: Swartzentruber and Swartzentruber to Gospel Fellowship.

⁴⁸ Harry Anthony Brunk, *History of Mennonites in Virginia 1900-1960*, vol. 2 (Harrisonburg, Va.: H. A. Brunk, 1972), 103-04.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

church fellowship.”⁵⁰ Claiming “a matter of expediency” in their desire to promote “the best interests of both colored and white,” the joint executive committees voted to form a segregated African-American congregation that would celebrate the rites of footwashing, the holy kiss, and communion on a racially segregated basis.⁵¹ Even though the Swartzentrubers challenged their supervisors to identify a scriptural basis for the segregation dictate, the bishops on the board remained firm in their opposition to the celebration of integrated sacraments.⁵² Swartzentruber expressed her frustration to her husband and the bishops, but cooperated for the time being because she believed that God had put them in charge.⁵³

Swartzentruber passionately opposed the segregation dictate but conformed to racial norms in her relationship with Lark. To be sure, the mutual affection that each woman expressed for the other appeared genuine and heartfelt. For example, Lark and two of her daughters stayed

⁵⁰ "Policy Governing the Organization of a Mennonite Colored Organization," November 11 (Virginia Mennonite Conference; Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions And Charities, 1940), Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "I-D-1, Box 1 Board/Executive Minutes 1904-1969 Restricted," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes (retyped) 1931-1947." The timing of the segregation decision deserves at least passing note. Virginia Conference executives made their decision to conform to segregationist practices at a time when local Harrisonburg news reports had begun to highlight the pacifists' conscientious objector status. By the point of their segregationist decision, the Harrisonburg newspaper had reported on a local alternative service camp for conscientious objectors that Mennonites administered even as pro-war sentiment ran high in the community. The decision to support Virginia's Jim Crow standards thereby came in the midst of an ongoing decision to oppose the country's rising militarism. See: "Eight Arrive at Grottoes Camp," *Daily News Record*, Friday, May 23 1941; "Germans Launching New Drive on Leningrad; Violent Fighting," *Daily News Record*, Monday, November 10 1941.

⁵¹ "Mennonite Colored Policy." Notably, the official sacramental segregation centered on the most physically intimate of the church sacraments. At no point did the policy call for racially differentiated coverings, for instance.

⁵² Huber and Huber, interview with author; Weber, "Broad Street History," 17.

⁵³ Homer Swartzentruber, interview with author, Shipshewanna, Ind./Evanston, Ill., February 24, 2007.

at the Swartzentruber home for three weeks during the vacation bible school session at Gay Street in 1940. According to Swartzentruber, Lark and her daughters enjoyed “rich Christian fellowship” together with her, Ernest, and their three children, the youngest only about a month old.⁵⁴ The following year, Lark offered to travel down to Harrisonburg to assist the Swartzentruber family after an accident left Ernest in the hospital for a stretch of ten days. Lark assured Swartzentruber of “the complete sympathy and service of the Lark family” and enjoined her to “not worry my dear.”⁵⁵ Such mutual appreciation belied other, less equitable parts of their relationship. A 1940 photo caption identifies Lark as a “helper” rather than a more prestigious “worker” in the vacation bible school program.⁵⁶ The following year Swartzentruber tried to recruit a white lead vacation bible school teacher even though talented and experienced Lark had already agreed to teach the class.⁵⁷ Early in their relationship, Swartzentruber thus opposed worship segregation while accepting segregation of roles and responsibilities.

The overt segregation nonetheless continued to hamper Swartzentruber’s ministry at Gay Street. On March 23, 1941, the small congregation of twelve adult workers and members joined in their first communion service, one of two typically held in the course of a year. Following the segregated service, Swartzentruber emphasized that they needed mission workers “who will

⁵⁴ Swartzentruber and Swartzentruber to Gospel Fellowship.

⁵⁵ Rowena Lark to Fannie Swartzentruber, June 5 1941, Washington, D.C., AMC, Hist. Miss 1-738, Fannie Yoder Swartzentruber Collection, Rowena Lark Letters 1941-1967, Folder SC.

⁵⁶ Group of Workers at Gay St. Mission (1940) Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)."

⁵⁷ Fannie Swartzentruber to Elma Hershberger, August 4 1941, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

really LOVE these people,” by which she meant selfless workers who were ready to enter into deep relationships and who offered no false assurances of solidarity.⁵⁸ On the heels of a service marked by racial segregation, Swartzentruber thus scurried to find workers who would counter the Conference’s segregationist policies through the integrity of their words and deeds. Despite Swartzentruber’s pleas for ethically pure workers, African-American members at Gay Street began to comment on the Jim Crow policy. Luther Gaines, one of the congregation’s first baptized members, soon asked why Fannie’s husband Ernest gave white people the holy kiss but would not do the same with African-American members.⁵⁹ Although Ernest subsequently stopped giving a traditional kiss on the cheek to visitors and congregants alike, he had not changed the underlying segregation policy. The community around the church took note.

Potential adult converts – especially women – found the combined racial and religious purity-based policies difficult to negotiate. Although as many as ninety children had begun to attend the congregation’s vacation bible school program by 1942, many fewer adults participated on a regular basis and men were more likely than women to join.⁶⁰ In addition to facing racial segregation and nonconformist dictates such as those forbidding life insurance policies, women bore the extra burden of needing to adopt the cape dress and covering upon their baptism.⁶¹ By

⁵⁸ Fannie Swartzentruber to April 2 1941, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

⁵⁹ Weber, "Broad Street History," 18.

⁶⁰ Ernest L. Swartzentruber, "Harrisonburg Colored Mission," (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1942), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

⁶¹ Many Mennonite groups at the time forbade the purchase of life insurance because the purchase of such policies indicated a lack of reliance on God’s providence. In 1941, for example,

contrast, men experienced greater flexibility in the wearing of the plain coat.⁶² At the beginning of 1942, Swartzentruber reported that seven adults, only one of them a woman, had joined the congregation as of that year.⁶³ The church's religious and racial purity restrictions proved far less of a barrier for children than they did for adults in the neighborhood surrounding Gay Street.

Nonetheless the integrity shown by Swartzentruber and other workers at Gay Street did draw some African-American women into the church. For example, given the paucity of female converts in the early years, the congregation celebrated the baptism of Roberta Webb with distinct pleasure. Webb, a talented teacher and community organizer, became a member in early 1943 in a baptism service marred only by the segregation dictates that governed her receipt into the Mennonite community.⁶⁴ Following her baptism, Webb began to wear the prayer cap and cape dress (see Figure 11). She explained that she did so because of the "very deep desire to treat our people as brothers" evidenced by mission workers like Swartzentruber, who on June 8, 1943,

leaders at Gay Street requested prayer for "one woman that she may be willing to give up her life insurance." See: Ernest L. Swartzentruber, "For Missionary Light Harrisonburg Colored Mission," (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1941), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

⁶² Amy Regier, "Revising the Plainness of Whiteness," in *Mennonite Life* (2002).

⁶³ Fannie Swartzentruber to Sewing Circle, January 9 1942, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

⁶⁴ Ernest L. Swartzentruber, "Harrisonburg Colored Mission," (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1943), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

accepted another year's reappointment as matron at Gay Street.⁶⁵ Swartzentruber delighted in the energy that Webb and her daughters brought to the small congregation and rejoiced at the growth their participation represented.

Webb's baptism marked the beginning of a tumultuous period in the life of the Gay Street mission and the history of race relations in the Mennonite community. During that unsettled period, stretching from 1944 through 1949, Lark and Swartzentruber lived through an era of evangelism and church growth replete with segregation debates and spectacle made of African-American converts. Even as they resisted segregation and countered spectacle – actions that lead to rupture and upheaval in their own lives – Lark and Swartzentruber still found ways to exercise new forms of leadership and sustain their relationship. In



Figure 11: Roberta Webb (seated) and daughters, Nancy (left), Peggy, and Ada, circa 1940s ("[Roberta Webb and Daughters Portrait]." Harrisonburg, Va.).

particular, the high-profile ministry at Gay Street bore a human cost during this period felt in a personal and traumatic way by Swartzentruber. By the time a new decade opened, the Swartzentrubers had left the Gay Street mission and the Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Nonetheless Lark left first. In the summer of 1944, she and her husband James traveled to the Dearborn Street area of Chicago, an impoverished African-American community, to lead

⁶⁵ Roberta W. Webb to Rosalie Wyse, December 5 1947, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)," Folder "Broad Street-General History"; "Minutes of the Annual Meeting 1943," June 8 (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities, 1943), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-D-1 Box 1 Board/executive Minutes 1904-1969 RESTRICTED," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes 1931-1949 complete."

vacation bible school.⁶⁶ Notably, they moved to a region free of church-based segregationist policies. Despite Lark's fondness for Swartzentruber and the ministry at Gay Street, she did not seek to stay where her ministry had been officially marginalized. Although the Larks encountered ample prejudice and racism in Chicago, Lark no longer had to accept the role of helper.⁶⁷ The Larks led the vacation bible school program with the support of local Mennonites. Immediately following bible school, the Larks initiated a prayer meeting in the home of a Dearborn Street resident. The ensuing challenges of ministry in a new northern urban environment took Lark away from the work at Gay Street. Although she remained connected to the Gay Street vacation bible school program for several more years, she focused her energies on the emerging Bethel Mennonite congregation in Chicago.⁶⁸

Roberta Webb stepped up into new leadership as Lark moved farther away. Less than a month after her baptism, Webb's daughters presented a "special music" program at a nearby Mennonite church, a ministry Webb encouraged.⁶⁹ Webb tempered support for her adopted

⁶⁶ "Chicago Bethel Church Development 1944-1953: Housing Project in Mission Area Makes New Church Building Necessary and Enlarges Witnessing Opportunities," (Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1953), 9, LMHS - Rudy, Mass Emma, Diaries -- 1953, 1963, 1966, 1974, Historical & Commemorative notes, programs & periodicals.

⁶⁷ One Mennonite in Chicago, for example, protested vehemently against the Larks's presence in Chicago, found fault with their ministry methods, protested their son's romantic relationship with a white Mennonite girl, and disparaged African Americans for their "emotional extremes, their poor housekeeping, their lassitude, and immorality." See: Ann Jennings Brunk to Guy F. Hershberger, June 10 1952, Lombard, Ill.

⁶⁸ One account indicates that Rowena continued her involvement at the Harrisonburg vacation bible school program through 1950. See: Mullet, "Review of Broad Street," 9. Yet she makes few appearances in the mission's reports or articles past 1944.

⁶⁹ Harry A. Brunk, "Harry A. Brunk 1944 Diary," (1944), March 17 entry, Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Diaries - John Brunk, Joseph Heatwole, Lena Burkholder Brunk, Harry A. Brunk Box 4."

church, however, with increasing challenge to another segregationist practice. As of 1945, the Virginia Conference-sponsored Eastern Mennonite School in Harrisonburg maintained a whites-only policy. Administrators kept their institution segregated based on a fear of making “trouble” should they admit African-American students and out of a concern to act in an “expedient” manner in light of Jim Crow law.⁷⁰ Webb, however, viewed the policy quite differently. Her brother John, for example, exclaimed, “They accept you in the church.... Yet, they won't accept your children in their college.”⁷¹ Webb noted the hypocrisy as well and sought change even while casting about for other Mennonite colleges that would accept her daughters.

Yet Webb soon lost two of her most vocal allies against the Conference's segregationist policies. Swartzentruber also left Harrisonburg but in far more controversial circumstances. In the fall of 1944, Swartzentruber lost patience with the practice of segregated communion.⁷² She had watched Lark move even farther away from the segregated South, observed her being shut out by leaders who would not acknowledge her verbal objections, and witnessed the skepticism of potential African-American converts in the Gay Street neighborhood. At every turn the segregated sacraments blocked the purity of her intention. Swartzentruber could not demonstrate

⁷⁰ John L. Stauffer to Milo Kauffman, April 16 1945, Harrisonburg, Va., EMU archives, Box "II-B3-2 John L. Stauffer Collection Correspondence," Folder, "College Corres., Miscell. 1943-1946."

⁷¹ Roberta Webb and Janet Eaton, "Personal Copy of Mrs. Roberta Webb's Story," September 7-9 (Mennonite Historical Library, 1981), 26, Mennonite Historical Library, H B W38n.

⁷² I have settled on 1944 as the date of Swartzentruber's protest after discussions with her eldest son and the author of a 1971 paper that cites the date as 1941. The earlier date, based on no-longer existing notes of a conversation between Ernest Swartzentruber and an undergraduate at Eastern Mennonite College in 1971, does not concur with Fannie's statement, “God, you've put these men in charge of us. We're going to obey them until you show us otherwise” See: Swartzentruber, interview with author. As evident here, Fannie left the communion service only after several years of building frustration with the segregationist dictate, not immediately after the dictate as the 1971 account suggests.

integrity of word and deed if she participated in a service that claimed to welcome all, but separated some. Even those African Americans who, like Lark, marked their separation from society by the clothes they wore could not fully participate in physically intimate sacraments where believers kissed cheeks, shared a cup, washed each other's feet, and entered together into baptismal waters. Swartzentruber couldn't stand the inconsistency. Before communion ended on a fall Sunday, she gathered her youngest daughter Rhoda into her arms and stormed out of the service. Rather than wait for Ernest, she walked four miles to their farm just north of Harrisonburg. When Ernest joined her, Swartzentruber declared that she would never again sit through such a service.⁷³

Swartzentruber's singular eruption appears to have been a breaking point. Although the Swartzentrubers had been reappointed for another year's term on May 23, 1944, leaders from the Virginia Conference terminated the Swartzentrubers' assignment only months after Swartzentruber stormed out of the communion service. On January 5, 1945, the executive committee of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions abruptly removed the Swartzentrubers from their posts as matron and superintendent.⁷⁴ Offering no explanation for their action, the mission board then immediately moved to appoint Ralph Shank as superintendent and his wife Bessie as matron.⁷⁵ In a change from past practice, Shank would also fill the role of resident

⁷³ Huber and Huber, interview with author.

⁷⁴ "Executive Committee Meeting - Friday 10:00 A.M., January 5, 1945," January 5 (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions And Charities, 1945), 112, Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "I-D-1, Box 1 Board/Executive Minutes 1904-1969 Restricted," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes (retyped) 1931-1947"; Weber, "Broad Street History," 17-18.

⁷⁵ "Executive Committee Meeting - Friday 10:00 A.M., January 5, 1945," 112; "Annual Meeting of Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities," May 22 (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions & Charities, 1945), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-D-1 Box 1 Board/executive

pastor. The two decisions left no room at Gay Street for the Swartzentrubers. In the space of a few minutes, the bishops forced Swartzentruber to leave a church community about which she deeply cared.

The dismissal hit both of the Swartzentrubers hard. Their niece remembered hearing about the dismissal when she was about eight years old. "I remember this heaviness [about] ... something awful having happened," she recalled. Family members expressed concern about the couple's well being and witnessed their emotional devastation.⁷⁶ Although Ernest continued to work at a local hatchery and Fannie and the older children kept the farm running, they lost their spiritual foundation.⁷⁷ The dismissal from Gay Street left them so distraught that the Swartzentrubers contemplated leaving the Mennonite church entirely and for a short while considered joining an independent bible church in the area.⁷⁸ The couple remained uncertain how to restore their integrity when they had been so abruptly barred from their base of action and worship. For the Swartzentrubers and the Mennonite community at large, the expression of purity took place in community or not at all. Without a congregation to support and embody their commitment to separation from the world and service to it, they were left feeling both impure and discouraged.

Yet Swartzentruber did not abandon relationships formed at Gay Street. She continued to nurture her friendship with Lark and communicated with the Webb family locally. By December

Minutes 1904-1969 RESTRICTED," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes 1931-1949 complete."

⁷⁶ Huber and Huber, interview with author.

⁷⁷ Swartzentruber, interview with author.

⁷⁸ Ibid., interview with author.

of 1945, just under a year after the Swartzentrubers' dismissal from the Gay Street mission, Fannie received a letter from Chicago. The Larks had moved to the Windy City on a permanent basis that year and had recently celebrated Bethel Mennonite's first communion service.⁷⁹ In a post in which Lark mused that life's difficulties acted as "God's machinery for the purification of my soul," she tried to rouse her friend's spirit in the midst of lingering trauma from the Gay Street dismissal by writing, "This old world needs Christians like you and Ernest. Please do not leave us yet. Ha! Ha!"⁸⁰ Lark continued in that upbeat vein by inviting Swartzentruber to assist in the work at Bethel. Although childcare responsibilities kept Swartzentruber from accepting it, the invitation represented a significant shift in the women's relationship as former helper became leader.⁸¹ Lark had been prompted to write Swartzentruber after receiving a phone call from Roberta Webb's daughter Peggy. Even though Swartzentruber no longer worshipped with the congregation that she had helped build, she remained in close contact with many of the members there.

The next two years saw significant changes in the lives of both Swartzentruber and Lark. The Swartzentrubers relocated to Greenwood, Delaware, in 1946, after selling their farm in Harrisonburg. Ernest had accepted a call from the Greenwood Mennonite School Board to join their faculty. Once they relocated, the couple also became involved in starting a bible school at an African-American migrant camp in Stateonsville, north of Greenwood.⁸² In Chicago, Lark continued to provide leadership at Bethel as she ran a woman's sewing circle, conducted bible

⁷⁹ Rowena Lark, "The History of Bethel Mennonite Church," *Our Journal*, May 1950, 1.

⁸⁰ Lark to Swartzentruber, 1945.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Swartzentruber, interview with author.

studies, and kept the missions at “Dearborn St. and the work at Bethel going” when her husband took ill.⁸³ At a time when few Mennonite women exercised public leadership of any kind, Lark fulfilled significant leadership roles in both public and private.

Yet editors eager to report on church missions gave more attention to the spectacle of African-American Mennonites than to the leadership Lark exercised. In an era when African Americans found themselves the subject of much curious attention, the Larks’ pictures regularly appeared in mission newsletters. After leaders from the Illinois Conference ordained James as the first African-American minister in the Mennonite church, such attention increased. Yet, however well intentioned, those who wrote captions that identified the couple as the “Zealous Larks” or James as the “First Colored Mennonite Minister” set them up as objects for display (see Figures 12 and 13).⁸⁴ Through such photos and the articles that accompanied them,



Figure 12: Rowena and James Lark, circa 1947 (“Zealous Larks.” *The Missionary Guide* circa 1947, 16).

many Mennonites across the country became familiar with displays featuring Lark, but seldom did they grow to know her as a person, a co-believer, and full-fledged church member. Because the articles centered on public display rather than interpersonal connection, few white Mennonites grew to know Lark as well as did Swartzentruber, who continued to labor out of the limelight in Greenwood, Delaware.

The two women left behind a mixed legacy of resistance and spectacle at the Harrisonburg congregation. Even without the support of Swartzentruber and Lark, Roberta Webb

⁸³ Lark to Swartzentruber, 1945.

⁸⁴ “Zealous Larks,” *The Missionary Guide* circa 1947.

continued to push the Virginia Conference to change its segregationist policies. In December of 1947, for example, Roberta described her experience to a group of white Mennonites in Pennsylvania. In her letter, Webb wrote that, unless removed, segregation in the Mennonite church “will ... shake our faith in the very Maker whom you are seemingly so anxious to have us serve.”⁸⁵ She referred not to communion segregation, but to the decision made seven months previously by the president and board of Eastern Mennonite School to deny entry to her daughter.⁸⁶ Demonstrating her deft facility in returning good for evil, a value held dear by nonresistant Mennonites, Webb praised Mennonites in Virginia for “their anxiety... to teach us ... what real Christian love is.”⁸⁷ She did not, however, mention to her Pennsylvania correspondents that she had found a way for her daughter to be educated in the Mennonite community. Already in early 1945 Roberta had contacted the president of Hesston College, a two-year school in southeastern Kansas, to see if her daughter could matriculate there.⁸⁸ After checking with Eastern Mennonite’s president for his assent, Hesston’s president admitted Ada.⁸⁹ As Lark had before her, Webb skillfully negotiated the limits placed on her by an often unwelcoming church community.

⁸⁵ Webb to Wyse.

⁸⁶ A. G. Heishman, "Annual Board Meeting Trustees Eastern Mennonite School," May 14 (Eastern Mennonite School, 1945), 2, EMU archives, Box "II EMU A Trustees 3 Board of Trustees A 2 Minutes 1939-1969 w\Exec Comm," Folder "1944-1948."

⁸⁷ Webb to Wyse.

⁸⁸ Milo Kauffman to John L. Stauffer, April 9 1945, Hesston, Kans., EMU archives, Box "II-B3-2 John L. Stauffer Collection Correspondence," Folder, "College Corres., Miscell. 1943-1946."

⁸⁹ Stauffer to Kauffman.

African-American Mennonite women also followed Lark's example in making deft dress choices despite their own ambivalence about church segregation policies. As already noted, Lark, Webb, and other African-American converts during this era willingly accepted the dress dictates that the church placed upon them.⁹⁰ At the same time, church leaders responded to that deliberate decision with curiosity. In an exercise that missed the point of the women's dress entirely, editors of church magazines and newsletters drew attention to African-American women dressed like white Mennonites rather than to African-American women who were unimpugnable church members in their own right. The editors and other white church leaders did not notice that the women were declaring themselves full members through their dress or that their sartorial choices gave them a platform from which to criticize segregation. Even as they embarked on daily acts of sophisticated resistance, African-American plain-clothed women often found themselves on display during the late 1940s and beyond.

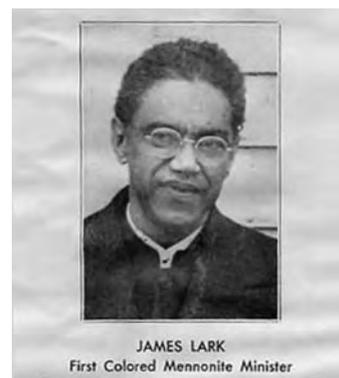
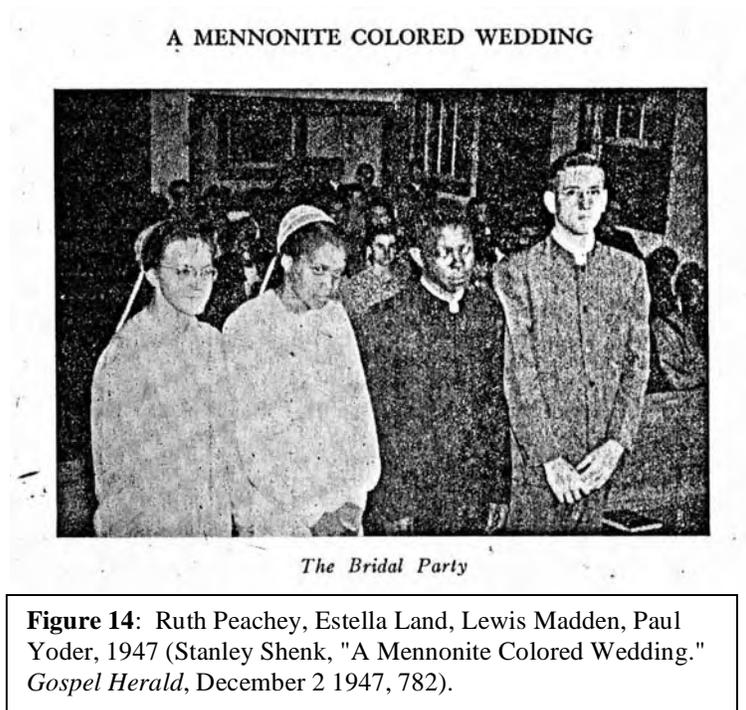


Figure 13: James Lark, circa 1947 ("James Lark: First Colored Mennonite Minister." *The Missionary Guide* circa 1947, 16).

⁹⁰ African-American women in other parts of the country also chose to dress conservatively. At South Christian Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for example, Elizabeth Mack made the decision to join the congregation in 1948 even though, at the age of forty-five, she was hesitant to make the switch to wearing plain clothes. Nonetheless, she did so and reportedly came to care much less about her plain-clothed appearance. Indeed, she wore plain clothes until her death in 1976. See: Lehman to Weaver; "South Christian Street Mennonite Church Presents This Tribute to Our Beloved Sister Elizabeth Mack," (South Christian Street Mennonite Church, 1976), LMHS - Box: South Christian Street, Now Crossroads Cong., Folder: South Christian Street -- Miscellaneous files, 1968-1988.

A 1947 denominational magazine featured just such an exhibition. The editors of the (Old) Mennonite Church national publication the *Gospel Herald* featured an article that December about a wedding held at Gay Street's successor, Broad Street Mennonite Church. The editors printed a large photo of a conservatively dressed wedding party beneath the capitalized caption "A MENNONITE COLORED WEDDING" (see Figure 14).⁹¹ Through his choice of a racially specific, denominationally labeled title, the editor who penned the photo caption thus emphasized the rarity



of a wedding of two African Americans in the Mennonite Church. Moreover, the staging of the photo further amplified the spectacle of African-American Mennonites dressed in nonconformist attire. As the surrounding text made evident, the newly wedded couple's race rather than a theological or ritual departure made the event notable.

Swartzentruber and Lark continued to support Broad Street members and each other despite their distance from such celebration and spectacle. In 1948, for example, Swartzentruber stayed at home with her children to make it possible for her husband to serve as the vacation bible school superintendent at Lark's congregation in Chicago.⁹² Through this effort, the

⁹¹ Stanley Shenk, "A Mennonite Colored Wedding," *Gospel Herald*, December 2 1947.

⁹² Lark, "The History of Bethel."

Swartzentrubers had become Lark's helpers. Lark also reached out to assist Roberta Webb's daughter Ada after her study at Hesston. In November of 1947, Ada moved to Chicago, where the Larks welcomed her to their congregation. The following year, again with the support and encouragement of Lark, Ada enrolled in evening courses at Roosevelt College in Chicago.⁹³ In early 1949, Ada returned home to Harrisonburg and became the first full-time African-American student enrolled at Eastern Mennonite School (see Figure 15).⁹⁴ Lark provided a home away from home for Ada during an uncertain and tumultuous time.

Lark led the women of Bethel Mennonite to another first the same year that Ada entered Eastern Mennonite School. In 1949, the Larks had begun to talk about constructing a new building for the growing congregation of forty-six members, a group that accounted for nearly a third of the African-American members of the (Old) Mennonite Church at that time.⁹⁵ Their existing facility had already begun to grow crowded, especially during the popular summer vacation bible school programs. Before the mission board produced a fundraising brochure or released James from his pastoral responsibilities to raise finances for the church building, Lark mobilized the women of Bethel's sewing circle. Through rummage sales on March 12 and April

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ "Minutes of Administration Committee Meeting," January 26 (Eastern Mennonite College, 1949), 1, Eastern Mennonite University Archives, Box II-B-4, John R. Mumaw Collection Box 27; *Minutes of the Virginia Mennonite Conference Including Some Historical Data, a Brief Biographical Sketch of Its Founders and Organization and Her Official Statement of Christian Fundamentals, Constitution, and Rules and Discipline: A Publication Authorized by the Conference in a Session Held at Weavers Church, August, 1938*, vol. 2 (Harrisonburg, Va.: Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1950), 303; "Administration Committee," September 20 (Eastern Mennonite College, 1948), Eastern Mennonite University Archives, Box II-B-4, John R. Mumaw Collection Box 27. The previous year African-American student Willis Johnson was admitted on a part-time basis. See: "EMC Ad Committe 9-20-1948."

⁹⁵ Melvin Gingerich, "Negroes and the Mennonites," *The Mennonite*, June 14 1949, 9; Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church*, 172.

9, the women raised over \$150 for the “building fund.”⁹⁶ With evident pride, Lark noted that this was the “first time in the history of the church” that a group of African-American Mennonites had contributed to a church-building project or major mission endeavor.⁹⁷

Lark raised those funds in Chicago wearing the same kind of clothes that Swartzentruber wore while she ministered to migrant workers in Delaware. As a period of intense evangelism, church planting, and spectacle came to a close, both women continued to bear out the visible purity dictates of the church through the clothes they wore and the coverings



Second Semester

First Row—A. Webb, C. Watters, A. Oberholtzer, I. Watters
Second Row—L. Peachey, A. Yoder, H. Martin, W. Martin, A. Yoder

Figure 15: Ada Webb (left, front row), 1949 ("The Shenandoah." 51. Harrisonburg, Va.: Eastern Mennonite College, 1949).

they put on each morning. Although church leaders rarely had cause in the 1940s to defend the rationale for sexual and racial purity, they ensured that women demonstrated the importance of purity through corporeal action. Lark and Swartzentruber together demonstrated the value of purity on a daily basis. Beyond the bonds of struggle formed in the intense and conflicted environment at Gay Street, beyond the shared experience of being married to men whose church work took them from home and required often unappreciated support, even beyond a genuine friendship that prompted them to write letters back and forth across the miles, the clothes that Lark and Swartzentruber wore bound them together. That common bond nonetheless had very different meanings.

⁹⁶ Lark, "The History of Bethel," 3.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Swartzentruber's and Lark's dress choices received new attention during the next six years. From 1950 through 1955, members of the (Old) Mennonite Church debated the problem of how best to express their commitment to remaining pure and separate from a sinful world. Those debates centered on women's attire. To signify serious membership, male church leaders made more and more fuss about clothes as they renewed their conviction that women needed to dress plainly and wear the covering. Lark and Swartzentruber publicly cooperated with the white male leaders, even while using their clothing to claim insider status. Because the sartorial purity marker on their head so clearly indicated they belonged, they could then more effectively resist oppression within the church. Although they expressed that resistance in different ways and in response to differing kinds of oppression, both women, along with other women in the church, made the covering count for more than just separation from the world.

Swartzentruber's words and actions began to demonstrate one measure of the difference in white and African-American responses to oppression. While she and Ernest continued to raise a family that would soon include seven children, Swartzentruber demonstrated the same passion for justice and the work of the church that had led her to storm out of Gay Street in 1944. Amid parenting, running a household, and participating in migrant ministry, Swartzentruber vocalized her objection to the more visible dress restrictions placed on women. Her eldest son recalled her saying on numerous occasions, "God put the mark on the man, not the woman," an allusion to the Genesis account where Abraham underwent circumcision as a sign of separation from the world.⁹⁸ Although Swartzentruber wore the prayer covering up until the last few years before her death and did not cut her hair, another prohibition imposed by the church, she adhered to those proscriptions with evident resentment. Unequal, gender-based dress restrictions struck her as

⁹⁸ Swartzentruber, interview with author.

inappropriate and unjust. Yet her commitment to the church and her respect for the prohibitions placed on women by male church leaders during the 1950s meant that she continued to wear the covering.

Women like Swartzentruber nonetheless matched such public acquiescence to restrictive dress codes with strenuous objections to racial oppression. Although Swartzentruber seldom wrote for publication in any forum, other white women in the early 1950s raised public objections to racial segregation and prejudice in the church. For example, in 1951 Ruth Peachey publicly denounced racial stereotyping and Mennonites' belief in the curse of Ham, a Genesis passage used to justify slavery and oppression of African Americans.⁹⁹ Like Swartzentruber, Peachey's desire for integrity in the church emerged from her relationships with African Americans in Harrisonburg. She had served as bridesmaid in the "COLORED WEDDING" mentioned above. Building on such personal integrity, Peachey called white Mennonites to treat African Americans as they themselves would like to be treated. By acting in "light of the Golden Rule," she declared, "our race problem will be reduced to a minimum or will vanish entirely."¹⁰⁰ Although she made no corresponding protest about gender inequities in the church, Peachey called on ethical purity to prompt her co-religionists to resist belief in racial impurity.

A year later another white woman spoke out against church-based segregation. Even as a writer like Peachey objected to racial segregation based on her experience at Broad Street, church leaders in Pennsylvania continued to support racially segregated congregations. The church at Steelton, Pennsylvania, had since 1944 practiced racial segregation in its ministry to

⁹⁹ Ruth Peachey, "The Mennonite Church, a World Church," *Missionary Messenger*, February 1951.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

African-American adults and children but proposed in 1952 to solidify that practice by purchasing a separate building for African-American congregants.¹⁰¹ Mission worker and church member Leah Risser objected openly to these plans. An admiring biographer wrote several decades later that Risser had told church leaders, “The winds of social change [are] blowing against [you]. It [is] not the time to affirm racial segregation.”¹⁰² Despite their prescience, Risser’s objections went unheeded.

Swartzentruber continued to work for the church even though Mennonite leaders had ignored her objections to racial and gender inequity. In 1952, she and Ernest moved their family from Delaware to the small, rural town of Schuyler, Virginia, approximately seventy miles southeast of Harrisonburg, where they began to minister at Rehoboth Mennonite Church. Although their migrant ministry near Greenwood had kept them in touch with the African-American community there, they did not reach out to African Americans after relocating to Schuyler.¹⁰³ Enough pain remained from the past trauma that they kept their distance.¹⁰⁴

Rowena Lark, however, moved ever deeper into ministry in the African-American community. While the Swartzentrubers relocated to Virginia, Lark continued to work at Bethel and extend her ministry across the church. In the summers of 1952 and 1953, Lark traveled to the Diamond Street Mennonite congregation in Philadelphia to assist in their vacation bible school

¹⁰¹ Orie O. Miller, "Sixty-Eighth Quarterly Meeting of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Mission and Charities Held at the Groffdale Church March 8, 1944," March 8 (Eastern Mennonite Board of Mission and Charities, 1944); "News Notes ... City," *Missionary Messenger*, October 1952.

¹⁰² William Yovanovich, "Leah Risser, Ahead of Her Time," *WMSC Voice*, November 1990, 7.

¹⁰³ Swartzentruber, interview with author.

¹⁰⁴ Huber and Huber, interview with author.

program. She brought with her a love of singing, more than twenty-five years' teaching experience, and the ability to tell a good story. Church leader and pastor's wife Miriam Stoltzfus recalled Lark's "vivacious" presence as she encouraged young African-American women to wear their hair "naturally" under the prayer covering.¹⁰⁵ Although bishops from the Lancaster Conference continued to prohibit women from cutting their hair, Lark claimed cultural space outside the bishops' purview. The bishops could demand that female converts wear the covering and refrain from cutting their hair, but they could not even begin to discuss hair relaxers. In the vacuum created by the bishops' ignorance of culturally specific hair treatment, Lark led where the bishops could not follow.

Lark's leadership gifts and cultural expertise served the growing African-American Mennonite community well. Although only one hundred and fifty African Americans had joined the (Old) Mennonite Church by 1950, by 1953 that number had nearly doubled and Sunday morning attendance had risen to more than one thousand.¹⁰⁶ No longer needing to tend to children at home, Lark continued to travel among the burgeoning African-American Mennonite community during these years. As she led vacation bible school programs, spoke at Broad Street in Harrisonburg, and led bible clubs and sewing circles in Chicago, Lark proved to be a powerful presence.¹⁰⁷ Photos from the period show African-American women in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Illinois adopting the dress patterns Lark had long modeled (see Figure 16). Yet neither she

¹⁰⁵ Miriam Stoltzfus, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 15, 2003.

¹⁰⁶ Negro Membership in Mennonite Church to September 1 1953, AMC, Hist. Miss 1-566, James and Rowena Lark Collection, Negro Membership, Menn. Church, 1953, Folder 1/5.

¹⁰⁷ "Broad Street Journal," (Broad Street Mennonite Church, 1954-1956), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "Broad Street Mennonite Church (Deposited by Harold & Vida Huber on April 4, 1998) Box 2"; "Chicago Bethel."

nor her husband James required new converts to dress plainly, as photos from Bethel demonstrate (see Figures 17 and 18). Lark led by example rather than mandate.

White mission workers, however, strictly enforced dress restrictions. Until the mid-1960s, white missionaries required African-American members in general, and women in particular, to strictly conform to the church's dress standards.¹⁰⁸ Most broadly, African Americans joining the church came under closer scrutiny than did white converts. In the case of the Diamond Street mission, a particularly stringent bishop accounted for the tight enforcement.¹⁰⁹ The pattern extended, however, beyond the purview of a single, overbearing bishop. White mission workers in the Lancaster Conference admitted in 1954 that they required African-American converts to



Figure 16: Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Kimbrough, circa 1953 ("Chicago Bethel Church Development 1944-1953: Housing Project" Chicago: Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1953).

“dress much plainer than members of home congregations” but then asserted their belief that the

¹⁰⁸ Arthur and Graybill argue that among conservative Mennonite groups social control of the body is maintained through strict conformity to dress patterns as enforced by the women themselves, the men in their lives, and church leaders. The women's dress, far more than the men's, defines separation from society and thus the women come under more scrutiny from ministers than do men. Even though women internalized this control and maintained it through informal relationships and gossip, it was men who defined when a woman's dress was deviant. What was true of women in general proved more so for the African-American women in this chapter. See: Linda B. Arthur and Beth Graybill, "The Social Control of Women's Bodies in Two Mennonite Communities," in *Religion, Dress and the Body*, ed. Linda B. Arthur (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 10, 12, 23, 27.

¹⁰⁹ Stoltzfus, *Quiet Shouts*, 163, 240.

restrictions offered “a blessing rather than a hindrance.”¹¹⁰ Workers at the Andrews Bridge congregation in southern Lancaster County corroborated the double standard as did a 1955 nonconformity survey distributed in Virginia.¹¹¹ Others had long noted the same.¹¹² Mission workers thus knew that the double standard kept African Americans from joining but did little in this period to address the issue.

The mission workers hesitated to challenge dress restrictions in part due to a mounting concern about purity doctrine. On August 26, 1955, the (Old) Mennonite Church General Conference passed a statement entitled “Declaration of Commitment in Respect to Christian Separation and Nonconformity to the World.”¹¹³ The delegates gathered in Hesston, Kansas, focused on applying the purity-laden doctrine of



An Adult Bible Club conducted by Sister Lark in a home.

Figure 17: Roberta Lark and bible club members, circa 1953 (“Chicago Bethel Church Development 1944-1953: Housing Project . . .” Chicago: Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1953).

¹¹⁰ “Colored Workers Committee Notes 1953-1957,” (1953-57), 104, EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964: File: Four numbered notebooks.

¹¹¹ Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., April 28, 2005; Norman Derstine, “Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,” (Trissels Mennonite Church, 1955), 13-15, Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box “I-MS-17 John L. Stauffer collection General Files H-Z BOX 6,” Folder “Nonconformity.” The extra scrutiny and double standard continued into the 1960s at congregations like South Seventh Street in Reading, Pennsylvania.

¹¹² For example, as early as 1946 Emma Rudy wrote, “Other factors (such as separation from the world as we believe) may have some bearing on small memberships.” See: Ruth G. Erb and Abraham L. Gehman, “From Our Negro Stations,” *Missionary Messenger*, January 1946, 5.

¹¹³ “Declaration of Commitment in Respect to Christian Separation and Nonconformity to the World,” August 26 (Mennonite Church General Conference, 1955), AMC - I-1-1 Mennonite General Conference Statements Box 6, Folder: #11, Declaration of Commitment in Respect to Christian Separation and Nonconformity to the World, 1955.

nonconformity to a rapidly changing world. In courtship, the delegates decided, Mennonites should keep their bodies “unstained.”¹¹⁴ Women in the church should avoid any dress or hairstyle that would “violate the principles of Christian holiness, [and] purity.”¹¹⁵ In the case of alcohol and tobacco, the delegates enjoined all Mennonites to adopt an abstemious “clean life.”¹¹⁶ Likewise, only “wholesome” recreational activities should be enjoyed by nonconformed Mennonites even as they employed a “holiness and purity of language.”¹¹⁷ The delegates declared that, aided by the Holy Spirit, these efforts would “cleanse our brotherhood of all sin and worldliness.”¹¹⁸ In at least twenty-seven different ways, the delegates relied on forms of the word *purity* or its synonyms to articulate their need to separate from the world.¹¹⁹



Figure 18: Roberta Lark and sewing circle members, circa 1953 (“Chicago Bethel Church Development 1944-1953: Housing Project” Chicago: Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1953).

The Kansas delegates thus placed at least three expressions of purity at the center of church life and used familiar rhetoric to do so. Authors of the 1955 nonconformity statement drew on purity terms that the delegates gathered in Hesston knew well. The writers emphasized

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3-4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 5,6.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

¹¹⁹ The 1955 nonconformity document employs the following expressions of purity: purity (2x), pure (1x), holy (8x), holiness (5x), perfect (3x), wholesome (2x), clean/unclean/cleanse (5x), unstained (1x).

sexual purity in the form of female chastity and modesty and religious purity in the form of sustained and deliberate separation from the surrounding society. At points, the authors also suggested ethical purity as expressed in integrity of word and deed. Not since 1948 when Eastern Mennonite School president John L. Stauffer pronounced nonconformity one of the “twin pillars of truth” had church leaders worked so hard to reinforce purity in the church.¹²⁰ The 1955 conference delegates in effect gave Stauffer’s much earlier statement the official stamp of doctrine.

Yet that stamp came on a gendered package. Although the 1955 statement called both women and men to separate from the world, the Hesston delegates saved their most detailed instructions for women. Eight separate sets of instructions delineated how women should dress, arrange their hair, eschew jewelry, and conform to pure conduct in their fashion choices.¹²¹ Men received only one sentence of instruction: “Likewise Christian men should dress simply and plainly, wearing no rings or jewelry, and scrupulously avoid conforming to worldly fashions.”¹²² Notably, the dictate made no mention of purity. As never before, women bore the full weight of the church’s ethical, religious, and sexual purity commitments on their bodies. If the church had not previously paid close attention to how new female converts dressed, they did so following the passage of the 1955 nonconformity statement. Although all women who joined the church came under scrutiny, African-American women received extra attention since white church

¹²⁰ John L. Stauffer, "Introductory to Non Conformity Conference at Chicago, Ill. Oct. 19, 20, 1948," (Eastern Mennonite College, 1948), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-17 John. L. Stauffer Collection Misc. folders of Notes and Outlines, etc. Box 8." Stauffer declared that nonresistance was the second of the “twin pillars of truth.”

¹²¹ "Declaration of Commitment," 3-4.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 4.

members assumed from the beginning that black bodies were more impure and therefore needed more thorough cleansing and more careful control.

A community that expressed its commitment to religious, ethical, and sexual purity through the bodies of its white female members therefore responded clumsily to African-American women in its midst. Grassroots constituents in particular reached out to African-American Mennonite women in ways that alienated the women. At a 1955 conference on race relations, Lark reported to the gathered assembly that her white co-believers had on more than one occasion come up to her and asked to touch her hair. Although she could not understand why they would want to do so, Lark explained that she “graciously let them feel it.”¹²³ Such a long-suffering response attested to Lark’s willingness to work in a community that continued to treat her like an exotic foreigner. White constituents throughout the (Old) Mennonite Church responded to Lark as if her race transformed her body into a profane curiosity rather than the sacred tabernacle claimed by the church’s purity doctrine.

African-American women nonetheless transformed the ethical, religious, and sexual purity expressed in the 1955 nonconformity statement through their bodies. Even as (Old) Mennonite Church delegates declared their commitment to separate from a steadily encroaching world, they applied that doctrine with a heavy and oft-times uninformed hand to African Americans in their midst. Yet when born out on the bodies of African-American women, the purity-focused doctrine of nonconformity transformed into something that the delegates gathered in Hesston had not anticipated. As women like Rowena Lark embraced the doctrine and called it their own, they found a way to resist the racial order of the day. The African-American women

¹²³ "Christian Race Relations" (paper presented at the Conference on Christian Community Relations, Goshen, Ind., April 22-24 1955), 21, AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

who wore holy clothes emblematic of the community's pillar of nonconformity claimed that they, too, were pure. It was not by accident that Lark wore her covering with ever-evident pride and satisfaction. She stated her purity and belonging every time she donned a covering.

Lark and Swartzentruber continued to communicate with each other and dress plainly through the course of the next seven years even though the geographic and experiential distance separating the two women grew ever wider. From 1956 through 1962, the Larks completed their ministry in Chicago and then moved through St. Louis and on to Fresno, California. During the same period, the Swartzentrubers ministered at a low-profile rural congregation in Schuyler, Virginia. In Schuyler, Swartzentruber groused in private about the dress standards placed on women, but continued to enforce the standard with other women in the church. In Fresno, Lark offered no complaint about the plain dress she continued to wear. Both women thus paid attention to religious purity through the clothes they wore and the church they continued to support. The broader church also continued to emphasize religious and ethical purities in the face of a rapidly changing world. Some of the changes in the 1960s, in Lark's case at least, opened up new avenues for leadership.

Those new leadership possibilities demanded that Lark remain active in ministry even in her mid-sixties. In the same year that James received his ordination as the first African-American bishop in the (Old) Mennonite Church, Rowena led songs and classes during the 1956 summer vacation bible school program held at Camp Rehoboth, a ten-acre wooded retreat the Larks had developed in Hopkins Park, Illinois.¹²⁴ A reporter describing Lark's ministry noted that she led

¹²⁴ Robert Stoltzfus, "The Lord Made Room," *Christian Living*, August 1956; John D. Zehr, "The Brotherhood of Saints," *Christian Living*, May 1956.

African-American children in singing, “What can wash away my sins?” (see Figure 19).¹²⁵

Within months of singing about purity at Camp Rehoboth, Lark relocated to St. Louis to minister to residents of the sprawling Pruitt-Igoe housing development. She and James accepted an invitation from leaders of the St.

Louis Federation of Churches who had expressed interest in the “wholesome” evangelism

Mennonites would bring to the city.¹²⁶ As Lark conducted visits,

led bible studies, and sang with



“What can wash away my sins . . .” Mrs. Lark leads the group in singing at the closing program of the Hopkins Park summer Bible school. The program was held in the community park.

Figure 19: Rowena Lark, 1956 (Robert Stoltzfus, “The Lord Made Room.” *Christian Living*, August 1956, 24-25).

children, she attracted women like Nettie Taylor, an African-American convert who would eventually bring twenty members with her to the fledging Bethesda congregation.¹²⁷ Throughout her time in St. Louis, Lark continued to dress in plain attire and, by her example, invited converts to do the same. The church grew as a result of her efforts.

Church leaders in the East failed to provide leadership opportunities for women like Lark. For example, white mission workers in the Lancaster Conference hesitated to include any African Americans in leadership circles. During a discussion focused on “the value of interracial leadership” in the fall of 1956, Elmer Leaman noted his objection to opening up new leadership

¹²⁵ Stoltzfus, “The Lord Made Room.”

¹²⁶ “Mennonite Church Organized Here,” *The Saint Louis Argus*, Friday, November 29 1957, 1.

¹²⁷ William B. Franklin, “Rev. James Lark Guides Mennonite Project in Pruitt Area,” *Ibid.*, Friday, July 5; Nelson E. Kauffman, “Light Shines out from the Inner City,” *Gospel Herald*, June 6 1961.

roles for African Americans by declaring, “[A] good thing can be overdone.”¹²⁸ In part due to comments like Leaman’s, through 1962 only white men sat on the executive committee of the Lancaster Conference’s Colored Workers Committee even though African-American Mennonite men lead songs, gave testimonials, and offered the occasional devotional.¹²⁹ The committee’s white leaders did assign African-American women to lead children’s stories, but women rarely sat on panels or led workshops.¹³⁰ Few African-American women or men in the Lancaster and Virginia Conferences exercised the same leadership as did Lark in Chicago and St. Louis.

Lark continued to promote purity as a leader and a friend. By 1959, she had marked her sixty-seventh birthday. In a letter that year, she wrote to Swartzentruber that the warm mid-November weather in Fresno allowed her to sit outside with “just a towel around my shoulders.”¹³¹ She and James had relocated to Fresno in 1958 for health reasons and to assist in

¹²⁸ "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1953-1957," 125.

¹²⁹ "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1958-1963," (Colored Workers Committee, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963), EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks; "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1964-1969," (Colored Workers Committee, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969), 198, EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

¹³⁰ African-American women regularly attended the Colored Workers Committee meetings throughout the period from 1956 to 1962. The most frequent speaking role they filled was that of telling the children’s story. A few women like Willie Mae Thomas and Mattie Cooper did sit on panels and lead discussions. Other African-American women who either told children’s stories or offered testimonials at the Colored Workers Committee gatherings during this period included: Barbara Allen, Doris Allen, Annie Brown, Peggy Curry, Mattie Harris, Mattie Lee, Doris Nolley, and Ann White. See: "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1953-1957"; "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1958-1963."

¹³¹ Rowena Lark to Fannie Swartzentruber, November 16 1959, Fresno, California, AMC, Hist. Miss 1-738, Fannie Yoder Swartzentruber Collection, Rowena Lark Letters 1941-1967, Folder SC.

ministry to the African-American community there. Lark focused more on holiness and purity, however, than she did on the weather. As she reflected on the age in which she lived, Lark rued the passions of an “unholy” world that exercised “no control over ... [its] appetites.”¹³²

Even in her retirement,

Lark reminded

Swartzentruber, her letter-writing companion of

more than fourteen years,

that they needed to remain

separate from a world of

temptation, excess, and

impurity.



The Sunday school at Lee Heights originated after the church was established, not before. It is an extension of teaching received at the home. Mrs. Claudia Watkins teaches here.

Figure 20: Claudia Watkins and Lee Heights Sunday school class members, 1961 (Virgil Vogt, "Emergent Church in Cleveland." *Christian Living*, October 1961, 15).

African-American women in other parts of the church also promoted the ideal of religious purity as a means to claim church membership. Photographs from this period show African-American women at Lee Heights in Cleveland in 1961, at Broad Street in Harrisonburg the same year, and at Bethel in Chicago in 1962 wearing coverings with evident ease (see Figures 20, 21, 22, and 23).¹³³ Lark had contact with women from all three congregations.¹³⁴ At a Colored Workers Committee meeting in 1962, where memories of Lark’s trendsetting example

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Virgil Vogt, "Emergent Church in Cleveland," *Christian Living*, October 1961; Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Webb, Nancy, Frank & Earl F. Lewis (1961); Billy & Peggy Curry & Family (1961); Kathryn Aschliman, "Living Family Worship," *Gospel Herald*, June 12 1962.

¹³⁴ Lark’s connections with the Chicago and Harrisonburg communities have already been established. She refers to connections with Cleveland in 1950. See: Lark, "The History of Bethel."

continued to loom large, African American Willie Mae Thomas led a session promoting the prayer veiling.¹³⁵ The strategy hinted at earlier came into full view. Rather than acquiescing to stringent church dictates, the African-American women who donned the church's most potent symbol of sexual and religious purity called other Mennonites to treat them as bona fide members. By wearing the covering, they demanded inclusion. Peggy Curry of Broad Street and Mattie Cooper Nikiema of Diamond Street, two more African-American converts, both affirmed that they wore the covering as a sign of belonging.¹³⁶ Rather than feeling that conservative dress was an opprobrious burden, many African-American women during this period adopted plain dress as a way to establish membership inside the church.

Yet white women during the late 1950s and early 1960s focused on the covering as a sign of white male control. During this period, a number of white women began to raise the ire of

male church leaders by challenging the church's dictates on the prayer covering and cut hair. For example, in the Lancaster Conference, bishop board secretary Amos S. Horst strenuously objected to those "Christian women" who made use of the "services of professional hairdressers."¹³⁷ The length and specificity of his instruction on cut hair and the wearing of the



Figure 21: Mrs. Lewis, Nancy (Webb) Lewis, Earl F. Lewis, Frank Lewis, and Roberta Webb, 1961 ("Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Webb, Nancy, Frank & Earl F. Lewis" at Broad Street Mennonite. (1961)).

¹³⁵ "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1958-1963," 192.

¹³⁶ Peggy Curry, interview with author, Harrisonburg, Va., March 29, 2005; Stoltzfus, *Quiet Shouts*, 162.

¹³⁷ Amos S. Horst, "A Query," *Pastoral Messenger*, July 1962, 8.

covering indicate that by 1962, enough women had begun to challenge nonconformist dress dictates to provoke an official response. Just as Swartzentruber earlier complained that “God put the mark on the man, not the women,” a discernable group of white Mennonite women increasingly chafed at the purity-focused dictates. For them the issue centered on gender inequity rather than a repeal of sexual and religious purity claims.

Lark, Swartzentruber, and their respective contemporaries responded to the prayer covering with differing strategies due to disparate church experiences. Although photos that made a spectacle of African-American Mennonites had dissipated by the early 1960s, African-American Mennonites faced a new form of alienation. White Mennonite missionaries preparing to



Figure 22: Peggy and Billy Curry and children, 1961 ("Billy & Peggy Curry & Family," 1961, taken outside Broad Street Mennonite.)

travel to Tanganyika, Ethiopia, and other overseas mission posts often spent time at African-American mission churches. Some African-American members noted the pattern and felt that their congregations had become “testing ground[s],” an observation confirmed by congregational records.¹³⁸ Ironically, at the same time church leaders attempted to use black Mennonites to

¹³⁸ Curry, interview with author. In addition to anecdotal evidence from Broad Street in Harrisonburg, Virginia, church records list the following overseas missionaries as having first been involved at Andrews Bridge, an African-American mission post in Lancaster County: Miriam Buckwalter, Rebecca Herr, Hershey Lehman, Elsie Groff Shirk, and Marie Shenk. See: Edwin Ranck, "Report Given at Mellingers 250 Anniversary," (Mellingers Mennonite Church, 1967), LMHS - Box: Andrews Bridge Cong., Folder: [unmarked red folder]; Bernard Kautz, "Mellinger Church 250th. Anniversary Home Coming. Andrew's Bridge," (Mellingers Mennonite Church, 1967), LMHS - Box: Andrews Bridge Cong; Folder: [unmarked red folder]. Evidently the use of domestic mission outposts to prepare missionaries for overseas ministry was not limited to African-American congregations. An informal history of the Steelton Mennonite

prepare white missionaries for African evangelism, African leaders requested that the Mennonite church send African-American missionaries to work alongside them.¹³⁹ Rather than African-American missionaries, however, the church sent more white Mennonites, a significant number of them women who had prior experience with the African-American church. In this area as in others, the church experiences of white and African-American Mennonite women differed significantly.

Swartzentruber and Lark continued to express great fondness for each other despite differing church experiences and approaches to the covering. In early 1963, Swartzentruber wrote to Lark about the small details of her daily life and the exciting news that Ernest had



The Seymour family holds family worship in their home.

Figure 23: Seymour family (from Bethel Mennonite Church), 1962 (Kathryn Aschliman, "Living Family Worship." *Gospel Herald*, June 12 1962, 538).

completed his Master's degree in education. After receiving Swartzentruber's letter, Lark found time amid teaching children's bible school, giving devotionals at adult evangelism classes, and speaking at local Mennonite churches to respond to her long-time friend.¹⁴⁰ The seventy-year-old Lark wrote to Swartzentruber, who was then in her early fifties, that she thanked "God upon

congregation includes mention of a Samuel Miller who developed a "special concern for the Spanish-speaking peoples of South America through his work with the Spanish-speaking Mexicans at Steelton." See: Harold Reed, "A History of Steelton Mennonite Gospel Mission" (Eastern Mennonite College, 1961), 6-7, EMM Record Room - 1st Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Home Ministries, Locations New York City, City Wisconsin 1964-1975 (1961), Folder: PENNSYLVANIA STEELTON.

¹³⁹ "Cash Views African Work," *Gospel Herald*, July 17 1962, 633.

¹⁴⁰ Rowena Lark to Fannie Swartzentruber, February 5 1963, Fresno, California, AMC, Hist. Miss 1-738, Fannie Yoder Swartzentruber Collection, Rowena Lark Letters 1941-1967, Folder SC.

every remembrance [sic] of you” and expressed regret that she could no longer travel well enough to visit Swartzentruber in Virginia.¹⁴¹ Even though they lived on opposite sides of the country, a mutual affection shines through their letters.

These two women thus maintained a relationship in the midst of finding ways to lead in a white and male-dominated church. At a point in her life when Mennonite leaders referred to her and James as “leaders” in the church, Lark continued to extend that leadership by teaching, corresponding with life-long friends like Swartzentruber, and speaking to other African-American Mennonites.¹⁴² Although she did not receive the same kind of attention from the national church, Swartzentruber likewise engaged in ministry. As she continued to care for her growing children, Swartzentruber also ministered to adults in crisis at the Schuyler church. A prolific letter writer, she would often wake up in the middle of the night to write letters to Lark or others in need of encouragement. According to her eldest son, the sermons she wrote in letters bested her husband’s Sunday morning professions.¹⁴³ Both women had found ways to minister within the church despite dramatically different lifestyles and racial identities.

The years from 1963 through 1965 saw African-American women use new strategies to claim inclusion in a church that paid less and less attention to Swartzentruber and Lark. As the white Mennonite community began to focus on race relations and the Civil Rights Movement with unprecedented intensity, Rosemarie Harding modeled another route to inclusion through her work as co-director of the Mennonite Voluntary Service Program in Atlanta. Rather than

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "Mennonite General Conference Proceedings, August 20-23, 1963, Kalona, Iowa" (paper presented at the Thirty-third Mennonite General Conference, Kalona, Iowa, August 20-23 1963), 87, AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

¹⁴³ Swartzentruber, interview with author.

claiming membership by wearing the covering or cape dress, Harding found a way into the church through activism and her relationally based critique of Mennonite quietism.¹⁴⁴ As she and her husband Vincent challenged their co-believers to be true to their Anabaptist roots, Harding claimed her status as a Mennonite without apology (see Figure 24). Other African-American women embraced the prayer veil with an aesthetic unimagined by Lark or white church leaders. Even as church leaders affirmed the prayer covering as a “recognized symbol of purity” in 1964, new converts took that symbol and reinterpreted it.¹⁴⁵ An African-American convert at the Diamond Street congregation in Philadelphia specifically asked for a covering with strings because she thought that the “ribbons,” considered a conservative sign by established Mennonites, looked pretty.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, an African-American member of Tenth Street Mennonite in Wichita, Kansas, wore a prayer covering to church one Sunday morning in the early 1960s along with large, dangling gold earrings.¹⁴⁷ Although women at the predominantly African-American congregation did not usually wear coverings, this member appropriated a purity symbol still cherished by many white Mennonites.¹⁴⁸ In Atlanta, Philadelphia, and

¹⁴⁴ C. J. Dyck, "Dialogue on Race," *The Mennonite*, October 29 1963; Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, "Visit to Camp Landon, March 1 to March 6, 1963," March 1-6 (MCC Peace Section, 1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 18; Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, "Pilgrimage to Albany," *The Mennonite*, January 22 1963; Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, "They Went to Atlanta," *The Mennonite*, March 5 1963.

¹⁴⁵ J. C. Wenger, *The Prayer Veil in Scripture and History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964), 25.

¹⁴⁶ Robert W. Good, "Forty Years on Diamond Street: A Historical Research of Diamond Street Mennonite Church and Mennonite Mission to Philadelphia" (Paper, Eastern Mennonite College, 1982), 22-23, I-3-3.5 JHMHEC 1985-6 35/5, Good, Robert W., "Forty Years on Diamond Street: A Historical Research"

¹⁴⁷ Lynford Hershey, interview with author, Payette, Idaho/Evanston, Ill., March 2, 2003.

Wichita, African-American women took new routes into church membership.

A few white women joined their African-American sisters in the church by objecting to racial inequity with the same passion for integrity of word and deed Swartzentruber had shown back in 1941. An author from the Lancaster Conference wrote most clearly in Swartzentruber's impassioned tradition. Mrs. Lloyd Weaver, a participant in a 1967 evangelism conference, wrote an article in which she opposed insensitive worship practices, racially prejudiced attitudes, and segregated housing and cemetery lots. Although Weaver repeatedly used the expression "these people" to refer to the African Americans about whom she wrote, she challenged white Mennonites to enliven staid worship services and invite African Americans into full fellowship.¹⁴⁹ Most interestingly, Weaver based her appeal on the need for "God's cleansing"



Figure 24: Vincent, Rosemarie, and Rachel Harding, 1963 (VA Mennonite archives, uncatalogued box named "Broad Street 1936-1979 Richard & Virginia Weaver").

from prejudicial thoughts and attitudes, a deliberate application of religious purity ideals in an

¹⁴⁸ The juxtaposition of the symbol of nonconformity with worldly gold earrings suggests not only a creative sort of syncretism but also a means to express purity to fit new and unexpected expressions of identity. A body of scholarship also points to the way in which women from a variety of cultures, nations, and historical periods have appropriated head covering and dress on their own terms. See, for example: Joseph Stimpfl, "Veiling and Unveiling: Reconstructing Malay Female Identity in Singapore," in *Undressing Religion: Commitment and Conversion from a Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Linda B. Arthur (New York: Oxford, 2000), 180; Kirsten Ruether, "Heated Debates over Crinolines: European Clothing on Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Mission Stations in the Transvaal," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 360, 61, 70.

¹⁴⁹ Lloyd Weaver, Mrs., "With Afro-Americans," *Missionary Messenger*, August 1967, 5.

attempt to remove racial segregation.¹⁵⁰ Like Swartzentruber before her, Weaver argued that no type of segregation, whether overt or subtle, could have any part in a church that claimed full separation from a sinful world.

Lark, too, left behind an example. In 1970, the local Lancaster, Pennsylvania, newspaper featured a profile of former “countian” Elvin Martin as he prepared to leave his pastorate at an integrated Mennonite congregation in Atlanta. A photo accompanying the article featured the outgoing and incoming pastoral couples (see Figure 25).¹⁵¹ In the picture, Mrs. Elvin Martin peers at a brochure held by Betty Gwinn, wife of the incoming pastor.¹⁵² Both women wear coverings. Martin’s white prayer cap stands out clearly in the photo. As the reporter noted, however, “Today, Mrs. Gwinn wears a Mennonite covering – a black one.”¹⁵³ Even as her husband did not wear the plain coat, Betty Gwinn deliberately did not wear a white covering. Like Rowena Lark long before her, Betty Gwinn claimed a Mennonite symbol of purity as her own, but tweaked it further to fit the black consciousness of her age. The photo and article featuring Betty Gwin and her black “Mennonite covering” appeared in print the same month that Lark passed away.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Gary Martin, "Countian Pulled Down Atlanta's Racial Bars," *Intelligencer Journal*, Thursday, March 19 1970.

¹⁵² Although her first name is not given in the 1970 article, a writer in 1968 mentioned Mrs. Gwinn’s first name, but again, not Mrs. Martin’s. See: Robert J. Baker, "Mennonite Church in Atlanta," *Gospel Herald*, November 26 1968. Indeed, while multiple articles mention Elvin Martin and his ministry, none listed his wife’s name. See: "Mennonite Faith Called 'Total Love'," *Gospel Herald*, August 14 1962; "Mennonite Churches in South Hold Conference on Race," *The Mennonite*, March 31 1964; Betty Wenger, "A Venture in Day Camping," *The Volunteer*, April 1967.

¹⁵³ Martin, "Countian Pulled Down," 30.

Swartzentruber thus lived to see her friend of many years leave this earth and to reconnect with the site of their first labors together. At the time of Lark's death, Swartzentruber continued in ministry at Schuyler, Virginia, but had only sporadic contact with the Broad Street congregation seventy miles to the

northwest. Two events brought her and Ernest back to the Harrisonburg

community. On the occasion of Broad Street's fortieth anniversary in 1976,

Fannie traveled with Ernest to Broad Street, where members of the local

community who recalled their ministry at Gay Street greeted them with much

enthusiasm.¹⁵⁴ Ten years later, the Broad Street congregation extended a special invitation to

Fannie and her husband to attend the congregation's fiftieth anniversary celebration. This time, Vida Huber, a member of the pastoral team who was also Fannie's niece, offered a formal

apology to the couple on behalf of the entire Conference.¹⁵⁵ The gesture, even though offered

forty-one years after the couple's abrupt dismissal, left the Swartzentrubers in tears. Although

Swartzentruber seldom spoke about the event in the years before her death in June of 1999, those close to her noticed that a burden seemed to have been lifted.¹⁵⁶



Figure 25: Elvin Martin, Mrs. Elvin Martin, Betty Gwinn, and Macon Gwinn, 1970 (Gary Martin, "Countian Pulled Down Atlanta's Racial Bars." *Intelligencer Journal*, Thursday, March 19 1970, 48).

¹⁵⁴ Huber and Huber, interview with author.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, interview with author.

¹⁵⁶ Ernest died shortly after the event and, according to his son-in-law, had preached one of the "most powerful sermons" of his life following the conciliatory gesture. Fannie did not receive

* * *

The lives of two intrepid trailblazers can tell only a slice of the story of women's resistance to the United States racial order. But it is a telling slice. Through their engagement with religious, ethical, sexual, and racial forms of purity, the women demonstrated new forms of sartorial resistance. Likewise, the women's extended interracial relationship reveals the importance of integrity, racially specific church experiences, and the reasons that African Americans came to join the church. As Lark and Swartzentruber negotiated the multiple expressions of purity that both divided and drew them inexorably together across lines of race, age, geographical distance, and life experience, their lives spoke far beyond their immediate circumstances.

Swartzentruber's and Lark's narrative first reveals an unexpected strategy to claim membership in a segregated community. As women like Rowena Lark embraced the doctrine of religious purity and called it their own, they found a way to demonstrate their belonging. The African-American women who wore holy clothes emblematic of the community's pillar of nonconformity claimed that they, too, were Mennonites. It was not by accident that Lark wore her covering with ever-evident pride and satisfaction. In the face of ongoing practices of segregation, in place in Virginia through 1955 and in parts of Pennsylvania through 1962, she stated her inclusion every time she donned a covering. Within this Mennonite story, a new form of racially significant sartorial resistance becomes plain.

The women's story also unearths impassioned, costly action born of interracial relationships and concern for integrity of word and deed. White women like Swartzentruber

the same opportunity to preach from behind the pulpit. See: *Ibid.*, interview with author; Swartzentruber, interview with author.

entered into lasting relationships with African-American women like Lark that prompted them to take action in keeping with their professed commitment to racial egalitarianism. Nonetheless their concern for ethical purity often led to painful outcomes. The emotional trauma of Swartzentruber's communion protest and subsequent dismissal from Gay Street stayed with her for decades. Although she maintained her ethical purity, she felt alienated from a community and congregation that she cherished. Only the intervention of a thoughtful niece years later restored a measure of her standing in the church. Swartzentruber's concern for integrity and interracial relationship broadens our understanding of why white people took risks in the midst of segregated social norms.

African-American women also valued integrity. Lark joined the church because white Mennonites like Swartzentruber tried to match their actions with their beliefs. Lark likewise remained faithful in her commitment to remain separate from an impure world through the clothes she wore and the doctrines she supported. Even when many of her contemporaries, white and African-American alike, had stopped wearing plain dress, she continued to wear the covering. At the same time, she displayed faithful integrity in the face of racism within her adopted church. When faced with white Mennonites who treated her as racially tainted, alien, and outsider, Lark approached such trials – as she wrote to Swartzentruber in 1945 – as “God’s machinery for the purification” of her soul.¹⁵⁷ Lark’s commitment to ethical purity reveals a principal reason that African Americans risked stepping into racist environments.

White and African-American women in the (Old) Mennonite Church took different paths regarding sexual purity through the course of this study. White women increasingly chafed at the rigid dress restrictions placed upon them by the church’s white male leadership. Swartzentruber

¹⁵⁷ Lark to Swartzentruber, 1945.

protested the distinction on theological grounds as she pointed out that men in the Old Testament had been given “the mark” of separation through circumcision and, by extension, Mennonite men should bear the primary contemporary mark of separation from the world. In her retirement years, she acted on that observation and stopped wearing the covering.¹⁵⁸ Lark, however, took the church’s most prized symbol of religious and sexual purity and employed it to her own ends. As she promoted natural hair styles worn beneath the prayer covering, led children’s songs rich with religious purity images, and called those around her to live a life of separation from an unclean society, Lark employed the Mennonite community’s oft-times dangerous and divisive purity rhetoric to create a welcoming space for those who looked like her. As younger African-American women joined the church, they too remolded the church’s primary religious and sexual purity symbol by asking for pretty ribbons to attach to their prayer caps and pairing staid coverings with flashy gold earrings. The resulting incongruities stumped church leaders and often led directly to a relaxing of rigid dress requirements.¹⁵⁹ As a result of such actions, cherished religious symbols took on new layers of meaning unmediated by the church hierarchy. Although Swartzentruber and Lark took different paths in response to sexual purity in the church, both women’s actions changed how the church viewed the covering. These disparate strategies thus reveal how racially specific actions during the civil rights era nonetheless led to similar outcomes.

¹⁵⁸ Swartzentruber, interview with author.

¹⁵⁹ When a new convert to Diamond Street Mennonite requested strings for her covering because she thought they “were pretty” rather than the symbols of humility and austerity originally intended, Bishop Luke Stoltzfus removed the covering string requirement. See: Good, “Forty Years,” 22-23.

In the end, Rowena Lark joined the Mennonite church for many of the same reasons as other African-American converts. She found a faith community that put high value on the integrity of word and deed, a quality that Nettie Taylor of the Bethesda Mennonite congregation would later call “pure fellowship.”¹⁶⁰ Lark also discovered a faith experience that sustained and enriched her life’s ministry to children. That faith, interwoven as it was with appeals to living holy, pure, and separate from society around her, drew her into deep relationships with people like Fannie Swartzentruber who embodied those purity values in her dress and actions. Thanks to Rowena’s quarter-century tenure as a public school teacher and her husband James’ success as a church planter and entrepreneur, she did not draw on the material aid that Mennonites often offered to service recipients and new converts. Instead, countering the assumptions of white Mennonites around her, Lark contributed monetarily to the development of new missions and prompted African-American converts to give significant financial and human resources to build the church. Lark became and stayed a member because, in the context of her relationship with Fannie Swartzentruber, she found a way to both contribute and receive.

The African-American women who joined the church and the white women who entered into relationships with them thus offer a first glimpse into the contradictory nature of purity’s many expressions. As Lark entered the church in response to Swartzentruber’s ethical purity, she encountered segregationist practices based on racial purity. In order to counter ecclesial Jim Crow practices, Lark claimed religious purity through her prayer covering even while white church leaders placed white women’s sexual purity above that of African-American women. During Swartzentruber’s and Lark’s lives, when one kind of purity opened a door to including African Americans, another expression of purity often countered it.

¹⁶⁰ Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City," 517.

The first photo examined in this study captures a moment pregnant with the insight gained by a focus on the multiple expressions of purity in women's interracial relationship during the height of the civil rights era (see Figure 8). As would be the case in most of the photos of the women taken during this period, Swartzentruber and Lark subtly mirror each other's stance. At the time the photographer captured their parallel posture, the two women could not foresee the manner in which their interracial relationship and their mutual commitment to religious and ethical purity would bring them heartache and joy. Neither could they foresee how those same expressions of purity would render the clothes they wore and the coverings they affixed each morning so dramatically different in purpose and meaning. On a country roadside they could only know the comfort they found in each other's presence. The memory of that comfort would serve them well as they demonstrated through the ensuing years that they had much to offer the church they loved and, ultimately, much to give those who would come to learn of their story many decades later.

In the following chapter, four African-American children demonstrate the manner in which rural exchange programs further complicated the already complex nature of interracial relationship in the Mennonite church. Unlike Swartzentruber and Lark, the children who participated in Mennonite-run Fresh Air programs had little opportunity to enter into sustained relationships across racial lines or move outside of relationships defined by power inequity. The young intrepid visitors who entered strange, white homes changed their hosts even as the adults used the young people to establish Mennonites as racial egalitarians during the civil rights era. In this next chapter, as in the case of Swartzentruber and Lark, religious purities again open and shut the church's doors.

CHAPTER 4

“IT MUST BE THE PURE STUFF”:
FRESH AIR RURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AS
CIVIL RIGHTS INOCULATION, 1950-1971

Margie Middleton left her earrings at home because she knew her Fresh Air hosts wouldn't understand. During a previous visit to a farm owned by white Mennonites in southeastern Pennsylvania during the 1950s, Middleton listened to her hosts warn against sinful practices like dancing, wearing earrings, using lipstick, and listening to radio music. Although she loved to dance with her mother in their New York City apartment, by the end of the Fresh Air trip Middleton began “to feel the same way” as her hosts and did not want “to go back home to all bad things.”¹ Only after Middleton's mother assured her that “[s]in shows up everywhere” did Middleton again rest easy in a home with a radio in the kitchen and lipstick on the dresser.² When she ventured to the countryside in the years that followed, Middleton left the earrings at home because she knew that her white rural hosts had not yet grasped a truth about sin that she and her mother shared.

¹ Margie Middleton and Ruth Y. Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences," *Missionary Messenger*, July 1977, 13.

² Ibid.

Jerry Smith also knew a truth that his Fresh Air hosts did not understand.³ When Marietta Voth first picked up Smith for a rural exchange program visit to Newton, Kansas, in the summer of 1969, she began to wonder if she, her husband Otto, and their four children had made a mistake. Marietta felt ill much of that summer, Otto labored long hours in his fields, and their four active children already required a great deal of supervision. The addition of another mouth to feed and another child to supervise during one of the summer's busiest stretches seemed like a foolish error. Yet Smith knew otherwise. Having traveled all the way from Gulfport, Mississippi, Smith jumped into the activities of the Voth household with nary a glitch. He relished rides on "the big diesel tractor" and spent hours "playing in the sand and dirt" with miniature versions of farm implements.⁴ He so loved the time he spent with the Voths that he asked to extend his stay beyond the eleven allotted days. A few days before his departure date, he asked his hosts to adopt him. Smith's request startled Marietta. She realized that her "outlook" had been too "adult" all along.⁵

Children like Middleton and Smith and the rural white families who hosted them tell a civil rights era story of youthful agency in the face of obtrusive power and careful inoculation. Between 1950 and 1971, Fresh Air children left the familiar surroundings of their homes to travel to unknown rural Mennonite families for one- to two-week stays. Whether traveling from an urban environment like New York City or a southern town like Gulfport, the children brought

³ Extant records don't mention Jerry's last name. For sake of clarity and uniform reference, I have assigned him the last name of Smith.

⁴ Otto Voth and Marietta Voth to Orlo Kaufman, August 6 1969, Newton, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 130, Fresh Air, 1969.

⁵ Ibid.

carefully controlled racial exchange into Mennonite homes during a time when adult African Americans increasingly called into question white Mennonites' racial egalitarianism. During the 1950s and 1960s, civil rights advocates within and without the church challenged white Mennonites to set aside concern for separatist conviction and embrace racial struggle. In the face of such a threat to nonconformist practice and belief, visits from young, deloused, and meticulously vetted African-American children protected thousands of Fresh Air hosts. As they exercised significant power over the children by limiting visits, setting age caps, and attempting to discipline the children's bodies and minds, Fresh Air hosts and administrators used the children as a type of inoculation against such dangerous critique. Under the innocuous guise of home-based missions, hosts took in a little of the racially tainted world to inoculate themselves from a lot of criticism of their racism.⁶ At the same time, as the children brought intense racial exchange into intimate home environments, they revealed white Mennonite ignorance about African Americans. The intrepid young travelers confronted their hosts' racial naïveté and forced the adults to re-examine their racial prejudice. Through these interactions, white adult Mennonites thus made use of African-American children even as the children challenged their hosts in unexpected ways.

These intense, home-based encounters reveal changes in the manner in which white adults approached African-American children during the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

⁶ I build here again on the work of Mary Douglas where she names attacks on a community's boundaries as a form of social pollution. See: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 2002 ed. (New York: Routledge, 1966), 151-52. Given that white Mennonites clearly felt threatened by the introduction of adult African Americans into the community during the 1950s and 1960s and by the corresponding challenges to white hegemony in the broader society, the adult members of rural white Mennonite congregations viewed African Americans as a type of racial pollution. My intervention here historicizes Douglas's more general observation and expands her theory by introducing the notion of inoculation developed more fully at the end of this chapter.

The study of two Fresh Air programs from 1950 forward shows how adults hosted younger children, enforced stricter rules, and viewed the children as ever more wholesome through the course of twenty years. The first program – host to children like Middleton – relied on white Mennonites from the Lancaster Conference, the (Old) Mennonite Church regional body that encompassed the largest geographical grouping of Mennonites in the United States during the years of this study. The second program – sponsor to Smith and other children like him – came out of the General Conference run Camp Landon ministry in Gulfport, Mississippi. Between 1950 and 1971, hosts from both programs increasingly began to enforce age limits, curtail return visits, and shorten lengths of stay. Likewise, although administrators had earlier treated the children as dangerous and corrupt contaminants, the hosts increasingly spoke of their ever-younger charges as unblemished innocents capable of overcoming racial unrest.⁷ This movement toward hosting younger, purer children in turn corresponded with the hosts' ever-greater interest in presenting themselves as racial egalitarians. These changes in program rules and publicity trace how the adults shaped the children.

Yet the children also shaped the adults with remarkable consistency across the twenty years of this study. The thousands of children who braved entry into strange homes changed

⁷ By coming to treat African-American Fresh Air participants as innocents, the white Mennonite hosts adapted a theological assumption long made about their own children. Mennonites traditionally promoted an ideal of “complex innocence” that recognized the presence of original sin in children that was nonetheless covered over by grace until the child reached the age of accountability in his or her early to late teens. See: Keith Graber Miller, “Complex Innocence, Obligatory Nurturance, and Parental Vigilance: ‘The Child’ In the Work of Menno Simons,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000), 194, 201, 03. White Mennonites thus eventually came to see African-American Fresh Air children as holding the same sort of theological innocence as their own children in addition to a racial innocence potent enough to counter racial strife.

adults' perceptions, narrowed relational gaps, and forced adults to pay attention to their lives.⁸ In the intimacy of a stranger's home, children confronted adults who did not know how to comb their hair, who sought to save their souls, and who asked probing questions about their families. As the children taught their hosts proper hair care, demonstrated active spiritual lives, and resisted intrusive queries, they reversed the missionary exchange and evangelized the adults.⁹ Even on the most insulting of matters the children challenged their hosts. A host parent who commented on "niggers in the woodpile" faced the awkward silence of his young African-American guest and came to re-examine his collusion with social sin.¹⁰ Even though the adults held significant power over their young charges, the children nonetheless managed to challenge and in some cases change their adult hosts.

This record unearths a seldom-told story of children changing adults even as the adults sought to change children during the unrest and ferment of the civil rights era. With a few exceptions, historians of this period have focused on adult actors at both national and local levels.¹¹ Children do appear in dramatic accounts of Birmingham sheriff Bull Connor turning

⁸ I am in debt to the following authors for modeling how to write histories that treat children as agents of change rather than passive respondents to adult action: Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "Street-Rats and Gutter-Snipes: Child Pickpockets and Street Culture in New York City, 1850—1900," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 4 (2004); and David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and at Play* (New York: Anchor Press, 1985).

⁹ For evidence of other mutually shaping evangelical exchanges, see: Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Harold Regier and Rosella Wiens Regier, interview with author, Newton, Kans./Evanston, Ill., July 12, 2005.

¹¹ Despite the excellent, children-centered work of Robert Coles (Robert Coles, *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), vii, 336-37) adults continue to dominate the following civil rights studies: Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens:

water canons and attack dogs on young marchers in 1963 but even these narratives downplay the children's agency by focusing on the strategists who sent them "into the streets."¹² Rather than courageous and significant actors in their own right, the children appear as powerless puppets used by leaders to advance the civil rights drama. African-American children's negotiation of living arrangements and work expectations with racially naïve Fresh Air hosts reveals a process of mutual exchange that places children as central actors in the civil rights story.

Four children's stories organize this chapter and make evident the intimate home environments where adults and children shaped each other. Margie Middleton first entered Lancaster Mennonite households in the 1950s. Albert Potts traveled from Mississippi to a Kansas home in 1961. Four years later, an article about a fictional Fresh Air child named "Sammy" opened a window onto the experiences of children like him who traveled to Lancaster farms in 1965. Like Potts, Smith also traveled from Mississippi to stay with a Kansas family, but his trip in 1969 came at a time when the programs appeared ready to fizzle out. At key turning points across the two decades of this study, these four children's stories reveal the source of the children's excitement, the ways they responded to unpleasant encounters, and the details of their

University of Georgia Press, 1987); James Findlay, "Churches Join the Movement," in *The Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Paul A. Winters (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000); John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Norton, 1990); and Aimin Zhang, *The Origins of African American Civil Rights Movement, 1865-1956*, ed. Graham Russell Hodges, *Studies in African American History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹² Lee E. Bains, Jr., "Birmingham, 1963: Confrontation over Civil Rights," in *Birmingham, Alabama, 1956-1963: The Black Struggle for Civil Rights*, ed. David J. Garrow, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub., 1989), 180-81.

changing relationships with adult caretakers. As the children entered their hosts' homes, they shifted the adults' worldview by challenging their racial prejudices and connecting them to big cities and distant communities. Although the children rarely prompted white Mennonites to engage in civil rights activism, they nonetheless helped the adults connect to a world filled with racial unrest. Through this process of mutual exchange across racial and generational divides, Fresh Air children and their hosts show how racial changes prompted by demonstrations in the streets were most often realized and resisted in the home.

* * *

Margie Middleton loved to visit Mennonite homes in Lancaster even though she had to leave her earrings back in New York City. From 1950 onward, children from New York like Middleton vied for coveted vacations to the rural homes of Mennonites in the Lancaster Conference. In the October 11, 1949, meeting that led to the development of the Lancaster hosting venture, members of the Colored Workers Committee called for a Fresh Air program “for colored children of our city missions” by appealing “to the brotherhood to open their homes.”¹³ Following a publicity blitz that promoted Fresh Air programs as a way to win “the Negro of America to Christ,” forty-two African-American children from Mennonite city missions prepared to visit white rural hosts in the summer of 1950.¹⁴ Children like Middleton

¹³ Ira J. Buckwalter, "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1947-1953," (Colored Workers Committee, 1947-1953), EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

¹⁴ Despite the intentions of the Colored Workers Committee in 1949 to serve only African-American children, for the first three years of the Fresh Air Program white children nearly equaled and in some cases actually outnumbered African-American and “Spanish” children in the program. See: Paul N. Kraybill, "Report of Mennonite Mission Children Visitation Program," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1953), EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Committee Action. Within ten

looked forward to entering these unknown homes. Writing as an adult, Middleton mused that “[t]he best part of Fresh-Air was the families... we had a lot of good times with them.”¹⁵ She praised her hosts for the deep concern they showed her. “By the end of two weeks I was calling them Ma and Pa and I was crying because I didn’t want to leave,” she added.¹⁶ The loss of earrings paled before the families who demonstrated their care for her.

Middleton’s enthusiasm echoed sentiments of the African-American children who had originally prompted Mennonite administrators to start their own Fresh Air program. From 1947 through 1950, children from James and Rowena Lark’s Bethel Mennonite Church in Chicago thrilled to travel to Millersburg, Ohio, where they spent two-week stints at a rural farm known as Camp Ebenezer. Young girls especially enjoyed the encounters because all those who participated in the program returned home with a new dress made by a local Mennonite women’s sewing circle.¹⁷ Bethel and other congregations in Chicago also ran their own home-based Fresh Air programs, some having done so since the early twentieth century.¹⁸ Program administrators in Pennsylvania knew of the children’s positive reactions to the Chicago programs as well as

years, white participation would drop dramatically and then disappear almost entirely due to white flight from the inner city. I focus here on the African-American children participants because of the program’s original intent and the interracial environment created by their visits to white Mennonite homes.

¹⁵ Middleton and Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences," 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁷ Rowena Lark, "The History of Bethel Mennonite Church," *Our Journal*, May 1950, 2.

¹⁸ Dorothy Bean to April 3 circa 1951, Chicago, Ill., EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Testimonies and misc.

similar positive responses to the New York City *Herald Tribune's* Fresh Air Fund.¹⁹ The more children responded enthusiastically to these programs, the more the Lancaster Conference Mennonites came to desire their own Mennonite-run venture.

African-American children had previously prompted white Mennonites to initiate new race relations programs. White Mennonite missionaries founded South Christian Street Mennonite Church, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the late 1930s because five siblings from an African-American family attended a series of evangelism meetings and requested baptism. Rather than send the Jones children to the Rawlinsville Mennonite congregation in the same town where the children lived, mission workers in 1933 transported the children thirteen miles north into Lancaster City to attend a racially segregated Sunday school class organized for their benefit.²⁰ Other children from the neighborhood around South



Figure 26: Mose Brown, Malachi Brown, and Willie Brown, circa 1934 (LMHS - South Christian Street (Lancaster, Pa.), LMHS/box: South Christian Street; photo album, circa 1934).

Christian Street began to attend the Sunday school class and thereby forced the Conference to invest more time and money into a segregated mission effort (see Figures 26 and 27). In the same way, hundreds of African-American children flocked to vacation bible school programs in the 1940s at Broad Street Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Mission workers there had

¹⁹ "Whoso Shall Receive One Such Little Child . . . Receiveth Me," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1951), EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Forms 1950-1952.

²⁰ Ruth Garman and Virginia Weaver, "History of South Christian Street Mennonite Church Years 1933-1970," in *LMHS - South Christian Street (Now Crossroads Cong)* (Lancaster, Pa.: 1970), 1, LMHS - Box: South Christian Street, Now Crossroads Cong; Folder: History.

to scramble to recruit enough volunteers to handle the large crowds.²¹ As they took part in Sunday schools and vacation bible school programs, African-American children exposed the church's latent collusion with racial segregation and forced church workers to expend financial and human resources on their behalf. For nearly two decades before Fresh Air hosting programs became popular, African-American children had already begun to require white Mennonite church leaders to engage racial issues they might otherwise have left alone.

Middleton joined a group of African-American children who built on this legacy of initiating Mennonite racial exchange by capturing the attention of the church. From 1950 through 1956 African-American children involved in Fresh Air programs continued to garner far more attention than the white children who constituted the majority of the participants. In



Figure 27: Evelyn Jason, Marion Jason, and Norma Jason, circa 1934 (LMHS - South Christian Street (Lancaster, Pa.), LMHS/box: South Christian Street; photo album, circa 1934.

1950, nine more white children participated than African-American.²² The following year, eighty more white children participated than African-American, and in 1952 sixty-seven more white

²¹ Gay St. Mennonite Mission (Harrisonburg, Va.: 1939) Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "Harold Huber's Papers, Broad Street Mennonite Church Materials (History, etc.)"; Ernest L. Swartzentruber to Esther, July 20 1942, Harrisonburg, Va., Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church"; Ernest L. Swartzentruber, "Harrisonburg Colored Mission," (Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1942), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-MS-13 Harry A. Brunk Collection Materials related to Virginia Menn. Conf. Box 1," Folder "8. Colored Work Broad Street Mennonite Church."

²² Interestingly, in the 1950 reports, the program administrator lists 40 white, eleven "Spanish," and 42 African-American participants. See: Paul N. Kraybill, "Mennonite Mission Children Visitation Program," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1950), EMM Record

than African-American children had traveled to the countryside.²³ Yet host comments to program administrators focused first and most extensively on the African-American children. In 1951, a “Brother Gehman” contacted program administrator Paul Kraybill about his interest in hosting “Colored to prevent racial barrier.”²⁴ That same year, E. G. Horst wrote of her experience hosting an African-American child: “It has been a blessing to us as it makes us feel there is no difference in color or race.”²⁵ Although white children primarily populated the Fresh Air Program in these early years, both hosts and administrators conceived of the program as being for African Americans.

Middleton soon discovered, however, that such an intentional race focus led to times of discomfort and outright discrimination during her Fresh Air stays. Some responses only annoyed her. Many of the hosts she stayed with during the 1950s asked incessant questions about the kind of house she lived in, where she went to school, and whether her parents lived together. Middleton couldn’t understand why anyone would need such detailed information. She noted, “There were parents who lived together quite naturally and there were parents who didn't live

Room - 6th Cabinet of middle row on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: testimonies and Misc. In a cumulative report published in 1953, the same administrator listed 51 white and 42 “Negro” participants. See: Kraybill, "Report of Mennonite Mission Children Visitation Program." He had shifted from a three-group scheme to a binary division. Race had become more important rather than less.

²³ Kraybill, "Report of Mennonite Mission Children Visitation Program."

²⁴ Bro. [?] Sonencker to Paul N. Kraybill, August 1951, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: F-J.

²⁵ "[Untitled Collection of Host Testimonies]," (Eastern Mennonite Missions, circa 1951), 1, EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Testimonies and misc.

together; mothers who raised their children alone and fathers who raised their children alone.”²⁶ Displaying a keen understanding of what Middleton would face in the white homes, her mother said, “Any questions they ask you about your homelife, don’t answer them. If they persist, tell them what goes on in our house stays in our house.”²⁷ Middleton refused to quench her hosts’ thirst for more and more personal information.

Middleton had less patience for the judgments her hosts made about her life and her community. Middleton remembered overhearing a conversation between her mother and one of the white members of the Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church in Harlem. Her mother expressed her appreciation for the trips Middleton and other children took each year to the countryside, but explained that she and other parents “felt the Fresh-Air parents shouldn't implant in ... [children's] minds that the city was wicked.” The children returned home bothered by activities like dancing and mixed bathing that had never before concerned them. Middleton soon came to realize, however, the inconsistency of her hosts’ judgment. She noted that her hosts “said it was possible to be a Christian and live in the city, but all of them remained in Pennsylvania on farms.”²⁸ Although she was only six the first time she visited a Fresh Air farm in the early 1950s, Middleton had to figure out the best way to respond to her hosts’ judgments about life in the city. Upon returning from Fresh Air visits, Middleton grew tired of having to again decide whether she would listen to the radio, go to a public swimming pool, or wear earrings.

Middleton’s peers in the Fresh Air Program faced similar judgments. In the second year of the Lancaster program, a host noted of her African-American charges, “[T]hese children

²⁶ Middleton and Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences," 12.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 21.

should be encouraged to help [and] learn to work, lest we encourage laziness, which I have learned since the New Yorkers are noted for.”²⁹ That same year, a host in Lancaster who had worked with African-American children since 1939 bitterly complained of a Fresh Air child who purportedly stole a handkerchief.³⁰ Regardless of the truth behind the accusation, hosts such as these often made assumptions about their charges based on the language used by Fresh Air program administrators to promote the program. Promotional materials referred to “these needy children,” “these needy city children,” and “these underprivileged children” in 1951 and for many years to follow.³¹ Even though Middleton and many other children came from homes where they received more than adequate nutrition, clothing, and love, the young children had to interact with adults who assumed from the start that they would steal, avoid chores, and arrive in need of nourishment.³²

Yet the harshest judgment against Middleton and her peers came from the program’s administrators. Even though administrators did not conduct background checks or health tests on the hosts or their children, they required Middleton and all the Fresh Air children to undergo humiliating examinations for lice and other communicable diseases.³³ Although lice checks may

²⁹ Mary Rohrer and Anna Rohrer, "Mennonite Mission Children's Visitation Program, Visitation Record," (Eastern Mennonite Missions, 1951), EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: F-J.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ "Whoso Shall Receive One Such Little Child . . . Receiveth Me"; S. L. Longenecker to *Missionary Messenger*, March 26 1951, Middletown, Pa., EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Testimonies and misc.

³² Middleton and Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences," 12.

³³ Paul N. Kraybill, "Mennonite Mission Children Visitation Program," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1952), 5, EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Committee Action. Often conducted in public, lice

have made sense based on past experience, program administrators still did not conduct background checks on host homes even after a host parent sexually abused his charges.³⁴ Within two years of the Lancaster program's start, this double standard became even more pronounced. In 1952, Paul N. Kraybill, a program administrator from the Lancaster Conference, wrote to the *Herald Tribune* Fresh Air Fund to see if their personnel tested participating children for venereal disease. Apparently some Mennonite hosts had contacted Kraybill to express concern that the young Fresh Air children might bring venereal disease into their homes.³⁵ In his letter Kraybill did not discuss the manner in which a six- or eight-year-old child might have contracted such a disease, but he carefully queried *Tribune* administrators about their practices.

Middleton soon came to realize the irony of these efforts to protect Fresh Air homes from outside contagion. She recognized that many homes already had problems and contagions of their own. Looking back on her experience as a young Fresh Air child, Middleton emphasized two things. First, she once thought that all Mennonite families embodied perfection. Middleton wrote, "My impression of Mennonites, each time I came back, was that they had lots of money, big cars, and lots of children, they never spanked their children, the husband and wife never had any arguments, and they were a perfect family."³⁶ Yet Middleton came to understand at a young

checks humiliated the children and enforced the administrators' power, a process replicated in many other parts of the country during this period. See, for example: Tomás Rivera, ... *and the Earth Did Not Devour Him*, trans. Evangelinia Vigil-Piñón (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1992), 92-93.

³⁴ Ira J. Buckwalter to Allen Hoffnagle, August 14 1956, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet in on right side, bottom drawer, Folder: Mission Children's visitation Program - 1957.

³⁵ Paul N. Kraybill to Frederick Howell Lewis, June 25 1952, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: F-J.

³⁶ Middleton and Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences," 21.

age that other problems stood alongside that apparent perfection. The impression left by her hosts “that only Mennonites went to heaven” rankled her even then.³⁷ More specifically, she remembered that the first family she stayed with abruptly separated her from her best friend. When she was six, Middleton and her best friend Pat stayed with the same hosts. The following year, the host family asked Pat alone to return. Middleton could not understand what had happened. She and Pat had both enjoyed their time, they both were African-American, and they both had made decisions to accept Christ as their savior. At the time, the hosts offered no explanation for excluding Middleton. Only years later did Middleton learn of the reason for their decision. Pat had started to wear the traditional white, Mennonite prayer covering. Middleton had not.³⁸ As a young girl, Middleton knew only that hosts she had thought to be perfect had punished her without reason.

Middleton’s disappointment highlights an additional inconsistency in her hosts’ behavior. The devotional prayer covering, as discussed in the previous chapter, stood for church membership, male hierarchy, and, especially during the first half of the 1950s, women’s purity. According to a national church statement passed in 1955, however, church leaders were not to pressure children to join the church until they became responsible for their moral decisions at or about twelve years of age.³⁹ Although the hosts knew that some white Mennonite girls did start wearing the covering before they turned twelve, their decision to exclude a seven-year-old child

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 13. Note also that Middleton and her friend Pat were separated from each other as girls who made different decisions about the covering. Boys did not experience this kind of gender-based trauma.

³⁹ Mennonite General Conference, *The Nurture and Evangelism of Children* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Pub. House, 1955).

because she chose not to wear a covering flew in the face of official church doctrine.

Evidently, Middleton's hosts held her to a stricter standard than the broader church held white Mennonite girls.

Middleton's story thus encompasses the full breadth of children's experiences in the early years of the Lancaster Fresh Air venture. Like the vast majority of the children participating in the program, Middleton wanted to go to the countryside. No one forced her to get on the bus or train. She looked forward to the trips and participated every year that she could. Yet she and the other participants also had to assess judgments made by their hosts and deal with disappointments and overt discrimination. This tension between anticipation and disillusionment continued into the early part of the next decade as both programs began to tighten restrictions. In the ensuing years, repeat visits like the one enjoyed by Middleton's friend Pat became less and less common. The story that follows makes evident the initial signs of change in a program that children like Middleton loved and by which they were disappointed.

* * *

Albert Potts proudly held his camera as he perched on a bike next to a cement-block garage in Inman, Kansas. Potts had reason to be proud. He had braved a twenty-four hour bus trip from his home in Gulfport, Mississippi, to spend two weeks with Elmer and Linda Voth and their sons Stanley and Eugene in July of 1961. Rather than sit timidly inside, he prepared to venture out into the small, rural town of Inman to chronicle what he saw there with the help of a camera given to him by his host parents (see Figure 28). As a Fresh Air child from another Mennonite-run rural hosting program, Potts came to stay with hosts who had been told only of his need. As in the case of Margie Middleton, Potts refused to meet their expectations.

Potts traveled to Inman under the sponsorship of a Mennonite program that had worked with African-American children in Mississippi since the mid-1940s. Camp Landon, situated just outside the town of Gulfport,

Mississippi, only a few miles from the Gulf of Mexico, began in 1945 as a program site where young Mennonite men served out alternative military service assignments. Although program volunteers first worked to improve sanitation in the area by constructing outdoor privies, volunteers began to work with children within a year of Camp Landon's founding.⁴⁰ After the Alternative Service

Program ended, other young adult Mennonite volunteers conducted weekly metal shop and sewing

classes, Sunday afternoon bible classes, and, in the 1950s, release time bible instruction and recreational periods in the public schools.⁴¹ By 1957, long-time Camp Landon director Orlo Kaufman had begun to recruit volunteers by centering on the camp's outreach to children.⁴²

Through the 1950s, the larger Mennonite church, with the General Conference denomination offering the most consistent backing, supported Camp Landon by contributing money, sponsoring volunteers, and sending Christmas gifts to Gulfport children from as far away as



Figure 28: Albert Potts, 1961 ("[Photo of Albert Potts Outside with Camera and Bike]" (1961). Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas; MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 196, Photographs.

⁴⁰ David A. Haury, *The Quiet Demonstration: The Mennonite Mission in Gulfport, Mississippi* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1979), 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 22, 23, 26.

⁴² Orlo Kaufman, "Go South for Service," *The Mennonite*, March 19 1957.

Pennsylvania, Kansas, and Illinois.⁴³ By 1960, Camp Landon workers had established caring relationships with many children in the Gulfport community (see Figure 29).

Albert Potts came to Inman courtesy of a Fresh Air program initiated by Orlo Kaufman in 1960. Kaufman sought to bring

African-American children from Gulfport into contact with white Mennonite families in the North. Although the administrator of a similar program run out of Woodlawn

Mennonite Church in Chicago warned Kaufman that many of the Fresh Air children's parents



Figure 29: Unnamed Camp Landon workers and Gulfport, Mississippi, kindergartners, 1960 (“[Photo of two white Camp Landon workers teaching large kindergarten class on church steps.]” (1960). Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas; MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 196, Photographs).

expressed great reluctance to send their offspring to unknown white Mennonite families,

Kaufman's record of work with children through Camp Landon assuaged the fears of parents in Gulfport.⁴⁴ For the program's debut in 1960, Kaufman and his staff gathered twenty-one children, including three with the Potts surname, to travel to his home territory in Goessel and Moundridge, Kansas, nearly a thousand miles to the north (see Figures 30 and 31).

⁴³ Martha, "Praise and Prayer," *The Gulfbreeze*, November-December 1959.

⁴⁴ Delton Franz to Orlo Kaufman, February 1 1960, Chicago, Illinois, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 4, Correspondence - General Conf. 1960.

Potts had a grand time during his stay. Although he did not go to the same town as his relatives had the previous year, Potts stayed with the Voth family in the nearby town of Inman. Soon after his arrival, Potts teamed up with the Voths' son Eugene to ride bikes around town, swim in the local pool, and attend church and Sunday school at the local Mennonite congregation. During the Voth family's daily devotions, Potts joined in the discussion and shared insight he gained from attending bible study classes at Camp Landon in Gulfport. Potts also earned money by feeding chickens, sweeping the Voths' garage, pulling weeds, and mowing the Voths' lawn.⁴⁵ Potts likewise joined in the celebration of Elmer and Linda's silver wedding anniversary where he met the couple's relatives. Like Middleton before him, Potts greatly enjoyed his Fresh Air host family (see Figure 32).



Figure 30: Moundridge, Kansas, Fresh Air group, 1960 (“Moundridge Group: Claude Croutch, Connie Davis, Joshua Spann, Willie Ducksworth, Margret Walker, Ruby Lee Ellis, Johnny Funches, Thomas Flowers, Patsy Flowers, Johnny Jefferson, Mary Ann Jefferson,” (1960). Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas; Photo collection, Folder: Mississippi-Gulfport).

Potts had heard others tell glowing reports about their previous Fresh Air trip so the Voths' warm reception came as no surprise. Upon returning back from Kansas the year before in 1960, the Gulfport children had heaped praise upon their hosts.⁴⁶ The children exclaimed over the rural sights they encountered and the good food they ate. Indeed, many young people gained

⁴⁵ Elmer Voth and Linda Voth to Orlo Kaufman, September 5 1961, Inman, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 123, Fresh Air, 1961.

⁴⁶ Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, 46.

weight in the course of their stays. Others returned home proud to have learned how to milk cows, steer a tractor, or drive a car.⁴⁷ Many mentioned that they wanted to go back again the following year, often for a longer period of time.⁴⁸ Although Potts had not learned to drive a car, he had learned how to shoot a camera. His pride in the accomplished task came through clearly as he posed for a picture holding the camera by the Voths' garage.

Such glowing reports did not mention, however, the manner in which the children challenged their hosts. Again like Middleton, Potts remained silent when faced with his hosts' probing questions.⁴⁹

Potts's hosts also expressed surprise at his polite behavior and that he put them "to shame at times" with his proper conduct.⁵⁰ Other Fresh Air children

from Gulfport encountered similar reactions when they took proper care of themselves and worked as hard as the white children they visited. In 1960, one host made a point of noting the cleanliness of the children visiting their community. She wrote, "We found that they were just as



Figure 31: Goessel, Kansas, Fresh Air group, 1960 ("Goessel Group: David Potts, Bobbie Kennedy, Herbert Holmes, Wilmer Dedeaux, Howard Potts, Eddie Potts, Connie Washington, George Holmes, Veronica Robinson, Lorette Lee, behind Missionary John ... (1960). Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas, Photo collection, Folder: Mississippi-Gulfport).

⁴⁷ With a few exceptions, girls did not receive envied instruction about how to drive a tractor. They were instead relegated to more domestic tasks like washing laundry and preparing meals.

⁴⁸ Orlo Kaufman to Andrew Shelly, August 10 1960, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 4, Correspondence - General Conf. 1960.

⁴⁹ Voth and Voth to Kaufman.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

lovable and clean as our white friends.”⁵¹ Another host expressed her enthusiasm about the “clean shiny black faces scattered thru out the Eden Church on Sunday morning.”⁵² In addition to proving their ability to maintain basic hygiene, the children also demonstrated their intelligence. One child’s host showed him how to do various tasks around the farm under the assumption he would have to repeat himself before the child completed them correctly. When the Fresh Air child finished the tasks without error the first time, the host replied in wonder, “He is a very smart boy.”⁵³ In the majority of cases, the children spent considerable energy simply proving to their hosts that they knew how to care for themselves and had healthy intellects.

In some cases Potts’s peers also had to contend with adults who blamed their guests for corrupting their own children and for failing to express adequate appreciation. One Fresh Air participant enjoyed telling ghost stories that left at least a few of the host children in his household “scared to sleep alone at night.”⁵⁴ His stories provoked understandable correction.



Figure 32: Stanley (?) Voth, Albert Potts, Eugene (?) Voth, Linda Voth, Elmer Voth, 1961 (“[Photo of Albert Potts with Host Family, Elmer and Linda Voth]” (1961). Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas; MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 196, Photographs).

⁵¹ "Host Parents Summary - 1960," (Camp Landon, 1960), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 122, Fresh Air, 1960.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Orlo Kaufman, "A New Venture," *The Gulfbreeze*, July-August 1960.

⁵⁴ "Host Parents Summary - 1960."

Other children, however, dealt with host parents who offered less reasonable criticism. Host parents criticized the children's play, their interest in dancing, and "onery" personalities.⁵⁵ One girl's host felt that her guest "came from too wealthy a home to really appreciate" the family's possessions and material provisions.⁵⁶ The young girl responded by behaving as properly as she knew how and demonstrating once again that she understood the basics of good hygiene. In the end, the host conceded that her guest had been "well behaved," "very neat and clean," and "never caused any trouble while she was here."⁵⁷ Many of the children in the Gulfport program struggled with hosts who assumed from the start that the children would introduce problems into the household.

The challenge of living in households that both welcomed and judged them left the Gulfport children with mixed emotions as they prepared to return home in the summer of 1961. Some looked forward to being relieved of work demands placed on them by adults who apparently had a very different idea of what a "vacation" entailed.⁵⁸ A few of the Gulfport children cherished positive memories and tried to forget judgments made on them for dancing, having a "wild imagination," or spending their money "foolishly."⁵⁹ They grew sad at the end of

⁵⁵ Ibid; Dwight Stucky, Mrs. to Orlo Kaufman, August 14 1961, Moundridge, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 123, Fresh Air, 1961.

⁵⁶ Stucky to Kaufman.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Winton Stucky, Mrs. to Orlo Kaufman, August 12 1961, Hesston, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 123, Fresh Air, 1961.

⁵⁹ Marjorie Graber to Orlo Kaufman and Edna Kaufman, August 29 1961, Moundridge, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 123, Fresh Air, 1961; Ernie Hiedebrecht and Ernie Hiedebrecht,

an enjoyable time spent in recreational activities with new friends. Others, like Potts, looked quietly back at their host families as the prospect of a twenty-four-hour trip in an un-air-conditioned school bus loomed before them.⁶⁰ A few Fresh Air participants chatted excitedly about the prospect of returning again to host homes that had welcomed them particularly well.

Such return trips did not, however, appeal to those local planners who expressed greater interest in besting civil rights demonstrators than in developing long-term relationships with the children. In an article that appeared in a local Kansas newspaper soon after Potts and the rest of the Gulfport Fresh Air children arrived, the Reverend Arnold Nickel, pastor of Eden Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kansas, told a newspaper reporter that Mennonite Fresh Air hosts approached “the racial problem with moderation” in contrast to the direct challenge posed by freedom riders. Nickel added, “We work toward creating better relationships and better understandings.” Although Nickel made clear that Kansas had its own racial problems, he also pointed out that Mennonite hosts gave the Gulfport children experiences they would never have in the South such as living with a white family or worshiping in a white church.⁶¹ Yet Nickel’s desire to promote “better relationships” with the children did not extend past the period of eleven days. In a letter to Camp Landon administrator Orlo Kaufman that same year, Nickel cautioned against sending children to the same home year after year because “familiarity in this case might

Mrs. to Orlo Kaufman, 1961, Inman, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 123, Fresh Air, 1961.

⁶⁰ Voth and Voth to Kaufman.

⁶¹ Jim Banman, "Integration Comes to Central Kansas as Mennonites Are Hosts to Negroes," 1961.

lead to certain problems.”⁶² The better relationships Nickel promoted in public evidently lasted no longer than a week or two.

Nickel’s fear of “problems” thus dampened any desire expressed by Potts to return to the Voth family in Inman, Kansas. Although Rev. Nickel left the naming of those fears to other less circumspect Fresh Air hosts, his words resonated with concerns expressed by other adults involved in hosting and planning the trips.⁶³ In the following years, Camp Landon continued to shift children among Mennonite towns and, by the end of the 1960s, to states even farther north. Seldom did any Fresh Air child from Gulfport, regardless how clean or well-behaved, get a chance to return to the same home twice.

Rev. Nickel’s 1961 letter to Kaufman demonstrated an assumption fundamental to the Fresh Air Program: everything came in small doses. Administrators did not regularly recruit host families willing to bring children into their homes for months at a time. They recruited hosts willing to bring small children into their homes for short stays. Ultimately the Fresh Air Program focused more on limiting interaction than creating relationships. If Potts wanted to travel again to Kansas, he would have to risk entering a new home that could prove to be as relatively welcoming as the one he visited or as overtly judgmental as those experienced by many of his

⁶² Arnold Nickel, Rev. to Orlo Kaufman, February 27 1961, Moundridge, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 32, Correspondence - non-conf, 1961.

⁶³ In 1961, at least one host couple was somewhat more forthcoming. They wrote to Kaufman that they thought it would “be wise if the older boys could be placed in homes where there are no girls their age.” The fears referred to by Nickel may have centered on discipline concerns or relational intimacy, but at least some of his local contemporaries feared the possibility of interracial sexual intimacy between African-American boys and white Mennonite girls. See: George E. Kroecker and George E. Kroecker, Mrs. to Orlo Kaufman, August 20 1961, Inman, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 123, Fresh Air, 1961.

friends. Short stays to multiple sites limited relationships that might otherwise have proved sustainable.

Potts traveled back to Mississippi with a new camera, good memories, and the prospect of racial change sandwiching him between civil rights leaders and his Mennonite hosts. In 1961, much seemed possible as civil rights leaders planned strategies to force a new president to intervene in segregated southern towns like Potts's home in Gulfport. By contrast, the Mennonites who hosted Fresh Air children promoted their efforts as a better alternative to the freedom rides and street marches employed by civil rights organizers to pressure the Kennedy administration. Potts and the other children on the Camp Landon bus rode home pressed between the two groups. Children like Potts made the white Mennonites' criticism possible and had the most to lose in the long run should the efforts of the Civil Rights Movement not bear fruit. Although Potts knew little of the two groups' interests, he responded with poise and aplomb to the racial environment around him. As he took pictures and rode bikes, surprised his hosts with good hygiene and remained mum about his home environment, Potts created a temporary living environment where neither adult nor child entirely controlled the agenda. Although he did not bring about ensuing civil rights legislation by traveling to Inman, Albert Potts did help shape adults who were at least a little less likely to ignore it.

* * *

Four years after Albert Potts climbed back on the Camp Landon bus and nearly ten years after Margie Middleton grew tired of leaving earrings at home, a story about a young Fresh Air child and his host family made the child's race even more explicit. The 1965 article in the Lancaster Conference's flagship missions magazine described how one family decided to invite an African-American child to their home. Anne, the host family daughter, exclaimed one

evening, “Mother, let’s have a Negro child this year.”⁶⁴ Her proposal highlighted a change since Margie Middleton first began visiting Lancaster Mennonite homes. By 1965, African-American children had come to dominate the Fresh Air Program. White flight from the inner-city New York locales where Mennonite mission outposts vetted Fresh Air participants left few white candidates. So common had the presence of African-American children become that at least one editor in 1965 refrained from adding a caption to a photo of two Fresh Air visitors and their white Mennonite hosts (see Figure 33). The editor assumed that readers knew the reason that two African-American boys would walk across a swinging bridge with a white Mennonite woman and her daughter.⁶⁵ In the 1965 fictionalized account, Anne and the rest of the Smith family joined hundreds of other white Mennonites in welcoming an African-American child into their home.



Figure 33: Unnamed Fresh Air hosts and guests, 1965 (D. Harly, *The Volunteer*, June 1965, 1).

The article appeared at a time when racial rebellions destabilized many urban communities and internal debate about the problem of how best to respond to activist calls from the Civil Rights Movement garnered the attention of Mennonite leaders and lay people alike. Within the Mennonite community, the debate in 1965 often proved intense. African-American

⁶⁴ Clayton Shaub, Mrs., "An Unfinished Story," *Missionary Messenger*, June 1965.

⁶⁵ D. Harly, *The Volunteer*, June 1965.

Mennonites publicly queried “Why Do White Folks Hate Us?”⁶⁶ In response, some white Mennonites advocated walking on picket lines while others proclaimed that the solution would “not come through marches and picketing” but by evangelizing “underprivileged Negroes.”⁶⁷ For a people long known for their racial egalitarianism, the emerging debate over the problem of how to maintain that reputation and respond with integrity to racial unrest left many grasping for ways to move forward.

Young Fresh Air children like “Sammy” offered a particularly attractive way to uphold Mennonites’ record of racial egalitarianism without besmirching the host homes or communities. By the mid-1960s, administrators no longer expressed concern that the children might carry sexually transmitted diseases. Program promoters instead touted the mutually reinforcing purity of the children and their hosts. One author enjoined her readers in 1963 to exude “pure stuff” consisting of “genuine interest in and love” for Fresh Air children.⁶⁸ That purity of intention matched the agrarian bliss Fresh Air children purportedly encountered in the countryside. During the Fresh Air visit described in the 1965 article, “Sammy” listened to “the wind talking to the ripened wheat,” found a nest of rabbits, collected eggs, drank fresh milk, explored a groundhog burrow in clean earth, and lay on his back to gaze at puffy, white clouds.⁶⁹ The purity and wholesomeness of these agrarian activities and of the child who experienced them proved singularly appealing to white Mennonites. By participating in the hosting programs, white

⁶⁶ “Why Do White Folks Hate Us?: Urban-Racial Meetings, Youngstown, Ohio, March 4, 5, St. Louis, Mo., March 11, 12,” *Mission Service Newsletter*, May 9 1965.

⁶⁷ Lynford Hershey, “Souls and Civil Rights,” *Gospel Herald*, July 6 1965; Sanford G. Shetler, “Is This Our Task?” *Gospel Herald*, July 20 1965.

⁶⁸ Ella May Miller, “Of One Blood,” *Gospel Herald*, February 5 1963.

⁶⁹ Shaub, “An Unfinished Story.”

Mennonites demonstrated the purity of their intention and welcomed into their homes children who would no longer sully their communities.

As a purported seven-year-old, “Sammy” represented a shift toward sending younger participants into host homes while shunting teenagers and pre-teens to camps. Already in 1961, a host in Kansas recommended that the program administrator not place teenage boys in homes with girls near their age.⁷⁰ In another instance, a long-time host family in Pennsylvania stopped inviting a female Fresh Air guest to their home after the hosts’ teenage daughter grew jealous of their Fresh Air guest’s budding physical maturity.⁷¹ By the mid-1960s, African-American pre-adolescents and early teens rarely



Sometimes it's good to get away from the other fellows at camp, to be alone, and fish . . . and think. . . .

11

Figure 34: Unnamed Camp Hebron guest, 1964 ("It's Quiet Now at Camp Hebron." *The Volunteer*, October 1964, 4-6, 11).

received invitations to Fresh Air homes.⁷² In lieu of home visits, mission administrators gave the young people applications to attend camp. The teens and pre-teens responded with an enthusiasm that in turn raised another alarm. As African-American youth began to travel to church-sponsored camps, church leaders expressed some fear at the perceived encroachment. A white Mennonite mission worker lamented in 1963, “Missions Camp at Hebron is getting darker and

⁷⁰ Kroecker and Kroecker to Kaufman.

⁷¹ Peggy Curry, interview with author, Harrisonburg, Va., March 29, 2005.

⁷² Older teens at many city missions had stopped participating in many white-led city missions by the mid-1960s. See, for example, the ineffective efforts of South Christian Street mission workers in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to recruit teens to their services: Dale L. Weaver, "Annual Christian Worker Group Report," (South Christian Street Mennonite Church, 1964), 3, LMHS - Box: South Christian Street, Now Crossroads Cong, Folder: S. Christian Street.

darker each year.”⁷³ Yet the majority of mission staff and Fresh Air administrators supported the shift of older children to the structured and somewhat more distant camping environment. The following year a missions newsletter featured a photo of one of those pre-teen African-American campers fishing by the side of a pond (see Figure 34). Like the author of the article who described “Sammy’s” agrarian bliss, the photographer of the straw-hatted angler emphasized the rustic though stereotypical purity of the boy’s fishing pursuit. At camp, older children could still gain the benefit of country life without threatening Mennonite homes.

The six- and seven-year-old children who did spend time in family homes prompted Fresh Air hosts to change the length of the program. To be certain that their readers got the message that



Figure 35: Unnamed Fresh Air prospective participants, 1965 (Mrs. Clayton Shaub, "An Unfinished Story." *Missionary Messenger*, June 1965, 14-15.

the Fresh Air Program only placed young children in family homes, the editors of the 1965 article about “Sammy” and his host family included a photo of four kindergarten-age children, two white girls and two dark-skinned boys (see Figure 35). As program personnel placed such children in family homes, the six- and seven-year-old visitors showed greater signs of exhaustion at the end of two-week stays than had the older children during the previous decade.

⁷³ Paul N. Kraybill, "Paul Kraybill's Handwritten Notes from Visit to Steelton," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, 1963), EMM Record Room - 1st Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Home Ministries, Locations New York City, City Wisconsin 1964-1975 (1961), Folder: PENNSYLVANIA STEELTON.

As the children grew tired more quickly, hosts complained and, in response, program administrators reduced most stays to one week.⁷⁴ The shorter visits led hosts to wonder whether they should continue expending energy on exchanges only seven days long.

The children who tired so quickly of Fresh Air living proved irresistible to their hosts, however, because the adults came to believe that their young charges could lead the way through racial tumult. The author who described “Sammy” and the Smiths made that belief apparent. In the summer of 1965, the Smith family decided to invite “Sammy” and one other Fresh Air child to their home. Host daughter Anne wanted a girl to play with while the Smiths’ son Bob wanted a boy. In compromise, “Mother” Smith offered a solution. “Well, why not both?” she asked.⁷⁵ Nevertheless “both” did not mean two African-American children. Against the statistical odds – white children made up less than ten percent of the participants in the Lancaster-based program by this point – blonde-haired Jennie also appeared in the story.⁷⁶ She, too, became part of the Smith family for a short while and learned of the wonders of agrarian bliss alongside “Sammy.” The message of the story came through clearly. Very young Fresh Air children in their purity and in their interracial harmony could draw the church forward to a better world as interracial riots filled the headlines and made white Mennonites wary. Mennonite hosts placed great stock in their young charges and the purity they had come to represent.

Children like “Sammy” did offer change and hope to their hosts but often not in the form the hosts expected. Although the program administrators’ decision to invite younger participants

⁷⁴ Norman G. Shenk, interview with author, Salunga, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 22, 2005.

⁷⁵ Shaub, "An Unfinished Story," 15.

⁷⁶ Paul G. Burkholder, "Glad Tidings Mennonite Church Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund Agency Report 1966," March 17 (Glad Tidings Mennonite Church, 1967), LMHS - Box: Glad Tidings, Folder: Glad Tidings.

had removed the older children most capable of challenging their hosts' prejudices, the younger children still forced their hosts to engage with them and recognize points of ignorance about racial matters. One host, for example, could not bring herself to comb and plait the hair of her Fresh Air guest. As she struggled to overcome her reticence to touch an African-American child, the host "grew" from the experience and came to a new realization about her racial conditioning.⁷⁷ Such encounters occasionally prompted hosts to write a letter to a church publication or, even more rarely, a government official, but most of the learning stayed on the farm. In the midst of the agrarian bliss so cherished by the Fresh Air program administrators, white Mennonites found that they, too, had something to learn. The Fresh Air children continued to make sure of it.

* * *

Smith asked to be adopted at a time when white Mennonites showed less enthusiasm for Fresh Air ventures. Eight years after Albert Potts had carried his camera through the streets of Inman, Kansas, Smith arrived in nearby Newton in the midst of a church and a country unsettled by criticism from Black Power advocates. By the summer of 1969, the racial dynamics in even a small rural Kansas town like Newton had undergone significant change. As Black Power advocates raised their voices, white Mennonites came under new criticism. The General Conference publications featured articles that referred to the threat of "revolution" against the "white racist institution" of the church and called for sending money into the city rather than taking children out of it.⁷⁸ Those who had dared to call Fresh Air efforts superior to freedom rides in 1961 offered no similar boast of dominance over Black Power advocates in 1969. In the

⁷⁷ John Eby, interview with author, Philadelphia/Evanston, Ill., February 28, 2003.

⁷⁸ "Special Funds for Summer City Needs," *The Mennonite*, June 10 1969.

face of direct challenge to their race relations record, some white Mennonites began to question their involvement in the Fresh Air Program.

Yet Smith had larger concerns before him than growing criticism of the Fresh Air Program. He had traveled twenty-four hours north from Gulfport for time away from a still segregated and threatening environment. The previous year Albert Potts, the same Fresh Air participant featured above, had outgrown the rural exchange program and joined a local program also designed to give him new opportunities. As in the case of the Fresh Air Program, however, those opportunities often came fraught with trauma. In the summer of 1968, Potts and a group of five other African-American boys had accepted a ride home from a white boy who worked with them at the high school summer employment program. Not long into their trip, a county patrolman stopped the car. Evidently, the teen had been driving erratically. The patrolman listened to the young driver explain that his car lacked second gear, but did not ticket him. Instead, the officer ordered the six African-American boys out of the car, used offensive racial epithets against them, and ordered them to start running back to North Gulfport. As the boys left, the officer fired two shots into the air above their heads. Upon hearing those shots, Potts and the other five young men ran as fast as they could to their homes. The story spread through the entire Gulfport community and eventually led to a cursory apology from the patrolman's supervisor, but county officials allowed the policeman to keep his job.⁷⁹ As Smith prepared to travel to Kansas the following year, the opportunity to leave behind the kind of harassment experienced

⁷⁹ Harold Regier, "Harassment by County Patrolman," August 9 (Camp Landon, 1968), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 45, Correspondence - non-conf, June-Dec., 1968; Orlo Kaufman to C. D. Kaufman, August 7 1968, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 45, Correspondence - non-conf, June-Dec., 1968.

by Potts and the other five boys overshadowed the dangers pointed out by critics of the Fresh Air Program.

No wonder then that Smith thrilled to a farm experience free of the threat of police harassment. Smith quickly learned the names of his four new host siblings and followed them around the farmyard even before he had the chance to eat breakfast on the morning of his arrival. He got to perch behind the wheel of the Voth family's diesel tractor, to ride bikes with the Voths' sons, and to meet their extended family.⁸⁰ Smith even received a visit from one of his former vacation bible school teachers who, like Marietta Voth herself, had traveled from the Newton, Kansas, area to serve in the Camp Landon ministry. Although Smith had to put up with the same kind of prying questions about his family life that Potts and Middleton had faced before him, Smith tactfully evaded the questions. Such small nuisances seemed a fair tradeoff for a trip away from Gulfport.

Smith's positive experience with the Voths offered an ideal rebuttal to the Fresh Air Program's multiplying critics. Everything seemed to have gone well. Marietta Voth, Smith's host mother, later wrote to Kaufman that not only did she think they had "gotten about the best one on the bus," but that Smith got along with their family "so well his hair might turn blonde one of these days."⁸¹ Smith returned that fondness by asking the Voths to adopt him. Although they did not consider his adoption request, the Voths listened carefully as their four children clamored to

⁸⁰ Note that Smith stayed with Marietta and Otto Voth in Newton. Albert Potts was hosted by Elmer and Linda Voth in Inman. Voth is a common Mennonite surname in eastern Kansas.

⁸¹ Voth and Voth to Kaufman.

have Smith return another year.⁸² As both host and guest children responded with such enthusiasm, critics' voices seemed much less relevant to the hosts and program administrators.

Yet Smith and the Voths did not know how unrealistic return visits had become. Already in 1966, Kaufman and his staff from Camp Landon found it difficult to recruit host families. As the years progressed and reports of bad experiences spread through the Mennonite community in Kansas, fewer and fewer hosts volunteered even though more and more Gulfport children applied.⁸³ Exaggerated tales of theft, misbehavior, clashes over appropriate dress, and other cross-cultural misunderstandings diminished the enthusiasm of potential hosts. Rather than accept that a once popular program had run its course, Kaufman looked even farther north to Mennonite communities in South Dakota as potential hosting sites. The same year that Smith and a smaller group of Gulfport children entered host homes in Newton, a group of fourteen children traveled thirty-six hours to Freeman, South Dakota, where their hosts and the local press welcomed them (see Figure 36).⁸⁴ Although Kaufman allowed a few teens to travel to Kansas and South Dakota, he had begun to send older children to camps and retreats. As fewer white host families volunteered and Camp Landon staff sent children farther north, Smith's return to the Voth family became less and less likely.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, 49.

⁸⁴ "Local Farm Families Host Mississippi Children During Week-Long, 'Fresh-Air Program'," 1969; Milo Dailey, "Mississippi Negro Boy Is Enjoying Life from Farm Family near Freeman," *Yankton Press & Dakotan*, Friday, August 1 1969; Delmer Hofer, "Towards Better Understanding between Races," *The Northern Light*, September 1969.

Smith did have a more feasible but nonetheless conflicted option of traveling to summer camp in future years. In addition to sponsoring the two Fresh Air groups in 1969, Camp Landon staff also transported a group of twenty-two children to Camp Friedenswald, a Mennonite-run retreat center in Michigan. Unlike Lancaster administrators, Kaufman and his staff also sent younger children to Friedenswald in order to have something to offer the large number of Fresh Air applicants. Although the children appeared to have had a wonderful time, the African-

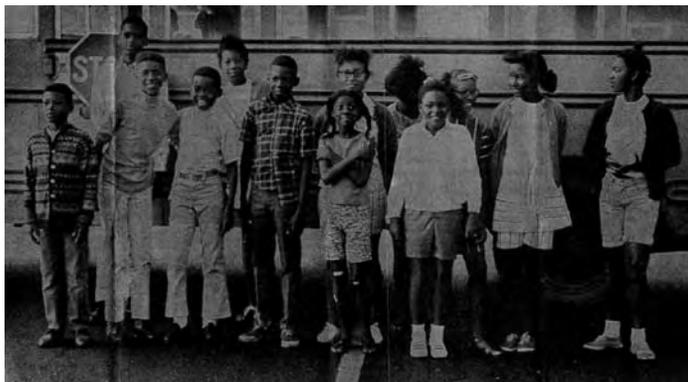


Figure 36: Unnamed Gulfport, Mississippi, Fresh Air participants, 1969 ("Local Farm Families Host Mississippi Children During Week-Long, 'Fresh-Air' Program." Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas; MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 4, Folder 130, Fresh Air, 1969, 10).

American sponsor and public school teacher who traveled with them expressed more reserve. Percy Love noted that the white children at the camp "terribly outnumbered" the African-American children and left them seeming "overshadowed." Love offered only the weakest of affirmation that the endeavor did "no harm."⁸⁵ If Smith traveled north in the future, he would likely end up at a camp where the excitement of outdoor adventure came at the cost of awkwardness and social exclusion.

The possibility that Smith would return to a Fresh Air home diminished due to waning support for both the Camp Landon and Lancaster programs. By 1971, Lancaster administrators

⁸⁵ Percy Love, "Michigan Retreat: A Candid Look," *The Gulfbreeze*, June-July-August-September 1969.

limited their program to six and eight year olds.⁸⁶ They made official what “Sammy’s” 1965 story had already inferred. Lancaster Mennonites would take only the very young and pure into their homes. With the drop in age came a reduction in overall numbers. By 1971, the Lancaster program had decreased in size by more than thirty-five percent from a high of 302 participants in 1951 to 191 in 1971.⁸⁷ Likewise, that same year critics internal to the Lancaster Conference called for the program’s end because Fresh Air ventures reinforced “patterns of racism in our brotherhood” and proved “detrimental to the self concept of participating children.”⁸⁸ Reduced numbers and internal criticism likewise plagued the Gulfport program. Echoing concerns similar to those of parents in the Northeast, Marietta Voth – Smith’s host mother – wrote to Kaufman that two-week stays kept hosts from requesting return visits because the visits lasted “too long.”⁸⁹ Amid criticism both external and internal, the Fresh Air Programs seemed ready to fade away.

Yet the children kept the programs active well beyond their prime. Hundreds of children at both sites continued to clamor for an opportunity to visit a Fresh Air home. Despite growing criticism about the program’s length, implicit paternalism, and extent of required commitment as well as increasing reluctance from white families to invite even the youngest of African-American children into their homes, administrators kept on distributing applications to the

⁸⁶ M. Arlene Mellinger, "200 Children Are Hoping . . .," *Missionary Messenger*, May 1972.

⁸⁷ Ibid.; Paul N. Kraybill, "Mennonite Mission Children Visitation Program, Report of the Director," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1951), 1, EMM Record Room - 3rd Cabinet of second set in on right side, bottom unmarked drawer, Folder: Committee Action.

⁸⁸ Nelson Good et al., "Racism Is a Primary Concern . . .," March 8 (Lancaster Mennonite Conference Race Relations Study Committee, 1971), 3.

⁸⁹ Voth and Voth to Kaufman.

children and invitations to the host families. Camp Landon staff continued to send children to the North through the mid-1970s, and Lancaster administrators placed children from the city in rural homes through the mid-1990s.⁹⁰ Those children in turn encouraged their own offspring to visit Fresh Air homes. When Margie Middleton sat for an interview in 1977 to describe her Fresh Air experiences, a photographer snapped a picture of her and her daughter Karen who, like Middleton, also had traveled to a Pennsylvanian farm for a Fresh Air visit (see Figure 37).⁹¹ Likewise, in 1972, a graduate of the Camp Landon program asked staff to include her young child in the group that would travel north that year.⁹² If not for generations of Fresh Air children, program administrators would have long before shut down the efforts as too expensive, exhausting, and fraught with contradiction to continue.



Figure 37: Margie Middleton and her daughter Karen, 1977 (Margie Middleton and Ruth Y. Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences." *Missionary Messenger*, July 1977, 12-13, 21).

Smith cared little about such critiques because he wanted to stay longer. He had found a place where he did not have to worry about police officers forcing him to run home beneath a hail of bullets. He had found a community that welcomed him because of his racial identity rather than in spite of it. The Voth family farm beckoned him with the fresh air, exercise, and

⁹⁰ Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, 49; Barbara Horst, interview with author, Ephrata, Pa./Evanston, Ill., April 22, 2003.

⁹¹ Middleton and Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences."

⁹² Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, 49.

mechanized marvels of Midwestern farm life. Smith proposed adoption to the Voths. One of his peers considered walking back to his host family. The following year Smith's fellow participant asked, "How long does it take to walk 1400 miles?"⁹³ Smith may have considered a similar fourteen hundred mile trek to return to this rural haven.

Yet no one told him what might happen if he did stay longer. African-American teens who traveled north to build on positive Fresh Air ventures rarely experienced the same welcome. During weekend visits to friends' homes, students at Bethel College in Newton, Kansas, encountered racial slurs.⁹⁴ In order to be served in segregated Newton during the 1950s, one student had to pretend he was Japanese.⁹⁵ Members of a Mennonite church in that same town told several Bethel students from Gulfport in 1963 that they would not be allowed to become associate members there.⁹⁶ Similar evidence of overt prejudice by white Mennonites emerged when African-American students began to attend Lancaster Mennonite High School from the mid-1950s forward.⁹⁷ While some completed coursework at Mennonite colleges in Kansas or at

⁹³ Edith Tschetter and Larry Tscheter, "Who Profited More?" *The Gulfbreeze*, July-October 1970.

⁹⁴ Regier and Regier, interview with author; Harold Regier and Rosella Regier to Gary Stenson, April 11 1963, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 34, Correspondence - non-conf, Jan.-July 1963; Esther Groves, "Gulfport at the Crossroads," *The Mennonite*, November 19 1963.

⁹⁵ Regier and Regier, interview with author.

⁹⁶ Mae Schrag, "Mennonite Prejudice," *The Gulfbreeze*, May-June 1963.

⁹⁷ Amos W. Weaver, "Response to Leroy Bechler Survey," (Lancaster Mennonite High School, 1954), AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-723 Le Roy Bechler Coll., Questionnaire on Race attitude, 1951-1954; "South Seventh St. Workers' Meeting," (South Seventh Street Mennonite Church, 1956), LMHS - Box: South Seventh Street, Reading, Minute/Record Books; Folder: [tan ring-bound notebook]; Leon Stauffer to J. Lester Brubaker, July 14 1971, Lancaster, Pa.

Lancaster Mennonite High School in Pennsylvania, other students left early or refused to return after a semester or two.⁹⁸ For those who returned to communities that had once welcomed them, memories of the Fresh Air experience grew stale quickly.

Unfamiliar with these older students' encounters with white Mennonite racial prejudice, Smith traveled back to Gulfport where an uncertain future awaited him. Some Fresh Air children went on to succeed in high school and college.⁹⁹ Others dropped out of school and married at a young age.¹⁰⁰ Smith's future, as promising as some and as imperiled as others, remained uncertain. Whether his Fresh Air trip would contribute negatively or positively to the path before him likewise was not clear. Yet as the summer of 1969 came to a close and the Camp Landon bus pulled away from Newton, Smith faced at least one near certainty: he would not be adopted by the Voth family. The rest of his future – his prospects for good schooling, the possibility of a steady job, and how long his Fresh Air memories would keep from growing stale – would unfold without the Voths to intervene or Smith to change their minds. With a thousand miles between them, they lived out different futures.

* * *

⁹⁸ Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 8, 2003; Orlo Kaufman, "Bethel Graduates," *The Gulfbreeze*, May-June 1961; John Powell, "Hesston College Visit," April 16 (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-784 Box 1, Hubert Schwartzentruber Collection, Miscellaneous, Folder: Minority Ministries Council, 1970.

⁹⁹ Kaufman, "Bethel Graduates."

¹⁰⁰ Orlo Kaufman to Harold Schrag, et al., March 7 1961, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 32, Correspondence - non-conf, 1961; Harold Regier to Ervin Krehbiel and Ervin Krehbiel, Mrs., March 3 1964, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 36, Correspondence - non-conf, 1964.

All the children featured in this chapter challenged hosts often uninterested in the lessons that their young visitors proffered. In most cases, children like Middleton, Potts, “Sammy,” and Smith entered homes where white Mennonite adults knew little about relating across racial lines. In many homes, the children from Gulfport and New York City gave the adults their first lessons in crossing racial boundaries. Most strikingly, the children revealed their hosts’ racial naïveté. The rural mother who did not know how to care for African-American hair eventually came to accept lessons from her young guest in order to gain proficiency.¹⁰¹ Other hosts resisted the children’s lessons and gratefully sent older children to the more professionalized and less intimate camp settings. Still others, as in the case of many of those involved in the Camp Landon program, simply didn’t ask the children to return. As they withheld invitations and shunted older children out of their homes, the adults made clear that they did not always appreciate the lessons taught by their young charges.

The children also forced their hosts to live with limits. Middleton, Potts, and many other Fresh Air children refused to supply the intimate home details their hosts craved.¹⁰² Although they rarely showed disrespect toward the adults, the children resisted white Mennonites’ efforts to control them. Like Rowena Lark and other African-American converts, the children exercised power where they could in ways often unacknowledged by their contemporaries. Every time the children eagerly sought out the excitement of travel and rural adventure while refusing to exchange such vacations for intimate revelation, the young Fresh Air participants controlled a small but significant measure of the interracial exchange. Rather than acquiescing to pressure applied by their hosts, the children set limits that the adults eventually came to accept.

¹⁰¹ Eby, interview with author.

¹⁰² Voth and Voth to Kaufman; Middleton and Wenger, "Fresh Air Reminiscences."

The children set limits and taught their hosts lessons even as the program administrators used the children as inoculants. Fresh Air programs brought more white Mennonites into intimate contact with African Americans than any other church initiative during the two decades of this study. By 1970, only fifty-six Mennonite congregations in the United States included African Americans, but hundreds of congregations and thousands of individuals had hosted African-American Fresh Air children by the end of this period.¹⁰³ That extended exposure nonetheless came in a particular form. Throughout the two decades of the Fresh Air ventures sampled here, administrators kept the visits short, the children deloused, and the homes free of inspection. Like public health nurses, the program promoters injected African-American children into host families for limited, intense, but relatively harmless visits that rendered the families immune to the need for further action. In only isolated cases did Fresh Air exchanges lead to involvement with African-American adults, civil rights marches, or other action against racial injustice.

The process of inoculation proved all the more effective because families shuffled through different children each year. Middleton's hosts did not invite her to return because she did not wear a prayer covering. Camp Landon administrators shifted children to different locations almost every year, so Potts had little chance of returning to Inman to take more pictures. The hosts who invited children like "Sammy" into their homes could not invite them back after they turned nine. The Voths didn't adopt Smith. While in each case hosts and administrators offered good reasons for their decisions, the adults diluted the "pure stuff" they had been enjoined to give their charges with distance, time, and (as in the case of Middleton and

¹⁰³ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 177.

her covering) concern for religious purity.¹⁰⁴ Without the “pure stuff” of sustained, genuine, and long-term relationships, the program administrators could do little more than promote periodic, short-term exchanges.

Even those hosts who stayed connected with their charges did so in the context of serial relationships. When a couple from Kansas traveled down to Gulfport in 1969 to visit family members working at Camp Landon, they made a point of visiting the homes of their former Fresh Air guests. The children and their parents enthusiastically received these northern visitors, but the Klassens had limited time with each household because they had to visit three children. Each summer, they had hosted a different child.¹⁰⁵ Kaufman and his staff apparently had listened carefully to Reverend Nichols in 1961 when he discouraged repeat visits. Although the Lancaster program administrators officially encouraged contact between host and guest families, they also instituted age limits that curtailed such contact.¹⁰⁶ Fresh Air program staff had never promoted long-term, sustained relationships.

Hosts nonetheless ventured down one of the few integrated avenues accessible to them. At the grassroots level, practicality mattered more than intention. In the majority of cases, adults opened their homes out of genuine interest in the young children. The hosts frequently expressed concern about the burgeoning racial crisis in the United States and welcomed an opportunity to minister to young children affected by that crisis. The task proved especially appealing because, by the mid-1960s, the young children appeared much less threatening to them than did older African-American city dwellers. Furthermore, few hosts made time in the midst of exhausting

¹⁰⁴ Miller, "Of One Blood."

¹⁰⁵ Oswald E. Klassen, "Fresh Air Visits Reversed," *The Gulfbreeze*, January-February 1969.

¹⁰⁶ Shenk, interview with author.

summer farm tasks to attend a civil rights march. Fewer still had the desire or ability to develop adult interracial relationships outside their immediate community. Tied to the demands of farm life, the hosts had found a practical way to become involved. Fresh Air Program promoters did not need to proclaim that hosting African-American children would protect hosts against civil rights critics. In the end, the inoculation offered to hosts by Fresh Air administrators sprang more from the practicality of rural living than the deliberation of conspiratorial intent.

Fresh Air ventures did, however, offer a deliberate measure of protection to the leaders who planned, promoted, and sustained the programs. Like most Mennonite church leaders in both the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite communities during this period, the Fresh Air Program administrators found themselves in a bind. They sought to protect and promote a purity doctrine that called the Mennonite community to remain unsullied from the world's influences at the same time that they sought to engage the world around them.¹⁰⁷ Caught between the desire to minister to "the least of these" and the concern that they might become compromised in doing so, the leaders had limited options.¹⁰⁸ Fresh Air programs provided a means to satisfy both desires. By hosting young African-American children, Mennonites could minister to those they perceived to be in need without becoming sullied in the process. Having found an excellent solution to their evangelical dilemma, church leaders promoted the program most heavily at a time when their lack of involvement in civil rights initiatives came under

¹⁰⁷ Although he uses the metaphor of an underlying stream bursting to the surface, Bush captures a similar tension in his description of Mennonite separation and "missionary fervor" in the middle of the twentieth century. See: Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 11.

¹⁰⁸ The author of Matthew 25:45 quotes Jesus' description of final judgment in which those who have served "one of the least of these" receive the reward of "eternal life." White Mennonites, like many Christians, knew and frequently quoted the verse.

heaviest attack. For example, the 1965 article about “Sammy” came out one month after another author excoriated white Mennonites for remaining “aloof from the larger civil rights movement.”¹⁰⁹ Fresh Air programs allowed administrators to demonstrate race-related action if not civil rights advocacy.

Yet the protection sought by the Fresh Air promoters exacted a heavy cost from the children. As noted throughout this chapter, the hosts exercised significant power over their charges. They required their guests to work according to their schedule and style, dress by their standards, refrain from dancing, eschew earrings, and return home as required. Such control exacerbated the hosts’ overt prejudice as they used racial epithets, expressed surprise at the children’s appearance, and sometimes refused to invite children to return. Although the children gained travel and adventure, they did so at the cost of dealing with hosts who often tried to make them conform to a worldview based on prejudice and racism.

The children nonetheless changed the adults’ ideas about racial purity. In the midst of the practical concerns and political issues described above, the children defied racial stereotypes that cast them as dirty, ill-mannered, slovenly waifs. The Fresh Air travelers surprised their hosts by demonstrating good hygiene, proper conduct, and careful grooming. By venturing into their hosts’ homes, they forced the adults to reexamine these racial myths. Every time they confounded their hosts’ preconceptions, the children expanded the adults’ understanding of the broader world. Most often, those new realizations did not lead white Mennonites to protest the racial inequities faced by the children in Gulfport, Lancaster, New York City, and Newton. At

¹⁰⁹ "Why Do White Folks Hate Us?: Urban-Racial Meetings, Youngstown, Ohio, March 4, 5, St. Louis, Mo., March 11, 12."

the same time, the children forced the hosts to acknowledge that bigger issues and life choices existed outside the bounds of rural Mennonite communities.

The next chapter focuses on an activist whose ministry gripped Mennonites in part because of Fresh Air children. Although African-American Mennonite Vincent Harding did not participate in Mennonite-run Fresh Air programs, he found an audience prepared to listen to him because of children like Middleton, Potts, “Sammy,” and Smith. White Mennonites initially engaged with Harding because the children had carved out a space where race mattered in new ways. As the children challenged their hosts to look at their prejudices, the young participants established a precedent: white Mennonites had begun to learn – even if on a limited and contingent basis – from African Americans. Middleton, Potts, “Sammy,” and Smith inoculated Mennonites from civil rights action, but they also prepared the community to attend to a voice that could stir them to venture beyond the protection that the children offered.

CHAPTER 5

MOVING BEYOND CHARISMA IN CIVIL RIGHTS SCHOLARSHIP:
VINCENT HARDING'S SOJOURN WITH THE MENNONITES, 1958-1966

Vincent Harding spoke fifteen times on December 4, 1963. Others spoke more frequently in the course of the day-long gathering billed as "The Church Facing the Race Crisis," but no one spoke as long. The twenty-two men who met in Newton, Kansas, hailed from as far north as Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and as far south as Gulfport, Mississippi. Harding had traveled from Atlanta, Georgia, where he and his wife Rosemarie Freeney Harding led Mennonite House, a Mennonite-sponsored service unit focused on supporting the Civil Rights Movement.¹ The work at Mennonite House put Harding in regular contact with Martin Luther King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, and many other movement leaders. No one else who spoke at the December 4 meeting brought such a record of activism. No one else was African-American. Among the Mennonite leaders gathered for the General Conference Mennonite Church's Board of Christian Service, only Harding straddled two worlds.

This chapter traces the tumultuous events leading up to and following Harding's participation in the December 1963 meeting. By 1963, every issue at the core of white and African-American Mennonite engagement received public and often controversial attention. Mennonites debated what it meant to be separated from society in a time of social

¹ Rachel E. Harding, "Biography, Democracy and Spirit: An Interview with Vincent Harding," *Callaloo* 20, no. 3 (1998): 689.

crisis. They explored the meaning of legislative advocacy as cities erupted. Discussions surfaced in church publications and denominational meetings about the sin of racism, Mennonite prejudice, and biblical passages purported to support African-American servitude. Church leaders issued statements to their congregants and national political leaders. Amid the unrest, Mennonites debated again and again how the church should relate to the Civil Rights Movement. As this chapter will show, Harding's words and actions in between the white Mennonite community and African-American civil rights leaders reveal the purity-entwined sources of the conflict and its incomplete resolution.

Harding provides an ideal means of untangling the multiple expressions of purity at the root of Mennonites' unsettled approach to racial advocacy by virtue of his dual membership in the Mennonite church and the Civil Rights Movement. Although his passion prodded people to action, his ability to straddle two worlds got their attention and kept it. Harding defied easy description. Neither birthright Mennonite nor child convert, he nonetheless spoke as if he had always been steeped in church doctrine. He looked like the African-American service recipients featured in mission magazines, but he was more likely to have given aid as a Mennonite than to have received succor from one. He was a Mennonite minister, but he marched in civil rights demonstrations and spent time in jail. In the uncomfortable and at times precarious position of a carpenter straddling a roof crest, he kept one leg in the world of separation and another in that of engagement. Mennonites – both African-American and white – and civil rights leaders kept looking at and listening to Harding because he balanced on the border between withdrawal and advocacy.

The narrative of Harding's straddling sojourn with the Mennonites from 1958 through 1966 first and most importantly challenges those historians who debate Martin Luther King's

role in terms of Weberian charisma.² Following the terms of this debate, historians have attempted to answer, for example, whether King created the Civil Rights Movement or the Civil Rights Movement created King.³ Such debate tends to occlude the contributions of women, local communities, and faith-based change efforts. This chapter seeks to reframe bi-polar charisma-centered inquiry not by expanding the field of scholarship to study gender, grassroots organizing, or belief but by analyzing borderers – those who straddle boundary lines.⁴ From a bordered perspective, Harding's charisma appears less important than does his position in between a sectarian religious community and the Civil Rights Movement.⁵ In the same way, King's

² For discussion of Weber's articulation of charismatic leadership, see: Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon, 1964).

³ See, for example, the work of Adam Fairclough: Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987). Fairclough resolves the debate by suggesting that organizations like SCLC influenced King as much as King influenced those organizations and the entire Civil Rights Movement.

⁴ A group of scholars have already done an excellent job of expanding Civil Rights Movement scholarship into previously occluded fields. For a treatment of gender, see: Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith, "Gender and the Civil Rights Movement," in *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith, *Crosscurrents in African American History* (New York: Garland Pub., 1999); and Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001). For an exploration of Christian belief within the Civil Rights Movement, see: Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Justice, from the Civil Rights Movement to Today* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); and Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997). For a particularly engaging treatment of grassroots organizing, see: Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁵ In her work on purity, Mary Douglas examines borders through the metaphor of anomaly. In her schema, anomalies take the form of those things that do not fit, i.e. impurities. Like anomalies and impurities, borderers do not fit into the established order, threaten to destabilize the prevailing organizational system because they refuse to conform, and – in certain cases – revitalize norms because they demonstrate new possibilities. See: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 2002 ed. (New York: Routledge,

personal charisma seems less salient when he is cast as a borderer. King likewise did not fit the preconceptions of white people who expected buffoonery and servitude or of African Americans and white people who anticipated calls to violence. Like Harding, this nonviolent, well-educated African-American minister garnered the attention of the nation not only because his oratory proved arresting, but also because he straddled the African-American and white communities. By following the method employed in this chapter, civil rights historians can thus use the study of borderers to analyze the movement anew.

The story told in this chapter likewise challenges the argument that white Christian consensus splintered in the face of civil rights initiatives. In his influential treatment of Roman Catholic reaction to racial change in the urban north, John T. McGreevy argues that white racism takes multiple and contradictory forms that change over time.⁶ David Swartz makes a similar argument about varied responses to the Civil Rights Movement among Mennonites in Mississippi.⁷ Both historians offer convincing evidence for the particular stories they tell. Yet

1966), 44-50. By examining Vincent as a borderer, I thus seek to explore how study of border-straddling sheds new light on purity systems and, as will be argued, demonstrates how borderers reveal the destructive aspects of purity.

⁶ John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3-4.

⁷ David R. Swartz, "'Mista Mid-Nights': Mennonites and Race in Mississippi," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78, no. 4 (2004). I am particularly grateful for Swartz's treatment of the varied and contested responses of Mennonites to the Civil Rights Movement. He successfully argues for a reconsideration of Leo Driedger's and Donald Kraybill's thesis that Mennonites in North America became increasingly engaged in activist pursuits and left behind a more quietist withdrawal in the course of the twentieth century. While I agree with Swartz that Driedger, Kraybill, and to a degree Perry Bush focus on church leadership at the expense of highly contested and often turbulent congregational-level engagement with race relations questions, the story I tell in this chapter demonstrates that an individual like Vincent Harding had far reaching influence among various Mennonite communities and at multiple levels of church life. In short, Harding was influential in circles far wider than just among the church intelligentsia and

they miss how white leaders responded to civil rights leaders such as Harding with remarkably consistent terms of engagement. Harding met with many church functionaries during his Mennonite sojourn, but he also engaged with local pastors, college students, voluntary service workers, and lay congregational members from across the country. Those diverse groups responded to Harding with a similar set of objections, questions, and unsettled emotion. Discrete Mennonite groups may have each engaged in particular ways with the Civil Rights Movement, but their struggle to arrive at a response looked very similar in Goshen, Indiana; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Gulfport, Mississippi.

Such consistent response repositions Mennonite historiography of the civil rights period. Most notably, Perry Bush and Paul Toews acknowledge Harding's charisma but fail to ask why Mennonites centered on Harding in an era when several charismatic African-American men had risen to prominence.⁸ Charismatic African Americans in the Mennonite church at the

bureaucracy. His prolific writing, multiple meetings, and connection with even the most conservative Mennonite communities in Mississippi and elsewhere suggest that all groups, from the grassroots to the executive level, had to negotiate or respond to the critique raised by Harding.

⁸ Note in particular Toews' description of Harding's 1967 Mennonite World Conference speech as "riveting." See: Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, 4 vols., vol. 4, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996), 259-61. For evidence of other African-American males with charismatic presence, see: Hubert L. Brown, "The Larks: Mission Workers," in *1991 Mennonite Yearbook and Directory* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1991); Vincent Harding et al., "Church and Race in 6 Cities," *The Mennonite*, February 12 1963; and "Record of the Meeting of Church Leaders for a Discussion on Racial and Civil Rights Problems to Discover Which Course Should Be Followed by the Mennonite Church in This Time of Social Revolution," Saturday, September 14, 1963 (1963), AMC-MCC Peace Section, Conjoint and Related Minutes, Box I, File #1 entitled: "Reports, 1952-68." Mennonite historian Perry Bush also notes the pre-eminent role that Harding played and writes of him: "Indeed, the leadership had begun to digest the not entirely comfortable knowledge that having inaugurated a prophet in their midst, they could not always contain the direction of his fire. For Harding also functioned in an equally energetic capacity in calling the church to activity in the racial struggle and in puncturing inflated Mennonite estimations of their own moral purity." See: Perry Bush, *Two*

time included Bishop James Lark, James Harris, Ed Riddick, and others. Lark and Harrison both led revivals and spoke at church meetings and, especially in the case of Lark, asked provocative questions of the church. Yet even the highly charismatic and widely respected Bishop Lark never reached the same level of national and international prominence as did Harding. Although Lark also moved between the church and the world, his was an evangelical mission lodged within the church. Harding, however, maintained equal footing in both church and movement. Whereas Lark worked from a church base to bring converts off the streets and into pews, Harding stood abreast both church and movement to get church members off pews and into the streets. This chapter suggests that Harding achieved greater attention not because he was more charismatic than Lark, but because he was more evenly divided between two worlds. Likewise, other treatments of Mennonite engagement with the Civil Rights Movement have either ignored Harding's wide-reaching impact entirely or explained Harding's intervention in terms of the growing influence of Black Power.⁹ During Harding's most influential years,

Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 215. Note that Bush describes Harding in terms of his charismatic capacity expressed in prophetic pronouncement. Interestingly, Bush introduces the idea of moral purity at the end of his analysis but misses how white Mennonites found Harding's anomalous position as both civil rights activist and Mennonite pastor intriguing and threatening. While I reposition Harding in this chapter, Bush's work stands in its own right as an excellent summary of the wide-ranging impact Harding had on white Mennonite orientation to the Civil Rights Movement.

⁹ Writing as a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in 1970, J. Denny Weaver offered a groundbreaking history of "The Mennonite Church and the American Negro" that positioned 1963 in a period of accepting past avoidance of race relations issues and increasing readiness to engage in action. Interestingly, he made no direct mention of Vincent Harding. See: John Denny Weaver, "The Mennonite Church and the American Negro" (paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1970), AMC - I-3-3.5 Box 11 John Horsch Mennonites History Essay Contest, Denny Weaver: The Mennonite Church and the American Negro. Jan Bender Shetler wrote a brilliant and exhaustive paper on Guy Hershberger and Vincent Harding as an undergraduate at Goshen College in 1977. Although I focus on Harding's earlier years in the church for an explanation of his readiness to leave the church well before the advent of black

however, he moved in circles far more influenced by King than by SNCC's Stokely Carmichael. In 1963, for example, John Lewis had just been elected SNCC's chairperson and actively promoted a Christian non-violent agenda.¹⁰ Carmichael's and Willie Rick's call for black power would not enter the national scene until mid-1966.¹¹ Furthermore, a regional study of Camp Landon in Gulfport, Mississippi, by David Haury puts far more emphasis on visits by white church administrators in 1963 than on a visit by the Hardings even though, as will be shown, local staff referred to the latter visit more frequently and with deeper appreciation.¹² The story of this Mennonite convert who received no Fresh Air vacations explains how Harding challenged the church on its own terms even while gaining the trust of civil rights leaders. Setting a new direction in Anabaptist history, this chapter thus explains why Harding's border-straddling position as an African-American Mennonite allowed him to rise from a field of charismatic African-American male leaders to critique the church without relying on Black Power rhetoric.

Alongside Harding's story, another tale remains largely untold in this chapter. For the first number of years of their Mennonite sojourn, Vincent's and Rosemarie's names often appeared together in print. From early 1963 forward, however, Rosemarie's presence in official

power, Shetler's overarching examination of the failure of Harding to act as a conscience to the Black Power Movement and of Hershberger's failure to draw the church into the Civil Rights Movement bears significant attention. See: Jan Bender Shetler, "A Prophetic Voice in Race Relations?: The Mennonite Church - Missions to Minority Ministries" (Paper, Goshen College, 1977), AMC - I-3-3.5 JHMHE Contest 1977-78 23/17, Shetler, Jan Bender, "A Prophetic Voice in Race Relations."

¹⁰ Payne, *I've Got the Light*, 376.

¹¹ Mark L. Chapman, *Christianity on Trial: African-American Religious Thought before and after Black Power*, ed. Dwight N. Hopkins, 13 vols., vol. 10, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner/Sojourner Truth Series* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), 73.

¹² David A. Haury, *The Quiet Demonstration: The Mennonite Mission in Gulfport, Mississippi* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1979), 90-91.

Mennonite church sources dissipated. The demands of caring for a newborn and the patriarchy and sexism of the Mennonite church turned attention away from Rosemarie and toward Vincent. Although she remained active in both Mennonite and civil rights groups for the period under study here, she received significantly less attention from church leaders than did her husband. Despite evident patriarchy and sexism among groups like SNCC, SCLC, and CORE, Rosemarie found more ways to exercise leadership among civil rights groups than in the Mennonite community.¹³ Thus, even though she had been a Mennonite far longer than had her husband and rarely critiqued the church in as direct a manner, she became more identified with civil rights groups and less with the Mennonite church. As she moved closer to civil rights circles and further away from official Mennonite positions, she became less of a borderer and received little official church attention. In this chapter, Rosemarie thus appears as an early but then absent partner in Vincent's story. In actuality, her voice remained strong and influential in non-Mennonite circles through the period of this study.¹⁴ Her diminishing presence in this chapter's narrative underscores the precarious position held by those who straddled disparate worlds.

Harding entered the broader Mennonite world through Woodlawn Mennonite Church, the congregation he and Rosemarie attended on the south side of Chicago. Rosemarie grew up

¹³ For discussion of patriarchy and sexism in the Civil Rights Movement, see: Dorothy I. Height, "'We Wanted the Voice of a Woman to Be Heard': Black Women and the 1963 March on Washington," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Rosemarie Harding did maintain personal connections with white Mennonites, but she held fewer official positions than did her husband.

attending Woodlawn, received her undergraduate degree in education from Goshen College, a Mennonite liberal arts college in northern Indiana, and returned to Chicago where she worked as a public school teacher. After two years in the army, Harding moved from Harlem to Chicago in pursuit of his masters degree.¹⁵ The two met in Mennonite social circles in the mid-1950s after Harding followed his growing disillusionment with state-sponsored violence to join Mennonites who were ready “to accept death rather than inflict suffering.”¹⁶ By 1958, Harding served as Woodlawn’s associate pastor while he worked toward a doctoral degree in American history at the University of Chicago. During those years, Harding and lead pastor Delton Franz received attention from the General Conference Mennonites for their integrated pastorate. Never before had the General Conference denomination included an African-American leader.¹⁷

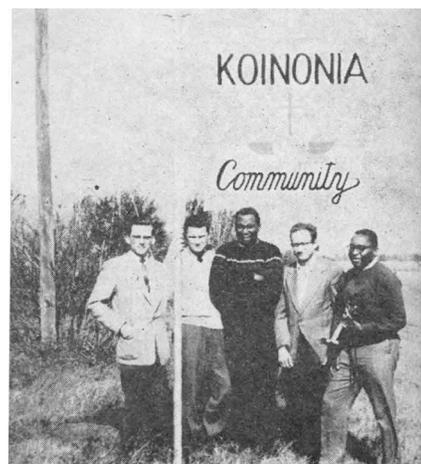


Figure 38: Delton Franz, Elmer Neufeld, Ed Riddick, Glen Boese, and Vincent Harding, 1959 (Delton Franz, "Island of Hope in a Sea of Despair." *The Mennonite*, February 24 1959, 119).

Not content to remain within the Chicago area, Franz and Harding extended their ministry to the South and the entire country. In the summer of 1958, Harding, fellow African-American Mennonite Ed Riddick, and three of their white co-congregants, Franz, Glen Boese,

¹⁵ Rose Marie Berger, "'I've Known Rivers': The Story of Freedom Movement Leaders Rosemarie Freney Harding and Vincent Harding," *Sojourners*, March 11 2004.

¹⁶ Vincent Harding, "Vincent Harding: A Black Historian," in *Peace-Makers: Christian Voices from the New Abolitionist Movement*, ed. Jim Wallis (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 87-88.

¹⁷ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 44.

and Elmer Neufeld, traveled through the South in order to gain new insight into the “Negro’s demands” and the “white man’s fear” (see Figure 38).¹⁸ The five men also sought to connect Mennonite nonresistance with the Civil Rights Movement’s nonviolence, a bold goal at a time when many Mennonites criticized the coercion implicit within civil rights demonstrations.¹⁹ At the time, many Mennonite church leaders felt that the doctrine of nonresistance called for absolute refusal to use any kind of force – including nonviolent public protest – to bring about social change. The Woodlawn contingent nonetheless called for new and vocal action. Their subsequent report touched off an “age of tours” running from the late fifties through the early sixties in which Mennonites from the North sought to understand and, in some cases, discipline their southern counterparts.²⁰ The Woodlawn contingent stood out due to their racially integrated team, the early start of their sojourn, and the pointed nature of their commentary – much of which bears the mark of Harding’s concise analysis.

Subsequent to the trip, in the first of many articles and addresses to follow, Harding publicly challenged Mennonites to bring cherished values of discipleship, purity of belief, and nonresistance to bear upon the “American tragedy” of racial oppression.²¹ With characteristic passion, Harding asked, “Can the voices which once sounded so loudly in opposition to warfare

¹⁸ Misc. Correspondence from and to Camp Landon to 1958, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 30, Correspondence - non-conf 1958; Delton Franz to Orlo Kaufman, September 4 1958, Chicago, Illinois, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 30, Correspondence - non-conf 1958.

¹⁹ Misc. Correspondence from and to Camp Landon.

²⁰ Weaver, "The Mennonite Church," 33.

²¹ Vincent Harding, "To My Fellow Christians: An Open Letter to Mennonites," *The Mennonite*, September 30 1958, 597.

between nations now be silent when men are destroying other men (and themselves) with hatred?"²² Harding enjoined his co-believers to demonstrate the same integrity of "words and deeds" they had shown when young, Mennonite men faced the possibility of mandatory military training.²³ He called white Mennonites to leave comfortable farms behind and align themselves with the struggles of the African-American community as an expression of "the way of the disciple."²⁴ For the first time before a national Mennonite audience, Harding employed core theological concepts to support civil rights goals.

Eight months later both Vincent and Rosemarie attended a seminar on race relations at which Harding firmly established his position between the church and the Civil Rights Movement. Held at Woodlawn from April 17 through 19, 1959, the conference drew leaders from the hosts' General Conference denomination but also from the Lancaster Conference, the Mennonite Brethren, and the (Old) Mennonite Church.²⁵ In a departure from other meetings on race relations held up to that point and, in many cases, subsequent to the date, over 28 percent of the approximately fifty participants were African Americans.²⁶ Speaking to this diverse,

²² Ibid., 598.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "Seminar on Race Relations: Representation as of March 18, 1959," March 18 (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1959), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 58.

²⁶ Documents reporting on the event list the names of forty-nine participants, eleven of them African-American. See: "Seminar on Race Relations Representation," April 17-19 (Woodlawn Mennonite Church, 1959), IX-12-3, PS, Folder "Race Relations: Christ, the Mennonite Churches & Race, Seminar." Three other African Americans, Charles Flowers, Gerald Hughes, and Warner Jackson, were quoted in a report by Guy F. Hershberger as also having been present. See: Guy F. Hershberger, "Report of the Chicago Race Relations Seminar," July 16 (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1959), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 58.

influential audience, Harding spoke as a Mennonite even as he pointed across the border to the need for activism. In a plenary address he questioned how Mennonites could profess nonconformity while “slavishly and silently” acquiescing to racial segregation.²⁷ From his perspective, nonconformity should lead believers to oppose racially unjust laws and practices. Yet he pointed back toward the Mennonite church itself. Having noted how the “the cultural stereotype of Mennonitism” excluded those whose ancestors did not hail from “Germany or Switzerland or Holland or Russia,” he called his audience to bring African Americans “into the deep places” of Mennonite fellowship.²⁸ A perch the crest between separation and engagement, Harding directed Mennonites to address problems within and without the church.

That precarious perch grew increasingly unsteady, however, as Harding moved further into both Mennonite and civil rights leadership circles. The Hardings celebrated their marriage at Woodlawn in 1960 and, within a year, accepted an invitation to start a service unit in Atlanta under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee’s Peace Section, the peace advocacy arm of the Mennonite family of churches. Rosemarie left a teaching job in the Chicago Public School system and Vincent left his dissertation project at the University of Chicago to direct the program known as Mennonite House, which Vincent later described as “a combination residence for an interracial team of local movement participants and social service volunteers, a house of refuge for field workers from the various movement organizations, an ecumenical community,

²⁷ Vincent Harding, "The Task of the Mennonite Church in Establishing Racial Unity," in *Archives of the Mennonite Church* (Goshen, Ind.: 1959), 29, Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

and a base of operations for our own ministry of reconciliation.”²⁹ The Hardings located Mennonite House at 540 Houston Street, only a block away from Martin and Coretta Scott King’s home. Vincent had met Dr. King during his trip to the South three years previously and they soon developed a close relationship.

An institutional program intended to draw the church’s attention to the Civil Rights Movement while remaining separate from it nonetheless drew the Hardings ever closer to civil rights leaders. By 1963 the Hardings had contributed to some of the most intense work of the Civil Rights Movement. Soon after their arrival in Atlanta, King invited the Hardings to join SCLC’s protest work in Albany, Georgia, to “help keep this a Christian movement.”³⁰ From December 1961 well into 1962, the Hardings repeatedly traveled to Albany to hold discussions with white and African-American community leaders about “the way of reconciling love.”³¹ During one of their Albany sojourns in 1962, Vincent spent three days in jail for praying in public.³² King and Albany sheriff Laurie Pritchett then urged Harding to accept release so that he could help calm anger roused in the local African-American community after police officers beat a prominent black lawyer.³³ Although the Albany protests saw little success, the Hardings’ efforts gained the trust of Civil Rights Movement leaders. Through the remainder of 1962 the

²⁹ Harding, "Biography, Democracy and Spirit: An Interview with Vincent Harding," 689; Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties*, 213; Harding, "Vincent Harding: A Black Historian," 89.

³⁰ Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, "An Experiment in Peace," *The Mennonite*, January 22 1963, 53.

³¹ Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, "Pilgrimage to Albany," *The Mennonite*, January 22 1963, 50.

³² Vincent Harding, "The Christian and the Race Question," August 6 (Mennonite World Conference, 1962), AMC - IX-7 -12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

³³ Harding and Harding, "Pilgrimage to Albany," 52.

Hardings regularly hosted civil rights leaders at Mennonite House and attended meetings to help craft movement strategy.

The Hardings had not, however, left the Mennonite church. Concurrent with their civil rights activity, both the Hardings worked within their sponsoring faith community. At the very beginning of 1963, they noted their primary identity as Christian members of the peace church and described their work among Mennonites as “meaningful, frustrating, and rewarding.”³⁴ Among the most meaningful of their activities was the opportunity to act as “sympathetic confessors” to white church leaders. In addition to speaking and writing in all of the major denominational publications, both the Hardings listened to the “untold inner agonies” of white church leaders, tried to “understand them,” and called them to costly response.³⁵ Such an interpersonal approach appealed to Mennonites committed to maintaining right relationship.

Publicity about their relationship-centered work led to writing and speaking opportunities that challenged Mennonites in new ways. For example, Harding wrote an article published on February 5, 1963, in which he challenged his readers to let go of their “Swiss-German Mennonite” identity that placed pride of ethnic and racial group before Christian unity. Unlike other white and African-American authors featured in the issue, Harding also pressed the church to move beyond interpersonal friendship to “church fellowship, neighborhood life, school comradery [sic], and job relationships.” Yet even though he called the church to “recast” its thinking, Harding wrote as an insider. In the course of his eight-paragraph article, he used plural pronouns twenty times. Harding referred to “our problem,” “our captivity,” “our life in one

³⁴ Harding and Harding, "An Experiment in Peace," 52, 53.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

body,” “our thinking.”³⁶ Concurrent with such strong claims of membership in the Mennonite family, white church pressman Daniel Hertzler lauded Harding for his and Rosemarie’s courageous action in Atlanta.³⁷ Other editors had heaped praise on the Hardings in the previous year as well (see Figure 39).³⁸ Although his claims of Mennonite identity would dissipate as the year progressed, Harding soon proved so influential that any Mennonite leader who hoped to speak about the racial tumult of 1963 had to address issues Harding raised.

At least one white Mennonite leader found Harding’s growing influence objectionable.

Following up a visit that the Hardings made to

Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Virginia, several months previously, the Virginia Conference Mission Board president Mahlon Blosser wrote to Mennonite Home Missions secretary Nelson Kaufman on March 4, 1963. Blosser strenuously objected to a report in which Harding proposed that the Virginia Conference host a meeting on race relations. Blosser, who otherwise supported Broad Street Mennonite Church and other interracial initiatives, did not take kindly to Harding’s suggestion. Blosser queried Kaufman, “Can one person go into a mennonite [sic] community of about 2000 members, and have one meeting with less than 200 present, then



Figure 39: Vincent and Rosemarie Harding, 1962 (Victor Stoltzfus, "A Talk with Vincent Harding." *Christian Living*, October 1962, 10-11, 37-38, 40).

³⁶ C. Norman Kraus et al., "Personal Responsibility in Improving Race Relations," *Gospel Herald*, February 5 1963.

³⁷ Daniel Hertzler, "Brotherhood at a Distance?" *Christian Living*, February 1963, 2.

³⁸ Victor Stoltzfus, "A Talk with Vincent Harding," *Ibid.*, October 1962; "Mennonite Faith Called 'Total Love'," *Gospel Herald*, August 14 1962.

have a meeting with the student body at E.M.C. and then write an accurate evaluation of the race situation in the community?" He answered his own question by noting that "Brother Harding" had not given them sufficient credit for progress made in the Conference. Blosser concluded by declaring that such a race relations gathering would prove harmful.³⁹ Harding's suggestion that the Virginia Conference lacked integrity evoked a particularly strong response in a group that prided itself on racial egalitarianism.

Other white Mennonite leaders found Harding's words challenging but remained more open to the activist message that he brought. For example, as Bishop Blosser penned his letter, the Hardings and their infant daughter Rachel spent time with the staff and administrators of Camp Landon in Gulfport, Mississippi. The Hardings had traveled to Mississippi at the request of church executives in Newton, Kansas, to review and assess Camp Landon's more than twenty-year-old program. As noted in the previous chapter, Camp Landon began as a site for Mennonite young men to serve out their alternative service commitments during World War II.⁴⁰ The young men's work constructing sanitary privies built a strong foundation of respect in the local community. Church administrators then transformed that respect into a long-term ministry to African Americans in the form of public school religious education, recreational leadership, and

³⁹ Mahlon L. Blosser to Nelson E. Kauffman, March 4 1963, Harrisonburg, Va. Interestingly, as will be mentioned below, thirteen months later, the Virginia Conference proudly promoted a "Conference on the Christian and Race." Only white Mennonite men spoke in the conference sessions. See: "Conference on the Christian and Race at Chicago Avenue Mennonite Church," March 31 (Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1964), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "Broad Street 1936-1979 Richard & Virginia Weaver."

⁴⁰ Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, 1.

youth bible education (see Figures 40 and 41).⁴¹ By 1963, the voluntary service workers at the camp also administered Fresh Air rural visitation programs, staffed a weekly Sunday school preparation radio broadcast, ran a lending library, and served on a variety of local ministerial groups.

From all reports, long-term white staff members Edna and Orlo Kaufman and Harold and Rosella Regier nervously awaited the Hardings' visit. Orlo Kaufman had heard Harding speak at the 1959 conference in Chicago and knew firsthand of his ability to challenge the status quo. In response to a query



Figure 40: Unnamed Camp Landon worker and Gulfport, Mississippi, children, 1962 (Fred Unruh, (1962). Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas, Photo collection, Folder: Mississippi-Gulfport).

about the Hardings coming to work at Camp Landon in 1960, Kaufman raised significant objections. Kaufman indicated he would consider placing the Hardings in an assignment only if they agreed to do “personal work,” by which Kaufman meant anything not related to civil rights activism. Among other reasons for his objections, Kaufman stated, “I’m not sure that Vincent fully understands [the southern reality], and being a Northerner could get into even more serious difficulty than a Southerner.”⁴² In light of these prior exchanges, Edna Kaufman requested prayer

⁴¹ Orlo Kaufman, "The Gulfport Story: Accent on Challenge," February (Camp Landon, 1966), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 214, Reports, misc.

⁴² Orlo Kaufman to Leo Dreidger, January 13 1960, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 4, Correspondence - General Conf. 1960.

from the readership of their monthly newsletter *The Gulfbreeze* that the Hardings' visit would be "beneficial for all of us."⁴³

Despite the collective nervousness, Camp Landon staff met at length with the Hardings. Although Orlo Kaufman scheduled Vincent to speak seven times in the course of four full days in addition to attending numerous meetings and visiting with local leaders, the Hardings spent the majority of their time with Camp Landon unit members.⁴⁴ For three extended sessions, the Hardings met



Figure 41: Gulfport, Mississippi, Camp Landon unit, 1960 (Don Yoder, Marciel Yoder, Martha Bergen, Bonnie Kaufman, Edna Kaufman, (front) Robert Kaufman, (back) Orlo Kaufman, (front) Eugene Kaufman, Ruth Friesen, Rudy Friesen) (Andrew Shelly, "Gulfport Unit - April 1960" (1960), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas, Photo collection, Folder: Mississippi - Gulfport).

with staff to discuss the camp program. According to Kaufman, the exchanges with Vincent made a profound impression. He later wrote that Vincent "never leaves one the same."⁴⁵ No

⁴³ Edna Kaufman, "When You Pray," *The Gulfbreeze*, January-February 1963, 1.

⁴⁴ Orlo Kaufman to Vincent Harding, February 20 1963, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 7, Correspondence - General Conf. 1963; Orlo Kaufman, "Camp Landon General Report #25 First Quarter, 1963," (Camp Landon, 1963), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 215, Reports, quarterly.

⁴⁵ Orlo Kaufman to Andrew Shelly, April 11 1963, Gulfport, MS, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 7, Correspondence - General Conf. 1963.

wonder then that Kaufman wrote to the national offices on April 30 expressing concern that the Hardings' much anticipated report had not yet arrived.⁴⁶

The report gave Camp Landoners much to consider. Even before reading the report, Orlo Kaufman wrote a brief article in which he frankly described Harding's challenge to the staff to relate to white segregated churches, get more involved in civil rights actions, and reconsider where staff lived and worshipped.⁴⁷ Harding's written report touched on each of these issues, but with a greater intensity than indicated by Kaufman's article. Harding recognized that Camp Landon staffers had built strong relationships with and mentored African-American children and young adults, but lamented the absence of a Mennonite church that would welcome them. The two Mennonite congregations in the area, Gulfport Mennonite and Crossroads Mennonite, intentionally maintained racial segregation and, in the latter case, did so vociferously despite the objections of Camp Landon staff members. Harding wrote, "[T]he Camp Landon group ... [needs] to resolve its schizophrenia of week day work with Negroes and Sunday worship where Negroes cannot go."⁴⁸ Harding reiterated his concern that the staff lived in an isolated compound even as they sought to relate to the African-American community. As he had in previous speeches and articles, Harding called the Camp Landon staff to pay attention to racial dynamics within their own organization.

⁴⁶ Orlo Kaufman to Verney Unruh, April 30 1963, Gulfport, Miss., Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 224, Retreats 1963.

⁴⁷ Orlo Kaufman, "Issues Faced Squarely," *The Gulfbreeze*, March-April 1963, 5.

⁴⁸ Vincent Harding and Rosemarie Harding, "Visit to Camp Landon, March 1 to March 6, 1963," April 18 (Mennonite Central Committee, 1963), 4, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 7, Correspondence - General Conf. 1963.

Yet he likewise called for greater involvement with civil rights groups outside church institutions. Prior to the Hardings' visit, Edna and Orlo Kaufman and Harold and Rosella Regier kept their distance from civil rights organizations such as SNCC and CORE. Although these four white church workers had attended an early February meeting sponsored by the Council on Human Rights, they met only with groups promoting gradualism. In his report about the February meeting and in subsequent correspondence, Orlo Kaufman consistently supported programs based on moderation, gradual advancement, and interpersonal relationships.⁴⁹ Following the Hardings' visit, however, Camp Landoners redirected some of their energies. On June 27, for example, Kaufman wrote a letter to the Gulfport mayor urging him to appoint a bi-racial committee as a proactive measure to avoid violence and agitation in the area.⁵⁰ In that same month, Harold Regier broadcast a Sunday school lesson on the radio in which he discussed the murder of Medgar Evers and Governor George Wallace's refusal to admit African-American students to the University of Alabama. Although Regier called for change in race relations rather than demonstrations, several white audience members nonetheless objected to Regier's commentary.⁵¹ Such public engagement represented a significant shift for Regier and Kaufman as they considered more proactive means of supporting civil rights initiatives.⁵²

⁴⁹ Orlo Kaufman, "Meeting at Tougaloo," *The Gulfbreeze*, January-February 1963; Orlo Kaufman to Herman Dueck, May 14 1963, Reedley, California, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 34, Correspondence - non-conf, Jan.-July 1963.

⁵⁰ Orlo Kaufman to Daniel Guice, June 27 1963, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 34, Correspondence - non-conf, Jan.-July 1963.

⁵¹ Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, 65.

⁵² Archival documents record little of Rosella Regier's and Edna Kaufman's responses to the Hardings' visit. Oral histories suggest, however, that even though they did not hold official

Effects of the Hardings' visit lasted well into the year and beyond. During visits subsequent to the Hardings' stay, white church administrators Vern Preheim and Peter Ediger wrote their reports largely in response to Harding's agenda.⁵³ A feature article on Camp Landon published in *The Mennonite* in November focused on the internal issues of church integration and staff relocation and the external challenges of the racial revolution, the primary issues the Hardings had raised during their visit.⁵⁴ Camp staff also responded to the Hardings' challenges. The same themes highlighted in the November feature article proved central to the camp's ongoing activities, discussions, and program evaluation. Civil rights activities, for example, grew in importance for the Camp Landon staffers. In December of 1963, Orlo and Harold attended an NAACP banquet where a group of white protestors threw rocks and debris at the banquet hall. The two men along with all the guests at the integrated gathering required police protection as they departed.⁵⁵ Such cautious but consistent initiative continued in subsequent months and, by March of 1964, Camp Landon would come under investigation by county and state officials

church positions at the time, they nonetheless responded proactively to the Hardings' visit by challenging local segregation customs through personal actions. For example, Regier and two African-American friends tried to prompt the local Gulfport, Mississippi, bookstore to stock *Black Like Me* by each asking for the book within the space of one hour. See: Harold Regier and Rosella Wiens Regier, interview with author, Newton, Kans./Evanston, Ill., July 12, 2005.

⁵³ Peter J. Ediger, "Report of Visit to Gulfport, Mississippi," October 5-13 (General Conference Mennonite Church, 1963), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 214, Reports, misc; Vern Preheim, "Gulfport Visit Report," March 7 (General Conference Mennonite Church, 1963), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 214, Reports, misc.

⁵⁴ Esther Groves, "Gulfport at the Crossroads," *The Mennonite*, November 19 1963.

⁵⁵ Orlo Kaufman, "NAACP Meeting Protested," *The Gulfbreeze*, November-December 1963.

for its interracial activities.⁵⁶ Five years later, staff continued to reference Harding and seek his council.⁵⁷ Through dually focused challenges to address racial matters both inside and outside the church, the Hardings invited Camp Landon staff to join them in straddling the Mennonite church and the Movement.

The Hardings paired such a Mennonite-specific encounter with a second venture deep into civil rights activism. Immediately following their visit to Camp Landon, the Hardings and Rachel traveled to the Mississippi delta region to visit with and interview both white and African-American stakeholders in the community. Working from the home of African-American activist Amzie Moore in Cleveland, the Hardings met with the owner of a large plantation, the administrator of an emergency relief committee, a local white businessman, newspaper reporters, an Episcopalian minister, an African-American businessman, and members of a Franciscan monastery. Even more notable than the breadth of their contacts or their perspicacious recommendations for economic relief and interracial communication was the manner of their initial contact with those they sought to interview. The Hardings refrained from identifying themselves as African Americans when first requesting meetings over the phone. They explained, “[W]e decided to move about and converse with individuals just as if Mississippi

⁵⁶ Harold Regier to Board of Christian Service, March 24 1964, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 8, Correspondence - General Conf. 1964.

⁵⁷ Harold R. Regier to Stanley Bohn, May 30 1968, Gulfport, Mississippi, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 25, Correspondence - General Conf. , CHM 1968-1971.

were well - or at least to do this as much as humanly possible.”⁵⁸ In subsequent interactions, the Hardings approached their Mennonite dialogue partners in a similar fashion.

In Cleveland and throughout the South, the Hardings brought values gained from the Mennonite church to their civil rights engagement. During a similar trip to the Mississippi delta that same year, the Hardings planned on meeting Titus Bender, a white Mennonite pastor in the region who was seeking to becoming more involved in civil rights activity. Given the racially tense situation in Meridian, Bender had informed the Hardings not to ask locals where he lived. Such a query could draw unnecessary and potentially dangerous attention. Instead, they arranged to rendezvous at a local gas station with the understanding that, when he saw them arrive, Bender would simply start driving and the Hardings would follow. When the Hardings approached the gas station, however, Bender got out of his car in front of the older white men gathered at the station, came up to the Hardings’ car, and greeted Vincent with the holy kiss, a traditional Mennonite greeting of a kiss on each



Figure 42: Vincent, Rosemarie, and Rachel Harding, 1963 (photo back refers to Harding as “evangelist”) (1963, VA Mennonite archives, uncatalogued box named “Broad Street 1936-1979 Richard & Virginia Weaver”).

cheek. Harding later recalled Bender’s greeting as a bold “kind of risk-taking” that encouraged him to continue his work.⁵⁹ Even though he increasingly challenged Mennonites, Harding learned from them as well. He also valued genuine displays of humility.

⁵⁸ Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, “Mississippi Delta Trip March 6-11 (Confidential),” April 25 (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1963), 10, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 18.

Such intense engagement with civil rights struggles influenced how Harding spoke when he returned to the Mennonite community. Traveling as he had been in March with Rosemarie and Rachel, Harding went in April to Broad Street Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, billed as an evangelist (see Figure 42).⁶⁰ He did not, however, act like one.

Speaking at the congregation born from the efforts of Rowena Lark and Fannie Swartzentruber, Harding spoke each evening for the first seven days of April on the topic “The Challenge of the Cross” (see Figure 43).⁶¹ Rather than direct his comments toward personal evangelism and end his sessions with altar calls, Harding concluded each

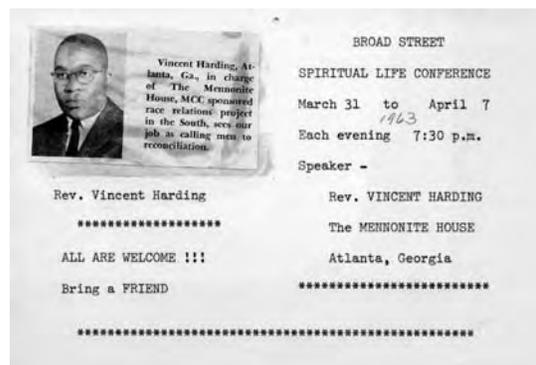


Figure 43: Spiritual Life Conference flier for Rev. Vincent Harding, 1963 ("Hear Vincent Harding ..." (Harrisonburg, Va.: Broad Street Mennonite Church, 1963), promotional. VA Mennonite archives, uncatalogued box "Broad Street 1936-1979 Richard & Virginia Weaver").

evening's service with a time of open discussion, an unusual practice for an event billed as a "spiritual life conference."⁶² More typically, visiting evangelists closed such meetings with pleas for confession of salvation. Once again Harding straddled two worlds by creating a new form of witness.

⁵⁹ Harding, "Biography, Democracy and Spirit: An Interview with Vincent Harding."

⁶⁰ [Photo of Vincent and Rosemarie Harding During Their 1963 Visit to Broad Street] (1963) VA Mennonite archives, uncatalogued box named "Broad Street 1936-1979 Richard & Virginia Weaver."

⁶¹ "Night Services at Broad St. Church," 1963.

⁶² Hear Vincent Harding ... (Harrisonburg, Va.: Broad Street Mennonite Church, 1963) VA Mennonite archives, uncatalogued box "Broad Street 1936-1979 Richard & Virginia Weaver."

Harrisonburg Mennonites continued to discuss Harding's challenges in his absence. The principal outcome of Harding's April visit was the meeting on race relations that Harding had called for, that Blosser had denied was necessary, and that took place anyhow. On March 31, 1964, almost exactly a year after Harding brought his particular mix of Mennonite history and racial critique to Broad Street, ministers and lay members from the Virginia Conference gathered at Chicago Avenue Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg to discuss the "Christian and Race."⁶³ Most significantly, only white men spoke at the conference despite the fact that African-American Broad Street member Billy Curry had already been ordained deacon, and that African-American pastor Leslie Francisco served at the Virginia Conference congregation in Newport News. Rather than inviting either of these charismatic and well-practiced African-American men to speak – the Virginia Conference at that time did not consider women for major public speaking engagements – the Conference leaders brought in Paul G. Landis, a white bishop and conference secretary from the Lancaster Conference, to speak on race relations. Ironically, Landis was the only person in the entire day's proceedings to mention Harding. In his closing remarks, Landis referred to Harding as one of the people who had helped him recognize his own prejudices.⁶⁴ Rather than acknowledge the impetus for the meeting in Harding's visit, the local speakers referred instead to civil rights leaders outside the Mennonite church. The Virginia leaders' refusal to invite or cite Harding suggests a fear that this borderer would yet further disrupt their internally focused and non-confrontational approach to racial integration.

⁶³ "Race Conference Program."

⁶⁴ Truman Brunk et al., "Conference on the Christian and Race," March 31 (Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1964).

Rather than wait for the Virginia Conference to decide to discuss race relations, the Hardings continue to deepen their civil rights work. With responsibilities complete in Harrisonburg, the Hardings returned to Atlanta on April 7 to attend a baptismal service led by King at Ebenezer Baptist, King's home congregation. Upon completion of the service, King paged Rosemarie over the church's public address system and requested that she and Vincent travel immediately to Birmingham to act as intermediaries between the civil rights demonstrators and white community leaders. In light of the demanding and ultimately disappointing experience with the Albany campaign, King's appeal got their attention. After spending several days considering the request, the Hardings and their daughter Rachel drove the 165 miles to Birmingham on April 10. The Hardings then played a critical mediating role with white "clergymen, lawyers, businessmen, political leaders." Due to the sensitive nature of the contacts, they often attended secret meetings and private negotiations.⁶⁵ Harding also lent his pen to movement efforts during the Birmingham conflict. At one point he wrote a letter for African-American demonstrators to distribute when they entered white segregated churches on Easter morning.⁶⁶ Although not involved in the actual demonstrations, the Hardings continued to develop contacts between the white leaders and civil rights demonstrators until well past Easter.

The intense and draining civil rights negotiations led to new speaking engagements in the Mennonite church and beyond. Upon return to Atlanta on April 20, Harding left for a speaking engagement in Connecticut followed by travel to additional meetings in Nashville, Tennessee,

⁶⁵ Vincent Harding, "Birmingham, Alabama," ed. Peace Section Executive Committee (Atlanta, Ga.: Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1963), LMHS - Clarence E. Lutz, MCC Peace Section, 1963-1969.

⁶⁶ Vincent Harding to white church members 1963, Birmingham, Ala., LMHS - Box: Clarence E. Lutz, MCC Peace Section, 1963-1969; Folder: M.C.C. Peace Section Reports.

and Akron, Pennsylvania, headquarters of the Mennonite Central Committee. He returned to Atlanta on April 25 to claim the MCC car from police impoundment. By order of his doctor, he went on bed rest from April 28 through May 5. The second day back on his feet, Harding traveled to Birmingham with Mennonite minister and peace activist Paul Peachey, a former pastor of Broad Street Mennonite Church in Virginia who was then working with Church Peace Mission, an organization of Protestant peace groups. Peachey had come to Atlanta to meet with Harding, King, and other movement leaders, but upon his arrival received the message that he should go to Birmingham and meet with committee members on an individual basis there.⁶⁷ Harding traveled with Peachey in order to participate in the ad hoc peace meeting but quickly entered into negotiations between demonstrators and city officials, at one point going out into the streets to “help stop the battle between the fire hoses and the Negro crowd.”⁶⁸ Through May 10 Harding stayed in the city to negotiate further between the two sides. Before he returned home, he drafted the press release King would read upon completion of the negotiations.⁶⁹ When bombs exploded the night of May 11 at the home of King’s brother Reverend A. D. King and the Gaston Motel where King had been staying, Harding got back on the phone with civil rights leaders and white officials urging them to keep their agreement. Cycling between activism in the streets and speeches in churches, Harding stayed connected to Mennonites and Movement leaders.

⁶⁷ Paul Peachey and Ellen Peachey, interview with author, Harrisonburg, Va., April 1, 2005.

⁶⁸ Harding, "Birmingham, Alabama," 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid. The final agreement provided for desegregation of local businesses, hiring of African Americans in sales and clerical positions, releasing prisoners on reduced bail, and maintaining communication between African-American and white leaders. See: Lee E. Bains, Jr., "Birmingham, 1963: Confrontation over Civil Rights," in *Birmingham, Alabama, 1956-1963: The Black Struggle for Civil Rights*, ed. David J. Garrow, *Martin Luther King, Jr. And the Civil Rights Movement* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub., 1989), 182.

Harding thus played a role in events in Birmingham that affected the nation at large. As reporters broadcast images of fire hoses, police dogs, and batons battering civil rights marchers, democratic rhetoric lost integrity. In addition to losing ideological ground, President Kennedy expressed outrage at the brutality and grew concerned over the possibility of increasing levels of violence.⁷⁰ In May on a nationally televised broadcast, Kennedy appealed to the populace's moral sensibility and asked them to accept changes to the racial order.⁷¹ Harding's efforts had played a significant role in helping to create space for such a shift in national perception.

Mennonites across the church likewise paid new attention to racial oppression within their own community as the Birmingham civil rights struggle continued. At a rate and intensity not previously witnessed, incidents of overt racial discrimination came to the fore. For example, Mae Schrag, another white Camp Landon staffer, reported on conversations she had with five African-American girls who had attended Mennonite colleges. She informed her readers in the May-June edition of *The Gulfbreeze* that white Mennonites had used offensive racial epithets in front of the girls, denied the young women associate membership status in local congregations, and housed the girls in separate rooms by race.⁷² News of these incidents spread far beyond the Gulfport community and later entered the national Mennonite press.⁷³ Mennonite claims of racial

⁷⁰ James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, vol. 10, *The Oxford History of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 481.

⁷¹ James Findlay, "Religion and Politics in the Sixties: The Churches and the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (1990): 71.

⁷² Mae Schrag, "Mennonite Prejudice," *The Gulfbreeze*, May-June 1963, 5.

⁷³ Gary Stenson and Elsie Stenson to Harold Regier, April 3 1963, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11

egalitarianism weakened in the face of such reports and brought renewed attention to Harding's ever more high-profile ministry.

National civil rights activism thus turned Mennonite church officials ever more toward the Hardings. Like civil rights leaders at the national level, Mennonite leaders noted the increasing intensity of racial struggle that was marked on June 23 by the murder of civil rights activist Medgar Evers.⁷⁴ Five days later, Ed Metzler, executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee's Peace Section and the Hardings' supervisor, contacted every Mennonite peace committee in the country to inform them of the Hardings' work in Atlanta and encourage civil rights lobbying. Metzler made his bold appeal for social action, a significant departure from traditional Mennonite nonresistant doctrine, based largely on the Hardings' work. Metzler first established credibility by describing how the couple served "as a reconciling bridge between the white and Negro communities." Once having done so, he then advocated for "witness to government on civil rights legislation."⁷⁵ Metzler knew his audience. He had to demonstrate integrity of word and deed before suggesting a new departure. The Hardings provided just such a demonstration.

Other religious communities who made similar calls to action faced an intense backlash absent from Mennonite response. For instance, a group like the Catholic Family Movement, an activist movement led by white Catholic clergy and lay parishioners, called upon their members

Gulfport VS Unit, Box 2, Folder 34, Correspondence - non-conf, Jan.-July 1963; Groves, "Gulfport at the Crossroads," 699.

⁷⁴ Height, " 'We Wanted the Voice of a Woman to Be Heard': Black Women and the 1963 March on Washington," 84.

⁷⁵ Edgar Metzler to Peace Section Members, June 28 1963, Akron, Pa., AMC - CESR papers, I-3-7, Box 7, File #7, entitled "1963, J-M."

to respond to civil rights unrest by joining marches and engaging in local organizing. While many parishioners did so, CFM leaders dealt with a sharp and sustained backlash in response to their proposal.⁷⁶ Likewise, an ecumenical conference on civil rights hosted by President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy on June 17 turned divisive when President Kennedy announced that the National Council of Churches would carry on the agenda. The Assemblies of God and other groups who refused to recognize the authority of the NCC walked out of the meeting in protest.⁷⁷ Despite similar reticence regarding the NCC, Mennonite church members did not protest the news that Harding had represented the Mennonite community at Kennedy's conclave.⁷⁸ Due to the integrity of their work, the Hardings gave Metzler a measure of political cover and ideological support lacking in the CFM and NCC initiatives.

Yet Metzler's attempt to move politically withdrawn Mennonites into civil rights action followed Harding's lead. Harding had long been in step with the example set by other religious communities as they moved toward a greater level of social activism. Significantly, Metzler followed Harding's ecumenical example by quoting the National Association of Evangelicals.⁷⁹ Leaders of the NAE as well as other Protestant denominational officials organized their constituencies around racial issues in 1963 and the following year through national conferences, commissions, and meetings at a level unparalleled within the white community through the

⁷⁶ Jeffrey M. Burns, *Disturbing the Peace: A History of the Christian Family Movement* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 127; Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 249.

⁷⁸ "Harding at White House," *The Mennonite*, July 9 1963.

⁷⁹ Metzler to Peace Section Members.

remainder of the decade.⁸⁰ Metzler's letter attempted to rally Mennonites in a similar way. Metzler thus moved in the direction in which Harding was already headed, toward greater involvement with and connection to the broader Christian community.

As the year progressed, Harding moved ever closer to costly civil rights activity. As the summer grew hotter, Harding continued to connect with and support an embattled civil rights community that had begun to take forceful and widespread action to new levels. The summer of 1963 saw 1,122 civil rights demonstrations throughout the country and, in the South, twenty thousand arrests.⁸¹ White southerners responded not only by incarcerating demonstrators, but also by beating them. Police officials and other segregationists directed the most violent of their attacks against women in the movement.⁸² For example, Mississippi state police arrested Fannie Lou Hamer and a group of her co-workers from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee when they were on their way home from a June voter registration workshop.⁸³ While holding her in jail, the police officers forced African-American inmates to beat Hamer with a blackjack. After her release, Hamer traveled to Atlanta where she stayed at Mennonite House so that she could recover from the brutal beatings while staff members of the Southern Christian Leadership

⁸⁰ Findlay, "Religion and Politics," 69, 71, 75, 90; "Churches Respond to Race," *The Mennonite*, August 6 1963.

⁸¹ Scott Sandage, "A Marble House Divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Memory, 1939-1963," *Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (1993): 158.

⁸² Payne, *I've Got the Light*, 269.

⁸³ Chana Kai Lee, "Anger, Memory, and Personal Power: Fannie Lou Hamer and Civil Rights Leadership," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 151; Nicholas Targ, "Human Rights Hero: Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977)," *Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities, American Bar Association Human Rights Magazine*, Spring 2005.

Conference interviewed her. During her stay, she spoke and laughed long with the Hardings.⁸⁴ Through such encounters, Vincent's commitment to the Civil Rights Movement grew stronger.

Harding's involvement with the Civil Rights Movement drew even more attention from Mennonite church leaders as the summer months progressed. As part of his extended tour of the South, Guy F. Hershberger, the white Mennonite professor from Goshen College who would come to call Harding "the expert," met with him in late July. Harding told Hershberger that African-American leaders believed God had abandoned the white church due to a collective interest in "affluence" rather than "influence."⁸⁵ For Mennonites in the South to act faithfully, Harding indicated, they would need to conduct interracial bible schools and summer camps and take vocal stands against segregation in the public schools.⁸⁶ In his subsequent report, Hershberger quoted Harding at length. Noted church leader and theologian C. Norman Kraus also spent three weeks in Atlanta from mid-July through early August. Harding put Kraus in touch with a broad range of civil rights activists and segregation supporters including Ralph Abernathy, Julian Bond, Clarence Jordan, and leaders of the White Citizens Council.⁸⁷ Thanks to Harding's extensive contacts, Norman enjoyed a level of access unusual for a white northerner.

⁸⁴ Berger, "I've Known Rivers!": The Story of Freedom Movement Leaders Rosemarie Freney Harding and Vincent Harding."

⁸⁵ Guy F. Hershberger, "Mennonites and the Current Race Issue: Observations, Reflections, and Recommendations Following a Visitation to Southern Mennonite Churches, July-August, 1963, with a Review of Historical Background," September 10 (Committee on Economic and Social Relations of the Mennonite Church, 1963), 11-12.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ C. Norman Kraus to July 16-August 4 1963, Atlanta, Georgia, AMC IX-12-3, Mennonite Central Committee, Data Files, Folder: Race Relations I.

Ironically, the more Harding turned his face toward civil rights activism, the more leaders from both the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite Church denominations regarded Harding as the church's primary spokesperson on race relations. By August of 1963, denominational officials increasingly called on Harding to attend their meetings and rouse response. Likewise, in early August, David Augsburg, the host of a nationally broadcast radio program known as the Mennonite Hour, interviewed Harding on the topic of race relations.⁸⁸ Several weeks later, the (Old) Mennonite Church passed a resolution on "reconciliation" at the church's biannual national assembly during which the Hardings had been lifted up as examples whose work should be "emulated and multiplied among us."⁸⁹ In correspondence with Guy Hershberger following the assembly, home missions secretary Nelson Kauffman proposed a meeting for African Americans "in addition to Vince Harding" to instruct white church leaders how to relate to civil rights groups.⁹⁰ Kauffman underlined Harding's prominence by referring to him repeatedly. Hershberger followed suit. When he sent out his southern trip report to more than thirty groups and individuals, Harding was the only African American to receive it.⁹¹

Harding's singular role was even more evident in the Mennonite printed press. On August 6, editors of both *The Mennonite* and *The Gospel Herald*, the weekly national publications of the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite Church denominations respectively, referred to Harding. On the General Conference side, Maynard Shelly quoted

⁸⁸ Ihk, "Mennonite Hour to Interview Harding," August 7 1963.

⁸⁹ "Mennonite General Conference Proceedings, August 20-23, 1963, Kalona, Iowa" (paper presented at the Thirty-third Mennonite General Conference, Kalona, Iowa, August 20-23 1963), 87, AMC-IX-7 -12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

⁹⁰ Nelson E. Kauffman to Guy F. Hershberger, August 26 1963, Elkhart, Ind.

⁹¹ Hershberger, "Mennonites and the Current Race."

Harding's bracing speech at the 1962 Mennonite World Conference that challenged his audience to engage in civil disobedience.⁹² *Gospel Herald* editor John M. Drescher admitted that his thinking about segregation had changed in part due to Harding's comments.⁹³ Drescher also printed an article by Harding challenging the church to be true to its calling of nonconformity to "prejudice and discrimination."⁹⁴ Following these dual references to Harding, both editors began to print articles that advocated congressional contact in support of civil rights legislation. The editors included legislative action appeals no less than five times through the end of the year, a startling departure from the church's past commitment to quietist withdrawal.⁹⁵ Harding's agenda again guided the church's response.

Harding ended the summer at the center of national civil rights activity. He joined a quarter of a million civil rights demonstrators at the August 28 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.⁹⁶ Unlike their antagonists, the interracial demonstrators did not resort to violence.⁹⁷ In subsequent weeks, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and other civil

⁹² Maynard Shelly, "Editorial," *The Mennonite*, August 6 1963.

⁹³ John M. Drescher, "Our Mission and Race," *Gospel Herald*, August 6 1963.

⁹⁴ Vincent Harding, "The Christian and the Race Question," *Ibid.*; "Reconciliation," August 23 (Mennonite General Conference, 1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 11.

⁹⁵ Edgar Metzler, "The Mennonite Churches and the Current Race Crisis," *Gospel Herald*, August 6 1963. "Schoolmen Aid Race Witness," *The Mennonite*, August 6 1963; Guy F. Hershberger, "Letter to the United States Congress on Civil Rights," *Gospel Herald*, August 13 1963; John D. Unruh, Jr. and Esko Loewen, "Is This Our Revolution," *The Mennonite*, September 10 1963; James Reston, "The First Significant Test of the Freedom March," *Gospel Herald*, October 8 1963.

⁹⁶ Vincent Harding, *Martin Luther King, the Inconvenient Hero* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), vii.

⁹⁷ John A. Salmond, *"My Mind Set on Freedom": A History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1968, The American Way* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 70.

rights groups built on the success of the national protest by conducting nonviolent voter registration drives in Mississippi and throughout the South.⁹⁸ The nonviolent discipline of the activists offered an implicit critique of Mennonites' quiet withdrawal. In the face of such critique, Mennonite officials who had previously given scant notice to civil rights activity began to pay attention.

Once again, Harding's shift toward greater activism drew Mennonite officials in his direction. Two weeks after the March on Washington Harding attended a hastily organized meeting on civil rights in Elkhart, Indiana. The meeting, originally proposed by Kauffman and supported by Hershberger, took place at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart on September 14. Billed as a response to the "time of Social Revolution," the meeting purported to "inquire of our colored brethren what in their mind should be the role of the Mennonite churches in the current racial revolution."⁹⁹ Twenty-five leaders gathered on that Saturday. All but two were men. According to later reports, Rosemarie was the only woman to have spoken.¹⁰⁰ At least seven of the twenty-five people gathered were African Americans. Another was African. Five of the "colored brethren," not including Harding, offered statements of concern to start the

⁹⁸ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 66.

⁹⁹ "Meeting of Church Leaders for a Discussion of the Course Which Should Be Followed in This Time of Social Revolution," September 14 (1963), 2, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 5, Folder 165.

¹⁰⁰ Although Rosemarie's name does not appear on the official meeting roster of the day, a later report quotes her observation about the need for reconciliation in the name of love such as that demonstrated by Clarence Jordan at Koinonia Farms. See: "Prairie Street 1963 Meeting"; C. J. Dyck, "Dialogue on Race," *The Mennonite*, October 29 1963, 685. A third report, in which the speakers' identities were replaced by alphabetized labels, attributes her comment anonymously to "Brother V." In interest of anonymity, the editors made Harding's gender invisible. See: C. J. Dyck, "Pronouncements - Then What?" *Gospel Herald*, October 22 1963.

meeting. Their statements encouraged dialogue, love, educational initiatives, interracial church fellowship, church-based evangelism, and interracial visitor and pulpit exchanges. No one advocated involvement in civil rights demonstrations.

Ever the borderer, Harding insisted on a more activist approach. Building on themes he had presented earlier in the year, Harding addressed the group with a new sense of urgency. Rather than pulpit exchanges or love, Harding focused on employment, housing, and equality, topics central to the March on Washington. He proclaimed, "It may be that God is ready to use revolution as a prelude to resurrection. We are defending the status quo. Most of our people will never be ready for the requirements of the hour, and we cannot longer wait for them."¹⁰¹ Harding's mention of "the requirements of the hour" appears prophetic in retrospect. The next day four girls died from a bomb thrown into a crowd of African-American youth at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Amid such horrific events, Harding seemed to be on the verge of leaving Mennonites behind if they could not join him in public demonstration. Yet he had not proclaimed his inclination to depart.

While he remained on the inside of the church, Harding offered a mixture of prophetic passion and ironic despair. His passion requires no further explication. The irony of his words does. Although his description of inactivity and disengagement matched Mennonite quietism in the main, white Mennonites in Elkhart had begun to act. Mennonites from northeast Indiana also wrote letters, traveled to Washington to lobby and monitor the civil rights bill, and distributed the church's official statement on race relations to President Kennedy and every member of Congress.¹⁰² Congressman John Bardemas later said that Elkhart Mennonites gave more support

¹⁰¹ "Prairie Street 1963 Meeting," 3.

¹⁰² Shetler, "A Prophetic Voice", 35.

to the then-pending civil rights bill than any other religious group.¹⁰³ Although northern Indiana Mennonites did not take to the streets, their proactive initiatives took them closer to such engagement than Harding realized. White Mennonites had previously lobbied only for conscientious objector status in the military. By September of 1963, at least some members of the church appeared ready to set aside concern for moral purity and enter the sullied world of politics. In the interstice between Mennonite quietism and civil rights activism, Northern Indiana Mennonites applied Harding's lessons about using church doctrine to support civil rights initiatives.

The group gathered on September 14 at Prairie Street did move closer to active engagement than perhaps even Harding had anticipated. Discussion in the afternoon finally settled on church constituent education and support for civil rights involvement. After discussing the recurrent topics of racial intermarriage and political engagement, the group went on record in support of limited but definitive involvement in marches and demonstrations. An anonymous quote from the day's proceedings stated, "Reconciliation means the removing of that which makes men enemies. Segregation does this. Therefore the disciple must be on the side of the oppressed, and this may have many ramifications, possibly even marching, sitting-in, and jail."¹⁰⁴ This succinct encapsulation of a position long-advocated by Harding summed up a new approach to the Civil Rights Movement. Although the position would gain scant headway in the church through the remainder of the decade, the statement of the position itself provided a basis for some white Mennonites to enter into civil rights activity. Yet even as the Prairie Street position moved the church closer to active protest, Harding moved further from the church. He

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ "Prairie Street 1963 Meeting," 5.

appeared ready to leave a community still reluctant to engage with a justice struggle that had come to define him.

Harding did not depart immediately. Even though he had leaned ever more to the activist side of the crest on which he perched, he continued to travel and speak in Mennonite settings. One week after the Prairie Street meeting, Harding attended a regional gathering of (Old) Mennonite Church leaders in the Indiana-Michigan Conference that Hershberger would later describe as an event in which “we had Vincent Harding there for these people to see and talk to.”¹⁰⁵ Harding was one of no more than two African Americans who spoke at the meeting.¹⁰⁶ At this gathering and elsewhere in the church, Harding continued to challenge other Mennonites with direct, uncompromising, and increasingly stark language.

Harding’s high profile itineration and critical stance began to elicit concern from church officials. From January through the end of September 1963, Harding had written or been cited in at least seventeen separate items in the national Mennonite church press.¹⁰⁷ In the midst of this

¹⁰⁵ "The Church Facing the Race Crisis," December 4 (Board of Christian Service, 1963), 18, AMC, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 5, Folder 168.

¹⁰⁶ "Regional Meeting on Race and Cultural Relations," September 21 (1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 5, Folder 165.

¹⁰⁷ Items (i.e. reports, feature articles, and editorials) referring to or written by Vincent appeared in the *Gospel Herald* on February 5, March 26, and August 6 (three times) and in *The Mennonite* on January 22 (two times), February 12 and 26, March 5 and 26, June 25, July 9 (two times), August 6 (two times) in addition to appearing once in *Christian Living* magazine in February. In general, the *Gospel Herald* focused more on Vincent’s critique of the church and *The Mennonite* on Vincent’s civil rights activities. Other than the *Gospel Herald*’s editor’s preference to write about racism as a theological problem and *The Mennonite*’s editor’s focus on legislative response, the two publications’ coverage of race and civil rights is surprisingly similar given an expectation of greater interest in worldly affairs on the part of Mennonites from the General Conference. In the course of the year both magazines included resounding denouncement of those who used the Genesis passage known as the “curse of Ham” to support racial discrimination, argued for involvement with civil rights as a means to maintain integrity for overseas mission, included a similar number of items on race-related matters (approximately 31

attention, white administrators at the Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania, expressed reservations about Harding's level and breadth of activity. In response, Harding's supervisor Ed Metzler asked him to keep a diary of activity for the last three months of 1963. The diary's list of meetings, conferences, and events refers to numerous civil rights luminaries. From October through December, Harding met with Martin Luther King, Jr., and associates such as Andrew Young and Fred Shuttlesworth, hosted Ella Baker from SNCC, spent a day talking with author James Baldwin, and spent time with Will Campbell from the Committee of Southern Churchmen. During the same period, Harding met with representatives from at least twelve additional groups including the Georgia and Alabama councils on human relations, the National Council of Churches, the Anti-Defamation League, and a local White Citizen's Council. This period of intense activity also included a keynote address at a national conference on race and religion.¹⁰⁸ The report he offered on this high-profile straddling of church and secular contacts did little to put his supervisors at ease.

Harding continued to speak with a broad range of Mennonites despite his supervisors' concerns that he spread himself too thin. Having only a month previously declared his impatience with Mennonite withdrawal, Harding nonetheless agreed to meet with white Mennonite volunteers John and Beth Miller on October 12 to discuss the relationship of Mennonite House to the voluntary service unit in Atlanta sponsored by the Lancaster

for the *Gospel Herald* and 34 for *The Mennonite*), and featured articles by white pastors chastising Mennonites for their participation in racial discrimination. See: Hubert Swartzentruber, "Where Do We Stand?" *Gospel Herald*, July 23 1963; "Birmingham Troubles Mennonite Conscience," *The Mennonite*, October 8 1963. In terms of their printed publications, white Mennonite response again looked very similar across the community.

¹⁰⁸ Edgar Metzler and Vincent Harding, "Race Relations Project," (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1963), AMC-IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

Conference. The Millers led the voluntary service unit based out of Berea Mennonite Church, a congregation in Atlanta whose pastor stated in print that they were “not engaged in a crusade for individual rights for the Negro.”¹⁰⁹ By contrast, members of Mennonite House actively participated in civil rights organizing and tested extant segregation laws during their integrated social outings.¹¹⁰ Although Harding spoke regularly in white Presbyterian, Quaker, and Methodist congregations in Atlanta, he appears not to have spoken at Berea. The Millers’ request to meet with Harding and his subsequent consultations with them and other voluntary service staff in November and December show the extent of Harding’s influence. Those who found his activist message suspect and those who embraced it both sought his counsel.

So influential had Harding become that he received requests for counsel from outside the United States. In late October through early November, Harding traveled to southern Ontario to speak to Mennonites in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.¹¹¹ Consistent with his overall approach, Harding challenged Canadians as directly as he did United States citizens. In his writing, he returned again to familiar theological territory of selflessness and discipleship by calling white Mennonite Canadians to surrender their lives and face the prospect of “social ostracism and economic deprivation” in pursuit of racial justice.¹¹² Upon completion of meetings at Sterling Avenue Mennonite Church, Harding traveled immediately to Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Pennsylvania where he led multiple discussions for volunteers preparing to travel to points overseas and throughout North America. Unbeknown to those who sought his insight,

¹⁰⁹ Elvin L. Martin, "Love in Atlanta," *The Volunteer*, September 1963, 4.

¹¹⁰ Anna Marie Peterson, "I Came - You May Too," *Ibid.*, October, 1.

¹¹¹ Metzler and Harding, "Race Relations Project."

¹¹² Harding to white church members.

such international influence and high-profile connection had already begun to sow the seeds of his departure.

Although such seeds of discontent remained hidden, additional signs of Harding's influence began to appear. For example, as the year progressed Mennonite church leaders acknowledged racial problems inside the church and throughout American society with increasingly political language. Within the General Conference denomination, a November 1 staff report by administrator Vern Preheim summarized meetings held "to discuss Mennonite involvement in the social and racial revolution."¹¹³ Toward the end of the year, members of Mennonite Central Committee's Peace Section drafted a document entitled "From Words to Deeds in Race Relations" that listed twenty-eight concrete actions church members could take in "response to the challenge of the racial revolution."¹¹⁴ Harding had long used such politically charged terms and continued to do so even with the most conservative of Mennonite church leaders. For instance, on November 22 – the day of President Kennedy's assassination – he met with bishops and pastors from congregations sponsored by the Lancaster Conference in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida to discuss "our churches and the racial revolution."¹¹⁵ In the South and across the church, Mennonite leaders took up political language strikingly similar to Harding's own.

¹¹³ Vern Preheim, "Staff Report," November 1 (General Conference Mennonite Church Board of Christian Service, 1963), B-23, "1963 Report and Materials for the [General Conference Mennonite Church] Board of Christian Service [meeting] held at Newton, Kansas, December 4-6, 1963" in bound volume shelved with serials, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

¹¹⁴ "From Words to Deeds in Race Relations (Tentative Draft)," (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1963), AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/2; Peace Section binder noted '63.

¹¹⁵ Metzler and Harding, "Race Relations Project."

Such influence came at a cost. In exchange for shaping the church's racial agenda, Harding had to spend much of his time away from Rosemarie and their daughter Rachel. In the month of December, Harding had only four days free of meetings or speeches. He attended fifteen conferences and gave four plenary addresses.¹¹⁶ Only four of those events connected with Mennonite audiences, but they did so in significant ways. Principal among the Mennonite meetings was the December 4 Board of Christian Service gathering in Newton, Kansas, that opened this chapter. Harding sat yet again through a meeting in which he was the only African American in attendance. He listened to a rehash of concerns about racial intermarriage, plans for education, and the tension between nonresistance and involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. At the end of a long year packed with meetings, demonstrations, crisis management, and constituent education, Harding's patience had begun to wear thin.

Harding had had enough by the end of the afternoon. After Guy Hershberger finished describing plans for a series of educational meetings on race, Harding let loose. In his longest speech of the day, Harding pleaded with his fellow Mennonites to speak to him directly, to even get "angry as hell" with him. He admitted to his own anger that Mennonites played "games with this issue so often." That anger then turned into biting regret as he lamented that God had to bring about change through the Supreme Court, the Communist Manifesto, and the NAACP rather than the church. In the depth of his lament, he asked his co-believers to become the "front light" to the world rather than the "rear light."¹¹⁷ Harding's passion leapt into a room that had been, up to that point, quite reserved.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁷ "Church Facing Crisis," 18.

At the end of this long year, Harding nonetheless chose his closing words carefully. As in his February essay in the *Gospel Herald*, Harding used plural pronouns when he spoke of Mennonites. “We,” “our,” “us,” and “ourselves” appear more than one hundred times in his fifteen comments. Harding still counted himself a Mennonite. The attachment had, however, thinned. For the first time in public, Harding hinted that his days in the Mennonite community might be numbered.¹¹⁸ He said that he was “not quite” ready to leave, but that he was “tempted pretty much when I hear us talking about so many things that seem so important to us and yet in terms of the living and the dying of the people in the world it seems so unimportant to me.” With that sobering comment yet ringing in the room, Harding then challenged the church to embrace all people rather than give “preference to whites.”¹¹⁹ He concluded his final impromptu speech of the day by telling the white male church leaders in the room, “This revolution will never be complete until the church does what it was called upon to do in the first place.”¹²⁰ The Mennonite community, in Harding’s mind, had a particular responsibility to step into the racial revolution with the same kind of selfless courage shown by Mennonite martyrs in the sixteenth century. From Harding’s perspective his and his white co-believers’ theological commitment to nonconformity and selfless sacrifice lost all integrity if church members held back from forceful engagement with the civil rights struggle. From his anomalous position as someone who moved within and advocated for the most active of Civil Rights Movement strategies even while maintaining membership in a white-dominated Christian community marked by its heritage of

¹¹⁸ A thorough search of Harding’s published addresses and articles from 1958 through 1963 revealed no previous references to his departure from the church.

¹¹⁹ “Church Facing Crisis,” 19-21.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

quietism and withdrawal, Harding called his co-believers to live out their professed commitment to purity of word and deed.

It seemed as if few in the room had heard Harding's impassioned plea. Acting as if Harding had just offered a casual proposal for inoffensive education, chair Robert Kreider brushed pass Harding's criticisms by asking, "What about the joint secretariat idea?"¹²¹ The meeting thus concluded with a tentative commitment to identify church staff who would be able to educate Mennonite constituency members on racial issues. Harding's call to costly demonstration received no immediate response.

Other Mennonites less focused on protecting church institutions did move toward active engagement by year's end. Harding's last formal interaction with Mennonites in 1963 was an all-day planning meeting at Mennonite House on December 17 to prepare for a "Conference on Race and the Mennonite Churches of the South" that would be held in Atlanta in the coming year. The initiative for the 1964 conference came out of conversations the Hardings had with Orlo Kaufman during their visit to Camp Landon in March. Although Harding was again the only African-American Mennonite to speak at the 1964 conference, local African-American leaders including C. T. Vivian of SCLC and Charles Demere, an African Methodist Episcopal minister in Atlanta, also addressed the assembly.¹²² The Atlanta meeting opened up space, perhaps for the first time among southern Mennonites, for members within the church to support a more activist response to the racial revolution (see Figure 44).

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Larry Kehlert, "Southern Churches Probe Race Issue," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 12 1964.

The race-focused gathering in Atlanta marked the end of Harding's long border straddling. Following a trip to visit European Mennonites and speak in churches on the continent during the summer of 1964, the Hardings returned to Atlanta in August and requested a six-month leave of absence.¹²³ At the end of the

leave in early 1965, Harding gave frank witness to self-described sexual impurity, claimed cleansing and renewal, resigned his post with Mennonite Central Committee, and accepted a teaching assignment at Spellman College.¹²⁴

Having cut positional ties, Harding moved to further distance himself from the Mennonite



Figure 44: Truman Brunk, Nelson Kauffman, and Peter Ediger, 1964 (Larry Kehlert, "Southern Churches Probe Race Issue." *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 12 1964, 1, 6.)

community. He signaled his departure in 1966 by quoting colleagues in the Black Power Movement who asked him, "Are you going to stay with those nice white Mennonites, Anabaptists, Christians? Are any of them going to join the fight, Vince? Where do they stand, Vince? Where do they stand?"¹²⁵ Other than a controversial address Harding gave at the Mennonite World Conference in 1967 and a few equally provocative articles he published in the Mennonite press that same year, Harding left the Mennonite world.¹²⁶

¹²³ "North America Race Relations," (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1964), LMHS - Clarence E. Lutz, MCC Peace Section, 1963-1969.

¹²⁴ Edgar Metzler to Peace Section Members, April 6 1965, Akron, Pa., CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 12.

¹²⁵ Vincent Harding, "What Answer to Black Power?" *Gospel Herald*, December 27 1966, 115.

¹²⁶ Vincent Harding, "Do We Have an Answer for Black Power," *The Mennonite*, February 7 1967; Vincent Harding, "Voices of Revolution," *The Mennonite*, October 3 1967; Vincent Harding, "Where Have All the Lovers Gone?" *Mennonite Life*, January 1967; Vincent Harding,

* * *

Harding's departure reveals how the four purity expressions at the center of this dissertation pushed Harding off the border and further into the Civil Rights Movement. Most strikingly, Harding drew on the quintessential Mennonite value of sexual purity to explain his reason for resigning. He did not refer to the frustrations that had vexed him into voicing doubts in 1963 about his future in the church. He made no mention of white Mennonites' continued hesitancy to join demonstrations in support of civil rights. Rather, he called on a value he had picked up from his position as a borderer, the Mennonite expression of monogamous fidelity. In the memo announcing the reasons for his departure, Harding stressed first his "sexual undiscipline" and unfaithfulness to Rosemarie.¹²⁷ Although he did not describe the details of his "sinful past," he explained that he was leaving because he had not been honest about his sexual practice. Rather than a rationale built on an activist critique of the church, Harding described the reasons for his departure using terms supplied by the rhetoric of sexual purity.

Such high demands for faithful conduct in marriage stemmed from ethical integrity, the second expression of purity supporting Harding's resignation. For Harding and other Mennonites, purity of sexual practice was insufficient. Sexual purity required integrity of body and mind. Harding confessed his sexual sin as a failure not only of "deeds" but also of "thoughts, [and] words."¹²⁸ He felt that he had "betrayed" his religious community by not adequately

"The Beggars Are Rising . . . Where Are the Saints?" *Mennonite Life* 22, no. 4 (1967); Vincent Harding, "The Peace Witness and Revolutionary Movements," *Mennonite Life* 22, no. 4 (1967).

¹²⁷ Metzler to Peace Section Members.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

embodying ethical purity.¹²⁹ Again, he made no mention of the hundreds of times he had called for white Mennonites to demonstrate integrity of word and deed in their racial ministry by becoming involved in the Civil Rights Movement. The desire for integrity that he had first found so attractive in Mennonites had become his own. Regardless of what white Mennonites around him had decided to do about their response to the racial revolution, he had reached a point where he could no longer tolerate his own perception of personal inconsistency.

A third and more subtle expression of purity peeks out beneath the previous two. Although Harding and his supervisor elided racial identity as they announced his departure, they trafficked in racial purity nonetheless. To understand how concerns for racial purity shaped Harding's resignation, his identity as an African-American Mennonite on the border between church and movement needs fuller explanation. Harding gained the attention of the church in part because he did not fit the expected role of an African-American Mennonite. To begin, he brought sterling Mennonite credentials, i.e. he had served as a pastor in a Mennonite mission church, led a voluntary service unit, knew Mennonite history, and preached from the pulpit. He also demonstrated sincere humility, consistent frugality, and willing servanthood. Likewise, despite his confession of sexual inconsistency, Harding's words and deeds matched. Harding did not just talk about the need for racial reconciliation; he and Rosemarie lived it out through the integrated civil rights ministry of Mennonite House. Harding also claimed full-fledged membership because he knew how to speak and write like a Mennonite. His speeches and articles in support of civil rights activism were filled with appeals to love, long-suffering, and nonconformity. For the first time in the history of Mennonites in the United States, a member of the church had skillfully and unapologetically brought core church doctrines to bear on the

¹²⁹ Ibid.

struggle for racial justice. Rather than treat civil rights agitation as a side issue tangential to the church's mission, Harding articulated a rationale for and practical theology of sustained social engagement that he claimed was necessary to the church's very survival. He found a way to turn Mennonites' interest in purity of intention to limited though distinctive social engagement despite fears that such action would compromise commitments to nonconformity and nonresistance. In service, proclamation, humility, and theology, Harding thus demonstrated unsullied Mennonite identity.

Racial dynamics, however, sullied Harding's pure Mennonite identity. Although he rarely defined himself in overtly racial terms in his writing, he always wrote from within the African-American community, an ontological stance that connoted racial impurity to white Mennonite observers. Likewise, he did not deign to dwell on the inevitable slights and overtly racist comments directed at him. He instead focused on the church's integrity and the possibility of change. He and Rosemarie assumed they belonged for as long as they could do so with integrity. They did not allow other Mennonites' uncertainty about their racial status to shake their confidence in their church membership. Finally, unlike other African Americans active within the Mennonite community in 1963, Harding had never been a recipient of Mennonite service. Neither child evangelists nor Fresh Air hosts had converted him. White Mennonite volunteers had not rescued him from disaster. He had instead come to the church through Rosemarie's connections and his attraction to the Anabaptist values of discipleship and peacemaking. Racial complications arising from Harding's self-description, his response to racial innuendo, and his entry into the church tarnished his otherwise pristine Mennonite identity.

The racial impurity tarnishing his Mennonite identity ultimately led to his departure. As noted above, Harding demonstrated a core Mennonite value as he strived to match his words and

actions. By resigning in order to reclaim ethical integrity, he first reminded his white Mennonite audience that he belonged. At the same time, the stated impetus for his resignation, sexual infidelity, supported the stereotype of sexually promiscuous African-American men.¹³⁰ Harding confessed a particular sin that reminded his audience of his racial identity. He was not just any Mennonite; he was an African-American Mennonite. The subtext of his suspect racial identity therefore made his position as a borderer all the more untenable. He had been able to straddle the identity of Mennonite and African-American even as he straddled his participation in the church and in the movement, but the balancing act became even more precarious when his race became an issue that he could not avoid. With his identity thus once again besmirched, Harding nonetheless challenged his supervisors to respond to him as a Mennonite, one worthy of “forgiveness” rather than dismissal.¹³¹ In the process of responding, however, Harding lost his perch.

The fourth expression of purity – religious separation – gave the final push. After voicing his request for forgiveness and reinstatement, Harding did not wait to find out how his supervisors would respond. He made no attempt to continue straddling two communities in which he had invested his time and energy. On April 6, 1965, his supervisor announced that Harding had abruptly resigned from his leadership position in Atlanta and from other “roles of leadership in Christ’s church.”¹³² In so doing, Harding did what he saw other Mennonites doing all around him. He acted out another fundamental lesson he had learned from his time among the

¹³⁰ See, for example, the legal legacy of fears of African-American male promiscuity – especially in relation to white women: Renee Christine Romano, *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

¹³¹ Metzler to Peace Section Members.

¹³² *Ibid.*

Mennonites: when confronted with inconsistency, withdraw. By withdrawing from the white separatist Mennonite community, Harding entered the more activist and engaged community at Spellman and the Civil Rights Movement more broadly. Ironically, Harding had learned his religious purity lesson so well that the need to separate himself from sin took him deeper into worldly contact.

The purity-laced complexities of his resignation thus reveal the process of Harding's departure as well the changes resulting from his sojourn on the borders. Most centrally, Harding challenged the categories Mennonites relied upon to articulate the idea of purity. Traditionally, white Mennonites drew clear boundaries between themselves and the world around them through dress (especially the prayer covering and cape dress); through tightly controlled service to and inoculation by African-American children as seen in stories of Fresh Air participants; and through the doctrines of nonconformity, nonresistance, discipleship, and selfless love. White Mennonite leaders during this period continued to demand that converts declare first allegiance to the church community. Harding, however, maintained that he belonged both to the church and to worldly groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Every day that he stepped to and from the two worlds, Harding created a new category defined by dual citizenship rather than separation. Even after he severed official ties, Harding continued to model how to straddle borders in his 1967 speech to the Mennonite World Conference and in casual conversation with Mennonite leaders. As a borderer, Harding thus undermined church leaders' purity rhetoric by questioning the idea of absolute allegiance to one realm or the other and by refusing to paint the outside world with one brush.

Through his actions and especially in his writing Harding also attempted to transform the hierarchy of Mennonites' purity values. For much of the twentieth century, white Mennonites

placed far greater emphasis on protecting nonconformity in dress and lifestyle choices, racial homogeneity within the home, and (as will become apparent in the chapter that follows) the sexual chastity of their daughters than on maintaining integrity of word and deed. In crisis moments such as those precipitated by the racial rebellions of 1963, few put human suffering first and church doctrine second. Without jettisoning any of the traditional Mennonite values, Harding reordered the implied sequence of racial, religious, and sexual separation first; service integrity second. In other words, he called his co-believers to transform each purity expression into motivation for service and racial advocacy. From Harding's perspective, separation could lead to holy engagement with the world; racial homogeneity, to integrated fellowship; female protection, to interracial relationships; and integrity of word and deed, to costly action. Even though he witnessed its destructive force, Harding saw potential benefit in purity.

In the end white Mennonites found Harding so attractive and troublesome precisely because he brought together purity and impurity at the border. Rather than his natural charisma, it his position as an insider Mennonite and an outsider African American who was also a church leader and a civil rights activist that gained him an audience. Harding challenged divisions between church members and outsiders, withdrawal and engagement, and white and black because he straddled two communities. In some cases his actions and words broke apart these doctrinally significant axes and created space for new action to emerge even without referring to the militant language of black power to do so. Leaders like Hershberger and Landis pursued agendas for effective social engagement in the context of intense contact and relationship with Harding. They were attracted to Harding's integrity of word and deed in part because he moved within non-Mennonite circles. As a result, the strategies they promoted echoed themes Harding

brought to the community from the outside.¹³³ In other instances, Harding's actions initially repelled his fellow Mennonites. White leaders like Blosser and Kaufman were generally more threatened by Harding's straddling of Mennonite withdrawal and civil rights activism. As southerners, Blosser and Kaufman feared shifts in politics and social organization to a greater degree than did Hershberger and Landis in Goshen, Indiana, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, respectively. Yet Blosser's and Kaufman's responses to those fears were still shaped by their direct contacts with Harding. Although they adamantly disagreed with his disruption of doctrinal purity, they could not ignore him. Ironically, they often ended up enacting the very initiatives Harding had proposed. In every case, in an era when Mennonites grappled as intensely as they ever had with what it meant to practice nonconformity in a time of social revolution, the borderer that was Vincent Harding shaped their response in remarkably similar ways across the church.

Harding never entirely gave up his position as a borderer. He continued to contribute to racial justice struggles and, periodically, to the Mennonite church in subsequent years. In 1969, *Newsweek* magazine profiled his work as the director of the Institute for the Black World at the Martin Luther King memorial center in Atlanta where he sought to create a "kind of international center for black studies."¹³⁴ In addition to a variety of teaching assignments, Harding later wrote an influential history of African-American resistance in the pre-Civil War United States, served as senior advisor to the *Eyes on the Prize* civil rights documentary series, and, along with Rosemarie, attempted to straddle the academic and activist communities by leading workshops

¹³³ Shetler, "A Prophetic Voice", 60; Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 8, 2003.

¹³⁴ "Black (Studies) Vatican," *Newsweek*, August 11 1969.

and giving speeches.¹³⁵ White and African-American Mennonites continued to seek out Harding for advice and counsel well into the 1970s and beyond.¹³⁶ In 1996, the Hardings and their daughter Rachel returned to Atlanta to celebrate thirty-five years of Mennonite Central Committee's work in the city and mark the closing of the service unit, a termination stirred in part by the same tensions between activism and withdrawal that Harding had brought together.¹³⁷ At the gathering, Harding offered words both pastoral and prophetic to the gathered administrators and former volunteers.¹³⁸ Harding's sojourn with the Mennonites had come full circle.

The following chapter takes up the experience of two different borderers. The story of Annabelle and Gerald Hughes and their interracial marriage traces two lives at the intimate space where African Americans and whites joined together in church-sanctioned union. Such a story overlaps with Harding's sojourn even as it opens up new paths through interracial exchange in the church. Narratives of borderers like Harding and the Hugheses, for all their complexities and contradictions, nonetheless make plain otherwise obscure dangers and necessities resulting from Mennonites' many purities.

¹³⁵ Harding, "Biography, Democracy and Spirit: An Interview with Vincent Harding."

¹³⁶ Albert J. Meyer to Guy Hershberger, et al., March 5 1970, Goshen, Ind., Guy F. Hershberger Hist. Mss. 1-171, Box 14, Folder 3; Guy F. Hershberger to Vincent Harding, December 29 1971, Phoenix, Arizona, Guy F. Hershberger Hist. Mss. 1-171, Box 14, Folder 6; John Powell to Vincent Harding, July 9 1971, Elkhart, Ind., AMC-IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: General Correspondence 1969-72.

¹³⁷ Rachel J. Lapp and Sarah E. Phend, "God's Table: A Precious Piece of Furniture," in *MPress on the Net* (2003).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 6
FROM POLLUTANTS TO PURIFIERS:
INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND THE MENNONITE CHURCH, 1930-1971

Annabelle and Gerald Hughes thought the worst was over. The pastor at Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio, had supported their interracial marriage on November 21, 1954, despite objections from members of the all-white congregation.¹ The Hugheses had found a replacement for the men's quartet member who withdrew because of concerns about their union. The business meeting held to discuss whether they could be married on church property had gone in their favor. College friends, interested observers, and a returning missionary with no previous connection to the couple replaced those who shunned the celebration.² Annabelle's and Gerald's ceremony went forward without visible disruption.

The disruption came several days later. Rather than take a honeymoon, the couple traveled back to Cleveland. Gerald needed to return to his job at Hawthorne State Hospital outside of Cleveland where he served as the only African-American Mennonite conscientious objector on staff. As the newlyweds traveled the fifty miles back to Hawthorne from Smithville, they anticipated being able to live in their own apartment on the hospital grounds. Annabelle had

¹ "Hughes-Conrad," *Gospel Herald*, Tuesday, December 21 1954.

² Annabelle Hughes and Gerald Hughes, interview with author, Cleveland Heights, Ohio/Evanston, Ill., August 29, 2006; "Christian Race Relations" (paper presented at the Conference on Christian Community Relations, Goshen, Ind., April 22-24 1955), AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

been promised a job at the facility as well. Soon after their arrival, however, hospital administrators dismissed Gerald without explanation. Only later did he discover that a leader from the Ohio Mennonite Conference had protested the hospital's support of an interracial couple. Despite the objections raised by other alternative service workers and national church officials, Hawthorne administrators sided with the Ohio Conference leader. Gerald and Annabelle had to leave. They returned to Annabelle's mother's home until Gerald received word that he could serve out the remainder of his term at Gladstone Mennonite Church in Cleveland where he and Annabelle first met.³

Thirteen years later Annabelle's and Gerald's names again garnered the attention of church officials. On August 28, 1967, Guy F. Hershberger nominated Gerald and three other men for service on the (Old) Mennonite Church's Committee for Peace and Social Concerns. Annabelle's name also appeared alongside her husband's in the nomination penned by Hershberger. Although Hershberger described the pedigree of all four men in terms of their church involvements and commitment to racial justice, he identified the nominees' wives only in the case of Gerald and a second African American, Curtis Burrell. Hershberger wrote, "Gerald Hughes... Married to Anabelle [sic] Conrad (white)."⁴ About a decade after Gerald's dismissal from Hawthorne as a consequence of church leaders' objections, different church leaders sought out Gerald precisely because he had married a white woman. The reception given an African-American man married into the white Mennonite community had changed dramatically.

³ Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

⁴ Guy F. Hershberger to John E. Lapp, August 28 1967, Goshen, Ind., author's personal collection.

The white church leaders who expressed interest in Gerald contradicted earlier church claims. From the late nineteenth century forward Mennonite authors supported racial equality and opposed interracial marriage, usually without specific scriptural reference. Between 1950 and 1955 alone, five authors had opposed interracial marriage while supporting racial equality.⁵ By the time Hershberger nominated Gerald based on his marriage to Annabelle, however, a change had taken place. Rather than being seen as threats to the church, African-American men who married white women provided white church leaders with the means to counter a growing perception that the Mennonite community lacked integrity in their professed support of racial equality. This chapter explains how the change from threat to prized participant took place.

This story of change challenges existing historical literature about interracial marriage by looking past legality to internal church dynamics. Most centrally, the white Mennonites who wrote about interracial marriage in the twentieth century did not concern themselves with legislation. Even though more than 180 Mennonite congregations sanctioned marriages in states subject to anti-miscegenation law, white Mennonite writers paid no attention to legal questions regarding interracial marriage.⁶ Indeed, only an African-American author of a reprinted article in

⁵ D. W. B., "Do You Want Your Daughter to Marry a Negro?" *The Mennonite*, October 28 1952; Paul Erb, "Interracial Marriage," *Gospel Herald*, June 24 1952; Levi C. Hartzler, "Race Problem Unnecessary," *Gospel Herald*, February 8 1955; Esko Loewen, "'What Do You Want to Do, Marry a Negro?'" *The Mennonite*, February 6 1951; Luke G. Stoltzfus, "Is Christianity a Hindrance to Good Race Relations?" *Missionary Messenger*, July 1952; Mary Toews, "Forgetting Our Own," *The Mennonite*, December 4 1951.

⁶ Not a single article written between 1889 and 1971 by a white Mennonite that appeared in any of the national Mennonite church publications took up the question of the legality or illegality of interracial marriage. See Appendix One for complete listing of articles dealing with race and interracial marriage. The states with laws against interracial marriage in 1967 were Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia See: Bárbara C. Cruz and Michael J. Berson, "The American Melting Pot? Miscegenation Laws in the United States," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 15, no. 4 (2001). For

a 1926 edition of the *Gospel Herald* even mentioned anti-miscegenation legislation.⁷ By contrast, historians writing about interracial marriage have focused first and foremost on legislative changes.⁸ Those studies have, in turn, ignored the place and people conducting most of the interracial marriages – congregations and church officials.⁹ Mennonites offer historians of interracial marriage a unique opportunity to study how a religious community unconcerned about legislative issues modified theological commitments, negotiated conflicting reactions, and responded to church leaders' tactics. This study thus opens up new lines of inquiry into interracial marriage absent from legislatively centered literature.

complete listing of Mennonite congregations in those states, see: Ellrose D. Zook, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, vol. 59 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1968), 85-90.

⁷ William Y. Bell, "The Question of the Races," *Gospel Herald*, January 7 1926. Here and throughout this chapter, I contend that the appearance or absence of published articles on interracial marriage reflected significant changes in Mennonite thought. Although official church statements and the experiences of a couple like Gerald and Annabelle Hughes corroborate those shifts, the evidence from printed articles establishes official church positions. Mennonite editors printed only those articles that fell within accepted church doctrine.

⁸ The titles of the following texts make evident the singular focus on legislation: Cruz and Berson, "The American Melting Pot? Miscegenation Laws in the United States"; A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. and Barbara K. Kopytoff, "Racial Purity and Interracial Sex in the Law of Colonial and Antebellum Virginia," in *Interracialism: Black-White Inter marriage in American History, Literature, and Law*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Rachel F. Moran, *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies Of 'Race' In Twentieth-Century America," in *Interracialism: Black-White Inter marriage in American History, Literature, and Law*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Werner Sollors, *Interracialism: Black-White Inter marriage in American History, Literature, and Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁹ See, for instance, the absence of attention to churches and ministers in following study of the primary legal test case in Virginia, the *Loving* case, which eventually made state-based prohibitions against interracial marriage illegal: Walter Wadlington, "The *Loving* Case: Virginia's Anti-Miscegenation Statue in Historical Perspective," *Virginia Law Review* 52, no. 7 (1966).

A Mennonite narrative about interracial marriage thus reveals historical dynamics obscured by more visible trends. For example, some scholars argue that, due to biblical injunctions, the Christian community did not welcome interracial couples or promote the value of marriage across racial lines in the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁰ While this conclusion bears itself out in the Mennonite community, scholars who promote this viewpoint miss how Mennonites and other Christians tried to hold together strong assertions of racial equality with repeated cautions against interracial marriage. Scholars likewise contend that legislative changes in the 1960s increased interracial socializing that in turn led to a new openness toward interracial marriage among white people.¹¹ Yet white and African-American Mennonites socialized as a result of church-planting efforts as early as the 1940s and 1950s. Mennonites thus demonstrate how theological contradiction and evangelical impulse brought about changes as dramatic as those precipitated by more overtly political forces.

Mennonite historians have largely ignored the topic of interracial marriage. Other than seminary students and the author of a history on the Camp Landon ministry in Gulfport, Mississippi, historians of the American Mennonite experience have written as if Mennonites never discussed the issue.¹² Yet every decade in the period of this study saw at least one and as

¹⁰ Renee Christine Romano, *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 50.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 176-77, 214.

¹² Henry D. Landes, "'... but Would You Want Your Daughter to Marry One?': Marriage and Institutional Racism in the Mennonite Church" (Term paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1974); John Denny Weaver, "The Mennonite Church and the American Negro" (paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1970), AMC - I-3-3.5 Box 11 John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest, Denny Weaver: *The Mennonite Church and the American Negro*; David A. Haury, *The Quiet Demonstration: The Mennonite Mission in Gulfport, Mississippi* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1979), 78.

many as twenty-four different authors publish articles referring to interracial marriage. Likewise, fifteen years after (Old) Mennonite Church delegates stated in 1955 that the bible did not forbid interracial marriage, activists in the church continued to report difficult conversations with congregants on the subject.¹³ In comparison to other race-related issues, whether congregational integration, social equality, or civil rights legislation, the topic of interracial marriage troubled white Mennonites for a longer period, proved more difficult to discuss, and involved fewer appeals to scripture. Given the prominence of interracial marriage discourse, a complete history of Mennonite race relations requires an explanation of the manner in which white Mennonite leaders came to support interracial marriages by the end of the 1960s even as congregational members continued to oppose the practice.

The lives of Annabelle and Gerald Hughes open a window onto changes in Mennonites' approach to interracial marriage. Alongside the record left by published authors and official church statements, Annabelle's and Gerald's story reveals a church community conflicted over whether to follow social wisdom or biblical mandate.¹⁴ White Mennonite leaders like Gerald's

¹³ Harold Regier and Rosella Regier, "Learning by Leaving," *The Gulfbreeze*, January-April 1968; Guy F. Hershberger to Stanley Kreider, May 24 1968, Goshen, Ind., CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 38; Lynford Hershey, "Report #3 to Counsel and Reference Committee for Minority Ministries Education Program," (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; Simon Gingerich and Lynford Hershey, "Minutes Counsel and Reference Committee for Minority Ministries Education," March 5 (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), 1, AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: Cross Cultural Relations 1971-1972, Lyn Hershey.

¹⁴ Articles from the following publications provided background information for this study: *Christian Living*, *Gospel Herald*, *The Herald of Truth*, *The Mennonite*, *Mennonite Life*, *Mennonite Weekly Review*, *Missionary Messenger*, *Pastoral Messenger*, and *The Volunteer*. Also referenced are statements passed by Bethel College, Bluffton College, Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, Eastern Mennonite College, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Indiana-Michigan Conference, the Lancaster Conference, Menno Housing, the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Mennonite Central Committee, the (Old) Mennonite Church, the Ohio

nominator, Guy F. Hershberger, advocated a response grounded in scripture. At the grassroots, a half-century of church teaching on the foolishness of interracial marriage bore fruit as congregational members continued to raise grave concerns about couples like the Hugheses. Only as Hershberger and other church leaders began to pay more attention to the broad justice concerns of the Civil Rights Movement rather than to the narrow internal “bogey of intermarriage” did a measure of change begin to appear.¹⁵ The story of the way in which Mennonites brought about that change begins the decade that Annabelle and Gerald were born.

Gerald Hughes and Annabelle Conrad entered the world at a time when Mennonites expressed their opposition to interracial marriage in the terms of eugenicists. Born in 1930 in Philadelphia to Vertell and Henry Hughes, Gerald knew little of Mennonites or their opinions about interracial marriage during the first ten years of his life. Even though white Mennonite missionaries labored to evangelize African Americans at the Philadelphia Colored Mission during the 1930s, the missionaries there did not encounter Gerald’s family. Had they met, Gerald’s Presbyterian grandfather might have pointed out that white Mennonites drew more from eugenic thought than scripture to articulate their perspectives on interracial marriage. Eugenics, a highly influential social movement and academic pursuit in the first half of the twentieth century, sought to protect society from inferior “genetic stock” through forced sterilization, support of anti-miscegenation laws, and immigration restrictions.¹⁶ As Jacob and Sadie Conrad prepared for

Conference, the South Central Conference, the Southwest Pennsylvania Conference, the Urban Racial Council, and the Virginia Conference. For a complete listing see Appendix One and Appendix Two.

¹⁵ "Christian Race Relations," iii.

¹⁶ Moran, *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance*, 11.

and then welcomed their daughter Annabelle in 1932, they surely encountered eugenics-influenced articles written by Mennonite editors and authors. Those authors argued against mixed marriages by noting that interracial partners came from “entirely different race stock, habits and ways of thinking” and their children inherited “the worst qualities of their parents.”¹⁷ Rather than scriptural arguments, authors in these years accepted the stated scientific assumption that interbreeding between races would result in “foolish” and “backward” offspring.¹⁸ Accepted scientific opinion discouraged even the thought of Annabelle’s and Gerald’s future union.

The Mennonites who opposed interracial marriage on scientific grounds in the 1930s followed in the tradition of Mennonite authors before them. As early as 1889, Abram B. Kolb expressed his opposition to interracial marriage “for many reasons,” none of them scriptural.¹⁹ Although he also maintained that people of all racial groups should “be equal and enjoy the same” God-ordained privileges, he articulated this egalitarian principle without appeal to scripture.²⁰ As assistant editor at *The Herald of Truth* and a leader in early Mennonite mission efforts, Kolb established an oft-repeated pattern: support for racial equality and opposition to interracial marriage.²¹ More than thirty years later in 1924, the Virginia Mennonite Conference

¹⁷ Aldine Carpenter Brunk, "Our Duty to People of Other Races," (1930), 6, 7, LMHS - Christian E. Charles Collection, Race Relations; S. M. Grubb, "Editorial," *The Mennonite*, February 6 1930; "Improving Our Attitude toward the People of Other Races," *The Mennonite and the Christian Evangel*, January 15 1935.

¹⁸ "Improving Our Attitude toward the People of Other Races"; Grubb, "Editorial."

¹⁹ Abram B. Kolb, "The Race Troubles," *Herald of Truth*, November 15 1889, 343.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Sam Steiner, *Kolb, Abram B. (1862-1925)* (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, 2002 [cited August 23 2006]); available from <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/K6442.html>.

took a similar position when they accepted African Americans as members but opposed “close social relationships” and “marrying between the colored and white races.”²² Kolb and the Virginia Conference leaders articulated a position the Mennonite church followed through mid-century.

Annabelle and Gerald came into closer proximity in the 1940s as Gerald and his three brothers relocated to Andrews Bridge, Pennsylvania, at the same time white



Figure 45: Andrews Bridge Sunday School class (note Gerald Hughes on far left second row in white shirt), circa 1940s (Anna Rohrer, "[Photo of a Sunday School at Andrews Bridge]." LMHS - Box: Andrews Bridge Cong: Folder: [unmarked - green]).

Mennonites began to evangelize African Americans. After Gerald’s parents separated when he was about ten years old, Gerald and his three brothers joined the Thompson household in southern Lancaster County where members of the Mellingers Mennonite congregation had held services since 1938 (see Figures 45 and 46).²³ As he worshipped with the conservatively dressed Mennonites, he soon realized that African-American converts came under greater scrutiny in their dress and demeanor than did white converts.²⁴ Yet he eventually joined the fledgling Andrews Bridge congregation where his singing ability quickly gained attention. By 1948,

²² Landes, "Marriage and Institutional Racism," 9-10.

²³ Israel D. Rohrer, "The Work of the Lord at Andrews Bridge," *Missionary Messenger*, January 1946.

²⁴ Ministers and bishops recalled the differentiation in dress restrictions at Andrews Bridge and other African-American mission stations such as South Seventh Street in Reading. See: Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., April 28, 2005; William M. Weaver to author, January 30 2003, Halifax, Pa.

eighteen-year-old Gerald had begun to lead songs at the Lancaster Conference gatherings of the Colored Workers Committee.²⁵ Gerald had found a new home among the Mennonites.

Gerald thus became intimately involved with white Mennonites at a time when eugenics-driven arguments had begun to lose favor. The only instance of eugenic thought to relate to interracial marriage in the 1940s appeared in 1943:

church statesman Daniel Kauffman opposed birth



Figure 46: Unnamed members of Andrews Bridge baptismal class, circa 1940s (Anna Rohrer, "[Photo of One of the First Classes to Be Baptized at Andrews Bridge]," LMHS - Box: Andrews Bridge Cong; Folder: [unmarked - green]).

control for white people because it could lead to “race suicide” and being “overwhelmed” by the “hordes of colored (and renegade white) races.”²⁶ Kaufman did not need to mention interracial marriage in light of his lament over low white reproduction rates. As World War II ended and Nazi atrocities became public, however, white Mennonites in concert with worldly sentiment shed vestiges of eugenic thought and focused on “Negro Missions” as the solution to the “sin” of racial discrimination.²⁷ As the decade unfolded, Gerald and his brothers became ever more involved in a church that claimed unity of the human race as expressed in “one blood” and opposed “any practices which are based on an assumption of white superiority” even while

²⁵ Ira J. Buckwalter, "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1947-1953," (Colored Workers Committee, 1947-1953), [008], EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

²⁶ Daniel Kauffman, "Editorial," *Gospel Herald*, January 7 1943.

²⁷ Daniel D. Wert, "What About Our Negro Missions?" *Missionary Messenger*, January 1946; Reynold Weinbrenner, "From the Editor's Point-of-View," *The Mennonite*, February 5 1946.

acknowledging that young white Mennonite men in rural communities sometimes harassed African-American pedestrians.²⁸ Amid such universal claims and prejudicial practice, Gerald worshipped with church leaders who had not yet considered that their evangelistic efforts might lead to interracial marriage.

The absence of attention to interracial marriage during the latter half of the 1940s comes as no surprise. Mennonites during this period placed great doctrinal weight on marrying within the faith community. From the turn of the century forward, Mennonite confessions of faith supported only believers' unions.²⁹ Throughout the twentieth century, confessional statements and Mennonite authors also opposed interdenominational marriages.³⁰ During a time that Mennonites experienced persecution for their nonresistant belief, the prohibition against interfaith marriages kept young white Mennonites marrying within the family. As a result, Mennonite leaders offered scant commentary on interracial marriage. Even as Gerald traveled to Goshen College in northern Indiana in 1949 to study music education and live with more white Mennonites, the threat of African-American men marrying white Mennonite women seemed worthy of minimal concern.

Annabelle and Gerald married during a period of unprecedented attention to interracial unions in the early 1950s. They first crossed paths in 1950 when Annabelle attended Goshen

²⁸ Irvin B. Horst, "Mennonites and the Race Question," *Gospel Herald*, July 13 1945; Paul Erb, "Editorial: The Race Question," *Gospel Herald*, January 27 1948; Harry L. Kraus, "Will You Dare to Be Christian?" *Gospel Herald*, May 10 1949; J. Harold Breneman, "On Race Prejudice: Behold the Field!" *Missionary Messenger*, October 1949.

²⁹ J. Lester Graybill, "The View of the Mennonite Church on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" (Goshen College, 1958).

³⁰ William L. Stoltzfus, "The Unequal Yoke in the Social and Marriage Relation," *Gospel Herald*, February 23 1939, 1006.

College for one year. Although they did not begin dating at that time, the two young people came into contact again during the summer of 1951 when Gerald moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in hopes of working in the steel industry and serving Gladstone Mennonite Church on evenings and weekends. Annabelle had accepted an assignment with the church as a voluntary service worker prior to Gerald's arrival. Due to a strike, however, Gerald ended up working for the Mennonite mission board as a staff member at Gladstone. After Annabelle completed her voluntary service assignment, she stayed on to support the Gladstone ministry while working in the offices of a local manufacturing company. In the pages of the national church news magazine, Annabelle avidly recruited young people to join her at Gladstone.³¹ Although Gerald returned to Goshen College during the school year, he served as leader of the church's voluntary service unit during the summers of 1952 and 1953.³² Annabelle's and Gerald's courtship had begun.

The couple's mutual interest developed at a time, however, when church leaders continued to oppose such interracial attraction. In early 1951, Esko Loewen editor of the youth section of the General Conference news magazine, *The Mennonite*, cautioned against racial intermarriage because it "is not generally wise" due to "many barriers to be hurdled."³³ Although he chided church leaders for promoting racial inclusiveness while practicing racial prejudice, his opposition to interracial marriage remained. Like Abram Kolb in 1889, Loewen replicated a familiar formula: support for racial inclusion combined with scriptural mandate followed by caution against interracial marriage based on social convention. Loewen offered no encouragement for the prospects of Annabelle's and Gerald's budding interest.

³¹ Annabelle Conrad, "What Are You Doing for Christ?" *Ibid.*, June 9 1953.

³² Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

³³ Loewen, "'What Do You Want to Do, Marry a Negro?'"

Other leaders from the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite denominations mounted stronger social arguments against interracial unions. John R. Mumaw, president of Goshen College's sister school, Eastern Mennonite College, declared his opposition to interracial marriage at a 1951 church-wide conference without appeal to scripture.³⁴ Writing several months later, Mary Toews, a missionary with ten years' experience "working side by side with the African," passionately objected to the idea of interracial marriage without giving the slightest nod toward the biblical text. She asked, "What has the colored family to contribute to my happy married life? One marries the family, Granny, Aunt Jemima and all." Toews also stressed that children of interracial unions should, like all Africans and African Americans, keep with "others of like skin and custom." Toews concluded that a white mother of a dark-skinned child would find her offspring "so "strange" that she would then "divorce" her child.³⁵ In short, Toews offered commentary indistinguishable from an ardent segregationist. Despite subsequent efforts by editors at *The Mennonite* to distance themselves from her article, Toews took a position substantively similar to other Mennonite authors in the early 1950s.³⁶ Like Loewen and Mumaw, Toews favored equality for the African-American community while opposing interracial marriage. Toews simply delineated her opposition while trafficking in stereotypes avoided by more cautious authors. Such critique did not bode well for Annabelle's and Gerald's growing attraction.

³⁴ Guy F. Hershberger, "[Notes from 1951 Laurelville Conference on Race]," July 24-27 (1951), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 2, Folder 35.

³⁵ Toews, "Forgetting Our Own."

³⁶ J. N. Smucker, "Mennonites and the Race Question," *Ibid.*, January 8 1952.

Yet the young people's courtship did receive support from some of those involved in interracial ministry. Within the African-American neighborhood where Gladstone members ministered, church workers and community residents offered their support to Annabelle and Gerald (see Figure 47). As they made community visits, distributed evangelical tracts, and handed out church bulletins, Annabelle and Gerald encountered no local opposition. In the national Mennonite community, a white Mennonite author associated with the integrated Woodlawn congregation in Chicago also expressed his support for interracial couples.³⁷ Just over a month after Toews' article appeared, William Keeney wrote an article for *The*



Figure 47: Unnamed Gladstone Mennonite Church Voluntary Service Unit members, 1953 (Vern Miller, "Cleveland Is Calling!" *Gospel Herald*, October 27 1953, 1030-31).

Mennonite that, for the first time in the Mennonite church's publication history, supported interracial marriages without reservation. Rather than withdraw from interracial contact for fear of negative reprisals, Keeney maintained that Christians should challenge the prejudicial attitudes that fostered such fears. Keeney called sinful those who opposed interracial marriage based on race prejudice. Quoting Colossians 3:9-11, Keeney called upon Mennonites to become color blind and so transcend the divisions of Jew and Greek, circumcised and uncircumcised, citizen and slave. Even more strikingly, Keeney brought core doctrine to bear by stating that some may be called to the "life of suffering love by intermarriage."³⁸ Mennonites committed to nonresistance and patient love could not ignore such commentary. Though uncharacteristic of

³⁷ William Keeney, "Woodlawn Mennonite Church," *Mennonite Life*, April 1953.

³⁸ William Keeney, "Reborn Color-Blind," *The Mennonite*, January 8 1952, 25.

other white Mennonites at the time, Keeney and Gladstone members supported Annabelle and Gerald as their relationship continued to mature.³⁹

Other white Mennonite workers at African-American mission sites offered less support for interracial marriage. From his station in Philadelphia, Luke G. Stoltzfus took up the question, "Is Christianity Good for Race Relations?" in July of 1952. After arguing strongly for congregational integration, racial equality, and just treatment for all, Stoltzfus asserted that African Americans' interest in marrying white people decreased as racial equality increased.⁴⁰ Four months later another author queried, "Would you like for your daughter to marry a Negro?" Like Stoltzfus, this author first claimed that African Americans lost interest in marrying white people when their economic and social situations improved. He concluded that, despite those few individuals who married outside their group, fears about intermarriage were "imaginary."⁴¹ By the end of 1952, however, Annabelle and Gerald had begun to show enough interest in each other that the prospect of their union became quite real.

The couple took their relationship to a new level by announcing in the fall of 1954 their plans to marry. Despite decades of written opposition to interracial marriage in Mennonite church periodicals, Annabelle's only living parent, her mother Sadie Conrad, welcomed Gerald without concern. Conrad had met Gerald during a previous summer when she lived and worked with the voluntary service workers in Cleveland. According to Annabelle, Conrad liked Gerald because of his education and interest in teaching. Although Annabelle's mother had discouraged a previous suitor by telling him he was "too pushy," Conrad supported Annabelle's and Gerald's

³⁹ Erb, "Interracial Marriage."

⁴⁰ Stoltzfus, "Is Christianity a Hindrance."

⁴¹ B. "Do You Want Your Daughter to Marry a Negro?"

relationship. Early on, Conrad affirmed her daughter for doing something that she “couldn’t do.”⁴² Gerald’s family likewise supported his relationship with Annabelle. Two of his brothers later married women from other racial groups. Although some of Annabelle’s relatives did express initial reservations, Gerald won them over through conversation and, in one instance, the shared task of cutting wood “with a cross-cut saw.”⁴³ The opposition they encountered came from the church at large, not their families.

Annabelle and Gerald enjoyed their wedding despite the controversy. As noted above, Annabelle’s home congregation met separately and without the couple’s knowledge to vote on whether they could be married in the church building. With the support of their pastor, the ceremony went forward as planned. Although some refused to take part in preparing the wedding meal and others voiced their disapproval, still other church members volunteered to prepare food for the reception and bless the union (see Figure 48).⁴⁴ A large crowd gathered to witness Annabelle and Gerald exchange vows on November 21, 1954. The couple felt far more supported and encouraged by those who came to wish them well than discouraged by those who criticized their relationship.⁴⁵

The large turnout and attendant controversy does not surprise given that the wedding took place only six months after the Supreme Court’s May 17, 1954, *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. Following *Brown*, a flurry of articles, all written by white men, took up the problem of racial prejudice in the church and presented theological arguments for racial equality and

⁴² Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, interview with author.

⁴⁴ "Christian Race Relations."

⁴⁵ Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

inclusion.⁴⁶ Although no one articulated a new position on interracial marriage, the issue remained current. A group of Mennonite students participating in a Chicago-based study program on industry discussed, for example, whether “intermarriage” was a solution to “the race problem.”⁴⁷ As Annabelle and Gerald returned to Cleveland after their wedding in anticipation of several years’ work at Hawthorne State Hospital, they had gained a level of notoriety that would only increase in the following year.

Annabelle and Gerald first gained wide attention as church leaders decided how to respond to Hawthorne administrators’ decision to fire Gerald. As mentioned above, a church official from the Ohio Conference contacted Hawthorne administrators to object to Gerald’s placement even though he had worked successfully at the hospital prior to his and Annabelle’s



Figure 48: Gerald and Annabelle Hughes, 1954 ([Gerald and Annabelle Hughes Wedding Photo]" (1954). Author's personal collection).

wedding. After deciding not to invite the local Congress on Racial Equality to advocate on their behalf, Annabelle and Gerald returned to the Conrad homestead in Smithville, Ohio, to await the

⁴⁶ "A Welcome and a Blessing Awaits Us," *The Mennonite*, June 29 1954; Harriet Amstutz, "A Look at Woodlawn Children," *The Mennonite*, October 5 1954; Paul Erb, "The Minority Prevails," *Gospel Herald*, June 8 1954; Orlo Kaufman, "Reaction to Supreme Court Decision," *The Mennonite*, August 3 1954; Orlo Kaufman, "The Decision to End Segregation," *Gospel Herald*, September 7 1954; Carl Kreider, "Negro Segregation," *Christian Living*, August 1954; Millard Lind, "Bible Principles Governing Race Relations in the Church," *Gospel Herald*, October 12 1954.

⁴⁷ "Group Discussion: 'A Race Relations Program for the Mennonite Church'," (Students-In-Industry, circa 1954), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 41.

decision of mission board executives and Selective Service personnel. Shortly thereafter, the couple received word that Gerald had been transferred to the Gladstone congregation. Annabelle and Gerald gladly returned to the congregation that had brought them together.⁴⁸ They would never again leave.

Annabelle and Gerald began to participate in the life of the broader church from their base at Gladstone. In a year that began with yet another white Mennonite editor raising social objections against interracial marriage, Annabelle and Gerald took part in a conference that would come to define the church's official position on interracial marriage.⁴⁹ From April 22 to 24, 1955, Annabelle and Gerald joined more than one hundred church leaders and congregants on the campus of Goshen College in northern Indiana for a meeting planned by the (Old) Mennonite Church's Committee on Economic and Social Relations.

Two addresses established the central role interracial marriage would play at the gathering. The Hugheses and other conference-goers listened to two plenary addresses on interracial marriage. First, conference organizer Guy Hershberger and Social Relations chair H. Ralph Hernley raised the topic of interracial marriage in their introduction to the assembly proceedings. The two men said that mutual acquaintance and brotherhood across racial lines could lead to "the bogey of intermarriage" losing "its meaning."⁵⁰ Conference planners did not, however, leave participants with only this assurance. Annabelle and Gerald also listened to a

⁴⁸ Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

⁴⁹ Hartzler, "Race Problem Unnecessary." Even though the Hugheses entered the church's public gaze as a couple, as opinions about interracial marriage shifted and Gerald entered nationally prominent church positions with ever greater frequency, Annabelle received less and less attention. Although she established Gerald's credentials through her union with him, she received no offers to sit on national boards and committees.

⁵⁰ "Christian Race Relations," iii.

lengthy and exhaustive exegesis of key Old Testament and New Testament passages by C. Norman Kraus. Kraus explained how Moses married outside his group and did not break any biblical commands by doing so.⁵¹ Kraus's call for unity based on Pauline texts likewise addressed concerns about the mixing of the races.⁵² Notably, Kraus first established the biblical basis of his argument before suggesting any application. Indeed, Kraus left it to subsequent speakers to comment on practical matters regarding marriage across racial lines. Yet Kraus brought specific scriptural texts into a conversation that had long been dominated by social arguments.

In addition to listening to theological pundits discuss their married state, Annabelle and Gerald also heard an official report about their wedding. Although he did not mention their names, conference attendant D. Richard Miller from Smithville, Ohio, supplied sufficient detail to make clear he spoke about Annabelle and Gerald. In his report about "the incident which has attracted the most attention" in his area, Miller identified the Hugheses' congregation, the debate over whether to allow them to marry in the Oak Grove church building, and that they attended Gladstone.⁵³ Miller closed his report by mentioning that Gerald had led music at Oak Grove Mennonite following their wedding, but that many members continued to express concern about "the welfare of the couple and the problems which confront them and will confront them as they take their place in society."⁵⁴ If Annabelle and Gerald had not previously captured the attention

⁵¹ C. Norman Kraus, "Scriptural Teachings on Race Relations," *Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁵³ "Christian Race Relations," 23.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

of the participants at the Goshen conference, they certainly had done so by the end of Miller's presentation.

Toward the end of the gathering, Annabelle and Gerald and the rest of the conference participants had the opportunity to respond to a new race relations statement. Paul Peachey, a sociologist and incoming pastor at Broad Street Mennonite, the African-American congregation in Harrisonburg, Virginia, presented a statement that undermined scriptural objections to interracial marriages. Although he earlier had raised objections about mixed race marriages because they were "foolish" and "inadvisable," Peachey put scripture before social objections in the official document.⁵⁵ In "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations," Peachey took a small but significant shift away from past writing. Giving more attention to this topic than to any other specific point of application, Peachey wrote, "On the question of interracial marriage we [will] help our people to understand that the only Scriptural requirement for marriage is that it be 'in the Lord'; that there is no valid biological objection to interracial marriage...." This clear statement of support did come with a caveat. The clause ended with, "[A]nd that, as in all marriages, the social implications of any proposed union should receive careful consideration."⁵⁶ As thus amended, the 1955 document pointed to social considerations but placed interracial unions on equal footing with all marriages. With little debate, conference participants approved the document in Goshen and church-wide delegates did the same four months later in Hesston,

⁵⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁵⁶ Mennonite General Conference, "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations," August 24, 1955 (Mennonite General Conference, 1955).

Kansas. Unlike several mainline Protestant groups, the (Old) Mennonite Church removed explicit scriptural barriers to marriage across racial lines.⁵⁷

Couples like Annabelle and Gerald thus made concrete a previously intangible issue. Because they participated in the 1955 race relations conference, other attendees could not ignore the flesh and blood presence of interracial couples within the church. Annabelle and Gerald made clear that the church would have to deal with couples coming together across racial lines. Leaders responded quickly. Less than a month after the release of an initial draft of the “Way of Christian Love in Race Relations” document, administrators at Bluffton College, a Mennonite college in northwestern Ohio, issued a statement on race relations that encouraged racial equality but discouraged interracial dating.⁵⁸ Likewise, Hershberger received several letters suggesting changes to the statement’s marriage clause. One correspondent advocated stronger wording in support of interracial couples; others expressed caution.⁵⁹ The section on interracial marriage received far more attention than any other portion of the document. Regardless of where they stood on the issue, white Mennonite church leaders could not ignore that more than a decade of church evangelism among African Americans had led to unexpected results.

⁵⁷ For example, Episcopalians passed a statement against segregation in 1955 but made no mention of interracial marriage. See: Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights, Religion in the South* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 68.

⁵⁸ "Attitude of Bluffton College on Relationships between Races on the Campus," May (Bluffton College, 1955), AMC - III-25-8 Box 3, Bethesda Mennonite Church, St. Louis, Mo., H. Schwartzentruber Files - data files, Folder: Race Relations Data.

⁵⁹ John Fisher to Guy Hershberger, May 14 1955, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 16; Abe Hallman to Guy Hershberger, May 14 1955, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 16; Paul Peachey to Guy F. Hershberger, May 14 1955, Harrisonburg, Va., CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 16.

Some church leaders did not agree with the direction taken by Hershberger, Peachey, and others at the race relations conference. When Vern Miller, Annabelle's and Gerald's pastor and co-worker, prepared to request ministerial credentials for Gerald from the Ohio Conference in 1955, Conference leaders told him not to proceed. They made clear that Gerald could not be considered because he had married a white woman.⁶⁰ As a woman, Annabelle had not even been considered as a recipient of ministerial credentials. Although the couple did not learn of the blocked request until much later, their lives had again been pushed in a different direction by those opposed to their union. The couple continued in ministry at Gladstone but without official recognition by the Conference.

Annabelle's and Gerald's marriage and reactions from members of their religious cohort marked the end of a six-year period notable for at least three transitions. Most directly, from 1950 through 1955 leaders of the (Old) Mennonite Church reversed a 50-year tradition and prioritized scriptural support for interracial marriage over social objection. After fifty years of social objections, the church put scripture first. With the passage of the 1955 "Way of Christian Love in Race Relations" document, the (Old) Mennonite Church went on record in support of interracial marriage. Secondly, this shift highlighted a new fissure between (Old) Mennonites and their General Conference denominational cousins. The silence of the (Old) Mennonite Church's sister denomination, which did not act on interracial marriage until 1962, emerged from different congregational demographics. Leaders of the General Conference Mennonite Church hesitated to speak on interracial marriage in part because their membership included few couples like the Hugheses. Finally, between 1950 and 1955 a gap widened between church

⁶⁰ Vern Miller, "Building Anew in Cleveland," in *Being God's Missionary Community: Reflections on Mennonite Missions 1945-1975* (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Board of Missions, 1975), 84; Gerald Hughes to author, January 19 2007, Cleveland, Ohio.

leaders and grassroots members on the question of interracial marriage. Although few voiced public opposition to marriage across racial lines, many white congregants raised private objections when the issue hit close to home.

Only two of these three transitions stabilized during the next seven years from 1956 through 1962. The denominational divide continued in place as the General Conference delegates debated the question of interracial marriage but passed a race relations document in 1959 that made no mention of the issue. The gap between lay members and denominational leaders remained even as church leaders and activists attempted to educate their constituencies. Following passage of the 1955 race relations document, however, social objections to interracial marriage again dominated church press articles. Members of both denominations returned repeatedly to the question of interracial marriage even as they began to address a wider range of racial issues.

As Annabelle and Gerald settled into their lives and work in Cleveland, they continued to read articles debating their union. An author in 1956 stated that the “Bogey of Intermarriage” broke no religious laws, but nonetheless led to persecution and was therefore “unwise.”⁶¹ The following year a voluntary service worker in Chicago penned a cautionary tale about the hard life of a child of an interracial union whose mother would not let him live with her.⁶² In 1958, a Mennonite editor again commented that those who married across racial lines lacked wisdom.⁶³ Yet Annabelle and Gerald continued to live, work, and worship in a community that welcomed

⁶¹ John D. Zehr, "The Sin of Race Prejudice," *Christian Living*, July 1956.

⁶² Elaine Teichrow, "Paul Learns: A Story Based on Observations During Six Weeks of Summer VS in Chicago," *The Mennonite*, March 12 1957.

⁶³ Paul Erb, "Witnessing in Race Relations," *Gospel Herald*, January 28 1958.

them and other interracial couples. When they read articles opposing their marriage, they responded as they did to those who expressed disapproval at the time of their wedding. In Annabelle's words, "I never paid [them] too much attention."⁶⁴ She and Gerald claimed the church as their own despite such judgments.

That same forbearance manifested in comments Gerald made at another major conference where interracial marriage received fresh attention.

During a gathering hosted



Figure 49: "The Mennonite Churches and Race" participants, 1959 (Gerald Hughes appears in middle of second row, fifth from the right, in a dark suit and tie; note also Vincent Harding (first row, fourth from right) and Delton Franz (first row, third from right)) ("The Mennonite Churches and Race." *Gospel Herald*, May 19 1959, 460, 77).

by the Woodlawn Mennonite congregation in Chicago from April 17 to 19, 1959, Gerald reflected on his experience at Goshen College and noted that, with time, his classmates came to see him as an individual (see Figure 49).⁶⁵ That individual recognition, however, still had not resolved white Mennonites' concerns about interracial marriage. Rev. Vincent Harding, Woodlawn's associate pastor and a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, gave a plenary address in which he introduced the topic of interracial marriage. For a leader who would soon express exasperation at being called constantly to address the issue, Harding conceded a surprising point. After expressing disappointment in white Christians who had not yet overcome

⁶⁴ Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

⁶⁵ Guy F. Hershberger, "Report of the Chicago Race Relations Seminar," July 16 (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1959), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 58.

their prejudices, Harding allowed that one could engage in “the ministry of reconciliation” without “full-hearted approval of interracial marriage.”⁶⁶ Harding also argued that most African Americans were not interested in becoming “part of our blood families” because, employing a phrase that had been used by other African Americans in the period, “Negroes generally seek to be Christian brothers rather than brothers-in-law.”⁶⁷ Gerald’s presence in the audience suggested otherwise.

Neither Hughes nor Harding successfully prompted the General Conference members at the Woodlawn conference to rally their denomination on the question of interracial marriage. Although the topic of interracial marriage garnered the attention of delegates at the General Conference national assembly in August of 1959, the delegates took no action. After heated and substantial debate regarding interracial marriage, church leaders presented a draft of “A Christian Declaration on Race Relations” to the delegate body gathered in Bluffton, Ohio.⁶⁸ Delegates read a shorter, more circumspect document than the (Old) Mennonite Church analogue.⁶⁹ The document’s authors offered only tentative confession and presented shorter, less

⁶⁶ Vincent Harding, “The Task of the Mennonite Church in Establishing Racial Unity,” in *Archives of the Mennonite Church* (Goshen, Ind.: 1959), Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/1.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Harding was most likely paraphrasing his friend and mentor Martin Luther King, Jr., who the year before wrote, “[The church] can point out that the Negro’s primary aim is to be the white man’s brother, not his brother-in-law.” See: Martin Luther King, *Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1958), 206).

⁶⁸ Lois Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Historical Series* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1983), 243.

⁶⁹ Elmer Ediger to Guy Hershberger, May 13 1955, Newton, Kans., CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 16; “A Christian Declaration on Race Relations,” August 17 (General Conference Mennonite Church, 1959), AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled “Race Relations 1955-70.”

encompassing suggestions for action. Most notably, the General Conference position paper passed on August 17 made no mention of interracial marriage. The General Conference authors simply lapsed into a silence on the matter that would last for three more years.⁷⁰ Without the high-profile, concrete witness of a couple like Annabelle and Gerald Hughes, the General Conference Church set the matter aside.

In the following year Gerald joined a host of other Mennonite authors who wrote about interracial marriage. Unlike many, however, Gerald spoke from firsthand experience. In a January 28 reply to a white Mennonite pastor from Chicago who supported racial segregation and opposed interracial marriage, Gerald wrote that he and Annabelle were “deeply disturbed” by the pastor’s commentary and referred him to official church statements on the matter.⁷¹ After rebutting the author’s segregationist arguments, Hughes closed by expressing his gratitude for “those in our brotherhood who have given a positive Christ-inspired witness in this area.”⁷² His

⁷⁰ The General Conference leaders’ seven-year silence on interracial marriage ended in 1962. On April 24 of that year, Leo Dreidger, the secretary of the denomination’s Peace and Social Concerns Committee, distributed a mass mailing in which he brought up the subject. Members of the Race Relations Committee requested that Dreidger attend to the topic even though their study paper released the previous year studiously avoided any mention of interracial marriage. Rather than drafting a new position, Dreidger included the section of the Mennonite Church statement dealing with interracial marriage along with the 1959 General Conference statement. Dreidger concluded his discussion of marriage between racial groups by noting, “Such words remind us that Christian brotherhood reaches into the very depths of our lives.” See: Vincent Harding et al., “The Christian in Race Relations,” in *Church and Society Study Conference, YMCA Hotel, 826 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago 5, Illinois, October 31-November 3, 1961* (Newton, Kans.: General Conference Mennonite Church, 1961); Leo Dreidger to Fellow Christians, April 24 1962, Newton, Kans., Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 6, Folder 211, Race Relations.

⁷¹ Gerald Hughes, “A Negro Mennonite Looks at Integration,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, January 28 1960; John T. Neufeld, “What About Racial Intermarriage,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, January 7 1960.

⁷² Hughes, “A Negro Mennonite Looks at Integration.”

reply typified the gentle forbearance typical of his and Annabelle's engagement with their fellow church members. Others followed Hughes's lead by stating that ongoing debates about integration stemmed from white evangelicals' and Mennonites' fear of interracial marriage.⁷³ Although they and their allies had not convinced the entire church of the value of their union, many began to listen to Annabelle and Gerald with new attention.

Annabelle and Gerald also helped build a congregation where other interracial couples felt welcome. In 1961, a young white Mennonite woman studying at the Carnegie Institute in Cleveland met and began dating an African-American man. Because interracial couples like Annabelle and Gerald belonged to the Cleveland congregation, then known as Lee Heights, the young woman and her boyfriend began attending there as well. When the woman's parents received word of their daughter's interracial relationship, they became "very much upset" and urged her to withdraw from classes at Carnegie and end the relationship.⁷⁴ Following an intervention by Vern Miller, Lee Heights' pastor, and Guy Hershberger, the Goshen College professor and church activist who nominated Gerald as mentioned above, the young woman's parents calmed down considerably and tried "to take a constructive attitude" toward the pairing.⁷⁵ Writing out of his long-term relationship with Annabelle and Gerald, Miller had earlier

⁷³ Paul G. Landis, "Building Interracial Churches," *Missionary Messenger*, January 1960; William Pannell, "The Evangelical and Minority Groups," *Gospel Herald*, March 8 1960; Vern Preheim, "Steps to Integration," *The Mennonite*, April 12 1960; Harold Regier, "Roots of Prejudice," *The Mennonite*, April 5 1960.

⁷⁴ Vern Miller to Guy F. Hershberger, Oct. 29 1961, Cleveland, Ohio, AMC, I-3-7 Committee on Economic and Social Relations, Guy F. Hershberger File, Correspondence with Individuals, II, Ki-Z: correspondence with individuals, III: Miscellaneous, II: Race, to Race - Misc. Box 5, Folder I-3-7 CESR, 5/140, Correspondence with individuals, II Miller, Vern, 1961-62.

⁷⁵ Guy F. Hershberger to Vernon L. Miller, January 25 1962, Goshen, Ind., AMC, I-3-7 Committee on Economic and Social Relations, Guy F. Hershberger File, Correspondence with Individuals, II, Ki-Z: correspondence with individuals, III: Miscellaneous, II: Race, to Race -

assured Hershberger that interracial unions were “not that bad.”⁷⁶ Thus, through their witness to Miller and others at Lee Heights, Annabelle and Gerald quietly calmed the “unnecessary fears concerning interracial marriage” that, according to Hershberger, hampered Mennonites’ ministry.⁷⁷ Although Gerald had not received ministerial credentials by 1961, he continued to lead choirs, preach in Miller’s absence, and, together with Annabelle, support a church community that loved and respected them.⁷⁸

Other than members of integrated congregations and the denominational executives who supported them, many Mennonites continued to oppose interracial marriages during this period. By 1962, fifty-two (Old) Mennonite churches reported African-American membership.⁷⁹ In these settings, interracial couples often found a home. The white Mennonites involved in integrated congregations like Lee Heights faced their fears of interracial marriage and came to cherish couples like Annabelle and Gerald who made the idea concrete. The General Conference congregants had far fewer opportunities to learn to know integrated couples. Only a handful of congregations from the General Conference reported African-American membership in 1962.⁸⁰ The white majority from both denominations rarely had contact with African American

Misc. Box 5, Folder I-3-7 CESR, 5/140, Correspondence with individuals, II Miller, Vern, 1961-62.

⁷⁶ Miller to Hershberger.

⁷⁷ Guy F. Hershberger, "A Mennonite Analysis of the Montgomery Bus Boycott," March (Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship, 1962), 10.

⁷⁸ Virgil Vogt, "Emergent Church in Cleveland," *Christian Living*, October 1961.

⁷⁹ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 174-77.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

Mennonites or those who married them. Although church leaders and administrators learned to drop their social objections post-1955 and, as in the case of Hershberger, actively worked to educate white constituents, grassroots members' fears increased as they learned of interracial marriages come to fruition. In the General Conference setting where fewer African-American members had joined the church, the issue remained present but somewhat less urgent. For many (Old) Mennonite congregants, interracial marriage continued as the primary threat associated with accelerated integration.

The period from 1963 through 1965 nonetheless began with an explosive turn away from the issue of interracial marriage by leaders in both the (Old) Mennonite and the General Conference Mennonite denominations. Annabelle and Gerald found themselves temporarily out of the spotlight as attention turned from interracial marriage to the Civil Rights Movement amid a deluge of writing on the topic. The number of articles published on race-related themes in 1963 exceeded that published in the previous five years and nearly tripled the previous high set in 1953.⁸¹ More than one hundred authors in eighty-eight different articles addressed various civil rights questions, many of them focusing on Mennonite integrity. Delton Franz, the white pastor of Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago, captured this latter concern when he suggested that white Mennonites unable to demonstrate peacemaking should stop calling themselves a "peace church and hand the title over to our Negro Christian brothers who have surely earned it."⁸² Only one article, written by an author from outside the Mennonite church, took up the question of

⁸¹ From 1958 through 1962, eighty-six articles with identifiable racial themes appeared in *The Gospel Herald*, *The Mennonite*, *Christian Living*, and *Mennonite Life*. In 1953, thirty-two articles appeared in the same four magazines in the course of one year. See Appendix One for complete list of titles.

⁸² "Race and Mennonites," *The Mennonite*, December 31 1963, 799-98.

interracial marriage.⁸³ A second article, published first in an (Old) Mennonite Church magazine and then a General Conference publication a few days later, reported on a meeting in which participants reiterated the church's 1955 position on interracial marriage but offered no new commentary.⁸⁴ As was the case in other denominations during this period, civil rights issues displaced concern about interracial marriage.⁸⁵

Church leaders' attention thus turned away from Annabelle and Gerald Hughes, the interracial couple, and toward Gerald Hughes, the African-American Mennonite. Even though Mennonite church leaders had prompted Gerald's dismissal from his alternative service assignment and refused to give him ministerial credentials, from 1963 forward church leaders recruited Gerald and other African-American men married to white women for church-wide leadership positions. On August 6, 1963, the General Mission Board of the (Old) Mennonite Church elected Gerald as secretary of an urban pastors' subcommittee.⁸⁶ A month later, Gerald offered one of the opening statements at a September 1963 meeting held to discuss the church's response to "racial and civil rights tension."⁸⁷ The meeting, held at Prairie Street Mennonite

⁸³ Martin Louw, "Our Children Are Part Negro," *Christian Living*, November 1963.

⁸⁴ C. J. Dyck, "Dialogue on Race," *The Mennonite*, October 29 1963; C. J. Dyck, "Pronouncements - Then What?" *Gospel Herald*, October 22 1963.

⁸⁵ The Baptist community, for example, focused on civil rights involvement to the exclusion of other race relations issues. See: David Keith Chrisman, "The Price of Moderation: Texas Baptists and Racial Integration, 1948-1968" (Ph. D., Texas A & M University, 2001), 161-62, 286. Members of the Roman Catholic community did, however, use civil rights agitation to take a stand against anti-miscegenation laws in 1963. See: Peter Wallenstein, *Tell the Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law: An American History* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 203.

⁸⁶ O. O. Wolfe, Mark Lehman, and Vern Miller, "Integration - What It Will Mean for the Church," *Gospel Herald*, August 6 1963.

⁸⁷ Dyck, "Dialogue on Race."

Church in Elkhart, Indiana, featured another African-American man married to a white woman, Curtis Burrell, who Hershberger would later nominate along with Gerald for another national church position.⁸⁸ During their opening statements, Hughes and Burrell spoke at greater length than the other three speakers combined and displayed more nuanced understanding of the white Mennonite community. Other participants appear to have noticed the difference. Soon leaders from both the (Old) Mennonite and the General Conference denominations began to ask African-American men married to white women to fill church leadership positions. Hughes and Burrell were only the beginning.

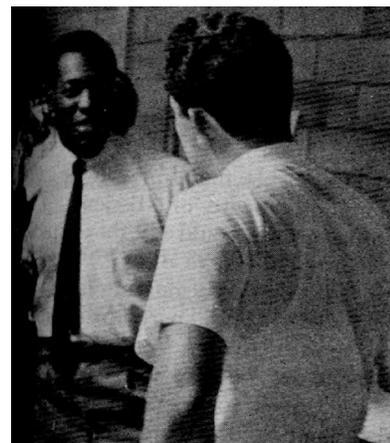


Figure 50: Lee Roy Berry, 1968 ("Interracial Council Approved." *Gospel Herald*, July 23 1968, 669).

The very men feared by a majority of the Mennonite community thus entered church leadership circles through the remainder of this period and on into 1971. Gerald in particular rose to new prominence. On December 4, 1963, Hershberger referred to Gerald as “the music secretary of the Christian Education Cabinet of the Ohio conference” and mentioned that he, Annabelle, and “their three little chocolate girls” gave music programs throughout the Ohio Conference.⁸⁹ The 1963 proceedings of the annual conference of the (Old) Mennonite Church also referred to Gerald alongside early church pioneers James and

⁸⁸ Cornelius J. Dyck to Ed Riddick, et al., September 3 1963, Elkhart, Ind., CESR papers I-3-7, Box 5, Folder 165; "Record of the Meeting of Church Leaders for a Discussion on Racial and Civil Rights Problems to Discover Which Course Should Be Followed by the Mennonite Church in This Time of Social Revolution," Saturday, September 14, (1963), AMC - MCC Peace Section, Conjoint and Related Minutes, Box I, File #1 entitled: "Reports, 1952-68."

⁸⁹ "The Church Facing the Race Crisis," December 4 (Board of Christian Service, 1963), AMC, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 5, Folder 168.

Rowena Lark.⁹⁰ By July 29, 1968, Gerald, Lee Heights pastor Vern Miller, and another African-American man who would soon marry a white woman, Lee Roy Berry, agreed to convene a meeting of the church's first interracial council (see Figure 50).⁹¹ Gerald came to that assignment as the only African-American man serving on the church's national church mission board.⁹² As of 1969, Gerald chaired the executive committee of the Urban Racial Council, the predecessor to the Minority Ministries Council that will figure prominently in Chapter 8.⁹³ Three of the four African-American members of that committee were likewise married to white women.⁹⁴ Gerald also chaired the first annual meeting of the Minority Ministries Council in 1970.⁹⁵ In (Old) Mennonite Church leadership circles, the threat posed by Gerald and others like him diminished by the end of the 1960s.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ "Mennonite General Conference Proceedings, August 20-23, 1963, Kalona, Iowa" (paper presented at the Thirty-third Mennonite General Conference, Kalona, Iowa, August 20-23 1963), 87, AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

⁹¹ "MBMC and CPSC Consultation," July 29 (Mennonite General Conference Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1968), PSC July 68.

⁹² "Interracial Council Approved," *Gospel Herald*, July 23 1968.

⁹³ John H. Mosemann, "Why an Urban-Racial Council?" *Ibid.*, November 25 1969.

⁹⁴ The members were John Powell, Gerald Hughes, and Lee Roy Berry. See: "Minutes of the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns," April 27-29 (Mennonite General Conference Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, 1969), LMHS - Paul G. Landis Coll., Mennonite General Conference Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, 1968-1971.

⁹⁵ jmb, "Minority Ministries Council Holds First Annual Meeting," November 6 (Minority Board of Missions and Charities, 1970), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

⁹⁶ During the most active years of the Minority Ministries Council, African-American men married to white Mennonite women continued to dominate staff appointments and committee leadership. In addition to Gerald Hughes, Hubert Brown, Tony Brown, Charles McDowell, Sylvester Outley, Richard Pannell, John Powell, Warner Jackson, and others all came to serve

Yet white church leaders continued to confront grassroots sentiment opposing mixed marriages. Articles in 1964, 1967, 1968, and 1970 mentioned interracial marriage as an ongoing concern among Mennonite church members.⁹⁷ Members of the Colored Workers Committee of the Lancaster Conference discussed "The Bible and Interracial Marriage" in 1969.⁹⁸ White church activists and leaders in 1968, 1970, and 1971 also complained about white constituents'

important roles in the Mennonite Church. See: Hubert Brown, "Report on the Church and Urban Development Seminar," April (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: Church and Urban Development 1970, Seminars; John Powell, "AFRAM to Bring Blacks Together," *Gospel Herald*, July 31 1973; "We They Coming Together: A Cross-Cultural Experience," (1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; "New York City Peacemaker Workshop," March 15-16 (Mennonite Peace and Social Concerns Committee; Mennonite Brethren in Christ churches in New York City Metropolitan Area; Mennonite General Conference, Scottdale, Pa., 1968), author's collection; John Powell, "Urban-Racial Concerns Statement," August 19 (Mennonite General Conference, 1969), AMC, I-1-1, Mennonite General Conference, 1898-1971, 1969 Session materials, Folder 5/8; Warner Jackson to Hubert Schwartzentruber, February 23 1971, Cleveland, Oh., AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-784 Box 1, Hubert Schwartzentruber, Collection, Miscellaneous, Folder: Minority Ministries Council 1970-71, Letter from Warner Jackson to Hubert Schwartzentruber; and J. N. Smucker, "Pale-Face Religion," *The Mennonite*, October 27 1953. With the exception of the last four of Vincent Harding's articles in 1967 and 1968, this same group of men wrote the majority of the few articles penned by African Americans to appear in the church press through 1971. See: Curtis E. Burrell, Jr., "Causes for Urban Rebellion," *Gospel Herald*, June 18 1968; John Powell, "The Urban Racial Council," *Missionary Messenger*, September 1969; John Powell, "The Compassion Fund Is," *Gospel Herald*, March 24 1970; and John Powell, "The Minority Ministries Council: A Call to Action," *Gospel Herald*, March 31 1970. In 1969, two articles written by African-American women did appear in the Lancaster Conference's *Missionary Messenger*. See: Georgia Lovett, "Others See Christ in Me: At School," *Missionary Messenger*, October 1969; and Hazel Sheppard, "Others See Christ in Me: In My Neighborhood," *Missionary Messenger*, October 1969.

⁹⁷ John T. Akar, "An African Views America," *Mennonite Life*, January 1967; Melvin L. Lehman, "Mennonites and Pittsburgh," *Christian Living*, March 1970; Harold Regier, "Understanding the Southern Viewpoint," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, May 14 1964; Polly Sedziol, "A Little Knowledge," *The Mennonite*, February 13 1968.

⁹⁸ "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1964-1969," (Colored Workers Committee, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969), [222], EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

frequent mention of the issue.⁹⁹ One of those activists, Lynford Hershey of the Minority Ministries Council, reported on March 23, 1971, about a race relations survey of 2,694 Mennonites. A majority of the respondents did not support the church's official position on interracial marriage. Some respondents asserted, "Even the blackbirds and robins know better and do not cross-mate."¹⁰⁰ Hershey replied, "I ... hope we can think on a much higher plane than of animals" and noted that the more apt analogy within the animal kingdom was that cows and dogs mated without regard to color.¹⁰¹ Leaders from the Lancaster Conference tried to educate their constituents on the matter by publicly confessing in July of 1971 that they had not "been supportive and accepting of interracial marriage."¹⁰² Leaders in the (Old) Mennonite Church came to recognize that simply including African Americans like Gerald on church committees would not change the opinions of all their constituents.

The shift to embrace African-American men bonded by marriage to the church most clearly marked the division between the (Old) Mennonite and the General Conference denominations. African-American leadership on a national scale failed to materialize within the General Conference following the departure of Vincent Harding in the mid 1960s. Due primarily to a paucity of African-American congregations, leaders in the General Conference had a smaller

⁹⁹ Hershberger to Miller; Hershey, "Report #3 to Counsel and Reference Committee for Minority Ministries Education Program"; Gingerich and Hershey, "Counsel and Reference Committee," 1.

¹⁰⁰ Lynford Hershey, "What Is the Mennonite Attitude on Race Relations," *Gospel Herald*, March 23 1971, 263.

¹⁰¹ In response to the somewhat awkwardly worded statement, "There is nothing morally wrong with interracial marriage if both partners are Christian," forty-nine percent of the respondents to Hershey's survey agreed, thirty-two percent were uncertain, and the remaining nineteen percent disagreed. See: *Ibid*.

¹⁰² "Statement on Racism," July 23 (Lancaster Conference, 1971), Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster Conference, Statements.

pool from which to draw.¹⁰³ Although they might have developed leaders from the dually affiliated Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago, the General Conference leaders distanced themselves from the congregation and its pastor, Curtis Burrell, following a series of “disruptive actions against the church.”¹⁰⁴ The decision to limit the General Conference’s Camp Landon ministry in Gulfport, Mississippi, to service rather than evangelism likewise forestalled the possibility of bringing in African-American leadership through church planting.¹⁰⁵ Without leaders like Gerald Hughes to prod the church forward, the General Conference leaders lost interest and, by 1971, only a handful of articles addressed race relations issues.

The transitions regarding interracial marriage that had been made evident sixteen years earlier came to fruition by 1971. Leaders from the General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite Church took different paths toward race relations in general and interracial marriage in particular. The former group opted for a more proactive engagement with legislative issues and a decidedly less proactive stance regarding evangelism within African-American communities. The (Old) Mennonite Church remained more committed to evangelism within the African-American community which encouraged increased numbers of African Americans in the church and, eventually, to a greater incidence of interracial marriages. Although (Old) Mennonites’ evangelistic efforts did not usually lead to legislative action, the cross-racial exchange did

¹⁰³ Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 245.

¹⁰⁴ Shuji Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite Church: Mennonites, Civil Rights Movement and the City" (Term Paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 1995), 36-39. For more detail on Curtis Burrell and the Woodlawn congregation, see Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁵ Haury, *Quiet Demonstration*, iv.

prompt some white Mennonite leaders to support interracial couples.¹⁰⁶ Such support helped ameliorate discomfort with racially mixed marriages. As Hershey's 1971 survey made evident, sentiment against interracial unions predominated in the (Old) Mennonite Church at the grassroots level despite education by white leaders and activists. Even as Annabelle sent Gerald off to chair church-wide committees and sit on national boards, she and Gerald continued to face negative reactions to their interracial marriage.

As 1971 came to a close, Annabelle and Gerald traveled through a church that they had helped change. Through their persistence and willingness to relate to those who found their union objectionable, Annabelle and Gerald altered the (Old) Mennonite white community. While realized most clearly at the leadership level, Annabelle and Gerald also transformed the perspectives of Annabelle's extended family and white congregants at Oak Grove in Smithville, Ohio. Furthermore, even the General Conference members had to debate interracial marriage with the knowledge that their sister denomination supported reputable couples like the Hugheses. Simply by showing up, Annabelle and Gerald brought the Mennonite community to a new understanding of the theological concerns and social realities surrounding interracial marriage.

Annabelle and Gerald and other couples like them did not, however, shift the church's approach to mixed marriages by themselves. The marked difference in opinion between leaders and constituents stemmed from four other influences: church doctrine, secular rationale,

¹⁰⁶ Two other Mennonites offer examples of those who spoke in favor of interracial marriage out of their involvement with (Old) Mennonite Church African-American congregations. An unnamed member of the Colored Workers Committee spoke out at a meeting in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on May 23, 1964. See: "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1964-1969." Housing activist A. Grace Wenger noted in the pages of the *Missionary Messenger* three years later that interracial marriage is not a problem for people who have lived in cross-cultural settings. See: A. Grace Wenger, "'No Room' - in Lancaster?" *Missionary Messenger*, May 1967.

evangelism, and civil rights debates. Each influence shaped the church alongside the quotidian efforts of couples like Annabelle and Gerald.

The first historical theme shaping change in Mennonites' approach to interracial marriage carried the greatest weight. Most significantly, a biblically centered people rarely based their objections to interracial marriage on scriptural passages. Even the most vocal opponents of interracial marriage shied away from mounting theologically grounded objections. An editorial by Levi C. Hartzler in 1955 came closest to arguing that scriptures forbade interracial marriage, but even he referred only to the tepid declaration that God intended for there to be distinct races and humans should not interfere with that plan.¹⁰⁷ Otherwise, Mennonite authors did not rely on scripture to oppose interracial marriage in any of the periods outlined here. Although male church leaders used scriptural dictates to keep women out of church leadership, they seldom relied on biblical mandates to prohibit interracial unions.

The same church leaders who refrained from mounting scriptural objections to interracial marriage offered little scriptural support for those who married across racial lines. Only one author in the course of this study applied core Mennonite theological values to the issue of interracial marriage. William Keeney's 1952 article paired the call to interracial marriage with the value of "suffering love."¹⁰⁸ He took what he had been taught as an adult convert to the Mennonite community and applied it to a pressing issue of his day even though long-time members did not find the need to do so. Beginning in the first half of the 1950s, authors in the church press instead noted that the scriptures posed no specific barriers to marriage across racial lines, a tack taken in the 1955 race relations statement and echoed in church press documents

¹⁰⁷ Hartzler, "Race Problem Unnecessary."

¹⁰⁸ Keeney, "Reborn Color-Blind," 25.

through the 1960s. With the exception of Keeney, church leaders turned away from scripture in both opposing and supporting interracial marriage, a tactic that often left them in a defensive position among a biblically centered community.

The second theme flowed from the first as post-1955 church leaders and activists spent much of their energy refuting the social objections raised by their predecessors. Because biblically based objections had never been a consistent part of the discussion, the resulting dialogue about interracial marriage centered on social arguments. Church members had listened well to the authors who informed them that the children of interracial marriages would live troubled lives, that such unions were doomed by the likelihood of divorce, that African Americans, especially African-American men, really didn't want to marry white women and, by implication, that those who did were obviously troubled individuals.¹⁰⁹ Even though most church leaders stopped emphasizing social objections in the wake of the 1955 (Old) Mennonite Church race relations statement, grassroots church members continued to employ the same set of social objections they had been taught for more than fifty years.

Those who debated social objections to interracial marriage also had to reckon with the influence of evangelism. The (Old) Mennonite Church invested more resources in African-American evangelism than their General Conference counterparts, which led to an increase in interracial marriages in the 1950s and 1960s. Those couples in turn intensified the debate. The Goshen College students and overseas mission workers who filled the pews at Annabelle's and Gerald's 1954 wedding demonstrated their support at a congregation still uncertain about the

¹⁰⁹ For example, a Canadian author responding to comments made by Vincent Harding in support of interracial marriage wrote that Harding's position had to have stemmed from "an unwarranted inferiority complex." See: "We Mennonites and the Race Problem," October 2 (*Steinbach Post*, 1962).

meaning of their decision to allow the celebration to take place.¹¹⁰ The concrete circumstance of a specific interracial marriage called congregants and leaders alike to define their positions. Corresponding to a less proactive record of evangelism in African-American communities, leaders in the General Conference backed away from claiming a public position on interracial marriage in 1959 and seldom took up the topic through the subsequent years of this study. Evangelism thus shaped discussions about interracial marriage in both communities.

Finally, civil rights debate changed the church. Leaders from the General Conference and their colleagues in the (Old) Mennonite Church both shifted their attention to nonresistance and the Civil Rights Movement after 1963. Debates over the problem of how best to respond to civil rights leaders' challenges pushed discussion of interracial marriage to the side as fewer and fewer authors wrote on the topic. Although congregational members continued to express fears of African-American encroachment through interracial marriage, church leaders turned their attention elsewhere. A torrent of more than two hundred and fifty articles, editorials, news reports, and official church statements between 1963 and 1971 focused on the Civil Rights Movement while only six articles mentioned interracial marriage. A new threat had garnered the attention of the white Mennonite leaders in the United States. They did not want to be seen as lacking in integrity on the question of nonresistance. Concerns about interracial marriage seemed less urgent by comparison.

Forces internal to the Mennonite community thus played a greater role than did outside influences. On the topic of this study, church leaders and grassroots members paid far more attention to theology than to law. The 1955 (Old) Mennonite race relations statement on interracial marriage challenged many more white Mennonites than did the 1967 Supreme Court

¹¹⁰ Hughes and Hughes, interview with author.

ruling that struck down anti-miscegenation legislation. Likewise, Mennonites supported the principle of racial equality independent of shifts in broader social thought. From the nineteenth century forward, church leaders had written about the importance of racial equality before such egalitarian measures found wide purchase across the country. Similarly, Mennonites socialized interracially as a result of church-based evangelism rather than civil rights activism. Those Mennonites who crossed racial lines did so most consistently in congregations integrated by evangelical efforts rather than in schools or neighborhoods integrated by marches and demonstrations. Although the Civil Rights Movement did help turn Mennonites' attention away from interracial marriage, the intensity of subsequent discussions about nonresistance arose from within the community. White Mennonites articulated positions about interracial marriage while discussing church doctrine, promoting racial equality, and worshipping across racial lines rather than while marching in the streets.

Such discussions about interracial marriage in the end revolved around the threat of pollution. Again following Mary Douglas, pollution here refers to anything that threatens purity and, in turn, social order.¹¹¹ As argued elsewhere in this work, white Mennonites in the latter half of the twentieth century associated sexual purity with the chastity of young white women.¹¹² The women came to represent religious purity through their attire and social position, an association that reached its height at the time of Annabelle's and Gerald's wedding. As this narrative makes

¹¹¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 2002 ed. (New York: Routledge, 1966), xi, 45.

¹¹² Mennonites did nothing new here by associating young women's chastity with sexual purity. As Paul Ricoeur notes, purity and virginity have long been linked together and, conversely, sexuality has from the earliest of times been central to the exercise and description of defilement. See: Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen, trans. Emerson Buchanan, vol. 17, *Religious Perspectives* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 28-29.

evident, church leaders and congregants alike identified men like Gerald as the most persistent threat of pollution to the religious and sexual purity of white Mennonite women. Although other interracial pairings also took place during the 1950s and 1960s, the union of an African-American man and a white woman received the most attention. The prospect of sexual and racial pollution by African-American men threatened the young women's protectors and the church community as a whole.

Yet that threat of pollution morphed into the promise of purification. This study of white Mennonite responses to interracial marriages shows how a man like Gerald Hughes, formerly feared as an agent of pollution, came to be seen as a valued resource for restoring ethical integrity to the church's race relations record. Church leaders, across denominations but most actively in the (Old) Mennonite Church, employed those they had previously warned against. In the course of four decades, former pollutants became purifiers. The threat of pollution – of African-American males sullyng the church through marrying the white daughters of the community – diminished as the former black encroachers deepened relationships, served in leadership, and would not go away. Annabelle, Gerald, their children, and other integrated families transformed a notion of pollution into the possibility of purity by unremittingly promoting and embodying the racial reconciliation that had become a central symbol of Anabaptist integrity.

This redefinition of pollution encouraged substantive changes. To be sure, the few assimilated African-American men who joined church-wide committees did not overthrow the ecclesiastical structures that gave power and privilege to white Mennonites. Furthermore, white church leaders readily referred to the African-American men who joined their committees as evidence that they had begun, as enjoined by their critics, to “do something to stop this present

system of racism!"¹¹³ Neither the men who joined the committees nor their wives who made it possible for them to serve allowed others to use them so easily. Annabelle and Gerald, for example, continued to attend church conventions, visit other congregations, and remain active in the church at large well past the period of this study. Along with other interracial couples and members of the Minority Ministries Council featured in Chapter 8, they defied the label of "pollutant," critiqued ongoing opposition to interracial marriage, and, for at least a season, created an arm of the church where racial pollution and purity mattered less.¹¹⁴ Through their challenges and persistent presence, Annabelle and Gerald changed what it meant to be a Mennonite.

Nonetheless the Mennonite church as a whole had not yet fully recognized the contributions made by interracial couples at the end of the 1960s. At the same church in Smithville, Ohio, where Annabelle and Gerald exchanged their vows in 1954, a second interracial couple celebrated their wedding in 1969. Like the Hugheses before them, Beth Hostetler and Lee Roy Berry also had the support of the pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, even though a different man held the position. During the fifteen years in between the two weddings, the majority of those who had opposed Annabelle's and Gerald's wedding, including

¹¹³ "Readers Say," *Gospel Herald*, February 17 1970, 158.

¹¹⁴ Annabelle, Gerald, and other African-American and white couples pushed the church the hardest at the end of the 1960s to realize its potential to fully embrace the African-American community. The potential realized through their activities provides a historical example of Mary Douglas's theoretical assertion that former pollutants hold the "potentiality" of a new social order. See: Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 5-6, 117. While the change they sought was not fully realized, their status as former pollutants turned purifiers gave them a platform from which to speak and seek change across the church.

Hostetler's father, had learned to accept the couple and ceased their opposition.¹¹⁵ Not everyone had. One of Hostetler's cousins continued to oppose interracial marriages as did the person who placed an anonymous phone call to Hostetler's brother-in-law warning him that "something bad was going to happen at that wedding."¹¹⁶ Berry recalled, "I got on my knees at the altar [and] I kept one eye opened to see if someone was going to come into the church to shoot me."¹¹⁷ Although no one opened fire or even disrupted the wedding, the threat remained as real as the couple entering into marriage that day.

Such threats took many forms. The following chapter chronicles how two congregations in and near Chicago dealt with threats found within neighborhoods transitioning from white to African-American. The threat of pollution again figured prominently in the stories of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Illinois, and Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago as did painful and tumultuous years of transformation. The question before those congregations was not, however, how to gain integrity. Members of Community Mennonite and Woodlawn Mennonite wanted their beloved fellowships to survive. Rather, the congregations dealt with a volatile mix of politics, racial tension, and, in one case, interracial marriage as they struggled to stay alive. Purity concerns emerged afresh when internal racial turmoil threatened the lives of these two cherished congregations.

¹¹⁵ Lee Roy Berry and Beth Berry, interview with author, Goshen, Ind./Evanston, Ill., August 29, 2006.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

INTEGRATED HOURS:
RACIAL INTEGRATION AND BLACK POWER
IN TWO CHICAGOLAND MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS

Curtis Burrell downplayed integration the first time he spoke to Mennonites. This African-American convert came fresh from coursework at the Mennonite-run Ontario Bible Institute to assure his listeners in April of 1959 that, rather than focusing on racial differences, “[t]he most important thing is to be free in Christ.”¹ His words were so mild that Delton Franz, a white Mennonite pastor and co-host of the Chicago event where Burrell spoke, later warned participants against using Burrell’s comments to shirk “our duty to work against social injustice.”² For the “uneasy Mennonites” gathered at Woodlawn Mennonite Church for the three-day seminar entitled “Christ, the Mennonite Churches, and Race,” Burrell’s emphasis on salvation before integration offered an enticing alternative to the activist messages offered by Franz and his African-American co-pastor Vincent Harding.³ In 1959, white Mennonites found discussion about saving souls far less threatening than talk about integration.

A smaller group of uneasy Mennonites nonetheless gathered in Chicago four years later to talk again about integration. Burrell did not attend this September 24, 1963, meeting. He

¹ Guy F. Hershberger, "Report of the Chicago Race Relations Seminar," July 16 (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1959), 7, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 58.

² *Ibid.*, 9.

³ "The Mennonite Churches and Race," *Gospel Herald*, May 19 1959.

instead kept to his studies at Goshen Biblical Seminary. Franz, however, traveled a few miles south from Woodlawn to Pastor Larry Voth's congregation, Community Mennonite. Voth invited Franz and two other white church leaders to help guide him through congregational crisis. For more than two and a half years, Voth had faced down angry white congregants, witnessed the departure of those too angry to stay, and, in the previous few months, been warned by influential Conference leaders against "moving too fast" toward integration.⁴ Rather than capitulate, however, on September 24, 1963, Voth turned to other white church leaders who, like him, believed passionately in racial integration and had relocated to the neighborhoods and suburbs of Chicago to serve Mennonite congregations.⁵ For four hours, the men discussed how churches in the Chicago area could survive the challenge of congregational integration.

This chapter examines how two of those Chicago area congregations met the demands of racial integration. Between 1956 and 1971, the leaders and congregants of Woodlawn Mennonite on Chicago's south side and Community Mennonite in Markham, Illinois, tried, in the words of Larry Voth, to move past discussion of mere integration and live out "total acceptance."⁶ The

⁴ "Community Mennonite Church Mission Board Meeting," July 26 (Community Mennonite Church, 1963), CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CMC Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64."

⁵ In addition to Voth and Franz, Harry Spaeth from First Mennonite attended the meeting as well as Peter Ediger, the field secretary for the General Conference Home Missions board tasked with supporting urban congregations. Ediger supported Franz and Voth throughout his tenure and Spaeth led his congregation to stay in Chicago during a period of racial transition from white to African-American. See: Peter J. Ediger, "The Mennonite Church and the Race Revolution," *The Mennonite Church in the City*, November 15 1963, 1; Lois Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Historical Series* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1983), 245.

⁶ "The Church Facing the Race Crisis," December 4 (Board of Christian Service, 1963), 8, AMC, CESR papers I-3-7, Box 5, Folder 168.

stories of these two integration attempts, one short-lived, the other long-lasting, trace a record of change that provides answers to questions skipped over by most historians of the Civil Rights Movement. That same story of ecclesiastical integration challenges contemporary Mennonite historiography by shifting attention away from Black Power rhetoric and toward pastoral purity. Finally, the rich interplay of evangelical impulse, demographic shift, and church culture reveal how two congregations concerned about the racial changes around them dealt with the legacy of a purity-focused tradition.

Two questions guide these narratives. The first question taken up here asks, “How did congregations change from the late 1950s through the 1960s as white and black congregants together attempted to live out their faith?” To answer that question, this chapter examines changes in neighborhood composition, outreach programs, congregational size, denominational connections, and congregants’ interpersonal relationships. As was the case in the last chapter on interracial marriage, external threats of racial pollution and internal debates over the problem of how to respond to those threats prove essential to understanding the changes that took place. By examining articles and correspondence written by Burrell, Franz, and Voth, this chapter likewise traces changes in the thought of those who pastored integrated churches during a time of racial unrest. Taken together, the words and deeds of both congregations explain how racial integration influenced congregational action in the 1960s.

A second question follows the first by asking, “Were integrated congregations sustained over time?” Given the stormy finish to the history of race relations in the 1960s, integrated churches would seem to have had little chance of weathering such a chaotic period. Indeed, in the 1950s and 1960s, few white mainline Protestant congregations counted more than a handful of African-American members and traditional African-American congregations were more likely

to host curious white tourists than earnest white converts.⁷ With the mid-1960s advent of the Black Power Movement, racially mixed congregations became even more rare as “integration became synonymous with oppression.”⁸ Yet some integrated congregations did survive. The following narratives highlight the primary historical factors leading to, in one instance, congregational demise, and, in the other, longevity during a time of ever increasing racial complication. This chapter explains how demographic shifts, theological commitments, personal judgments, and the presence or absence of a strong purity anchor – in this case a white pastor – affected the viability of integrated congregations during this period.

Historians of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements have rarely taken up questions about change and longevity in racially integrated congregations. Most often, they have accepted Martin Luther King, Jr.’s oft-repeated observation that Sunday at 11:00 a.m. was the “most segregated hour of Christian America” and paid much less attention to a less well-known passage of his 1958 text where he conceded that a small number of Protestant congregations

⁷ For example, a survey of more than 5,000 Presbyterian churches in 1964 found that 1,000 pastors claimed “some minimal interracial quality.” See: Commission on Religion and Race of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., *A Survey of Racial Integration in Local Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A* (New York: Commission on Religion and Race, 1964), 3. As Michael Emerson suggests in his study of contemporary churches that claim integration, however, those claims are often unsubstantiated when given close scrutiny. See: John Dart, “Hues in the Pews,” *Christian Century* 118, no. 7 (2001). Overall, within American Protestantism during the late 1950s and 1960s few white churches had more than a handful of African-American congregants and rarely did the numbers approach twenty percent, the proportion considered by sociologists to represent authentic racial integration. See: Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 185.

⁸ John Higham and Carl Guarneri, *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 132.

were “actually integrating their congregations.”⁹ As a result, historians have avoided studying such integrated groups and only glanced at the assumption behind King’s critique of segregated churches.¹⁰ Although several historical works have interrogated the assumptions behind integrationist ethics in studies of education, housing, government, and the military, they have let stand King’s assumption that integrated churches would lead to integrated society.¹¹

⁹ Martin Luther King, *Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1958), 207. In comparison to Protestant denominations, the Catholic church included a greater number of parishes with some degree of racial diversity during this period. See: Rhonda D. Evans, Craig J. Forsyth, and Stephanie Bernard, "One Church or Two? Contemporary and Historical Views of Race Relations in One Catholic Diocese," *Sociological Spectrum* 22, no. 2 (2002): 235. I have chosen not to examine Catholic congregations, however, due to two primary factors. First, the parish system in the 1950s and 1960s designated specific congregations at which Catholics were expected to worship. Thus, Catholic parishioners cannot be said to have chosen to worship in an integrated setting. I instead focus on two congregations at which both African-American and white congregants chose to attend even though other options were available to them. Secondly, John T. McGreevy’s *Parish Boundaries* takes up the question of racial integration within Roman Catholicism in the United States at great length. See: John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Although McGreevy explores the first question about internal developments in integrated congregations, he is less equipped to explore questions concerning sustainability due to the parish system. This chapter thus expands McGreevy’s work into Protestantism and initiates new exploration of the sustainability of integrated congregations when other options are available.

¹⁰ One exception, Ammerman’s *Community and Congregation*, provides helpful insight into one community – Oak Park in Chicago – that successfully integrated and the congregations that continue to worship within it. Her otherwise comprehensive study, however, purposefully avoids examination of congregations that dealt with white flight and studies Oak Park in the latter two decades of the twentieth century rather than the earlier period taken up here. Ammerman likewise asserts that much work has already been done on white churches dealing with white flight in their community. The studies she refers to, however, focused on sociological questions rather than historical ones and were written during the period of the greatest transition, thereby affording little historical distance or perspective. See: Nancy Tatom Ammerman and Arthur Emery Farnsley, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 4.

¹¹ Even an otherwise exemplary work such as Andrew Wiese’s *Places of their Own* treats African-American suburban homeowners as entirely nonreligious. See: Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). He offers no explanation as to

Without a thorough understanding of the congregations who worshipped and worked together across racial lines, historians fail to understand the fragility of the vision of the “beloved community” and the effect of integrated congregations on the struggle for civil rights and black power.¹²

Nestled in the narrative of racially integrated churches sit Mennonite stories in need of re-telling. Mennonite historians have told the stories of racially integrated congregations in much the same way. Of the two congregations featured here, Woodlawn has received by far the greater historical attention. No less than six different historians refer to portions of Woodlawn’s story.¹³ All these authors correlate conflict at Woodlawn with the rise of the Black Power Movement. I suggest that a range of purity concerns proved more influential in shaping the resolution of that conflict than did black power rhetoric. Advocates of black power at Woodlawn remained in conversation with the larger Mennonite community for far longer and with greater deliberation than previously evidenced but eventually found their dialogue disrupted by ongoing concerns

whether or where African-American suburbanites went to worship once they had relocated into white-dominated suburbs. For an example of a thorough interrogation of the assumptions behind racial integration in the public schools, see: Joseph Watras, *Politics, Race, and Schools: Racial Integration, 1954-1994, Garland Reference Library of Social Science* (New York: Garland Pub., 1997).

¹² Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Justice, from the Civil Rights Movement to Today* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 2.

¹³ S. F. Pannabecker, *Faith in Ferment: A History of the Central District Conference* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1968); Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, 4 vols., vol. 4, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996); Willard H. Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983); Samuel Floyd Pannabecker, *Ventures of Faith: The Story of Mennonite Biblical Seminary* (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 1975); Elaine Sommers Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999* (Bluffton, Ohio: Central District Conference, 1993); Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*.

about purity. Furthermore, the less well-known story of Community Mennonite has been told as the effort of one man, Larry Voth.¹⁴ As will become evident, his leadership should not be underestimated. Yet the arc of Community Mennonite's congregational life includes the contributions of African-American and white members who weathered significant controversy. Together these re-told stories challenge the assumption that the failure or success of integrated congregations in this era turned on the influence of black power alone. In the end, the stories in this chapter acknowledge the significant influence of the Black Power Movement along with the results of passionate commitment, unwise choices, and collective perseverance in the face of the danger and necessity of purity.

* * *

The first of these retold tales opens on the campus of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in late 1957. Delton Franz, only twenty-five at the time and with fewer than two years of pastoral experience, wrote an impassioned appeal to the General Conference constituency to support the six-year-old Woodlawn Mennonite Church.¹⁵ He feared that the impending exodus of the

¹⁴ Community Mennonite receives much less attention in works such as these: Pannabecker, *Faith in Ferment: A History of the Central District Conference*; Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*; Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*.

¹⁵ Shuji Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite Church: Mennonites, Civil Rights Movement and the City" (Term Paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 1995), 7. The General Conference Mennonite Church, the smaller of the two largest Mennonite denominations in the United States during the bulk of the twentieth century, sponsored both Community Mennonite and Woodlawn Mennonite. In the main the General Conference differed from their theological cousins – the (Old) Mennonite Church – with a greater emphasis on congregational autonomy, less emphasis on nonconformist dress, and a somewhat more open stance toward involvement in electoral politics. They shared with the (Old) Mennonite Church a strong peace stance, emphasis on love and discipleship, and strong cultural ties, in this case more often associated with Russian background. The General Conference Mennonite Church had its headquarters in Newton, Kansas, not far from where both Voth and Franz grew up.

seminary from the south-side neighborhood of Woodlawn to the city of Elkhart, located in rural north central Indiana, would lead to the demise of his congregation.¹⁶ Franz challenged the broader church to support Woodlawn as he and his congregation faced a “decision between life or death.”¹⁷

A brief account of the congregation’s relationship to the departing seminary explains Franz’s anxiety. Woodlawn began at a time when white Mennonite missionaries in Chicago paid little attention to race relations. Press coverage of Chicago Mennonites in 1953 listed eleven mission sites in the city, of which only one – Bethel Mennonite Community Church – had been deliberately started to serve African Americans.¹⁸ A second congregation served Mexican migrants, but members there had little contact with other Mennonites in the city.¹⁹ The remaining nine mission sites, sponsored by both the (Old) Mennonite and the General Conference mission boards, ministered primarily to church members who did not come from traditional Mennonite backgrounds but who shared a common white racial profile (see Figure 51).²⁰ Although various leaders hinted at demographic changes affecting congregations in Chicago that year, few yet

¹⁶ Delton Franz, "The Mennonite Church on Trial," *The Mennonite*, May 21 1957.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 324.

¹⁸ Andrew R. Shelly, "This Is Chicago," *Mennonite Life*, April 1953, 53.

¹⁹ John T. N. Litwiler, "Iglesia Evangelica Mennonita," *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁰ A 1940 study of Mennonites in Chicago showed that ninety-two percent had come from other than Mennonite families. See: Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 110. Litwiler’s work above shows that this proportion remained roughly constant through the following decade in most congregations in Chicago except in the case of those students who clustered in the Woodlawn neighborhood to attend Mennonite Biblical Seminary or the University of Chicago.

questions about integration. As they studied in a neighborhood that one long-time African-American resident described as “rather rough,” the students responded to the growing needs of the increasingly crowded, poor, and African-American community around them.²⁴ For example, having been able to purchase an entire city block worth of real estate for \$200,000 in the wake of white flight, the seminary had plenty of space to share. Seminary leaders made some of those facilities available to neighborhood children through programs run by the church.²⁵ In connection with this programming, adults began to participate.²⁶ Woodlawn’s 1954 vacation bible school attracted more than thirteen white and fifty-five African-American children and was led by eight white and two African-American adults.²⁷ Without having set out to do so, the seminary students stumbled into racial integration.

In 1957 Delton Franz thus inherited a practice of racial integration along with a corpus of seminary students readily available to support Woodlawn’s ministry. A native Kansan and graduate of Bethel College and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Franz had little experience in urban communities before coming to Woodlawn.²⁸ Yet, serving as he did in a neighborhood troubled by crime, overcrowding, and property abandonment, he quickly gained a passion for urban ministry. Franz felt the crisis brought about by the seminary’s departure so keenly because

²⁴ Eduardo Camacho and Ben Joravsky, *Against the Tide: The Middle Class in Chicago* (Chicago: Community Renewal Society, 1989), 44-45; Keeney, "Woodlawn Mennonite Church."

²⁵ S. F. Pannabecker, "Mennonite Seminary in Chicago," *Mennonite Life*, April 1953, 69.

²⁶ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 3-4.

²⁷ Summer Bible School, Woodlawn... Setting, Chicago Ill. (1954) Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: Photo collection: Folder: Voluntary Service - North America.

²⁸ Keith Graber Miller, *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: American Mennonites Engage Washington*, 1st ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 47-48.

Woodlawn had depended on the seminary for both members and facilities. Ministry in a demanding neighborhood like Woodlawn already taxed the congregation. Franz sent a plea to the General Conference constituency because he needed outside help to continue ministry inside the neighborhood.

Franz felt the crisis so keenly because he believed that the seminary's leaders had abandoned their commitment to interracial ministry. Already in 1953, rumors spread among church leaders that the African Americans entering the formerly all-white Woodlawn area would "slowly crowd Mennonite Biblical Seminary out of the neighborhood."²⁹ Seminarians regularly experienced theft and vandalism that, at least in the minds of some, came to be associated with integration itself.³⁰ Although seminary administrators cited changes in leadership, a developing relationship with Goshen Biblical Seminary, and city officials' interest in seminary property as reasons for the relocation, those who stayed behind felt that seminary leaders had fled because of the neighborhood's racial composition.³¹ In his 1957 appeal to the broader church, Franz called out for assistance because the seminary's decision to move had put the Mennonite church "on trial."³² From where Franz stood, the future of race relations in the church seemed to ride on Woodlawn's success or failure.

The broader church met Franz's appeal with a steady gaze during the course of the following decade. At least thirty articles reported on events at Woodlawn in the pages of both the

²⁹ Guy F. Hershberger to John Oyer, October 9 1953, Goshen, Ind., Guy F. Hershberger Hist. Mss. 1-171, Box 10, Folder 8.

³⁰ John T. Neufeld, "Problems of Integration," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, December 31 1959.

³¹ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 13-14; Pannabecker, *Ventures of Faith: The Story of Mennonite Biblical Seminary*, 55-56.

³² Franz, "The Mennonite Church on Trial," 324.

General Conference and the (Old) Mennonite Church publications. For the three years following Franz's 1957 appeal, much of that press attention focused on Franz and his co-pastor Vincent Harding. During the years of their integrated partnership, Franz and Harding hosted a 1959 conference on race relations attended by representatives from the General Conference, (Old) Mennonite, and Mennonite Brethren denominations, took a tour through the South as an integrated team, and became ever more involved with the Civil Rights Movement (see Figure 52).³³ In



Vincent Harding and Delton Franz, co-pastors, Woodlawn Church.

Figure 52: Vincent Harding and Delton Franz, 1957 (Elmer Neufeld, "That the World Might Recognize Christ." *The Mennonite*, November 12 1957, 709).

addition to contributing to a dozen church press articles as authors or interviewees during their joint tenure, Franz and Harding accepted speaking engagements outside their congregation and invitations to sit on church-wide committees. Church leaders eagerly highlighted this "congregational Camelot" as proof of their collective racial egalitarianism.³⁴

Attention to Woodlawn Church meant attention to the Woodlawn neighborhood. Under Franz's and Harding's leadership, members of Woodlawn and voluntary service workers posted at the congregation wrote articles and spoke about the difficulties of living and working in an urban environment. The authors used phrases such as "overcrowded jungle," "dirt and filth," and

³³ Vincent Harding, "The Task of the Mennonite Church in Establishing Racial Unity," in *Archives of the Mennonite Church* (Goshen, Ind.: 1959), Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/1; "The Mennonite Churches and Race"; Delton Franz, "Notes on a Southern Journey," *The Mennonite*, January 6 1959.

³⁴ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 101.

“a world of dark strangers” to describe Woodlawn.³⁵ Thus, if white Mennonite readers knew anything about the Woodlawn neighborhood, they knew those who continued to work there after the seminary’s 1958 departure did so surrounded by dangerous African Americans.

Heightening the rhetoric of racial contrast, African-American leaders at Woodlawn cast white Mennonite volunteers in a positive light. Even though more than thirty local African-American members actively participated in the congregation’s ministry during the years that Harding and Franz served as co-pastors, white outsiders received disproportionate attention.³⁶ For example, Harding published a letter in *The Mennonite* in which he lauded the self-sacrifice of a Mennonite couple who left good jobs in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, in order better to support the congregation. Harding wrote that Arthur and Helen Ross “were convinced that they could not continue talking about sacrifice and about voluntary service in their Sunday school classes unless they, themselves, were willing to offer their own lives.”³⁷ The Rosses expressed that self-sacrificial spirit by moving to Woodlawn. Indeed, their actions represented both the best of ethical purity and a willingness to challenge the boundaries of racial purity. To be certain, such praiseworthy examples emphasized that Woodlawn’s white members exemplified the best of Mennonite self-sacrifice amid a threatening environment. Yet the equally courageous and self-sacrificial efforts of African-American Mennonite members of Woodlawn received scant attention. With the exception of Harding, Woodlawn’s African-American members took second place behind the white Mennonites who had relocated to Chicago.

³⁵ "Woodlawn World," *The Mennonite*, October 15 1957; Ed Riddick, "Matterhorn," *The Mennonite*, July 19 1960; Birdie Preheim, "Tok," *The Mennonite*, February 24 1959.

³⁶ Pannabecker, *Ventures of Faith: The Story of Mennonite Biblical Seminary*, 53.

³⁷ Vincent Harding, "Peace Witness to Racial Strife," *The Mennonite*, November 8 1960, 727.

* * *

Another congregation in the Chicago area started its journey toward integration from a point of deliberate segregation. In 1956, the same year that Delton Franz began his pastoral responsibilities at Woodlawn, a group of Mennonites organized to purchase property in the predominantly white south Chicago suburb of Markham. Led by John T. Neufeld, long-time pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Chicago, and supported by local and national mission commissions, the group intended to evangelize new converts and reach Chicago Mennonites who had moved to the suburbs.³⁸ As they purchased property for a new church building, Neufeld and his associates agreed to the seller's restrictive covenant which stated that the "premises shall not be conveyed or issued to nor occupied by any one who is not a Caucasian."³⁹ Although unenforceable under United States law following the 1948 Supreme Court ruling *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the issue remained alive for the group. Neufeld wrote to the sale agent that the clause would "cause no difficulty."⁴⁰ Although several months later he asked the title agent if there was "anything we should or can do about" the restrictive covenant, the congregation's leaders eventually signed the contract without making further changes.⁴¹ Regardless of the clause's

³⁸ Pannabecker, *Faith in Ferment: A History of the Central District Conference*, 279; Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 97.

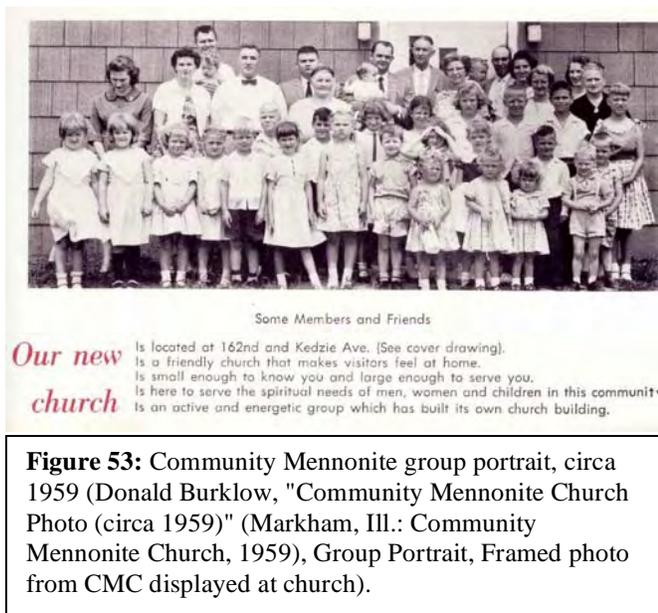
³⁹ "Preliminary Report on Title Guarantee Policy Application Number 45-59-339," August 3 (Chicago Title and Trust Company, 1956), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Building, CMC, Tax, Deeds, Titles, etc.

⁴⁰ John T. Neufeld to Paul J. Saenger, July 9 1956, Chicago, Ill., CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Building, CMC, Tax, Deeds, Titles, etc.

⁴¹ John T. Neufeld to Chicago Title & Trust Co., September 24 1956, Chicago, Ill., CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Building, CMC, Tax, Deeds, Titles, etc.

legality, the congregation's founding members accepted the covenant as necessary.⁴² From the beginning, the leaders of Community Mennonite intended to serve only white people.

The emerging church at Markham then turned its attention to more immediately pressing issues. Minutes from church board meetings between 1956 and 1960 focused on the congregation's efforts to raise funds to pay a pastor, build a church building, and run church programs. At the same time, congregants contributed to overseas mission projects in Paraguay and the Belgian Congo but paid much less attention to domestic outreach.⁴³ By



1959, the congregation had dedicated a new church building in a public ceremony attended by local Markham officials and recruited members from the community to join their "active and energetic group" (see Figure 53).⁴⁴ Charter members recall the early years as a time of warm fellowship, strong family bonds, and great appreciation for children in a church where "we were all close... [we trusted each other so much that] My kids are your kids."⁴⁵

⁴² Gerald Mares and Dolores Mares, interview with author, Markham, Ill., September 17, 2006.

⁴³ "Ledger with Handwritten Minutes from Early Church Board Meetings," (1956), CMC pastor's office - black unmarked ledger book with red stripe top and bottom, and green striping top and bottom.

⁴⁴ Donald Burklow, Community Mennonite Church Photo (Circa 1959) (Markham, Ill.: Community Mennonite Church, 1959) Framed photo from CMC displayed at church.

⁴⁵ Don Burklow and Grace Burklow, interview with author, Markham, Ill., April 15, 2005.

That friendly congregation, however, soon gave a chilly reception to an African-American guest. Shortly after the congregation had dedicated their new church building, pastor Ron Krehbiel invited Vincent Harding to speak. Krehbiel had met Harding while taking classes at Mennonite Biblical Seminary in the Woodlawn neighborhood. Thinking that his white congregants would accept an African-American speaker as easily as had the white Mennonites at the congregations Krehbiel attended as a child, Krehbiel invited Harding to speak but did not first consult with congregational leaders. Although he did not sense any adverse reaction during the service itself, Krehbiel began to notice “very disturbed” expressions as he shook people’s hands upon completion of the service.⁴⁶ Later on that afternoon, Krehbiel’s phone began to ring. Many of the congregants who had been raised in the South phoned Krehbiel to inform him, “If this ever happens again, we cannot come to your church anymore.”⁴⁷ Rather than wait for further dissension to build, Krehbiel called for a congregational meeting that very evening.

The ensuing meeting set a course the congregation would hold for decades to follow. Despite the short notice, the vast majority of the church’s sixty-five congregants attended. Those who had voiced their objections on the phone to Krehbiel again threatened to leave the congregation if anyone invited African Americans back to the church.⁴⁸ Following the gathering, church council members prayed, discussed, and decided on a course of action. In particular, council member Al Levreau lobbied for not placing any “restrictions... on anybody who is going to come to our church.” The council concurred and passed an “open door policy” by unanimous

⁴⁶ Ronald Krehbiel, interview with author, Hesston, Kans./Evanston, Ill., April 25, 2007.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

vote.⁴⁹ In response to the leaders' decision, nearly a third of the congregation left. The majority of those who departed had been raised in the South outside of white Mennonite enclaves and, although active participants, had not officially joined the congregation.⁵⁰

Community's open door policy came to the test a few years later as the neighborhood around the church began to change. Between 1950 and 1960 Markham's African-American population had grown from sixty-seven to 2,524, accounting for more than twenty-five percent of the suburb's census.⁵¹ By 1964, the African-American cohort in Markham had expanded to nearly thirty percent of the population and ballooned to forty-five percent by 1969.⁵² Amid the onset of that burgeoning change, pastor Krehbiel completed his tenure and the church welcomed a new pastor, Larry Voth.

Voth infused the fledgling group with fresh vigor. He came to the congregation in December 1960 while still a student at the Mennonite seminary in Elkhart that had formed in 1958 when Mennonite Biblical Seminary left the Woodlawn community.⁵³ Like Franz, he hailed from Kansas and had little urban pastoral experience before coming to Community Mennonite.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Tec-Search, "Comprehensive Plan, Markham, Illinois," March (1967), 6-2, CMC pastor's office - Large tabloid size plastic bindery cardboard covered tan book.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Lawrence Voth, "Markham Introduction," May 19 (Community Mennonite Church, 1964), CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CCM Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64"; Lawrence Voth, "The Story of the Markham Day Care Center," July 22 (Community Mennonite Church, 1969), 1, Marlene Suter's personal file.

⁵⁴ Helen Dick, "King of Fundraising to Retire," *Bethel College Collegian*, February 16 2001.

Yet Voth dove into the work with abandon. Beginning in January of 1961, Voth commuted between the seminary and the church for the next six months until he, his wife Jane, and daughters Laurie and Leslie moved to Markham in June.⁵⁵ From the onset, Voth brought abundant energy and a vision for new initiatives even as the congregation at times struggled to meet payroll.⁵⁶ Despite a small building, membership rolls counting no more than thirty-two, and Sunday morning worship census in the forties when he started, Voth had big plans to involve lay members in concrete ministry to the community.⁵⁷ Congregational members came to recognize that they had hired a visionary.

That visionary soon faced a significant challenge to his leadership. In response to Voth's energy, initiative, and vision, people began to take notice of the small Mennonite church building on Kedzie Avenue. Some who took notice and came to visit were white. Others, members of the growing African-American population in Markham, noticed and visited as well. On a Sunday in 1961 only a few months after Voth's arrival, three African-American women came into the brick-walled sanctuary and sat down in a pew.⁵⁸ They came because Voth had visited them in their homes and invited them to attend the church. Faye Mitchell, Ola Mae Smith, and Johnetta

⁵⁵ Marlene Suter, "Church History Notes," November 3 (Community Mennonite Church, 2001), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Church History; Jane Voth to author, December 2006, Markham, Ill., author's personal files. Although this chapter focuses on Larry Voth as a key motivator and agent in maintaining and developing the prospects for racial integration at Community Mennonite, Jane Voth also served a critical role in nurturing relationships with many African-American women at Community. As of this writing, she continues to maintain those relationships through periodic visits to Markham from her home in Newton, Kansas.

⁵⁶ Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes."

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Voth, "Markham Introduction," 2-3.

Wooden, who arrived “well-dressed and well-mannered,” immediately drew the attention of the entire congregation.⁵⁹ Unlike Woodlawn Mennonite where racial integration had been part of the congregation’s normal Sunday experience for the better part of a decade, the presence of African Americans in Community’s sanctuary proved controversial, threatening, and divisive despite the earlier decision under Krehbiel’s leadership to mandate an open door policy. From that point forward a crisis began to build in Voth’s congregation.

The confrontation that erupted at Community emerged out of the larger Markham context. Although by 1961 Markham had already experienced significant demographic shifts as African-American families began to relocate there in pursuit of better schools, housing, and living environment, the immediate neighborhood surrounding Community Mennonite remained all white.⁶⁰ The Kingston Green subdivision several miles away from the church building included many African-American homeowners, but Canterbury Gardens directly across from the church had none.⁶¹ Realtors and Veterans Housing Authority personnel had set up the racial segregation and the streets, toll roads, and industrial sites marking the boundaries of the

⁵⁹ Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes"; Lawrence Voth, "Markham and the Race Revolution," *The Mennonite Church in the City*, November 15 1963, 5.

⁶⁰ Andrew Wiese, "'The House I Live In': Race, Class and African American Suburban Dreams in the Postwar United States," in *The New Suburban History*, ed. Kevin Michael Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 118; Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*, 121-22; Peter J. Ediger, "Report on an Informal Meeting at Markham, Illinois, September 24, 1963," September 24 (Central District Missions Committee, Central District Peace and Service Committee, General Conference Board of Christian Service, General Conference Board of Missions, 1963), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Markham-Race-Village-Issues-General.

⁶¹ Ediger, "Ediger Report on Markham"; Karen Daigl, "Markham: Integration Worked Here," 1970.

segregated subdivisions enforced it.⁶² Despite such geographical boundaries, dozens of white families had already left Canterbury Gardens. Canterbury's local property manager, however, refused to sell the vacant homes to African-American buyers.⁶³ The three women who entered the congregation thus represented the potential for racial change within the congregation and the surrounding neighborhood.

Voth quickly recognized that the women's visit and their stated intention to return had destabilized the church. The congregation's prior commitment to welcome all people regardless of their race had suddenly become threatening. Some members declared that they had moved to Markham because they did not want to live anywhere near African Americans.⁶⁴ Others expressed concerns in private about interracial marriage.⁶⁵ Some claimed the congregation would soon become all African-American if the three women continued to attend.⁶⁶ The congregation's theoretical commitment to inclusion had become real in a way that discomfited many white congregants. In response to the congregational tumult, Voth visited with members to articulate his belief in the importance of a church open to members of all races. As threats to leave mounted, Voth called a congregational meeting to discuss how they were going to meet the challenge of helping African Americans "feel a part of our fellowship."⁶⁷

⁶² "Supplementary Information," March (City of Markham, 1965), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Markham-Race-Village-Issues-General.

⁶³ Louis G. Freeman, "History of the Land and People," June 24 (1970), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Markham-Race-Village-Issues-General.

⁶⁴ Voth, "Markham and Race," 5.

⁶⁵ Mares and Mares, interview with author.

⁶⁶ Burklow and Burklow, interview with author.

⁶⁷ Voth, "Markham and Race," 5.

The subsequent meeting led to new action and unsettled emotion. By all accounts, members made their perspectives known without apology.⁶⁸ Following this second round of discussion and intense scripture search, a majority of the congregation voted to welcome any African American who professed Christian belief and desired to become a part of their fellowship.⁶⁹ Jerry Mares, a charter member and church leader, summed up his reasons for supporting racial integration with a heavenly reference. He said, "God wasn't going to create two heavens, one for the blacks and one for the whites, so we better deal with it [i.e. integration] right now, which we did."⁷⁰ Yet even after this second round of deliberation the congregation had not completely settled the issue. Many white members remained unconvinced that Community Mennonite had chosen the correct path. Some of them began searching for a new congregation even as African Americans continued to assert that Community belonged to them.

Tension thus roiled through the church and surrounding community. Following President John F. Kennedy's November 1962 Executive Order 11063 that made it illegal to sell or rent federal property with regard to race, some African-American families began to express renewed interest in Canterbury Gardens properties, over thirty of which had been repossessed by the Veterans Administration.⁷¹ Less than a year after Kennedy's executive intervention, an African-American family purchased a home in Canterbury Gardens, but unidentified arsonists then set it on fire before the family could move in.⁷² Other African Americans succeeded in integrating the

⁶⁸ Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes."

⁶⁹ Voth, "Markham and Race," 5.

⁷⁰ Mares and Mares, interview with author.

⁷¹ Freeman, "Markham History," 8.

⁷² Ediger, "Ediger Report on Markham," 1.

surrounding neighborhood, however, and, at the invitation of pastor Voth, they began to attend Community; considerable strife ensued. By the end of 1962 African Americans had formally joined the church as evidenced by William Smith's membership on the church board. Smith, husband to one of the first three African-American women to attend the congregation the previous year, served on the board with relish.⁷³ Throughout 1962, African Americans participated in the youth group, women's fellowship, and Sunday school classes.⁷⁴

Such rapid integration brought along conflict. Racially demarcated fights among the youth occasionally broke out.⁷⁵ Some white members accused an African-American Sunday school teacher of heterodox instruction.⁷⁶ During one church board meeting, a white member started the rhyme, "Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Moe..." only to hear an African-American member reply, "Finish your thought."⁷⁷ Although board members laughed about the exchange, tension continued to sit uneasily in the room. Amid the tension, African Americans nonetheless developed strong relationships with the pastor and other white members.⁷⁸ The relationships made church attendance worthwhile.

⁷³ "Community Mennonite Church Church Board Meeting," December 15 (Community Mennonite Church, 1962), CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CCM Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64."

⁷⁴ Voth, "Markham and Race," 6.

⁷⁵ Burklow and Burklow, interview with author.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mares and Mares, interview with author. The speaker here quoted the first part of a racially offensive children's rhyme that ends with the phrase, "...pick a Nigger by his toe."

⁷⁸ Mertis Odom, interview with author, Markham, Ill., July 3, 2005.

The tension present in his congregation prompted Voth to seek outside support. The men he called to his aid on September 24, 1963, all came from outside Markham. Like Voth, they carried a passion for racial integration. Franz brought seven years' experience pastoring Woodlawn.⁷⁹ Peter Ediger came as Field Secretary for City Churches on behalf of the General Conference Home Missions Commission.⁸⁰ Harry Spaeth participated in his capacity as pastor of First Mennonite in the south-side Chicago neighborhood of Englewood, another community facing rapid racial transition. Together they laid plans for a "Mennonite strategy for Chicago."⁸¹ Rather than make his way forward alone, Voth sought partners who would counter congregational and Conference leaders who cautioned him to slow down. Although he did bring in Smith, the sole African-American board member at his congregation, to report briefly on the prospect of recruiting more African-American members, Voth relied first on external resources to help maintain racial integration at Community.

Voth's choice of conversation partners served him well. Most immediately, Ediger, Franz, and Spaeth asked questions that helped clarify the challenge he faced. In addition to such supportive inquiry, Voth received institutional support. Ediger sent minutes from the meeting to a wide circle of regional and national church leaders.⁸² Likewise within a few months of their

⁷⁹ Note also that Larry and Jane Voth were close friends with Delton and Marian Franz. Jane and Marian roomed together in college and the couples maintained their friendship while they were both located in the Chicago area. See: Voth to author.

⁸⁰ Harold Regier, "Where to from Here?" *The Gulfbreeze*, September-October 1963, 2.

⁸¹ Ediger, "Ediger Report on Markham." The predominance of white men at conference-level leadership meetings during this period is striking. White and African-American women exercised leadership at congregational-level gatherings at Community but rarely did men in leadership positions include women in gatherings with other church officials.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

meeting, Ediger had published a collection of reflections on Mennonites in the city in which both Franz and Voth figured prominently.⁸³ Voth used his article to describe a church where “both Negroes and whites will find ... acceptance and Christian life in the framework of our local congregation.”⁸⁴ In order to make that vision a reality, Voth had to garner the support of African-American and white members in his congregation and win the minds of the broader church as well.

Voth needed such external support to manage the crisis that finally broke out within Community. In December of 1963, about three months after meeting with Ediger, Franz, and Spaeth, Community Mennonite put on a Christmas pageant in which Mary and Joseph represented different races.⁸⁵ Less than a month later, on January 17, 1964, the church board listened as Ediger affirmed their integration efforts. In response to Ediger’s comments and the decision to cast a racially integrated holy couple, board chair Al Levreau – the same council member who had so strongly supported the church’s open door policy – launched into a debate over interracial marriage that ended when he abruptly resigned from his position and declared he would no longer attend worship services.⁸⁶ Levreau’s resignation added to a limited number of white congregant departures as of early 1964.⁸⁷ The departures this time, although fewer in

⁸³ Ediger, "Race Revolution."

⁸⁴ Lawrence Voth, "Markham and the Race Revolution," *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁵ "Community Mennonite Church Church Board Meeting," January 17 (Community Mennonite Church, 1964), 2, CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CCM Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64."

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Although oral history participants recalled this time period as full of a significant number of departures, as many as a third of the congregation by one account, church records indicate that

number than after Harding's sermon, were marked by greater acrimony. One member remembered that his boss, a former congregant, told him he would "go to hell" for worshipping with African Americans. The member replied, "You're going to go to hell because you left."⁸⁸ As such exchanges made evident, feelings remained raw in the aftermath of Levreau's resignation and some wondered, in response to comments made by Ediger, whether the General Conference denominational leaders were promoting interracial marriage as the solution to racial strife.

Voth responded quickly by again drawing the larger church into the congregation's crisis. This time he brought in the General Conference denominational president to meet with the group. During this February 17, 1964, meeting another member of the congregation, Margaret Carr, expressed her desire to worship elsewhere because she believed integration "leads to intermarriage." In response to a question posed by President Gehring, African-American board member Smith explained that the African-American members of the congregation did not want to marry across racial lines. He and other African-American members appeared to have found the discussion somewhat puzzling. They had joined the church to worship, not to marry across racial lines.⁸⁹ Gehring nonetheless stressed that the General Conference's officers had never

both membership and offerings increased from 1962 through 1963 by seventeen percent. See: Ibid; Mares and Mares, interview with author; Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes." The earlier mass departures after Vincent Harding's visit may have become conflated in memory with this latter conflict several years later.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, interview with author.

⁸⁹ Smith's pragmatic response indicating that African-American members in the church did not want to marry across racial lines is in keeping with the broader tack taken by the African-American community during this period in regards to interracial marriage. They recognized the danger of supporting such unions in white settings, but accepted interracial couples in their own neighborhoods and communities. See: Renee Christine Romano, *Race Mixing: Black-White*

encouraged “intermarriage.”⁹⁰ When apprised of Gehring’s statements by a delegation sent to him following this board meeting, former chair Levreau refused to rejoin the congregation due to continued fears about “who and what kind of people” might come to Community as a result of integration.⁹¹ By March the board officially accepted Levreau’s resignation and closed discussion of the issue by passing a statement that declared, “[T]he church body welcomes continued growth on a racially integrated basis.”⁹² Voth followed up that statement by sending out a letter several weeks later to every pastor in the Central District Conference asking that they pray for the white members of his congregation who found it “hard to accept people of a different color.”⁹³ The drama at Community thus unfolded before the entire district and much of the denomination.

Voth’s strategy to pull in outside resources to respond to internal conflict paralleled Franz’s approach during the same era. By 1963, Franz and other members of his congregation had written about the issues, concerns, and activities facing the Woodlawn congregation at least

Marriage in Postwar America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 83-84, 107-08.

⁹⁰ "Community Mennonite Church Church Board Meeting."

⁹¹ Lawrence Voth, Andrew F. Taylor, and Duane Zehr, "Visit with Alfred Levreau Family," March (Community Mennonite Church, 1964), 2, CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CCM Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64."

⁹² M. Carr, "Community Mennonite Church Board Meeting," March 7 (Community Mennonite Church, 1964), CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CMC Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64."

⁹³ Lawrence Voth to Central District Conference Ministers, April 30 1964, Markham, Ill., CMC Second Floor Storage Area, Box "Church Bulletins 1970-73: Missions CMC Reports 1974, 1975, 1976: Church Board Records Thru 1974," Binder: "Board Records 1961-64."

a dozen times.⁹⁴ As the two pastors and their congregations worked at external education, they thus called the church to delve into the meaning of integration. Already in late 1963, Voth pushed denominational leaders to ask what “total acceptance” would entail.⁹⁵ In the same way, Franz had begun to recognize that integration could not be sustained without rigorous engagement with the struggle for civil rights. He prodded church leaders and congregants to “become true peacemakers in this revolution against the evil of segregation.”⁹⁶ Unlike some civil rights activists who had begun to question the viability of racial integration by 1963, Voth and Franz continued to promote the ideal even as they tested its limits.⁹⁷ Given that the majority of white Mennonites at the time found discussions of integration at best foreign and at worst singularly threatening, the two men and the congregations they represented walked a lonely path. Yet both Voth and Franz tirelessly invited members of their denomination to join them.

For the following three years these two white Mennonite pastors managed to balance denominational contact with congregational outreach. From 1963 through 1965, both pastors led their congregations in remarkably similar ways. Although the two congregations had only

⁹⁴ J. N. Smucker, "Pale-Face Religion," *The Mennonite*, October 27 1953; Harriet Amstutz, "A Look at Woodlawn Children," *The Mennonite*, October 5 1954; "Woodlawn World"; Franz, "The Mennonite Church on Trial"; Elmer Neufeld, "That the World Might Recognize Christ," *The Mennonite*, November 12 1957; Elmer Neufeld, "Visitation at Woodlawn," *The Mennonite*, May 21 1957; Vincent Harding, "To My Fellow Christians: An Open Letter to Mennonites," *The Mennonite*, September 30 1958; Peter Kehler, "The Unwanted," *The Mennonite*, March 3 1959; Preheim, "Tok"; Riddick, "Matterhorn"; "Church Serves Coffee," *The Mennonite*, January 8 1963; Esther Groves, "Chicago Volunteers," *The Mennonite*, December 24 1963.

⁹⁵ "Church Facing Crisis," 8.

⁹⁶ Delton Franz, "What Stance for the Church in the Civil Rights Struggle?" *The Mennonite Church in the City*, November 15 1963, 10.

⁹⁷ Tamar Jacoby, *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration* (New York: Free Press, 1998), 50.

sporadic contact with each other through their pastors, both groups poured their energies into voluntary service, youth programming, and, to varying degrees, the Civil Rights Movement. As in the early years of both communities, mission and service came first.

Community Mennonite reached out to the surrounding neighborhood through a children's day-care program. To build this program, Voth turned again to the broader Mennonite network. Rather than draw on local resources, Voth recruited Mennonite college students to move to Markham, find jobs in the local school system, and help start the day-care center in their spare time.⁹⁸ In response to this charismatic and demanding vision, nearly a dozen teachers relocated to the Markham area.⁹⁹ The congregation began the center in 1964 with the teachers' help, the assistance of Mennonite Voluntary Service workers from the United States, and the leadership of the center's first director, Carol Selman, a local church member.¹⁰⁰ Although congregational members grew frustrated at times as they shared the church building with the children and their teachers, contacts through the center helped the congregation grow.¹⁰¹ African-American members such as Ivorie Lowe and Mary Ann Woods, who would later emerge as pivotal leaders in the church, joined after having made use of the day-care facilities as did white congregants like R. A. and Florence Ekstrom.¹⁰² Service raised the congregation's profile.

⁹⁸ Pannabecker, *Faith in Ferment: A History of the Central District Conference*, 279; Marlene Suter to author, November 10 2006, Markham, Ill.

⁹⁹ Teachers who relocated to Markham included: Vicki Bryant, Lavonne Goessen, Jo Hinz, Winnifred Kauffman, Esther Preheim, Janel Preheim, David Regehr, Cheryl Steiner, Rudi Steiner, and Sandra (Raber) Wingert. See: Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes."

¹⁰⁰ Suter to author.

¹⁰¹ Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes."

¹⁰² Mary Ann Woods, interview with author, Markham, Ill., April 29, 2005; Burklow and Burklow, interview with author; Suter to author.

In the same way, Woodlawn used a creative form of service to build relationships in their neighborhood. In 1963, Franz initiated a new ministry that would soon capture the imaginations of workers and community members alike.¹⁰³ Replicating a model first developed by the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., the congregation opened a coffeehouse in a former Chinese laundry near the congregation's church building.¹⁰⁴ Known as the "Quiet Place," the combination coffeehouse and bookstore offered coffee, donuts, and reading material to all who entered.¹⁰⁵ Franz described it as an effort to share "faith in a way that is not repugnant" to the "man on the street."¹⁰⁶ As in the case of Community Mennonite's day-care center, Woodlawn's coffeehouse increased the congregation's profile in the neighborhood. Bible study and small support groups developed as a result of relationships built over coffee and donuts.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, the Quiet Place and other Woodlawn ministries relied on voluntary service workers drawn from throughout North America.¹⁰⁸

Volunteers from outside the community also assisted in youth programs run by both congregations. Even before formal organization, Woodlawn had sponsored an active Sunday school and vacation bible school program attended by many local youth.¹⁰⁹ The congregation's

¹⁰³ "Church Serves Coffee."

¹⁰⁴ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 29.

¹⁰⁵ Groves, "Chicago Volunteers."

¹⁰⁶ "Church Serves Coffee."

¹⁰⁷ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 29; Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 394.

¹⁰⁸ Groves, "Chicago Volunteers."

¹⁰⁹ J. N. Smucker, "Pale-Face Religion," *Ibid.*, October 27 1953; Summer Bible School, Woodlawn... Setting, Chicago Ill.

Fresh Air program had sent hundreds of children from Woodlawn, Markham, and other Chicago neighborhoods for short stays in Mennonite country homes.¹¹⁰ As of 1964, Mennonite voluntary service workers continued to staff summer youth programs at Woodlawn (see Figure 54). In addition to running Sunday schools and participating in Woodlawn's Fresh Air program, Community Mennonite initiated new forms of youth ministry. By October of 1965, Voth became involved with Markham's Youth Services Council, a group trying to stem youth violence and gang activity in concert with local African-American churches.¹¹¹ Community Mennonite then obtained a grant of \$2,500 from the regional Mennonite conference to staff the council.¹¹² As these examples make evident, the congregation's local youth work depended heavily upon outside resources.



Figure 54: Margaret Harder, Joyce Goertzen and unnamed Woodlawn neighborhood children, 1964 (1964. Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas, Photo collection, Folder: Churches – Illinois).

From late 1965 forward Community and Woodlawn took somewhat different paths as the Civil Rights Movement began to turn toward Chicago. At Community, individual members

¹¹⁰ Delton Franz to Parents of Chicago Children and to the Host Parents, 1959, Chicago, Illinois, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 1, Folder 4, Correspondence - General Conf. 1960.

¹¹¹ "Youth Services Council Memos," October 8 (Youth Services Council, 1965), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Markham-Race-Village-Issues-General.

¹¹² Lois Rensberger, "A Weekend in Chicago," *The Mennonite/Central District Reporter*, June 17 1969, A-3.

participated in marches but civil rights discussions and activism seldom garnered congregation-wide attention.¹¹³ Voth did participate in the occasional demonstration, but he focused more of his energy on visiting with and inviting African-American residents from nearby Canterbury Gardens and other parts of Markham to join the congregation.¹¹⁴ During a time of racial unrest, members of Community thus practiced integration without talking about it.¹¹⁵ At Community, both white and African-American members kept integration and civil rights activism separate.

Woodlawn members, however, linked integration and civil rights. In September of 1965, *The Mennonite* featured an article by Delton Franz that pictured him hosting Martin Luther King, Jr., at the Woodlawn Mennonite Church (see Figure 55).¹¹⁶ In addition to writing articles and letters to the broader Mennonite community about race prejudice within their denomination, dozens of church members also participated in protests and marches.¹¹⁷ At one point the Woodlawn congregation, along with Voth and a few members from Community Mennonite, took part in a non-violence workshop led by Jesse Jackson and later marched with King into a white, segregated neighborhood.¹¹⁸ Such high-profile activism garnered press attention. Reporters

¹¹³ Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 247.

¹¹⁴ Burklow and Burklow, interview with author; Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes."

¹¹⁵ Burklow and Burklow, interview with author; Woods, interview with author; Odom, interview with author; Mares and Mares, interview with author.

¹¹⁶ Delton Franz, "King Comes to Woodlawn," *The Mennonite*, September 28 1965.

¹¹⁷ Marie J. Regier, "Lots of Education Needed," *Ibid.*, August 31.

¹¹⁸ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 101-02.; Voth to author.

covering Woodlawn's involvement in civil rights activities quoted both white and African-American leaders and listed the names of local church members and those who came to Woodlawn from other Mennonite enclaves. For example, church press news accounts named Chicago residents Leota Johnson and Mary Smith along with rural Mennonite transplants Marie Regier and Ingrid Neufeld.¹¹⁹ Woodlawn members enthusiastically promoted the nonviolent strategies and tactics that other Mennonites found problematic.



Martin Luther King (seated, center) visited Woodlawn.

Figure 55: Martin Luther King, Jr., and Delton Franz, 1965 (Delton Franz, "King Comes to Woodlawn." *The Mennonite*, September 28 1965, 607-08).

The same news accounts that named an integrated mix of white and African-American protestors highlighted the words of Woodlawn's summer pastor, Curtis Burrell. No longer did Burrell offer gentle consolation and assurance as he had at Woodlawn in 1959. Burrell spoke with a different voice. He explained his arrest during an early summer 1965 demonstration in Chicago in forthright biblical terms. Casting himself and his co-defendants in the role of an Old Testament prophet, Burrell stated, "Like Jeremiah who had a burning message in his heart and could not help but shout, we too have to shout our message."¹²⁰ In the course of six years, the cautious integrationist had become a passionate activist. Burrell's summer pastorate and the high-profile activism signaled a change that would soon transform Woodlawn beyond recognition.

¹¹⁹ "Jeremiah Appears in Chicago," *The Mennonite*, July 20 1965.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 467-68.

That change had not yet come about as fall turned into the winter of 1965. The three years from 1963 through 1965 had been good ones for both congregations. New programs led to growth and positive change as local neighbors turned into committed members. Strong leaders at Woodlawn and Community emphasized traditional Mennonite service, wrote about their churches in public forums, and gathered human and financial resources for their local communities. These two churches had demonstrated to Mennonites throughout the United States that racial integration could be successfully achieved. With the prospect of Burrell coming to work at Woodlawn and new African-American members continuing to join Community, the future looked bright for both groups.

In particular Curtis Burrell made that future shine. He came to Woodlawn in the summer of 1966 with the previous summer's pastorate behind him and widely respected Mennonite credentials.¹²¹ He earned those credentials after having contacted respected Mennonite pastor Hubert Schwartzenruber in early 1958 while yet incarcerated in the Missouri state penitentiary.¹²² Upon his release, Burrell plunged into the life of the Mennonite community. He attended the Ontario Mennonite Bible Institute in 1959 and then continued his Mennonite school education at Hesston College (Kansas), Goshen College, and Goshen Seminary.¹²³ In addition to contributing articles to various Mennonite church publications, he attended and spoke at

¹²¹ "Burrell New Associate at Woodlawn," *The Mennonite/Central District Reporter*, February 15 1966; "Jeremiah Appears in Chicago."

¹²² Curtis E. Burrell, Jr. to Hubert Schwartzenruber, January 2 1958, Jefferson City, Missouri, AMC - III-25-8 Bethesda MC 1/10, H. Schwartzenruber Files - Corres., Misc. incoming 1957-59.

¹²³ Jim Fairfield, "Curtis Burrell: A Bullet Hole in the Window," *Christian Living*, May 1971, 25.

numerous church events and served for a short while with the Hardings in Atlanta.¹²⁴ By 1963, church officials ranked him alongside the Hardings and long-time African-American church leaders James and Rowena Lark as exemplars of the church's race relations ministry.¹²⁵ With Burrell's arrival, some hoped that a second era of interracial leadership had come to Woodlawn.

The integrated leadership that had worked so well in 1959 could not, however, be transplanted to 1966. In inner-city Chicago, as throughout much of the nation, black power had arrived. Stokely Carmichael's summer 1966 proclamation that the time had come for African Americans to seize power reached Burrell and other African-American leaders in the church. Soon Burrell's integrationist message shifted toward black self-determination. Although his predecessor Vincent Harding had repeatedly challenged Mennonites about their participation in racism, Harding had done so from the assumption that an integrated community could and should be achieved. Burrell's growing embrace of black self-determination questioned that precept.

Although his partnership with Franz did not usher in another era of robust integrated leadership, Burrell nonetheless remained deliberately in conversation with white Mennonites throughout the entirety of his tenure at Woodlawn. An article he penned for the Mennonite press

¹²⁴ Rosemarie Harding and Vincent Harding, "They Went to Atlanta," *The Mennonite*, March 5 1963, 158; Linden M. Wenger and Virgil Brenneman, "Program of Witness to and with Negroes," April 16 (Home Missions and Evangelism Committee Round Table, 1959), AMC - III-25-8 Box 3, Bethesda Mennonite Church, St. Louis, MO, H. Schwartzentruber Files - data files, Folder: Race Relations Data; "Why Do White Folks Hate Us?: Urban-Racial Meetings, Youngstown, Ohio, March 4, 5, St. Louis, Mo., March 11, 12," *Mission Service Newsletter*, May 9, 1965.

¹²⁵ "Mennonite General Conference Proceedings, August 20-23, 1963, Kalona, Iowa" (paper presented at the Thirty-third Mennonite General Conference, Kalona, Iowa, August 20-23 1963), 87, AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

in the fall of 1966 declared that he was no longer bound by white values and ways of thinking but he continued to proclaim that all believers, white and African-American alike, could be transformed in Christ.¹²⁶ One month later he again directed his thoughts to a white Mennonite audience as he emphasized both “black political representation” and traditional Mennonite values of “[l]ove, courage, peace, tolerance, faith, spiritual ... good deeds, redemptive suffering.”¹²⁷ By the middle of the following year, Burrell wrote yet another time for a Mennonite audience in an article lauding Muhammad Ali’s conscientious objection to war.¹²⁸ White Mennonite readers did not appreciate Burrell’s perspective on Ali, a prizefighter who claimed political, racial, and religious reasons for his refusal to bear arms in an outspoken manner antithetical to Mennonite humility and concern for ethical and religious purity.¹²⁹ When faced with Burrell’s wholehearted embrace of Ali, one white Mennonite responded, “I am disgusted.”¹³⁰ She could not countenance how any Mennonite could support such a patently impure figure. Despite such rejection of his perspective, Burrell continued to engage white Mennonite audiences.

One of the Mennonites with whom Burrell remained in conversation had long challenged the church with commentary as pointed and critical as that offered by Burrell. As he had since

¹²⁶ Curtis E. Burrell, Jr., "How My Mind Has Changed About Whites," *Christian Living*, September 1966.

¹²⁷ Curtis Burrell, "Response to Black Power," *The Mennonite*, October 11 1966.

¹²⁸ Curtis Burrell, "The Conscience of a Heavyweight," *The Mennonite*, June 13 1967.

¹²⁹ Mrs. V. Flaming, "Slander of Country," *Ibid.*, July 18; Ronald W. Woelk, "Not Every Black Man," *The Mennonite*, July 18 1967.

¹³⁰ Mrs. V. Flaming, "Slander of Country," *The Mennonite*, July 18 1967; Kathy Mast, Mrs., "Disgusted with Clay," *The Mennonite*, July 18 1967; Ronald W. Woelk, "Not Every Black Man," *The Mennonite*, July 18 1967.

first coming to serve at Woodlawn, Franz continued to advocate for more active involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. In at least nine articles in the Mennonite church press, Franz called on Anabaptist values, quoted Karl Marx, and cited the example of the Woodlawn congregation as he challenged Mennonites to offer their bodies as a “living sacrifice” to the cause of justice.¹³¹ Franz consistently urged the church to push beyond building friendships and begin seeking justice. In 1959 Franz prodded the church to fulfill its “duty to work against social injustice.”¹³² His message had only gotten sharper by 1966. Franz had criticized Mennonites for their inaction and acquiescence to the status quo far earlier than Burrell.

Despite his at times radical rhetoric, Franz nonetheless anchored his congregation to the broader church. He first drew on his membership in an overwhelmingly white network of familial and social relationships to support his ministry at Woodlawn. This racially homogeneous network, maintained in part by notions of racial purity, thus tied him securely to the church. No one questioned Franz’s church membership based on his race. Likewise, as the examples above suggest, Franz used Mennonite theological terms with dispatch. Employing religious purity as Harding had before him, Franz drew on traditional values of nonconformity and separation from the world to prompt Mennonites to engage in sacrificial action. He also demonstrated ethical purity by living and working in a racially oppressed community while calling others to do the same. Finally, he maintained sexual purity in his relationship with a loving wife and daughter.

¹³¹ Franz, "The Mennonite Church on Trial"; Franz, "Notes on a Southern Journey"; Delton Franz, "Island of Hope in a Sea of Despair," *The Mennonite*, February 24 1959; Vincent Harding et al., "Church and Race in 6 Cities," *The Mennonite*, February 12 1963; Delton Franz, "Why Is Woodlawn Church in the Middle of Chicago's Civil Rights?" *The Mennonite/Central District Reporter*, February 15 1966; Delton Franz, "Dangers of 'Get Tough'," *The Mennonite*, June 18 1968; Delton Franz, "Senate Committee Hears Chicago Mennonite Pastor," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, September 3 1970; Franz, "King Comes," 608; Franz, "Church Stance."

¹³² Hershberger, "Race Relations Notes," 9.

Franz kept his congregation connected to the broader denomination because he embodied core Mennonite purity values in ways that Burrell did not.

The church's response to the two men's equally challenging messages reveals how a pastoral purity anchor like Franz helped stabilize a racially integrated congregation. The next eighteen months made clear that Burrell, lacking Franz's pristine credentials, could not anchor Woodlawn in the same way. For example, although Burrell had begun to speak of black self-determination while he and Franz co-pastored, only after Franz's departure did white church leaders begin to ask questions about Burrell's use of black power rhetoric. Likewise, while Franz pastored alongside Burrell, white members asked how they could give up power and control and yet remain "on the team."¹³³ As of December 1967 the congregation reported on their commitment to remain integrated while supporting black power.¹³⁴ Six months later, however, Franz resigned to accept a position with Mennonite Central Committee in Washington, D.C.¹³⁵ After Franz departed, national white church leaders scrutinized Woodlawn with new intensity and white congregational members reconsidered their participation. Internal questions about Burrell's viability as a leader of an integrated congregation began to spread across the denomination. The same leaders who rewarded Franz's critique with a national leadership post responded with much less enthusiasm to Burrell's prophetic words. Instead of filling a national leadership position, Burrell found himself sitting on the fringes of the church. Soon after Franz's departure, a regional Mennonite reporter described Burrell as an ineffective leader of a "puzzled,

¹³³ "Interracial Church Tested," *The Mennonite*, December 5 1967.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 102.

uneasy congregation.”¹³⁶ By contrast, despite his theologically suspect alliances with local political officials in Markham, Voth received accolades from the same author who raised questions about Burrell’s ministry.¹³⁷ In the review of four Chicago congregations and their pastors, only Burrell received negative appraisal.

Burrell nonetheless continued to relate to the Mennonite church. Concurrent with Franz’s summer 1968 departure, Burrell published an article in the pages of *The Mennonite* in which he called on white Christians to “repent of their racism” and stated unequivocally that “America” needed to follow “bold black leadership.”¹³⁸ He expounded on this theme at the national General Conference assembly that same year when he challenged white Mennonites to convert to “blackness” and declared, “[T]he black man is better equipped [than white people] to lead mankind morally.”¹³⁹ Although he no longer concluded his articles and addresses with appeals to Christian unity, he did continue to correspond with his white co-believers.

Burrell’s increasing hesitancy to discuss Christian unity stemmed from his growing commitment to minister first and foremost to Woodlawn’s African-American community. Even though the Mennonite press continued to refer to Woodlawn as a preeminent mission site, Burrell ever more focused on needs of the Woodlawn neighborhood.¹⁴⁰ To begin, Burrell transformed the Quiet Place coffeehouse into a restaurant training program for African-American

¹³⁶ Rensberger, "A Weekend in Chicago," A-13.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, A-3, A-4.

¹³⁸ Curtis E. Burrell, Jr., "A Primer on the Urban Rebellion," *The Mennonite*, June 18 1968, 418, 20.

¹³⁹ "White Society Saved When Miss America Is Black," *The Mennonite*, August 6 1968.

¹⁴⁰ Warren Moore, "Ethnic Mennonites?" *Mennonite Life*, January 1967, 26.

young adults known as the Palace Restaurant. Rather than white voluntary service workers, local neighborhood members ran the program to gain skills in restaurant management, cooking, bookkeeping, and hosting.¹⁴¹ Building on the success of local initiatives, Burrell began to move in circles outside the confines of Woodlawn Mennonite. Through his elected position as president of the Kenwood Oaklawn Community Organization, Burrell laid plans in 1969 to improve housing, schools, and medical facilities through African-American leadership.¹⁴² He also sought to end the ascendancy of a local gang, the Blackstone Rangers, who had intimidated the neighborhood through outright violence, petty theft, and burglary.¹⁴³ Burrell poured his energy into meeting needs of the African-American community where he lived. Union with white Christians continued to be important but only inasmuch as those relationships helped support his Woodlawn-based ministry.

Of all the needs he tried to meet, the need to end gang violence presented Burrell with his most daunting and irresistible challenge. From their start in 1966, the Blackstone Rangers had grown in size and influence to galvanize the attention of police, church, and community organizations.¹⁴⁴ African-American police officers' previously effective efforts to stem gang-related crime in Woodlawn had been undermined when their white superiors transferred them

¹⁴¹ Melvin Rensberger, Mrs., "Woodlawn Pastor Heads \$3,500,000 South Chicago Renewal Plan," *The Mennonite/Central District Reporter*, February 18 1969.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 32.

¹⁴⁴ John Hall Fish, *Black Power/White Control: The Struggle of the Woodlawn Organization in Chicago* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), 118-19.

out of the neighborhood.¹⁴⁵ In addition, the Rangers had aggressively recruited new members until they counted more than two thousand youth in their “super gang.”¹⁴⁶ In response, community-based groups like the Woodlawn Organization organized job-training programs and Woodlawn’s First Presbyterian Church opened up their building for the Rangers to hold parties and meetings.¹⁴⁷ These positive efforts notwithstanding, both African-American and white congregants from Woodlawn Mennonite began to leave the area because of the gang-related violence.¹⁴⁸ Burrell, however, felt called to work directly with “hard core” youth like the Rangers.¹⁴⁹

Burrell’s vision, passion, and ability to work with the Rangers and articulate the need for African-American community ownership lifted him to city-wide leadership. In 1969, Burrell hired several Blackstone Rangers, by that point known as the Black P Stone Nation, to important leadership posts within the Kenwood Oaklawn Community Organization.¹⁵⁰ That same year Burrell also resigned in protest from his position as co-chair of Mayor Richard J. Daley’s Model Area Planning Council because he claimed it was “stacked against the interests of the people.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Timuel D. Black, *Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Black Migration*, 1st pbk. printing. ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 418.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 564; Fish, *Black Power/White Control*, 118.

¹⁴⁷ Black, *Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Black Migration*, 564; Fish, *Black Power/White Control*, 119.

¹⁴⁸ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 102.

¹⁴⁹ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 32.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁵¹ Fish, *Black Power/White Control*, 251.

Because of this bold action, Burrell garnered the attention of Jesse Jackson and other political leaders.¹⁵² Burrell thus moved in circles foreign to most white Mennonites.

Yet Burrell continued to seek white Mennonite connections in the midst of serving an African-American neighborhood. Even as he entered ever more dangerous and controversial territory, Burrell kept Mennonites abreast of his vision and program. In early 1969, Burrell spoke with a reporter from the Central District Conference, Woodlawn's supporting conference body, about his growing vision and expanding program.¹⁵³ Four months later, a second account described his "puzzled, uneasy congregation."¹⁵⁴ Although Burrell had garnered citywide and regional attention as he hired gang members to run his community organization, members of his congregation expressed discomfort when he held meetings at the church with men who did not have "the best reputations."¹⁵⁵ Although he was acting on the theology of activism espoused by his mentors in the church like Franz, Schwartzentruber, and seminary professor John Howard Yoder, Burrell's relationship with his own congregation had begun to show signs of stress.

Eventually his connections with the Mennonite world would likewise grow thin and then snap altogether. The final demise came through his work with gangs. Unlike Franz or Voth, Burrell had entered into relationship with some of the most dangerous members of the community in which he pastored. Along with the possibility of successful relations came the possibility of failure. Burrell's efforts to minister to the gang members began to falter as he held them accountable for their work assignments. Eventually, he fired three gang members and the

¹⁵² Rensberger, "Woodlawn Pastor Heads \$3,500,000 South Chicago Renewal Plan."

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, A-2.

¹⁵⁴ Lois Rensberger, "A Weekend in Chicago," *Ibid.*, June 17, A-13.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 395-96; Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 33.

Rangers responded with violence. On June 10, 1970, Burrell put his family in hiding. Shortly thereafter unknown assailants bombed his offices and, on June 22, gang members shot nine times into his home.¹⁵⁶ As Burrell tried to rally community support through neighborhood marches, the harassment increased. Following gunfire exchange at Woodlawn Church between Rangers and Burrell's bodyguard, an arsonist set the church on fire on July 30, 1970.¹⁵⁷

The Rangers chose a target that should have brought Burrell into closer contact with the Mennonite community.¹⁵⁸ At first both the Mennonite community and local Woodlawn neighborhood rallied around Burrell and his congregation. Only four days after the fire, Burrell organized an outdoor

The church in the street: Jesse Jackson delivers the sermon at Woodlawn.



Figure 56: Jesse Jackson, Delton Franz, and other church dignitaries, 1970 ("Arsonists Set Fire to Woodlawn Church." *The Mennonite*, August 25 1970, 507-08).

worship service that drew an audience of five hundred and included an address by Jesse Jackson (see Figure 56).¹⁵⁹ Delton Franz returned from D.C. and sat on the outdoor platform along with Burrell and other community leaders.¹⁶⁰ Franz's inclusion on the makeshift dais symbolized

¹⁵⁶ "Arsonists Set Fire to Woodlawn Church," *The Mennonite*, August 25 1970.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Note, for example, the tremendous outpouring of support for the Native American Mennonites at Nanih Waiya, Mississippi, after their church building was bombed and burnt in 1964, 1966, and 1969. See: Lapp, "Mississippi Report 1969."

¹⁵⁹ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 102.

¹⁶⁰ "Arsonists Set Fire to Woodlawn Church."

ongoing connection with the white Mennonite community as did the presence of white Mennonite church leaders including former Mennonite Peace Section executive secretary and future Bluffton College president Elmer Neufeld, incoming Central District Conference minister Jacob T. Friesen, General Conference Commission on Home Ministries chair David Habegger, community activist and academic Don Schierling, and the then current Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section executive secretary John Lapp.¹⁶¹ Burrell's determination to rebuild the church appeared to be supported by the entire Mennonite community.

Initially positive press reports became increasingly critical during the next two years. The *Mennonite Weekly Review* covered Burrell's appearance before the Senate Sub-Committee on Permanent Investigations on August 4, 1970, where he testified about his efforts to confront the Black P Stone Nation.¹⁶² That same publication likewise published a sympathetic account that highlighted Burrell's efforts to "apply the historic Mennonite faith" to a "poor black community" and noted that Burrell and his wife Lois continued to host white Mennonite visitors in their home.¹⁶³ In May of the following year, *Christian Living* published an extensive profile on Burrell that mentioned his interracial marriage, a point made salient by the Mennonite church's turn toward embracing African-American men married to white women.¹⁶⁴ The author also mentioned Burrell's ongoing appreciation of white Mennonites like Franz, Yoder, and

¹⁶¹ Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 37; "\$25,000 Fire in Chicago's Woodlawn Church," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, August 6 1970, 1.

¹⁶² Franz, "Senate Committee."

¹⁶³ Jacob T. Friesen, "Pastor in Chicago Ghetto Identifies with Community's 'Hurts and Fears'," *Ibid.*, August 20.

¹⁶⁴ In Chapter 6 of this dissertation I develop the argument that the Mennonite community had begun to accept African-American men married to white women by 1970.

Schwartzentruber (see Figure 57). More so than Mennonite connections, however, the author focused on Burrell's black power rhetoric and his willingness to use violence in self-defense.¹⁶⁵ In writing the *Christian Living* profile, the author deliberately mentioned that Burrell carried a handgun in his briefcase.

More interesting is the assignment of the article itself. The Mennonite Publishing House flew in Jim Fairfield, a freelance writer from Virginia, to write the article. The choice of an outsider, albeit an accomplished writer, and the decision to fly him in to interview Burrell underscored both the



Figure 57: Curtis Burrell, 1971 (Jim Fairfield, "Curtis Burrell: A Bullet Hole in the Window." *Christian Living*, May 1971, 20-24).

significance given to Burrell and the sense of danger he represented to the community as a whole. Likewise, Burrell's willingness to give over a significant block of time to the interview with Fairfield indicated his ongoing interest in maintaining connections with the Mennonite community. Burrell still made Mennonite headlines in May of 1971, but church press editors handled stories about him with great care.

The article made no mention of a host of other pressures Burrell faced. Fairfield's claim that only Jesse Jackson held more power in Chicago's African-American community than did Burrell rang hollow.¹⁶⁶ By the end of 1971 the board of the Kenwood Oaklawn Community Organization had dismissed Burrell from his position as executive secretary, the remaining members of the Woodlawn church – both African-American and white – raised questions about

¹⁶⁵ Fairfield, "Curtis Burrell: A Bullet Hole in the Window."

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

his leadership, and Central District mission board members fretted about his theology.¹⁶⁷

Mission board members noted with concern that Burrell carried a handgun. Despite Burrell's protests that the General Conference denomination made no effort to "understand the theology we express," the Central District mission

board cut off his salary in August of

1971.¹⁶⁸ Without support from the

Conference or a director's salary, Burrell

was unable to keep the church open.

Woodlawn Mennonite was no more.

* * *

Community Mennonite took a



Figure 58: Larry Voth and Community Mennonite members, circa 1960s ("[Photo of Larry Voth Standing against Wall of Community Mennonite Church While People Sit in Pews]." CMC pastor's office - Large black binder with 8x10 black and white photos).

different path. Free of the national church scrutiny focused on Woodlawn, Community's members attended to racial integration rather than black self-determination through the 1960s.

By 1965, Markham had become thirty percent African-American and community leaders, including pastor Larry Voth, expressed growing concern that Canterbury Gardens across the street from Community Mennonite would soon become exclusively African-American.¹⁶⁹

Leaders feared that such a concentration would lead "to political and economic exploitation"

¹⁶⁷ Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 396.

¹⁶⁸ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 102.

¹⁶⁹ "Supplementary Information," 1; Madelyn Bonsignore et al., "Veteran's Administration Policy with Regards to Race in Its Repossessed Housing Program in the South Suburbs," March 1 (City of Markham, 1965), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Markham - Race - Village - Issues - General.

should Canterbury Gardens or other parts of Markham become a “Negro ghetto.”¹⁷⁰ Voth served on the town’s Human Relations Commission and joined in efforts to pursue a “dream of integration” through education, personal contact, and response to acts of violence and intimidation toward African-American families moving into the community.¹⁷¹ Community Mennonite lived that same dream on a weekly basis as the congregation’s African-American membership had risen from five in May 1964 to thirty-three of seventy-nine members by 1969.¹⁷² Sunday mornings found white members and African Americans interspersed through the pews (see Figure 58).

African-American members came to the church on Kedzie Avenue despite the white majority and white pastor. Mary Ann Woods recalled the group’s warm welcome and a monetary gift given by the congregation to her and her husband Robert during a difficult financial time.¹⁷³ Mertis Odom remembered how white congregants such as Dave and Marlene Suter invited her over to their home for a meal in late 1969.¹⁷⁴ Such individual experiences reflected a consistent pattern of outreach and welcome by the entire congregation during this time. With much of the controversy behind them, the congregation came to claim their integrated status.¹⁷⁵ African-

¹⁷⁰ Louis G. Freeman, "Human Relations Summary July 1966," July (Human Relations Commission of Markham, Ill., 1966), 3, CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Markham - Race - Village - Issues - General.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1,3.

¹⁷² Voth, "Markham Introduction"; "Community Mennonite Church Directory," October 6 (Community Mennonite Church, 1969), Marlene Suter's personal file.

¹⁷³ Woods, interview with author.

¹⁷⁴ Odom, interview with author; Suter to author.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 430.

American members continued to join the congregation through 1971.¹⁷⁶ Other African-American residents of Markham such as Lee King attended church services regularly but never officially became members.¹⁷⁷ In a community known for its racial balance and relative lack of public unrest, no singular African-American voice rose from within the congregation calling for black self-determination at least through 1971. The African-American members in attendance focused instead on making the church their own.

The congregation worked together across racial lines on social outreach even while emphasizing ministries populated by white volunteers. White church members Jerry and Dolores Mares attested to the communal spirit displayed across racial lines as the congregation engaged in outreach to the community.¹⁷⁸ That communal spirit did not, however, always translate into fully integrated programs. A white pastor continued to lead the integrated congregation. White volunteers carried out much of the congregation's day-care programming and found employment in the public schools and a white Mennonite volunteer provided staffing for the Markham Youth Committee, an initiative to minister to troubled youth through job training and counseling.¹⁷⁹ Yet the congregation did take some measures to turn over a variety of programs to local leadership.

¹⁷⁶ Suter lists the following African-American members who visited or joined the church in the early 1970s and through the 1960s: Jo and Lacie Alien, Orell and Joanne Mitchell, Ivorie Lowe, Mertis Odom, Essie DuBois, Fran Netterville, Richard and Louise Dearman, Andre and Aggie DaCosta, Robert and Maryann Woods, Barbara Gibbs, Willie and May Fauther, Judith McCall, Phyllis McKemey, Robert Williams, and Russell and Eva Bell. See: Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes."

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Mares and Mares, interview with author.

¹⁷⁹ Rensberger, "A Weekend in Chicago," A-3; Voth, "The Story of the Markham Day Care Center."

In 1970, the church hired Phyllis McKemey, a local resident, as the day-care center's first paid staff person. She went on to later become the facility's director.¹⁸⁰

In both service and worship Community Mennonite thus navigated the racial tensions that continued to introduce conflict in the community and the congregation. By 1970, the nearby Canterbury elementary school had become sixty percent African-American, an indication of demographic changes throughout Markham.¹⁸¹ Even though public reports touted successful integration in the police force, schools, and Community Mennonite itself, a different story emerged in daily interactions.¹⁸² For example, a Markham housing activist reported that the Human Relations Commission on which Voth served had effectively been disbanded by the city council because of the Commission's proactive efforts to address racial inequities in the area.¹⁸³ Likewise, the activist noted an emerging black power influenced "militant trend" among students and teachers that foreshadowed future difficulties.¹⁸⁴ Such citywide tensions surfaced in the congregation. Some white congregants objected that African Americans had entered significant leadership positions. A few more white members left the congregation because of the recurring controversy.¹⁸⁵ African-American members like Odom and Woods nevertheless made the congregation their home, and Voth and other white members like Grace and Don Burklow and

¹⁸⁰ Michael Devine to January 22 1984, Markham, Ill., Personal collection, Marlene Suter.

¹⁸¹ Freeman, "Markham History," 8.

¹⁸² Daigl, "Integration Worked"; Pannabecker, *Faith in Ferment: A History of the Central District Conference*, 279.

¹⁸³ Freeman, "Markham History," 10.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸⁵ Odom, interview with author.

Jerry and Dolores Mares joined them. By the early 1970s, Sunday mornings at Community Mennonite in Markham were not the most segregated hour of the week.

Here again a purity anchor stabilized the congregation. Like Franz at Woodlawn, Voth also bore pristine Mennonite credentials. His ethical purity was unparalleled because his words and actions matched. He brought racially pure family and social connections to bear upon his work. No one questioned his sexual practice, and he knew how to engage the world while never forgetting the separated, religiously pure status of the church. In short, church leaders trusted Voth's pure credentials. From that base of trust, they offered financial and human resources to help Community Mennonite weather racial storms.

As 1971 came to a close the two congregations bore contrasting legacies from their integrated histories. Woodlawn Mennonite no longer functioned as a congregation. Burrell's efforts to begin a new congregation under the name of "The First Church of MAN (Making a Nation)" bore little fruit.¹⁸⁶ The church building itself was on the market and would be sold to a Baptist group the following year.¹⁸⁷ Although no longer in Chicago, Franz brought a passion for racial and social justice formed while pastor at Woodlawn into the federal arena from his new post as founder and director of the Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee's Peace Section.¹⁸⁸ Other white church members who had passed through Woodlawn while at seminary

¹⁸⁶ Rich, *Walking Together in Faith: The Central District Conference, 1957-1999*, 102; Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 246.

¹⁸⁷ Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 396.

¹⁸⁸ Graber Miller, *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: American Mennonites Engage Washington*, 47.

or studying elsewhere in Chicago also held influential positions in the church.¹⁸⁹ By contrast, African-American members from Woodlawn began to leave the Mennonite community. As already noted, by 1971 Vincent and Rosemarie Harding were no longer directly involved with the Mennonite community. Curtis Burrell likewise ended his affiliation. Although former Woodlawn member Ed Riddick appeared on the roster of a cross-cultural consultation sponsored by the Minority Ministries Council of the Mennonite Church in 1973, few other African-American members from Woodlawn moved in church leadership circles.¹⁹⁰

By contrast Community Mennonite operated actively and well in 1971 and served to launch Voth into even more high-profile positions. Under Voth's leadership, the congregation began a sheltered care workshop for mentally challenged adults in addition to their ongoing day-care and youth ministries.¹⁹¹ Neighborhood residents continued to join the church in such numbers that within four years the congregation swelled to a ninety-member church equally divided between African-American and white Mennonites.¹⁹² Voth's influence grew as well. In addition to gaining the respect of the local Markham community for his work in race relations

¹⁸⁹ In addition to Franz, Toews lists the following names as having come through the seminary in Woodlawn and went on to hold influential church postings: Leo Driedger, Cornelius J. Dyck, Marian Franz, Leland and Bertha Fast Harder, J. Howard Kauffman, Robert Kreider, Elmer Neufeld, Betty Jean Pannabecker, Calvin Redekop, and Leola Schulz. See: Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*, 259.

¹⁹⁰ "Cross-Cultural Theological Consultation," April 26-29 (Minority Ministries Council, Mennonite Church General Board, 1973), LMHS - Landis Paul G., Papers: (SCCO minutes and report, 1966-71, Cross-Cultural Theological Consultation, 1973, Kitchener 71).

¹⁹¹ David Ewert, "The Story of Community Mennonite Church," December (Community Mennonite Church, 1990), CMC pastor's office: 2nd file cabinet: 3rd drawer marked "Admin": Folder - Church History; David Ewert, "Twenty-Five Years: A Presence with a Difference," (Community Mennonite Church, 1982), Marlene Suter's personal file.

¹⁹² Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 430.

and community service, Voth served on a national church reference committee on race relations and would go on to serve as director of development for Bethel College in Newton, Kansas.¹⁹³ It was not until much later that African-American members from Community received attention from the broader church. For example, in 1977 the congregation organized support for African-American church member Ivorie Lowe's candidacy on a national church committee. Her placement opened the way for others like Odom to follow.¹⁹⁴

* * *

Two questions shaped these narratives about Community and Woodlawn Mennonite churches. The first asked, "How did congregations change as white and black congregants together attempted to live out their faith?" The second queried, "Were integrated congregations sustained over time?" As two Chicagoland Mennonite congregations struggled through integration, their actions answered these questions with aplomb and alacrity. The answers provided by the words and deeds of Burrell, Franz, Voth, and their congregants also provide insight into the assumption behind King's 1958 critique of segregated congregations. King suggested that integrated worship would challenge social segregation as whites and blacks together embodied the "beloved community."¹⁹⁵ The stories of Woodlawn and Community Mennonite both confirm and challenge King's assumption.

¹⁹³ Lynford Hershey, "Report #6 To: Counsel and Reference Committee for Cross-Cultural Relations Program," August 2 (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; Suter, "Community Mennonite Notes"; Jerry DeMuth, "Pastor Sparks Markham: There Goes Neighborhood...Upward," 1973.

¹⁹⁴ Suter to author.

¹⁹⁵ Marsh, *Beloved Community*, 2.

The beloved communities that gathered at both congregations negotiated integration first and foremost in light of their leaders' racial identities. Woodlawn grew under the leadership of Franz and Harding from 1957 through 1961, maintained its membership for much of Franz's tenure, and began to decline as the Blackstone Rangers grew more powerful and Burrell took over the pastorate in 1968.¹⁹⁶ Community's membership dipped at the time of their initial integration under Krehbiel's leadership and then experienced small, steady growth that corresponded with gradually increasing integration through 1971. Voth led his congregation through the tumultuous years of integration and beyond. Both congregations thus saw their most stable period of integration when led by teams that included white pastors.

That stability arose in part from the broader church's response to the white male leaders. Although all three pastors wrote widely and were actively involved in national church ministries, Voth and Franz managed to sustain and increase their involvement in positions of church-wide responsibility while Burrell lost the respect of the Conference leaders and local Mennonite ministers despite his efforts to remain in conversation with them. At the same time, a simple racial dichotomy cannot account for differences in theology, political involvement, and life choices. Pacifist Mennonites, for example, had little tolerance for any owner of a handgun. Yet church leaders' impatience with Burrell's attempts to explain his decision cannot be divorced from assumptions made about his racial identity. In turn, church resources flowed more readily when a white pastor led the congregation. Furthermore, all three pastors made misjudgments during their tenures.¹⁹⁷ All three pushed their congregants and the larger church past religious

¹⁹⁶ Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 246.

¹⁹⁷ Burrell's purported joking about having two wives – a white one and an African-American one – could be raised as an example of his misjudgment in a morally conservative community.

purity barriers and into the streets. Yet the white pastors experienced much less negative backlash in response to their errors and criticism than Burrell experienced in response to his mistakes and prophetic statements. Given this record of response during the most intense years of racial tumult, the congregations studied here weathered racial storms best when anchored by the perceived purity of white pastors.

Burrell, Franz, and Voth led their congregations to disparate ends in the midst of other powerful forces. Demographics and rate of change proved particularly influential. For example, Community Mennonite benefited from Markham's relatively stable integration. Although the town had its share of problems, by 1971 it had managed to hold on to both white and African-American residents. In Woodlawn, white residents had abandoned the neighborhood. The two congregations reflected the demographics of the neighborhoods in which they were situated.¹⁹⁸ Differing rates of change also influenced congregational longevity. Leadership, worship styles, outreach programs, and integration at Community shifted over a span of years rather than months. At Woodlawn the changes could be much more abrupt. Witness, for example, the quick shift in the Quiet Place from relationally focused bookstore to training and empowerment-focused restaurant. Such fast-paced change destabilized the culture of service and external involvement that had helped maintain Woodlawn as an integrated community in a segregated

See: Moriichi, "Woodlawn Mennonite," 39. Chuck Neufeld, a member of the pastoral team at Community Mennonite in 2007, reported that Larry Voth once tried to get the congregation to agree to allow for the storing of cadavers in the church's walk-in freezer on Saturdays when the facility was not in use. The congregation turned him down.

¹⁹⁸ In very different settings but the same period, two other congregations from the United Church of Christ tradition also reflected success and failure that corresponded with the surrounding community's demographics. See: R. Vernon Boyd, "An Interpretive Analysis of the Integration of Two Churches," D. Min. (Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1986). As in the case of Community and Woodlawn, however, a host of other factors proved equally influential including pastoral timing, past experience, and local politics.

neighborhood. White Mennonites had been willing to relocate to the neighborhood to serve through the church. Yet the fast pace of change afforded little time for such transplanted Mennonites to learn how to be part of the team without being in control. More gradual shifts at Community Mennonite allowed for such re-orientation to take place.

Violence also played an important role in the two congregations' different ends. Community could change at a slower pace because it was located in geographical space a step removed from the gang violence that gripped Woodlawn from 1966 through 1971.¹⁹⁹ Many of Community's African-American members such as Mary Ann and Robert Woods had moved away from the poverty and crowded conditions of Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods precisely because they wanted to put distance between themselves and those harsher environments. The Woods and other African-American members tolerated the slower pace of change in part because it came with distance from more troubled communities. Woodlawn members had no such luxury. As violence increased, as daily life became further complicated by turf wars, and as members began to trickle away, the urgency of the moment demanded change. Those changes needed to be made in the present moment or, as in the case of Burrell's home and the congregation's building itself, more bullets might fly through windows.

The timing of pastoral leadership transition also deeply affected the congregations. Voth became pastor only months before the congregation received their first local African-American visitors and then stayed to see the transition through. Franz served through twelve years of integrated ministry and then left at a time when white people's presence in Woodlawn had come under increasing scrutiny. Although Franz departed on good terms with Burrell and the neighborhood as witnessed by his inclusion on the dais with Jesse Jackson and other

¹⁹⁹ Fish, *Black Power/White Control*, 118-19.

distinguished leaders after the Woodlawn fire, his absence nonetheless meant that an established link to the white Mennonite community had been severed. The responsibility for connecting to the funds and human resources that had helped maintain Woodlawn up to that point fell to Burrell alone. Different timing led to different ends.

At least one other factor hovers over the two stories, the growing presence of black power. Much contemporary historiography places the blame for the end of the Civil Rights Movement at the feet of the Black Power Movement. One historian has called the latter movement “racial narcissism.”²⁰⁰ Similarly, other studies of religious groups’ engagement with the Civil Rights Movement mark the advent of black power as the end of hope for integration.²⁰¹ To a degree, these assessments ring true. Advocates of black self-determination had little patience with or tolerance for groups who continued to call for integrated communities long after the assassinations of King and Malcolm X. As another historian notes, the “black power” slogan in particular offered legitimacy to “black activists and intellectuals... to think without constant reference to what pleased whites.”²⁰² Such intellectual freedom required distance from white people. Integrated congregations could offer no such freedom.

²⁰⁰ Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 192. See also: Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Norton, 1990), 261; Jacoby, *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration*, 93; and Higham and Guarneri, *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, 132.

²⁰¹ Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights, Religion in the South* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 205.

²⁰² Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 389.

Yet Civil Rights Movement historians too often assume that black power advocates abruptly cut off communication with the white community.²⁰³ Burrell's example suggests otherwise. As this study shows, Burrell found great legitimacy in the movement for black power. His writings and speeches from 1966 on bristle with references to various expressions of black power and self-determination. Throughout the period of his ministry at Woodlawn Mennonite, precisely when black power rhetoric most densely peppered his speeches, Burrell nonetheless remained in regular contact with Mennonite church leaders through writing and personal visits. In all these interactions, Burrell thought through his engagement with black power from a distinctly Mennonite frame. Even in 1971, as he appeared before the Senate Sub-Committee on Permanent Investigations, an appearance made possible in part by the work of Delton Franz from his new post in Washington, Burrell made his Mennonite identity and theological commitments clear. He said, "As a minister, and as a Mennonite minister especially, we don't usually turn our backs on anyone needing help. We really believe that man can be redeemed...."²⁰⁴

Burrell's efforts to identify himself as a Mennonite could not overcome fundamentally different understandings of the church. To be certain, some Mennonite church leaders tried to understand and stay in communication with Burrell. Franz's efforts have already been noted. Likewise, the Central District Conference Minister Jacob Friesen still wanted to offer funds to Burrell a year after he appeared before the Senate sub-committee.²⁰⁵ Voth himself remained in touch with Burrell at least through March of 1972, listened to his complaints about various

²⁰³ See, for example: Barrett, *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions in the General Conference Mennonite Church*, 245-46.

²⁰⁴ Fairfield, "Curtis Burrell: A Bullet Hole in the Window," 22.

²⁰⁵ Smith, *Mennonites in Illinois*, 396.

Mennonite leaders, and raised concerns with Burrell about some of his financial practices.²⁰⁶

All these church leaders expressed interest in dialogue, but they had little desire to embrace the political and racial advocacy articulated by Burrell. These white Mennonites knew how to serve and volunteer in poor and African-American communities. They knew less well how to respond to political and social changes that drew white-led, white-staffed service, one of the most honored expressions of Mennonite ethical purity, into question.

Burrell and his Mennonite sponsors broke off communication in the end not because black self-determination proved too controversial to discuss, but because the value of service proved too central to dismiss. Mennonite leaders in the Conference understood integrated communities in which white people served African Americans. They could not yet envision churches that modeled a different way of relating. Burrell's request that white Mennonites contribute financial resources rather than human services to meet Woodlawn's needs could not be sustained. Even an initial offer to bring in Mennonite Disaster Service to rebuild the Woodlawn church property did not come to fruition despite the organization's record of having worked successfully with a community organization committed to black self-determination in Pittsburgh.²⁰⁷ Outside of service, Burrell and Conference leaders had little left to discuss.

Community Mennonite on the other hand survived in part by avoiding the topic of black power. Neither oral histories nor written sources suggest that the rhetoric of black power had made any overt inroad into the congregation by the end of 1971. Although the congregation had begun to shift leadership of the day-care center into local hands and African Americans had long

²⁰⁶ Lawrence Voth to self, March 10 1972, Markham, Illinois, CMC File Box #3, General S-Z, Folder "Woodlawn Church - MDS."

²⁰⁷ Clyde Jackson and James Burkholder, "Interacting Where Asked," *Christian Living*, March 1970; Voth to self.

since been a part of church committees and boards, congregational leaders made such changes without reference to black power rhetoric. Tensions continued to surface within the congregation from a variety of racial conflicts, but no one challenged the assumption that white Mennonites should engage in service to an African-American community.

All of these various and diverse factors – the pastors’ racial identities, demographic shifts, rates of change, neighborhood violence, and the timing of pastoral transition – thus amplified and complicated how black power influenced integration outcomes. To be sure, the blunt comparison of these two congregations cannot be assumed to reflect a trend toward dissolution when an African-American pastor served at an integrated church. As of 1970, African Americans successfully served as pastors at five racially integrated congregations and twelve predominantly African-American congregations in the Mennonite Church.²⁰⁸ In Burrell’s case, a combination of local politics, courageous action, personal misjudgment, systemic racial inequities, and profound disconnect between the world in which Burrell lived and the world of his sponsoring Conference led to the congregation’s demise. The Central District Conference leaders connected much more easily to Voth’s ethic of service, his familiar last name, and his white identity. Both Burrell and Voth captured the imaginations and loyalties of those around them through articulation of a vision for improving the neighborhoods in which they lived and worked. Yet, as noted above, both came to very different ends in part due to the manner in which the Mennonite church responded to them. In the end, black power played only a secondary role in the closing acts of the lives of Community Mennonite and Woodlawn Mennonite through 1971.

²⁰⁸ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 174-75.

The closing acts of these two congregations thus offer both confirmation and challenge to King's critique of segregated Sunday mornings. King assumed that racially integrated congregations held intrinsic value. In this, he was correct. From an existential perspective, both white and African-American members found meaning and purpose through participating in these integrated groups. With the exception of those who stopped participating after Harding preached a sermon at Community, relatively few abandoned either congregation due to racial integration. Many more joined precisely because of the congregations' integrated status. New members gave their energy to groups who modeled interracial relationships rarely found in church or society.

A second assumption behind King's critique, that integrated churches would lead to a less racist society through support for civil rights activism, is more difficult to defend. In the case of Community Mennonite Church, involvement with the congregation did not necessarily result in increased support for or involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. While some members participated in demonstrations, the congregation itself kept such activities at a distance. Even though Woodlawn members more readily joined in marches as a group, this activist path put them at odds with their sponsoring denomination upon whom they depended for financial and human resources. When those resources dried up in part because of the group's activism, Woodlawn members could not sustain their corporate ministry. The identity of a racially integrated congregation offered meaning and purpose to members of both congregations. Yet integration itself did not lead to effective, sustainable engagement with civil rights activism.

During this era, King and other civil rights leaders built their movement on one further assumption. They posited that only deliberate, focused, and courageous strategy, often presented

with militaristic metaphors, would bring about an integrated society.²⁰⁹ To be certain, such intentionally strategic efforts led to changes, some lasting, others ephemeral, still more transformed beyond original intent. By contrast, neither Voth nor Franz at first intended to make their congregations integrated. Franz agreed to pastor a congregation that had become integrated by accident of location. The early Woodlawn seminarians responded to a need for their own children to have access to a Mennonite Sunday school. Likewise, Voth responded to the racial changes in Markham and the specific visit of African-American women. He did not come to the pastorate declaring he would make Community into an integrated community. Integration came, in some sense, unbidden. Only afterwards did the pastors and their supporting members maintain integration by deliberate, corporate, focused, and courageous action. At Woodlawn and Community the accidental had as much, if not more, to do with bringing about integration as did deliberate and intentional efforts to introduce change.

And so emerges an irony of history. Community and Woodlawn stayed integrated in part through doing service. The record of their ability to reach out and change the neighborhood around them through visiting over coffee and providing inexpensive and high-quality day care attracted African-American members. Yet that same ethic of service, motivated as it was by a desire to demonstrate ethical purity, proved problematic for both groups. Woodlawn never regrouped once predominantly white voluntary service workers left the church. Community slowly let go of voluntary service workers and, just as slowly, struggled to find new ways of being integrated as a congregation in the absence of that service. In a new paradigm devoid of voluntary service programs, white Community members struggled to find a way to relate to

²⁰⁹ Peter J. Ling, "Gender and Generation: Manhood at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference," in *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith, *Crosscurrents in African American History* (New York: Garland Pub., 1999), 117.

African Americans that did not place them in the superior position of faultless servers to the African-American community. The same service that made integration possible made integration difficult to sustain.

The contradictions evident in a service ethic that could undermine integration lead directly back to the discussion of purity at the heart of this project. Through the experiences of congregations like Community and Woodlawn, Mennonite leaders became ever more aware of the tension implicit in their reputation as the most ethically consistent of the racial do-gooders. Their reputation as racial egalitarians continued to rest on the integrity of their word and deed. Yet they could not as easily maintain that reputation when their congregational “Camelot” burst into flames and the best of their service initiatives failed to quench the fire. The record of sustained integration at Community offered only partial comfort in light of the tumult and discord that greeted the three African-American women when they first visited the church. White church leaders noticed with concern that their pure reputation had become stained with the ashes of failure and the soot of prejudice exposed.

This growing blot on Mennonites’ reputation comes into full focus in the next chapter. The narrative that unfolds there examines how the Mennonite church responded when African Americans on the inside directly challenged the church’s service programs and record of evangelism in the late 1960s. As in the case of the two congregations featured in this chapter, the events that then unfolded offer alternative insight into the accepted narrative of the fall of the beloved community and the rise of black power. Once again, Mennonite purities become pertinent and visible in the midst of racial tumult.

CHAPTER 8

A CONVERSATION ABOUT MONEY AND VIOLENCE:
REFRAMING THE BLACK MANIFESTO, 1965-1971

John Powell started a conversation about violence in order to ask for money. Paul Landis joined the conversation to counter Powell's appeal. In their respective responses to the financial demands of the 1969 Black Manifesto, these two men – one African-American, one white – agreed that peace-loving Mennonites had to confront an unacknowledged predisposition toward violence. Powell, an African-American pastor and church activist, claimed that had James Forman arrived to demand half a billion dollars in reparations for past and present exploitation of African Americans, white Mennonites would have “tarred and feathered him.”¹ Landis, a white bishop and church administrator, feared that pastors in his region might attack Black Manifesto activists should they try to disrupt a Sunday morning service. The men differed, however, on whether Mennonites should respond to concerns about their violence and involvement in racism by giving money. Powell and the Minority Ministries Council of the (Old) Mennonite Church used the occasion of the Black Manifesto to obtain program funds from white Mennonites. Landis and the Lancaster Mennonite Conference directed attention away from African-American demands for economic redistribution in order to bolster nonviolent recommitment. From the perspective of Powell and Landis, the Black Manifesto appears less like a one-sided militant

¹ Leonard E. Schmucker to John Powell, September 11 1969, Inlay City, Mich., AMC- IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries, Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: General Correspondence 1969-72.

intervention and more like a mutual exchange in which both parties agreed that violence was a problem but disagreed on whether money was the solution.

The document that initiated such intense dialogue confronted white churches and synagogues with an uncompromising demand. In the spring of 1969, African-American activist James Forman distributed the “Black Manifesto To the White Christian Church and the Jewish Synagogues in the United States of America and All Other Racist Institutions.” His document called white Christians and Jews to pay half a billion dollars in reparations for slavery and its legacy. Once collected, the money would fund a variety of black-led businesses and educational enterprises. If the white Christian and Jewish communities withheld reparations payments, Forman threatened to disrupt worship services at will. (See Appendix Three.) In the face of specific demands and a palpable threat, white church leaders paid attention.

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, seems an unlikely place to begin an exploration of the historical meaning of the Black Manifesto. James Forman and his colleagues presented their demands at large, nationally prominent congregations, not small, isolated churches like the ones constituting the majority of the Lancaster Conference at the end of the 1960s. Mennonite pastors in rural Pennsylvania towns like Mount Joy or Menges Mills led services more likely to be interrupted by roving livestock than reparations requirements. Most Mennonite congregations, in the Lancaster Conference and the rest of the denomination, remained outside Forman’s gaze. Powell and Landis nonetheless made certain that Mennonites became aware of the Black Manifesto.

This chapter chronicles how these two Mennonite men and their associates responded to the rapidly shifting terrain of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements from 1965 through 1971. During the four years prior to the 1969 Manifesto, leaders from the Lancaster Conference helped initiate new programs to address racial inequities in the church. Those programs proved

largely ineffective until new leadership emerged in 1968 with the birth of the Urban Racial Council. Under the guidance of African-American pastor John Powell, the Minority Ministries Council emerged from the Urban Racial Council as the pre-eminent Mennonite voice for racial justice in the aftermath of the Black Manifesto. Paul G. Landis, a young white bishop from the Lancaster Conference then serving in the powerful position of conference secretary, shaped much of the Conference's response to the Manifesto in the ensuing years. Like many other leaders of white Christian groups faced with the dramatic prospect of congregational takeovers, Landis and his colleagues focused first on the Manifesto's assertive methods. As Powell reinterpreted the Manifesto in Mennonite terms, however, Landis and other white leaders entered into intense and previously rare conversations about racism in the Mennonite church.²

The record of those exchanges first and most importantly reframes the Black Manifesto by shifting attention away from demands and toward conversation. Historians have interpreted the Manifesto as a unilateral demand for reparations that denominational leaders either rejected or accepted in the face of violence-tinged, black-led ecclesiastical disruption.³ As a result,

² On an official level, those conversations took place between African-American and white men. Oral histories completed for this study suggest that white women in the Mennonite church were less concerned about the prospect of takeovers than were white men.

³ See, for example, Jerry Frye's bifurcated categorization of responses to the Manifesto as being "either positive or negative": Jerry K. Frye, "The 'Black Manifesto' and the Tactic of Objectification," *Journal of Black Studies* 5, no. 1 (1974): 68. Other writers – both in the immediate aftermath of the Manifesto and three and a half decades later – employ variations of this basic theme with a few noting sub-categories of response among progressive, main-line denominations or tensions between church elite and grassroots membership. The underlying framework, however, remains centered on giving or withholding. See, for example: Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliott Wright, "Reparations Now? An Introduction," in *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism, and Reparations*, ed. Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliott Wright (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), 18-21; James F. Findlay, Jr., *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 212-13; Peter C. Murray, *Methodists and the Crucible of Race, 1930-1975* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 212-13; and William Noel Sousa, "The White Christian

sustained black-white conversations resulting from the demands have received scant attention. For Mennonites concerned about maintaining their commitment to nonviolence, the Black Manifesto occasioned a lengthy and tumultuous conversation predicated on the threat of violence. That conversation led to extensive jockeying over the meaning of the Manifesto wherein white leaders from the Lancaster Conference knowingly set aside the question of monetary response while remaining in conversation with finance-focused African-American emissaries of the Black Manifesto. This chapter complicates the standard narrative of militant demand and defensive response by suggesting, then, that the Black Manifesto's impact in the Mennonite community is best understood as a conversation in which both parties struggled to figure out whether money or violence would carry the day.

This study also reframes the Black Manifesto by demonstrating a diversity of theologically sophisticated responses within the Christian community. To begin, the story of Powell and Landis counters the finding that white respondents avoided theological questions about reparations. For example, an influential legal analyst has claimed that white church leaders who responded affirmatively to Forman's demands either admitted guilt or endorsed repentance but did not articulate theological arguments for the payment of reparations.⁴ Other scholars have highlighted how white opponents focused more often on the Manifesto's ideology, its apparent support of violence, or the methods used to promote it but few have noted that in so doing the white respondents failed to mount a rigorous theology of refusal.⁵ Yet Mennonite responses to

Churches' Responses to the Black Manifesto: A Thesis" (M.A., University of the Pacific, 1973), 49-54, HN32.

⁴ Boris I. Bittker, *The Case for Black Reparations* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2003), 5.

⁵ John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, *Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago

the Manifesto reveal a different story. White Mennonites presented finely honed theological and ethical arguments for both the payment and denial of reparations. For historians of the Black Manifesto and the Civil Rights Movement, Mennonites thus offer insight into the manner in which religious communities employed sacred texts to disparate ends when faced with unequivocal demands.

This record of Mennonite conversations about reparations also reframes Civil Rights Movement historiography by paying more attention to unintended consequences than to success or failure of Movement initiatives.⁶ Other demands-focused studies have taken up the question of whether the Black Manifesto succeeded or failed in meeting its stated goal of black self-determination.⁷ By evaluating success or failure, such treatments often miss the unsought

Press, 1996), 221; Murray, *Methodists and the Crucible*, 214; Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights, Religion in the South* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 191-92.

⁶ I am indebted to the work of Kenneth T. Andrews, Robin D. G. Kelley, and George Mariscal for modeling an approach to the civil rights and black power era that evaluates historical actors by what they offered and not whether they succeeded or failed. See, for example: Kenneth T. Andrews, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17, 39; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002); and George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

⁷ For example, the following authors – historians of religion and Civil Rights Movement historians alike – refer to the Black Manifesto from within various permutations of a success or failure paradigm. Clayborne Carson claims that the Black Manifesto was short-lived and not radical enough. See: Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 294-95. He is joined in more recent works by Lawrence Williams and C. Eric Lincoln who assert that the document was in general a failure and not historically significant. See: Lawrence H. Williams, "Christianity and Reparations: Revisiting James Forman's 'Black Manifesto,' 1969," *Currents in theology and mission* 32, no. 1 (2005): 40; and C. Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma*, Rev., 1st rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), 115-16. R. Laurence Moore, on the other hand, asserts that the Manifesto successfully demonstrated the "phoniness of purported white beneficence." See: R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*

changes stemming from the Black Manifesto. This chapter follows one religious community's record of response for the two and a half years after Forman's intervention in order to explore the intended and unintended consequences that resulted from this uniquely ecclesiastical crisis.

The historiography of Mennonites during the late 1960s and early 1970s likewise requires re-examination in light of the Manifesto. Historians tasked with describing the period act as if Mennonites had no knowledge of this assertive movement.⁸ On the contrary, many national bodies, church agencies, regional conferences, and congregations discussed the Black Manifesto and took positions on the manner in which Mennonites should respond. Individuals in the church also struggled with both the content of the Manifesto and its method. For the better part of five

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 195. Robert Weisbrot joins Moore in evaluating a positive component of the Manifesto when he notes that it freed up financial resources that had not been previously available. See: Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Norton, 1990), 284. Although Lincoln says that the document was not historically significant, he does note that it exposed to the world what African-American people in the United States had to "endure." See: Lincoln, *Race, Religion*. Yet another analyst, Hugo Adam Bedau offers convincing argumentation that the Manifesto was based on sound legal principle of "unjust enrichment" and therefore had successfully established a legal basis for its claims. See: Hugo Adam Bedau, "Compensatory Justice and the Black Manifesto," in *Injustice and Rectification*, ed. Rodney C. Roberts (New York: Peter Lang, 2002). Although he disagrees with Williams's and Lincoln's assessment of the historical significance of the Black Manifesto by noting that it was the "first systematic, fully elaborated plan for reparations to emerge from the black freedom movement," Robin Kelley also falls into a success/failure paradigm in his discussion of the Black Manifesto when he notes, "If bringing the issue of reparations to a national audience was one of the goals of the 'Black Manifesto,' it proved to be a stunning success." See: Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, 120-23.

⁸ The Black Manifesto goes unmentioned in each of these three significant volumes: Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, 4 vols., vol. 4, *The Mennonite Experience in America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996); Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); and Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986).

years the Minority Ministries Council, the advocacy program led by John Powell that most actively worked to advance Manifesto aims within the Mennonite community, garnered the attention of Mennonites at all levels. Church leaders traveled to converse with council staff, individuals corresponded with

Powell and other council leaders, and congregations hosted council speakers despite significant reservations about Minority Ministries' methods and their



Figure 59: Paul G. Landis and John W. Eby, 1964 ("Behind the Scenes." *The Volunteer*, July 1964, 4-6).

association with the Black Manifesto. As violence and money fused together in the aftermath of urban rebellions triggered by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, assassination and the subsequent Black Manifesto, these conversations between white and African-American Mennonites achieved their highest level of honesty. The previous seven decades since African Americans first entered the Mennonite church saw a few periods of forthright discussion across racial lines, but none offered as sustained, focused, and intense an exchange as that which took place when white Mennonites worried that African-American men might disrupt the order – and purity – of their worship service.

* * *

The route to those forthright conversations begins at a meeting dominated by white men. Bishop Paul G. Landis and the other white Lancaster Conference leaders traveled to Youngstown, Ohio, in early March 1965 to take part in the first of two "Urban Racial" conferences planned by the Home Missions Committee of the (Old) Mennonite Church Board of

Missions and Charities.⁹ At that time Landis worked as both associate director of the Lancaster Conference's Voluntary Service Program and as the Conference's secretary (see Figure 59). Ever since he had worked alongside a Jamaican pastor in ministry to migrants in Homestead, Florida, in the 1950s, Landis had expressed a keen interest in race relations.¹⁰ Landis brought that interest to his oversight of the Lancaster Conference congregations in New York City. Landis's familiarity with the issues faced by racially integrated New York congregations in turn prompted him to join a delegation of sixteen leaders from the Lancaster Conference who traveled to Youngstown, Ohio, for the March 4 through 5 gathering.¹¹ Only the names of white men appeared on the official delegation list from the Lancaster Conference even though Reverend James Harris, an African-American pastor from a Lancaster Conference mission outpost in Anderson, North Carolina, attended the meeting.¹² Indeed, Harris was the only African American who spoke from the platform. Given the gathering's emphasis on "integrating our total

⁹ Nelson E. Kauffman to "Dear Brother," October 13 1964, Elkhart, Indiana, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: URBAN RACIAL COUNCIL; Simon G. Gingerich to H. Howard Witmer, March 23 1965, Elkhart, Indiana, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: URBAN RACIAL COUNCIL.

¹⁰ Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 8, 2003.

¹¹ Landis traveled with pastors John Kraybill from New York City, William Yovanovich from Steelton, Pa., and William Weaver from Reading, Pa. – all of whom served at integrated mission posts – as well as Voluntary Service director John Eby and long-time bishop and missionary to Africa Elam Stauffer. See: H. Howard Witmer to Simon Gingerich, February 19 1965, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: URBAN RACIAL COUNCIL; John Eby, interview with author, Philadelphia/Evanston, Ill., February 28, 2003.

¹² "Program for Urban-Racial Conference to Be Held at Berean Mennonite Church, 1321 Lansdowne Blvd., Youngstown 5, Ohio," March 4, 5 (Urban Racial Council, 1965), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: URBAN RACIAL COUNCIL.

denominational life,” Harris’s lone billing is significant (see Figure 60). Although at least two other African Americans attended the Youngstown gathering, Landis and his colleagues heard far fewer African-American voices than those present at the second conference in the “Urban Racial” series held in St. Louis a few days later.¹³

The meeting thus began a male-dominated conversation that would largely exclude women for its duration. Although women like Fannie Swartzentruber and Rowena Lark, the committed friends



Figure 60: Urban Racial Gathering (Youngstown, Ohio) participants, 1965 (James Harris is in the fifth row back wearing a light plain coat and glasses) ("Why Do White Folks Hate Us?: Urban-Racial Meetings, Youngstown, Ohio, March 4, 5, St. Louis, Mo., March 11, 12." *Mission Service Newsletter*, May 9 1965, 1-4).

featured in Chapter 3, had been holding frank conversations across racial lines for much of the previous three decades, men initiated, led, and controlled interracial public exchanges about the Black Manifesto. In this regard, the Youngstown meeting reflected the sexism present in the Black Power Movement in particular and the Civil Rights Movement more generally.¹⁴ Women did speak and express opinions about the problem of how best to respond to urban racial concerns, but the voices of men around them often squelched their contributions.¹⁵ In this regard, Paul Landis and his white male colleagues from the Lancaster Conference acted in much the

¹³ "Why Do White Folks Hate Us?: Urban-Racial Meetings, Youngstown, Ohio, March 4, 5, St. Louis, Mo., March 11, 12," *Mission Service Newsletter*, May 9 1965, 3.

¹⁴ Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s*, Carter G. Woodson Institute Series in Black Studies (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 12, 98, 243.

¹⁵ Given the record of forthright protest by women like Fannie Swartzentruber and the long endurance of women like Rowena Lark, the meetings would have most likely turned out quite differently had women attended in proportion to their membership in the church.

same way as would John Powell and other African-American leaders of the Urban Racial Council.

The men who gathered at the Youngstown meeting nonetheless envisioned new possibilities even while failing to institute them. Although one reporter described “a sort of impending doom” hanging over the meeting, the delegates imagined new initiatives.¹⁶ The Lancaster Conference delegates, like other white participants, supported a call for new race-based programs. Their vision for the future included cautious engagement with nonviolent civil rights activities, integrated fellowship, housing, and employment, and “an office or agency to work in the area of race relations.”¹⁷ In response to this vision, Landis and his colleagues at the Board of Missions and Charities distributed findings from the meeting throughout the Lancaster Conference. They did not, however, act on the suggestion to develop a new race relations program. Instead, the Lancaster Conference leaders relied on individuals in attendance to take their “improved understandings and relationships” into the church as a whole.¹⁸ At the beginning of 1965, Landis and his colleagues were not yet ready to commit the finances necessary for a new program initiative.

During the next two years white leaders throughout the church displayed the same hesitancy as Landis to commit new funds or support emerging African-American leaders. In particular, from 1966 through 1967 white Mennonite authors voiced objections to the idea of

¹⁶ "Why Do White Folks Hate Us?: Urban-Racial Meetings, Youngstown, Ohio, March 4, 5, St. Louis, Mo., March 11, 12."

¹⁷ Simon G. Gingerich, "Report of the Findings Committee Urban Racial Meeting, Youngstown, Ohio," March 4, 5 (Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1965), 3, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: URBAN RACIAL COUNCIL.

¹⁸ Gingerich to Witmer.

black power. For example, based on two years' experience in an African-American community, one white Mennonite voluntary service worker declared that the Black Power Movement could not succeed because "Negroes simply will not truly commit themselves to an all-Negro organization or institution, no matter how much they protest that they want to be left alone to perfect their own society."¹⁹ Another white author argued that calls for black power undermined the broader base of appeal achieved by civil rights leaders.²⁰ Even those authors sympathetic to black power initiatives did not call for new race-based programs in the church.²¹ The focus stayed on individual conversion and general corporate responses. Money had not yet been put on the table.

The Lancaster Conference publications followed suit. Those who reported on church-planting initiatives among African Americans, on white Mennonite interpretations of black experience, and on reasons for racial rebellions did not identify specific corporate responses.²² Most significantly, white author Arden Almquist warned the Lancaster Conference readers, "Whitey, Your Time is Running Out." Writing about his experience as a missionary in revolutionary Congo, Almquist called for building bridges of love and mutual understanding in the United States to replace "a legacy of suspicion and fear, hesitation and distrust, distance,

¹⁹ D. R. Yoder, "How I Am Making My Mind About Negroes," *Christian Living*, September 1966, 31.

²⁰ John A. Lapp, "The Coming of Black Power," *Ibid.*, October.

²¹ See, for example: George E. Riddick, "Black Power in the White Perspective," *Mennonite Life*, January 1967; Vincent Harding, "Where Have All the Lovers Gone?" *Mennonite Life*, January 1967; and Howard Yoder, "Reflections on Riots," *Gospel Herald*, October 3 1967.

²² Lloyd Weaver, Mrs., "With Afro-Americans," *Missionary Messenger*, August 1967.

resentment, guilt, doubt, continued segregation and discrimination.”²³ Although Almquist offered thoughtful explanation as to why African Americans pursued self-determination, like the majority of Mennonite authors in 1966 and 1967, he stopped short of calling for church programs to support racial reconciliation.

As 1968 opened Bishop Paul Landis supported the continuation of race-focused writing and activism in the Conference and the larger church. By April of that year, Landis had been in his job as secretary of the Lancaster Conference for five years. Although he continued in his oversight of New York pastors, many of whom participated in a March conference in which black power ideas figured prominently, Landis spent much of his energy in helping to set agenda for the most powerful committees in the Lancaster Conference including the bishop board and Peace Committee.²⁴ He also served on numerous national committees such as the Home Missions Commission of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. To those committees, he brought a deep passion for race relations. For example, the day after he returned from April 4-6, 1968, meetings of the Board of Missions and Charities, Landis preached a sermon lamenting King’s death. In front of his home congregation, the predominantly white and conservative Mellingers Mennonite, Landis thanked God “for one who had attempted to direct the flood tide of deep hurt, hate, and revenge into positive, nonviolent efforts to make our society aware of the seriousness of its sins.”²⁵ By the end of the year, at least twenty-three Mennonite authors had

²³ Arden Almquist, "Whitey, Your Time Is Running Out," *Ibid.*, November, 14-15.

²⁴ "New York City Peacemaker Workshop," March 15-16 (Mennonite Peace and Social Concerns Committee; Mennonite Brethren in Christ churches in New York City Metropolitan Area; Mennonite General Conference, Scottsdale, Pa., 1968), author's collection.

²⁵ Paul G. Landis, "Tribute Lauds King's Life, Work," *Gospel Herald*, April 23 1968, 374.

joined Landis in raising their lament over King's assassination.²⁶ Having met with King to discuss Mennonite nonresistance, Landis felt King's loss keenly and, despite criticism that he preached too often on "race and Bible," joined other Mennonite leaders from across the country in calling for increased involvement with civil rights activities.²⁷

Few of those who called for civil rights action anticipated what form the response would take or who would lead it. Landis and other white church officials who encouraged their white constituents to support civil rights measures focused on secular race problems. Nevertheless a group of twenty-five urban pastors who gathered in Elkhart, Indiana, took the discussion in another direction. From June 3 until June 4, 1968, the pastors discussed "both immediate and long-range challenges confronting the church pertaining to race, economics (the rich-poor

²⁶ "The Task of Reconciliation," *Sword and Trumpet*, May 1968; "'Collective Guilt' in Dr. King's Death Called a 'Mischievous Myth'," *Sword and Trumpet*, July 1968; "A Time to Learn Compassion," *The Mennonite*, May 7 1968; "White Racism Blamed for City Riots," *The Mennonite*, April 2 1968; "Who Was He?" *Gospel Herald*, May 21 1968; "The Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Sword and Trumpet*, June 1968; Sandra Froese, "The American Dream," *The Mennonite*, May 7 1968; James A. Goering, "Martin Luther King and the Gandhian Method of Nonviolent Resistance," *Sword and Trumpet*, October 1968; Vincent Harding, "The History of a Wall," *Gospel Herald*, June 18 1968; Vincent Harding, "Wall of Bitterness," *The Mennonite*, June 18 1968; Daniel Hertzler, "On the Death of King," *Christian Living*, June 1968; John A. Lapp, "The Greatness of Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Christian Living*, June 1968; William G. Leber, "Slow on Race Relations," *The Mennonite*, April 23 1968; Frank H. Littell, "Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Mennonite Life*, July 1968; Carol Loganbill, "One Night in Alabama," *The Mennonite*, November 19 1968; Vern Miller, "We Shall Overcome," *Gospel Herald*, May 14 1968; William Robert Miller, "The Misunderstanding of Martin Luther King," *The Mennonite*, November 19 1968; Harold Regier, "He Lives On," *The Mennonite*, May 7 1968; Marie J. Regier, "To Preach or Demonstrate?" *The Mennonite*, April 30 1968; Marie J. Regier, "Bitter Harvest of Hate," *The Mennonite*, November 26 1968; John C. Rezmerski, "For Martin L. King, Jr.," *Mennonite Life*, July 1968; Edgar Stoesz, "A Mennonite Reflects on Martin Luther King," *Gospel Herald*, May 14 1968; Paul Unruh, "Deceived for a Long Time," *The Mennonite*, December 10 1968.

²⁷ Landis, interview with author.

disparity), and politics.”²⁸ Instead of society, the pastors focused on the Mennonite church.

John Powell, an African-American assistant pastor in Detroit, spoke for the first time in the Mennonite press to report on the June gathering. Powell declared, “[T]he average Afro-American has written off the phony Christian” and added his critique that most white Mennonites could better be described as “passivists than pacifists.”²⁹ Using terms a step more assertive and blunt than had been expressed by either Curtis Burrell or Vincent Harding before him, Powell gave notice that change had come to the Mennonite church. Such bold commentary would mark Powell’s rhetorical intervention for much of the following decade.

Powell’s voice proved powerful, but he did not immediately step into formal leadership. White pastors and administrators initiated the first action. During the June 1968 meeting, long-time advocates for racial justice like John Smucker, a minister from the Lancaster Conference then serving as a pastor in New York City, admitted that the Mennonite community knew how to do service well but had little interest in “changing neighborhoods and attitudes” within the church community.³⁰ Similar confessional statements by white leaders often followed such meetings. This meeting, however, ended with assurances that two white men – Ernest Bennett and Vern Miller – would study ways to place “Negro leaders in leadership capacities” throughout the church.³¹ Even though white leaders had taken up the task of furthering the group’s agenda, the Mennonite church seemed poised to include African Americans in leadership structures.

²⁸ "Urban Pastors Meet to Air Views," *Gospel Herald*, June 18 1968, 552.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

The June meetings heralded a summer during which the national Mennonite community aired calls for involvement with civil rights issues even while Landis and other leaders from the Lancaster Conference distanced themselves from the most urgent appeals. In the aftermath of King's assassination between June and September 1968, more than forty-five articles in the national church press called for legislative action, connected urban rebellions with the legacy of United States colonialism, and championed Mennonite values of service and supportive education.³² Although a few members from the Lancaster Conference contributed to those articles, the internal Conference press stopped short of advocating direct involvement in demonstrations or legislative advocacy. Instead authors focused exclusively on Mennonite service through Fresh Air exchange programs, educational initiatives, and traditional voluntary service in health care and youth work.³³ Despite Paul Landis's continued interest in racial justice, the Lancaster Conference did not demonstrate the same urgency to end racial inequity as did other parts of the church. It fell to other regional church bodies to initiate and support African Americans in leadership. Landis and his colleagues from the Lancaster Conference waited rather than acted upon the agenda articulated by Powell at the Elkhart meetings.

The Lancaster Conference thus played the part of observer at the founding meeting of the group that would come to embody the interests of the Black Manifesto in the (Old) Mennonite Church. Gene Shelly, a white pastor from New York under Landis's authority, attended meetings

³² See, for example: Leroy Berry, "Of Such Is the Kingdom," *Christian Living*, July 1968; Carl L. Good, "Time for Radical Servanthood," *The Mennonite*, June 18 1968; Hubert Schwartzentruber, "No One Will Escape," *The Mennonite*, June 18 1968; and Levi Keidel, "Where Our Race Troubles Began," *The Mennonite*, June 4 1968.

³³ John W. Eby, "Witnessing While Working in Washington," *The Volunteer*, July 1968; Eugene Shelly, "Inner City Growth," *Missionary Messenger*, June 1968; Chester L. Wenger, "Home Missions and Evangelism," *Missionary Messenger*, June 1968.

in Chicago from October 4 through 5, 1968, and reported that they marked “a milestone in the history of the Mennonite Church in America.”³⁴ The urban pastors at the Chicago meeting elected five men, four of whom were African-American, to constitute the steering committee of a new advocacy group, the Urban Racial Council.³⁵ Shelly’s enthusiastic report reflected the influence of the Black Power Movement within the steering committee. He wrote, “[W]e can neither dictate power nor use them [i.e. African Americans] as puppets in a basically white controlled power structure.”³⁶ In keeping with this emphasis on self-determination, the council aimed to give African-American church leaders the right to “make decisions which directly involve them.”³⁷ Shelly encouraged the Lancaster Conference leaders to sponsor a similar African-American led body in their region.³⁸

Predictably, Landis and the others who received Shelly’s report failed to act upon his suggestion. This failure typified a critical shift in Mennonite race relations. From the late nineteenth century forward, the Lancaster Conference had led and defined race relations efforts in the Mennonite church. They ran the largest Fresh Air exchange program, counted more African-American congregations, and placed more voluntary service workers in racially integrated communities than any other part of the church. Their Colored Workers Committee had

³⁴ Gene Shelly, "Report from the Urban Racial Council," (Glad Tidings Mennonite Church, 1968), 1, LMHS - Paul G. Landis Coll, New York - Glad Tidings 1967-68.

³⁵ John Powell, "Minutes Minority Ministries Council Executive Committee," December 17, 18 (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

³⁶ Shelly, "Report from the Urban Racial Council," 1.

³⁷ Ibid., 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

brought together white and African-American church workers for fellowship and instruction for the better part of twenty years. Yet the Lancaster Conference leaders pulled back from actively supporting the first minority-led church-wide committee in any American Mennonite denomination. The three African-American steering committee members – Lee Roy Berry, Gerald Hughes, and Powell – in addition to Latino representative John Ventura and the fifth white member – vocal activist Hubert Schwartzentruber – hailed from Goshen (Indiana), Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, and St. Louis.³⁹ Only one member, Gerald Hughes, had direct connections to the Lancaster Conference in that Hughes had grown up at the Andrews Bridge congregation in southern Lancaster County. As an adult, however, he worked alongside pastor Vern Miller and other members of Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland.⁴⁰ Although the Lancaster Conference counted several capable African-American leaders in their number at that time including Richard Pannell, James Harris, and Macon Gwin, no one in the Conference's leadership structure sponsored their membership on the Council's executive group. Most notably, then, the Lancaster Conference bishops pulled back at the very point when an assertive African-American majority committee emerged in the church.

It thus fell to those outside the bishops' inner circle to explore new areas of race relations. Notably, those who publicly addressed racial concerns came from a generation not yet represented on the bishop board. Merle Good, a young white entrepreneur and dramatist already

³⁹ Powell, "Minutes Minority Ministries Council Executive Committee." Although I focus on the African-American leadership of the Minority Ministries Council in this chapter, John Ventura and other Latino leaders like Mac Bustos, Ted Chapa, Lupe DeLeón, Criselda Garza, Lupe Gonzales, Tito Guedea, and Sammy Santos served critical leadership roles as the MMC began to develop. Thanks to Felipe Hinojosa for historical insight on this point.

⁴⁰ Annabelle Hughes and Gerald Hughes, interview with author, Cleveland Heights, Ohio/Evanston, Ill., August 29, 2006. Note also, as discussed in Chapter 6, that John Powell, Gerald Hughes, and Lee Roy Berry were all married to white Mennonite women.

making waves in the Conference because of his presentation of the Mennonite experience through public theatre, explored racial tensions in fictional form in the pages of one national Mennonite weekly in early February 1969, although he crossed over to a General Conference publication to do so.⁴¹ Closer to home, Leon Stauffer, the youthful director of the Lancaster Conference's Voluntary Service and I-W programs, enjoined Mennonite leaders in March 1969 to leave behind a legacy of paternalism and begin to trust African-American "brethren with dollars... leadership... personnel... organization [and]... goal-setting."⁴² Stauffer's experience as a voluntary service worker in New York City had convinced him of the need to let go of control. Unlike Landis and other bishops who remained focused on maintaining control of the Conference's doctrinal and financial resources, Stauffer understood that organizational change would require significant financial redistribution. Money, in short, mattered.

James Forman agreed. On April 26, 1969, the former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee executive secretary presented the "Black Manifesto To the White Christian Church and the Jewish Synagogues in the United States of America and All Other Racist Institutions" at the National Black Economic Development Conference in Detroit, Michigan. Forman came to the Detroit meeting with a long and distinguished record as a civil rights activist. After he left his administrative post with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Forman marched at

⁴¹ John Landis Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference*, ed. Steven M. Nolt, 39 vols., vol. 39, *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 2001), 1071-72; Richard Danner, "Bishop Board Meeting," August 21 (Lancaster Conference, 1969), LMHS - Box Bishop Board Minutes 1964-1969; I. Merle Good, "From across the Tracks," *The Mennonite*, February 11 1969.

⁴² Paul G. Landis, "Bishop Board Meeting," March 10-12 (Lancaster Conference, 1969), LMHS - Box Bishop Board Minutes 1964-1969; Leon Stauffer, "Then They Are Brethren," *The Volunteer*, March 1969. The I-W program was administered by the Lancaster Conference but provided a government-sanctioned alternative to military service for young Mennonite men.

Selma and maintained connections with and the respect of African-American clergymen.⁴³

Despite good relations with African-American church leaders, Forman had long before denounced Christianity for its collusion with slavery and ongoing support of economic inequity. His personal experience with racism and paternalism in both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and schools had led him to become an atheist by his mid-twenties.⁴⁴ Forman thus presented his money-focused Black Manifesto with all the passion of a preacher but none of the belief.

Nonetheless Forman concentrated on Christian churches and Jewish synagogues for his reparations efforts. The Manifesto presented to the Detroit gathering called for five hundred million dollars in reparations for Christianity's and Judaism's part in exploiting the "resources, ...minds, ...bodies, [and]... labor" of the African-American community.⁴⁵ Yet he did not intend for this to be a document limited to religious groups' involvement in slavery. Contrary to subsequent misinterpretation, Forman emphasized that he demanded reparations payments for a history of having been "degraded, brutalized, killed and persecuted" that extended well past emancipation.⁴⁶ Forman proposed to use reparations funds to purchase land, develop media outlets, organize welfare recipients and African-American laborers, start black-led businesses,

⁴³ Carson, *In Struggle*; Williams, "Christianity and Reparations: Revisiting James Forman's 'Black Manifesto,' 1969," 41-42.

⁴⁴ Williams, "Christianity and Reparations: Revisiting James Forman's 'Black Manifesto,' 1969," 42.

⁴⁵ "Black Manifesto to the White Christian Church and the Jewish Synagogues in the United States of America and All Other Racist Institutions," April 26 (National Black Economic Development Conference, 1969), 5, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 3, Folder 71, Black Manifesto.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

and found a southern black-led university. Forman exhorted white churches and synagogues to provide unrestricted revenue for these various ventures or risk having their offices and worship services interrupted.

Only after Forman followed through on his threat to disrupt worship services did Mennonites and the rest of the white community pay attention. The day after Forman presented his demands in a dramatic takeover of the worship service at the interdenominational Riverside Church in Morningside Heights, New York City, on May 4, 1969, the local Lancaster, Pennsylvania, newspaper gave Forman front-page coverage.⁴⁷ In addition to describing the Manifesto's demands, the report emphasized Forman's assertive rush down the aisle as he "pushed his way past two elderly ushers."⁴⁸ More than the monetary demands, the manner of the message received the most public attention.

Mennonites in the Lancaster area and throughout the east coast continued to read about Forman's activities in the ensuing months. By July 24, readers of Lancaster's *Intelligencer Journal* had encountered twenty-three articles reporting on various worship take-overs, office sit-ins, and denominational responses.⁴⁹ As in the case of the first report, the articles emphasized the

⁴⁷ Stephen C. Rose, "Putting It to the Churches," in *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism, and Reparations*, ed. Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliott Wright (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), 98; "Blacks Defy Church to Read Demands," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 5 1969.

⁴⁸ "Blacks Defy Church to Read Demands."

⁴⁹ Ibid; "Reparations Case Presented," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 16 1969; "Presbyterians Reply to Black Manifesto," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 22 1969; "\$50 Million Asked of Presbyterians," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 19 1969; "Forman Lauds Pastor after Rights Sermon," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 12 1969; George W. Cornell, "\$500 Million Demand Shocks Church Leaders," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 10 1969; Gil Scott, "'Black Manifesto Is Direct Attack'," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 26 1969; "Forman Asks \$200 Million from Catholics," *Intelligencer Journal*, May 10 1969; "8 Clergymen Arrested for Occupying Church," *Intelligencer Journal*, July 11 1969; "Black Claims Rejected by Baptist Body," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 14 1969; "Manifesto Rejected by Church," *Intelligencer Journal*, July 24 1969; "Manifesto Read by Dr. McIntire,"

disruption caused by Forman and his associates and the often caustic and forceful response by white church leaders. Several church officials highlighted in the articles had not hesitated to call the police and, in at least one instance, officers removed a woman who interrupted a Catholic service to protest racial discrimination.⁵⁰ Activists in nearby Philadelphia took even bolder action and removed an electric typewriter from the Presbyterian Church headquarters during an appearance there.⁵¹ Although the activists later returned the typewriter, they had clearly established the threat of disruption at worship and work.

The threat of takeovers captured white Mennonites' billfolds and attention. Although the Lancaster Conference leaders continued to recruit workers for summer programs with African-American youth in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Lancaster, and a church-owned rural camp in Halifax, Pennsylvania, Mennonites in other parts of the country began to respond more directly.⁵² On the General Conference side, Voluntary Service administrator Fred Unruh on May 26 instructed every worker in his program to read the Black Manifesto with "great intensity" because "I have

Intelligencer Journal, July 21 1969; "Judge Lectures Eight Dissenting Ministers," *Intelligencer Journal*, July 17 1969; "Ex-Local Pastor Target of Sit-In," *Intelligencer Journal*, July 12 1969; "Typewriter Taken as Reparation," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 5 1969; "Offices of Church Occupied," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 6 1969; "Typewriter Given Back to Church," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 12 1969; "Protesters Arrested in Churches," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 16 1969; "UCC Denies Reparation to Forman," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 21 1969; "UCC Funds for Forman Group Aired," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 27 1969; Joy Owens, "Rights Panel Asks Justice, Opportunity for Black Man," *Intelligencer Journal*, June 16 1969; "Parley Slated on Negro Fund Demands," *Intelligencer Journal*, July 3 1969; "Pastor Urges Housing Fund," *Intelligencer Journal*, July 7 1969.

⁵⁰ "Protesters Arrested in Churches"; "8 Clergymen Arrested for Occupying Church"; "Forman Lauds Pastor after Rights Sermon."

⁵¹ "Typewriter Taken as Reparation."

⁵² Richard L. Bowman, "Exposed . . . Developed . . . Printed," *The Volunteer*, October 1969; "Summer VS Openings," *The Volunteer*, March 1969.

no question about God speaking in this paper.... He is addressing us in painful words we dare not reject.”⁵³ Local Voluntary Service administrator and leader of the Camp Landon ministry in Gulfport, Mississippi, Orlo Kaufman proposed on June 19 that white Christians begin by repenting and then move to support equal opportunity and self-determination for the African-American community.⁵⁴ Kaufman called for authentic confession and deliberate action but was careful to include reparations in his response as well.⁵⁵ In correspondence with Kaufman, the General Conference’s president Henry Poettcker assured him that the General Conference would “accelerate the relief and service” that they had already been doing and follow through with plans to initiate a one million dollar “poverty fund.”⁵⁶ The General Conference Mennonites thus followed a pattern consistent with other mainline denominations by directing monetary response through their internal funding mechanisms.⁵⁷

National leaders of the (Old) Mennonite Church made an even clearer link between the Black Manifesto and fundraising initiatives. Atlee Beechy, a member of the Mennonite Board of Missions and chair of the Relief and Service Committee of that organization, proposed a

⁵³ Fred Unruh to Orlo Kaufman, May 26 1969, Newton, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 3, Folder 71, Black Manifesto.

⁵⁴ Orlo Kaufman, "Proposed General Conference Mennonite Church Response to the Black Manifesto," (Camp Landon, 1969), Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 3, Folder 71, Black Manifesto.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁶ Henry Poettcker to Orlo Kaufman and Orlando Waltner, June 27 1969, Newton, Kansas, Mennonite Library & Archives, Bethel, Kansas: MLA.VII.R GC Voluntary Service, Series 11 Gulfport VS Unit, Box 3, Folder 71, Black Manifesto.

⁵⁷ Sousa, "The White Christian Churches' Responses to the Black Manifesto: A Thesis"; "Presbyterians Reply to Black Manifesto."

“perhaps radical” increase in allocation of funding to address “the problems of poverty and discrimination” in the amount of two million dollars over the course of four years.⁵⁸ After noting that the Black Manifesto might alienate some Mennonites because of its “militant spirit,” Beechy urged his listeners to try to understand the “historical and emotional factors” behind the document.⁵⁹ At the July 2-6 meeting held in rural southeast Iowa, the Mennonite Board of Missions then passed a much smaller budget for missions with the provision that they would reallocate funds and staff to increase “ministry among minority groups in urban areas.”⁶⁰ Although the half million dollar annual budget for racial concerns had not been specifically allocated, Beechy’s proposal – with its attendant emphasis on black self-determination coupled with Anabaptist values of love and nonresistance – drew the attention of national church leaders.

Even as national Mennonite organizations struggled to respond to the Black Manifesto, Forman intensified his demands. Given that leaders of some black nationalist groups had criticized Forman for asking too little of the synagogues and churches, his next move does not surprise.⁶¹ On June 13 and again on July 6, Forman raised the reparations demand to three billion dollars.⁶² He indicated that the additional funds would support the development of a southern

⁵⁸ Resolutions Adopted by Mennonite Board of Missions to July 2-6 1969, Kalona, Iowa, AMC, I-1-1, Mennonite General Conference, 1898-1971, 1969 Session materials, Folder 5/8.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Frye, "The 'Black Manifesto' and the Tactic of Objectification," 68.

⁶² Lecky and Wright, "Reparations Now?" 3.

black college completely independent of any white control.⁶³ As time progressed, financial response to the Manifesto became even more important.

The Lancaster Conference did not, however, attend to the Black Manifesto in the same way as other parts of the Mennonite church. Rather than approach the Black Manifesto as a document fundamentally concerned about money, on July 10, 1969, Paul Landis and his Peace Committee co-chair Noah Good responded on their own terms. Landis and Good together with conference moderator David Thomas and the rest of the Peace Committee sent a letter to every

minister from the Lancaster Conference. The letter informed pastors about the Black Manifesto, instructed them how to respond should someone attempt to take over their services, and included a copy of the Manifesto for them to read (see Figures 61a and 61b).



Figure 61a: Lancaster Conference Peace Committee letter in response to the Black Manifesto, 1969 (Noah G. Good, and Paul G. Landis. Letter, July 1969).

⁶³ James Forman, *Control, Conflict and Change: The Underlying Concepts of the Black Manifesto* (Detroit: National Association of Black Students, 1970).

As will become evident, Landis and his colleagues drafted the letter in order to shift attention from reparations to the doctrine of nonresistance. Encouraged by the doctrine, many young men from the Lancaster Conference refused to participate in the military, opting instead for alternative service. Some men from the Lancaster Conference, however, choose to participate in non-combatant roles or even bear arms when drafted. In the face of what they perceived as waning commitment to pacifism, the Lancaster Conference leaders then redoubled their support for nonresistance doctrine in all its forms. For example, they harkened back to a 1940 statement that asserted, “Even if the Christian is the victim of injustice or crime, he

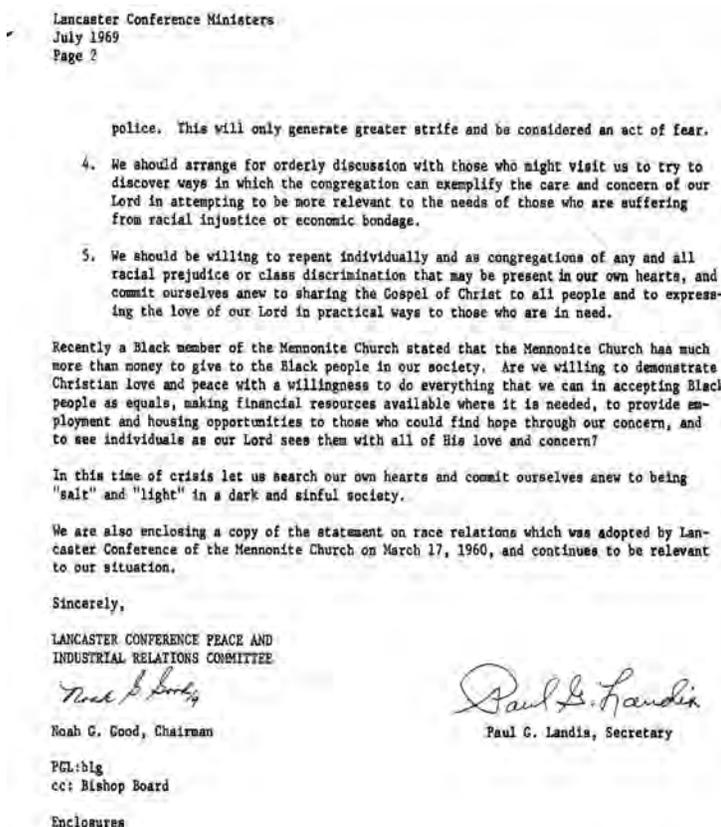


Figure 61b: Lancaster Conference Peace Committee letter in response to the Black Manifesto, 1969 (Noah G. Good and Paul G. Landis. Letter, July 1969).

cannot violate Bible principles to avenge himself or to punish the wrongdoer.”⁶⁴ In addition to stressing the importance of personal nonviolence in the face of violent attack, the leaders applied nonresistance to the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. When they distributed the Black Manifesto letter, leaders like Landis had begun to emphasize the distinctions between biblical

⁶⁴ *The Christian Nonresistant Way of Life*, (Lancaster, Pa.: Peace Problems Committee and Tract Editors of Lancaster Conference District, 1940), 41.

nonresistance and secular nonviolence. The Lancaster Conference leaders stated their opposition to “strikes, boycotts, and organized pressures of any kind” by explaining that such worldly actions used coercion rather than pacifist testimony to bring about change.⁶⁵ By 1969, leaders from the Conference emphasized the importance of nonresistance in all its expressions, but the distinction between biblical nonresistance and the tactical nonviolence used by worldly civil rights activists received extra attention.⁶⁶

Landis and his co-chair then used nonresistance to interpret the Black Manifesto. Having been commissioned by the Peace and Industrial Relations committee to draft a response, the two co-chairs wrote a mid-July letter that began by asking the more than three hundred pastors in the Conference to repent of “racial prejudice.”⁶⁷ Good and Landis asked in general that pastors make “financial resources available” where needed, but they did so only after focusing on nonviolence.⁶⁸ Of the letter’s twenty-one sentences, three identify economic reparations as the Black Manifesto’s subject, five refer to race relations, and thirteen discuss nonviolent methods. Good and Landis asked that pastors avoid “calling the police” and recommended “we be willing to have our services disrupted and listen ... in a spirit of Christian love.”⁶⁹ They stressed the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁶ Ruth, *The Earth*, 1100-01; Edgar Metzler, "The Mennonite Churches and the Current Race Crisis," *Gospel Herald*, August 6 1963, 683.

⁶⁷ "Lancaster Conference Peace Committee Responds to Black Manifesto," *Gospel Herald*, August 12 1969; Paul G. Landis and Norman Shenk, "Peace and Industrial Relations Committee," July 10 (Lancaster Conference, 1969), LMHS - Peace Committee Minutes, 1962-1974.

⁶⁸ Ellrose D. Zook, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, vol. 61 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1970), 65.

⁶⁹ Noah G. Good and Paul G. Landis to Lancaster Conference Ministers, July 1969, Salunga, Pa., LMHS- Box Conference Statements.

“way of love,” called for “orderly discussion,” enjoined ministers to avoid “any defensive... actions,” and directed them not to “restrain those who would enter our services or buildings.”⁷⁰

The careful enumeration of each point of conduct further emphasized that Good and Landis focused first and foremost on preventing violence within their churches.

As referenced above, Landis and his fellow Peace Committee members expressed concern about Mennonite violence in the context of a church unsettled by eroding commitment to nonresistance. Note here the extent of that erosion. During World War II, Mennonite men enlisted in the military in far greater numbers than hoped for by church leaders. In 1942, although leaders called for complete rejection of any form of military service by all Mennonite men, thirty percent of the drafted church members served in a branch of the armed forces.⁷¹ Likewise, from 1940 through 1947, more Mennonite men served in the military than in the wartime Civilian Public Service camps.⁷² The divisions evident in these disparate rates of military service reflected harsh disagreements within the Mennonite community over the question of how best to live out a nonresistant life.⁷³ Although many agreed that those who carried firearms – whether Curtis Burrell repelling gang members in Chicago or a Lancaster Conference farm boy soldiering in Danang – forfeited their church membership, others contended that the government, as ordained by God, could require one to serve in the military. Alongside continued commitment to personal nonviolence, a conservative political agenda that gave additional support to military service had made significant headway within the Lancaster

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*, 149.

⁷² Ibid., 173.

⁷³ Ibid., 311.

Conference and opened the door to other forms of violence.⁷⁴ Violent members in a nonresistant church had become a new possibility.

The cautions offered by Landis and his colleagues thus presumed a background of weakening nonresistant commitment within the Lancaster Conference itself. The authors appeared to be writing to a Protestant audience primed to call the police, devoid of any nonresistant values, and hostile to Black Manifesto emissaries.⁷⁵ As of July 1968, members from the Lancaster Conference had approved nonresistance guidelines based on the practice of “love and overcoming evil with good” that prohibited military service, political involvement, and jury duty.⁷⁶ Yet drafters of the 1968 nonresistance statement made no mention of police. Prior to the Black Manifesto movement, the Conference leaders had not even considered that someone might contact the police to restore order to a worship service. Yet reports published in the local papers made evident that some Christian communities had used law enforcement officers in their sanctuaries.⁷⁷ Spurred on by such examples, Landis and his fellow committee members then

⁷⁴ The political conservatism present among white Mennonites from the Lancaster Conference reflected a broader trend in the Mennonite church at the beginning of the 1970s. Although thirty-five percent of those participating in a survey on Mennonite values and political affiliations “took no position at all” on politics, forty-four percent supported the Republican Party. Only eleven percent identified themselves as Democrats. See: J. Howard Kauffman, "Dilemmas of Christian Pacifism within a Historic Peace Church," *Sociological Analysis* 49, no. 4 (1989): 382.

⁷⁵ Such congregations were perhaps the majority outside the Mennonite community. A 1975 study of twelve white mainline Protestant congregations in Indianapolis, Indiana, found that seven of the twelve congregations had not been willing to receive Black Manifesto readers cordially and some were prepared to call the police should readers show up. See: James R. Wood, "Legitimate Control and 'Organizational Transcendence'," *Social Forces* 54, no. 1 (1975). While the Lancaster Conference Mennonites clearly positioned themselves within or at least alongside mainline Protestantism, they claimed nonresistance as a distinctive doctrine.

⁷⁶ "Statement of Christian Doctrine and Rules and Discipline of the Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church," July 17 (Lancaster Conference, 1968), 22.

⁷⁷ "Forman Lauds Pastor after Rights Sermon"; "Protesters Arrested in Churches."

cautioned pastors against “calling the police.” They advised against restraining “those who would enter” even though caution against physical restraint had likewise not been necessary in the past. Further still, they reminded their pastors that “defensive actions” would “be considered an act of fear.”⁷⁸ Here again, Landis and the Peace Committee members assumed that their readers needed a reminder about a basic tenet of nonresistance. In a letter written first and foremost to ministers within the church, these leaders from the Lancaster Conference thus used the specter of African-American intruders to prod ministers from the Conference and their congregations back into the nonviolent fold.⁷⁹

The authors then closed their letter by directing attention even further away from reparations. In their penultimate paragraph, Landis and his colleagues wrote, “Recently a black member of the Mennonite Church stated that the Mennonite Church has much more than money to give to the black people in our society.”⁸⁰ They made their point clear. Although African Americans in the secular world asked for money, Landis and leaders from the Conference emphasized that African Americans in the Mennonite community asked for love, equality, and access to employment. The ministers who received their letter knew how to respond to these individual needs. A service-based record of African-American evangelism had prepared the pastors for tending to the disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis. The offerings from

⁷⁸ Good and Landis to Ministers.

⁷⁹ The letter sent by Good and Landis – as was the case for most written communication by officials from Lancaster Conference during this time period – was written and called for by an exclusively male group. In essence, the white men wrote about violence within the Lancaster Conference community that, if actualized in a given congregational take-over attempt, would most likely have been perpetuated by men. The question remains open as to whether most Mennonite women had ever left the nonviolent fold.

⁸⁰ Good and Landis to Ministers.

congregations located in one of the “wealthiest farming counties in the nation” supported service, poverty relief, and evangelism rather than the publishing houses, black-led academies, and training centers called for in Forman’s document.⁸¹ No wonder that the Lancaster Conference leaders failed to mount a corporate response to the Black Manifesto’s demands. In the course of a one-and-one-half-page letter, Landis and his colleagues had reinterpreted the radical critique of the Black Manifesto as a cautious appeal for equality and charity.

On the same day that Landis met with the Peace Committee to shape a response to the Black Manifesto four Mennonite leaders from other parts of the church met with Vincent Harding in Atlanta. Although no longer officially connected to the Mennonite community, Harding welcomed the church leaders and former colleagues to the highly influential Institute of the Black World housed at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center.⁸² Peace activist and professor Elmer Neufeld, theologian John Howard Yoder, denominational executive Darrell Fast, and Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section administrator John A. Lapp knew that Forman had listed Harding on the Manifesto’s steering committee. As the meeting progressed, Harding did not attempt to disassociate himself from the Manifesto but rather supported reparations as a means to confront “white racism” and help African Americans become more self-sufficient. Having heard Harding’s commitment, the white men in attendance together affirmed the need to “hear Vincent’s voice” and keep apprised of his priorities.⁸³ Although they

⁸¹ C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1941), 784.

⁸² Peniel E. Joseph, "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement," *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 2 (2003): 193-94.

⁸³ "Minutes of the MCC Peace Section," September 12-13 (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1969), LMHS - Clarence E. Lutz MCC Peace Section 1969-1970 in folder "Clarence Lutz, Peace Section - November 22, 1969, YMCA Hotel, Chicago, Illinois."

did not act at that point to call for reparations, Lapp and his associates, unlike Landis and the Lancaster Conference Peace Committee, understood that any response to the Black Manifesto needed to focus on money.

At least one leader from the Lancaster Conference shared Harding's conviction that a response to the Black Manifesto required a forthright financial commitment. *Missionary Messenger* editor Mahlon Hess, a white ordained minister with a long record of evangelism in Alabama, Tanganyika, and Virginia, wrote an editorial in support of reparations.⁸⁴ Without naming the Black Manifesto directly, he pleaded with his readers not to dismiss reparations simply because activists delivered the demands in a "provocative way."⁸⁵ In contrast to the many Christian responses that made no mention of scripture, Hess endorsed the idea of reparations because of the biblical precedent in Exodus 12:35-36, where Israelites demanded gold and jewelry from the Egyptians prior to fleeing to the desert. Although he urged his readers to contact their legislators, develop job-training programs, and enter into relationships of equality, most centrally Hess focused on finances. He wrote that Christians needed to take "the lead in making financial resources available" so that through sacrificial giving they could "dissociate ourselves from the wrong."⁸⁶ Even as the Peace Committee's nonresistance-focused letter appeared in the national church press on August 12, 1969, Hess's editorial sounded a counter call to focus on financial reparations.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ruth, *The Earth*, 993-94, 99.

⁸⁵ Mahlon M. Hess, "Editorial," *Missionary Messenger*, August 1969, 24.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 24, 23.

⁸⁷ "Lancaster Conference Peace Committee."

Long before Hess's editorial and Landis's letter appeared in print, the Urban Racial Council had been preparing for a race-focused intervention into national church agenda. As originally constituted in October 1968, the Urban Racial Council lacked an official budget, a staff, a clear mandate, and authority over other church bodies. Only the passion and urgency of a roiling racial revolution channeled through a few determined African-American and white leaders like Powell and Schwartzentruber had opened up space for the group in church structures. For example, Schwartzentruber had cajoled the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns to pay for a delegate from the Urban Racial Council to serve on their group.⁸⁸ In the face of the urgency shown by Schwartzentruber even a representative from the Lancaster Conference like Landis could join in demonstrating public affirmation for the council despite lackluster support from his sponsoring body.

Members of the Urban Racial Council then used the status gained by appointments to national committees to stage a dramatic presentation at the (Old) Mennonite Church biennial assembly in Turner, Oregon, which would bring Powell and Landis into a temporary alliance. From August 15 through 19, 1969, two hundred and twenty-seven delegates and eight hundred more non-voting participants gathered to worship together, conduct the business of the church, and hear sermons from leaders such as the Lancaster Conference moderator David Thomas.⁸⁹ The leaders and delegates who came to Oregon planned to discuss church reorganization and youthful draft resisters. Although Powell had been tapped to speak to the delegates about the

⁸⁸ "Minutes of the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns," November 7-9 (Mennonite General Conference Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, 1968), LMHS - Paul G. Landis Coll., Mennonite General Conference Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, 1968-1971.

⁸⁹ "Reporting Guide for Mennonite General Conference," *Hi-Lights*, Tuesday, August 19 1969, 3-4; Zook, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 44.

Black Manifesto in lieu of Harding, few of those who gathered anticipated that his presentation would lead to an experience that (Old) Mennonite Church executive secretary Howard J. Zehr later called “almost traumatic” (see Figure 62).⁹⁰

That trauma unfolded in response to proposals previously encountered by most delegates. As the delegates watched Powell stride to the podium on August 16, they knew he had come to speak about the Black Manifesto. In advance of the gathering, every official delegate had received a copy of Forman’s demands.⁹¹

Rather than demands, however, Powell presented seventeen “recommendations,” the first of which called white Mennonites to confess “to the sins committed against black people.”⁹² As in the case of this first proposal, publishers and church committee members had printed or discussed every one of the subsequent

sixteen recommendations prior to Powell’s presentation. Others in the church had already encouraged congregants to volunteer, fund scholarships, eschew prejudice, conduct job training, educate about African-American heritage, support black self-help programs, appoint African Americans to church-wide committees, treat renters with equality, and develop welfare

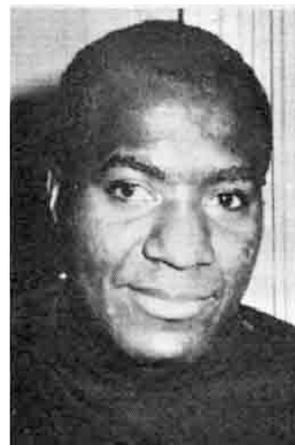


Figure 62: John Powell, 1969 ("Powell Joins Board Staff." *Gospel Herald*, November 18 1969, 1017-18.

⁹⁰ Howard J. Zehr, "The Mennonite Church, 1970," in *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, ed. Ellrose D. Zook (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1970), 5; John Powell, interview with author, Buffalo, New York/Evanston, Ill., March 16, 2003.

⁹¹ "A Response to Racial Tensions," *Hi-Lights*, Tuesday, August 19 1969.

⁹² John Powell, "Urban-Racial Concerns Statement," August 19 (Mennonite General Conference, 1969), AMC, I-1-1, Mennonite General Conference, 1898-1971, 1969 Session materials, Folder 5/8.

alternatives.⁹³ Scant weeks prior to Powell's presentation, Mahlon Hess had named similar proposals in his editorial. In Kalona, Iowa, a month and a half previously, Atlee Beechy had suggested raising two million dollars to fund programs similar to those identified by Powell. In short, none of the content was new.

Powell's presentation differed only in that an African-American man stood before the assembly and asked for a specific response. As one of the few African Americans at the gathering, Powell attracted the delegates' attention even before he combined prior proposals into a single document that necessitated a definitive response. Representing a base of merely 114,000 members, the delegates had to decide whether they would commit themselves to a half million dollars over and above an already ambitious four million dollar budget.⁹⁴ Powell explained that the money would be used for starting co-ops, urban training centers, secondary educational programs, housing projects, recreational programs, leadership training, and "racial sensitivity education in white congregations."⁹⁵ With the exception of the latter sensitivity training project, the various programs again differed only in that an African-American man presented them.

Race thus got the delegates' attention even as astute word choice gained their consideration. Urban Racial Council leaders presented recommendations rather than demands in

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ According to the 1970 *Mennonite Yearbook*, congregations were asked to forward about fifty dollars per member to church-wide agencies. The largest percentage of that amount, thirty-three dollars per member, went to Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities that in 1969 received just over \$2,200,000. Financial planners in the church thus anticipated receiving budget amounts from the equivalent of 80,000 of the church's 114,000 members in 1969. At that rate, as promoters of the Urban Racial fund would soon note, five hundred million dollars per year amounted to an asking of six dollars per member if contributions came in at the same rate as they did for the rest of the Mennonite church agencies. See: Zook, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 11-12, 44, 50.

⁹⁵ Powell, "Urban-Racial Concerns," 2.

the context of a Mennonite community known for strong congregational autonomy. Demands of any sort simply did not sit well with Mennonites. Given that a black man spoke about the Black Manifesto to a largely white audience, such a change from demands to recommendations gave the delegates one less reason to reject Powell's presentation. Likewise, Powell proposed that the Mission Board's executive committee oversee gathered funds. By ceding authority to the denomination's largest program board, Powell sidestepped objections about financial misappropriation. In light of such a careful presentation, traditionally frugal and autonomous Mennonites listened carefully.

Powell finished his arresting speech having gained the delegates' consideration but not their commitment. A white delegate recalled that Powell's presentation "sent shock waves" through the assembly.⁹⁶ In particular, delegates reacted to the perception that Powell had claimed white Mennonites "owed" African Americans hundreds of thousands of dollars.⁹⁷ Powell recalled one member saying, "If we do what John Powell tells us, they'll have me out of my pulpit and a nigger in there."⁹⁸ Other white delegates supported Powell's presentation and pushed hard for a positive vote. In the immediate aftermath of Powell's address, few knew whether the delegates would support or reject the Urban Racial Council proposals.

Surprisingly, amid such disparate responses, leaders negotiated a way to move forward. Careful negotiation, last minute editing, and political support from the Lancaster Conference led

⁹⁶ Paul Zehr, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 1, 2003.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Powell, interview with author. Gender dynamics surfaced with particular intensity during the Colorado gathering. White men responded with far greater defensiveness to Powell's presentation than did white women. Male conference delegates seemed to feel that the Urban Racial Council's proposal threatened their church dominance.

to an unequivocal outcome. After two days of behind the scenes discussion, the delegates received a six-point motion for their consideration on August 18.⁹⁹ The motion affirmed the church's 1955 race relations statement, confessed racial wrongdoing, validated Powell's presentation, called for above-budget giving in the amount of six dollars per member, and charged the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns with responsibility for building bridges between "our congregations and minority communities."¹⁰⁰ Only one change was requested. The draft as presented asked Mennonites to confess to "totally inadequate efforts in troubled urban areas." The final motion deleted "totally."¹⁰¹ Ironically, Paul Landis, the co-chair of the Lancaster Conference's Peace Committee that had had sent out a letter deliberately downplaying the financial components of the Black Manifesto, made the final motion on Tuesday, August 19, to accept the money-centered recommendations. The motion carried.

Initial reaction to the vote seemed positive. Immediately following the first vote, the delegates carried a second motion to collect an offering in support of "urban and minority crisis projects."¹⁰² The five thousand dollars collected lent dramatic support to the Urban Racial Council, especially when compared to the \$855.03 taken up during the previous evening's worship service.¹⁰³ Back in the Lancaster Conference, Hess penned a September editorial on

⁹⁹ "Resolution on Urban-Racial Concerns," August 19 (General Conference of the Mennonite Church, 1969), AMC, I-1-1, Mennonite General Conference, 1898-1971, 1969 Session materials, Folder 5/8.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² *Urban Racial Concerns* (Mennonite Historical Society, 1969 [cited November 15 2006]): available from <http://www.mcusa-archives.org/library/resolutions/BlackManifesto1969.html>.

¹⁰³ "Reporting Guide for Mennonite General Conference," 4.

reparations and introduced Powell to his readers by printing an article in which Powell reiterated Forman's critique that Christianity had supported African enslavement.¹⁰⁴ Powell challenged the church to share power, move beyond parochial isolation, and stop associating whiteness with the religious ideal of purity.¹⁰⁵ A pastor in Kansas likewise supported Powell's efforts by distributing the Black Manifesto to every member of his congregation and requiring that they read it before offering critique.¹⁰⁶ Further still, the editors of the *Gospel Herald* printed the entire text of the Urban Racial Council's recommendations.¹⁰⁷ In his new capacity as the executive director of the Urban Racial Council, now funded with the prospect of a half million dollars for each of the next five years, Powell received significant early support.

Not everyone appreciated Powell or the Urban Racial Council's aggressive turn. On September 11, Leonard Schmucker, a Michigan congregant who had been present at the Turner, Oregon, meetings, wrote about an accusation Powell made during his presentation. At Turner, Powell affirmed the love he felt from the church, but also launched into sharp criticism when he stated, "If Mr. James Forman would have appeared in this meeting, you would have tarred and feathered him."¹⁰⁸ In response, Schmucker expressed his forgiveness for what he felt was an unjust accusation and asked Powell to clarify his remarks to the entire church community, a

¹⁰⁴ Hess, "Editorial."

¹⁰⁵ John Powell, "The Urban Racial Council," Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Earl Buckwalter to John Powell, September 24 1969, Crystal Springs, Kans., AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: General Correspondence 1969-72.

¹⁰⁷ "Mennonite General Conference Urban-Racial Concerns," *Gospel Herald*, October 7 1969.

¹⁰⁸ Schmucker to Powell.

process Schmucker prompted by copying his letter to many church leaders.¹⁰⁹ Criticism continued to appear when, in early October, editors of the conservative *Sword and Trumpet* magazine denounced the Urban Racial Council recommendations as “something of a manifesto in itself” built on a “kind of favoritism which is also evil.”¹¹⁰ That same month, Landis and other members of the Lancaster Conference’s Peace Committee discussed the Urban Racial statement at length but took no common action.¹¹¹ The initial indicators of strong support faded as white constituents remained unconvinced that the manner or content of the Urban Racial Council statement deserved their financial backing.

Powell and the Urban Racial Council steering committee nonetheless had found a way to parlay the crisis precipitated by the Black Manifesto into a formidable position from which to critique the church. As Powell began his staff assignment as executive secretary of the Urban Racial Council on November 1, 1969, he entered a position made possible by the promise of funds committed at the delegate assembly. In as much as Powell modeled his presentation on the Black Manifesto, he owed his new job to Forman and the National Black Economic Development Corporation. Although people like Curtis Burrell, Rosemarie and Vincent Harding, Vern Miller, and Hubert Schwartzentruber had laid the groundwork for a more autonomous African-American group in the Mennonite community, the Black Manifesto provided the *kairos* moment – a crisis opportunity – out of which the Urban Racial Council gained a new and much more powerful position in the church.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ "General Conference, 1969," *Sword and Trumpet*, October 1969.

¹¹¹ Paul G. Landis, "Peace and Industrial Relations Committee," October 9 (Lancaster Conference, 1969), LMHS - Peace Committee Minutes, 1962-1974.

Even traditionally race-shy and evangelically minded Mennonites focused on the Manifesto and the related Black Power Movement. A November 11 article in the *Gospel Herald* written by popular African-American evangelical speaker William Pannell affirmed black self-determination and the need for white church leaders to share power and control.¹¹² Four days after Pannell's essay arrived in Mennonite homes, members of the Lancaster Conference's Colored Workers Committee met at Bowmansville Mennonite Church for a time of fellowship and discussion. Although white men continued to dominate the leadership structures and facilitate worship, participants heard a message on "The Bible in Social Conflict" and met in small groups to discuss how the bible related to poverty, interracial marriage, and Christian unity, topics central to then-current calls for economic reparations and black separatism.¹¹³ Even among this traditionally cautious separatist community, attention to the Black Power Movement and the Black Manifesto increased as the Urban Racial Council commanded the church's attention.

A few national leaders attempted to turn that attention into cold cash. In an article published two days before Thanksgiving, a time when many Mennonite communities expressed gratitude for God's financial blessing, John Mosemann asked readers to consider giving to the Urban Racial Council. Mosemann, a former missionary to Africa with family and personal roots in the Lancaster Conference, brought the full weight of his position as president of Mennonite Board of Missions to bear upon the Compassion Fund, the name then given to the Urban Racial

¹¹² William Pannell, "The Americanization of Sambo," *Gospel Herald*, November 11 1969.

¹¹³ "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1964-1969," (Colored Workers Committee, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969), EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

Council appeal. After describing the Urban Racial Council as a movement led “by the Spirit,” Mosemann implied that if white churches did not give in the present they would pay with black-led revolution in the future.¹¹⁴ Mosemann thus mixed threat with theology on Thanksgiving in hope of gaining new funds.

The Lancaster Conference leaders remained noncommittal despite Mosemann’s efforts and grassroots interest in the topic. In lieu of direct support, Landis and other leaders from the Conference enacted the same strategy they used when faced with the prospect of worship takeovers; they prepared for conversation with potentially hostile outsiders, in this case Powell and members of the Urban Racial Council, but gave no money. Such cautious response belied grassroots interest in the Manifesto and related topics. For example on January 4, 1970, Tom Skinner, a charismatic African-American evangelist from New York City, spoke before a crowd of six hundred people at Paradise Mennonite Church, a Lancaster Conference congregation. During his presentation, Skinner stated that the “problem with the Black Manifesto is not James Foreman [sic], but the people and the conditions that make a Foreman necessary.”¹¹⁵ Although he did not offer a ringing endorsement, Skinner nonetheless supported the Manifesto, a position his large Mennonite audience had come specifically to hear him discuss. The Lancaster Conference leaders, however, turned their attention elsewhere. The January edition of the Lancaster Conference’s *Pastoral Messenger* focused on nonconformity, liberalism, clothing, and disobedience to authority.¹¹⁶ As 1970 opened, the Lancaster Conference leaders continued to

¹¹⁴ John H. Mosemann, "Why an Urban-Racial Council?" *Gospel Herald*, November 25 1969.

¹¹⁵ "Evangelist Urges Gospel for Black Community," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, January 15 1970.

¹¹⁶ Lloy A. Kniss, "Worse or Better?" *Pastoral Messenger*, January 1969; Aaron O. Stauffer, "Liberalism or Conservatism," *Pastoral Messenger*, January 1969; "Worth Noting," *Pastoral*

withhold endorsement of the Compassion Fund even as grassroots church members showed interest in positions supported by the Urban Racial Council.

The tepid response from the Lancaster Conference did not keep Powell from plunging into his new responsibilities. After officially changing the name of their group from the Urban Racial Council to Minority Ministries Council in January 1970 in order better to represent “black and brown people in the Mennonite brotherhood,” Powell and his associates confronted the church in a number of forums from February through April.¹¹⁷ Most dramatically, Powell traveled to Hesston College, a Mennonite two-year school about an hour’s drive northwest of Wichita, to investigate troubling reports from the school’s few African-American students. The African-American students described how white students harassed them, faculty patronized them, and administrators suppressed their culture. College administrators explained in turn that they had “bent over backwards to help the black students” and could do nothing further, particularly in light of repeated alcohol infractions on the part of one student.¹¹⁸ In addition to concluding that he could not recommend Hesston College to any more African-American

Messenger, January 1969; "The Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pennsylvania, March 18, 1969," *Pastoral Messenger*, April 1969; Melvin Delp, "Nonconformity Committee Statement to Conference," *Pastoral Messenger*, April 1969; Aaron M. Shank, "Purpose and Objective of the Mennonite Messianic Mission," *Pastoral Messenger*, April 1969; "Report to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Mellinger Mennonite Meetinghouse, Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, September 18, 1969," *Pastoral Messenger*, October 1969; Norman Shenk, "Pulpit Echoes," *Pastoral Messenger*, October 1969.

¹¹⁷ John Powell, "Minutes of Minority Ministries Council Executive Meeting," January 9-10 (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

¹¹⁸ John Powell, "Hesston College Visit," April 16 (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), 1-2, AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-784 Box 1, Hubert Schwartzenruber Collection, Miscellaneous, Folder: Minority Ministries Council, 1970.

students, Powell proposed that the school offer courses in African-American history, expose all faculty to inner-city environments, replace all retiring faculty with minority professors, and provide “some avenue for cultural expression” for the African-American students.¹¹⁹ These recommendations did not go far enough in the mind of Hesston College board member Hubert Schwartzenruber, a Minority Ministries Council steering committee member and strong supporter of Powell. Schwartzenruber considered urging the African-American students to take legal action against the school.¹²⁰ Through actions such as these Powell and his white ally Schwartzenruber brought a new kind of direct confrontation to Mennonites accustomed to more passive aggression.

Such direct confrontation continued to typify Minority Ministries Council actions even as funds failed to materialize. Soon after his visit to Hesston, Powell reported to the church on March 24 that the Compassion Fund had received only \$38,075, far below the quarter million dollars necessary to reach the half million mark within a year.¹²¹ Perhaps in response to the disappointing giving rate, Powell made some effort to distance the Compassion Fund from the Black Manifesto, but then spoke glowingly of the Manifesto one week later in a different article in the same magazine.¹²² Like Powell, African-American Mennonite minister and council associate Hubert Brown engaged in bold confrontation. Brown returned from a Mennonite seminar on housing frustrated enough to report back to Powell on the “Bullshit” he encountered

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁰ Hubert Schwartzenruber to Randy Zercher, March 12 1970, St. Louis, Missouri, AMC - III-25-8 Bethesda MC 1/13, H. Schwartzenruber Files - Corres., Misc. outgoing 1968-71.

¹²¹ John Powell, "The Compassion Fund Is," *Gospel Herald*, March 24 1970.

¹²² John Powell, "The Minority Ministries Council: A Call to Action," *Gospel Herald*, March 31 1970.

among white Mennonites “all ‘decked out’ like gods who come to do ‘blackie’ a favor.”¹²³

Brown’s and Powell’s confrontational style increased their profile in the church but did little to motivate financial support for their efforts.

Confrontation did result in at least some financial support, however, as shown in a small gift offered to the Lancaster Conference in the name of the Black Manifesto. A white Mennonite working with the Agency for International Development in Morocco sent a letter in the fall of 1969 complimenting Paul Landis on the Conference’s response to the Black Manifesto.

Raymond Martin, the A.I.D. worker, praised the Peace Committee letter as a “balanced, honest, and reconciliatory [sic]” example of an “enlightened” response to the Manifesto, especially, he noted, when compared to the more defensive response of groups like the Southern Baptists.¹²⁴ In response to the Peace Committee’s letter, Martin sent a check to Landis for one hundred dollars with the suggestion that it be used in support of the African-American community. Martin explained that he did not want to wait for “James Forman to demand reparations of me or the Mennonite Church.”¹²⁵ More than the Lancaster Conference’s Black Manifesto response, the threat of confrontation motivated Martin to make his donation.

Landis’s ensuing response underlined how ill-equipped the Conference was to deal financially with the Black Manifesto. To begin, more than half a year passed between the sending and appropriating of Martin’s donation. Finally, on April 13, 1970, the congregation at Seventh Avenue in New York City proposed that the money be used to provide a small stipend

¹²³ Hubert Brown, "Report on the Church and Urban Development Seminar," April (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), AMC-IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: Church and Urban Development 1970, Seminars.

¹²⁴ Raymond Martin to Paul G. Landis, September 7 1969, New York City.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

to a local African-American youth, Warren (Pepy) Smith, to support his volunteer work with the congregation's softball team and weekly Boys Club.¹²⁶ Although not focused on the kind of economic development promoted by Powell, Seventh Avenue's proposal did offer a measure of encouragement to a struggling congregation and self-sacrificing youth worker. Yet the Lancaster Conference had no sustainable means of responding to additional funds offered in the name of the Manifesto. The Conference leaders simply did not have money in mind when they decided how to respond to the threat of disruptive African Americans.

Leaders from the Conference then moved from distributing Martin's meager funds to reducing the threat of worship service takeovers. Rather than wait for a Minority Ministries Council preacher to show up unannounced, the Lancaster Conference leaders began to introduce African Americans into white Mennonite congregations. Chester L. Wenger, secretary for Home Missions and Evangelism of the Lancaster Conference's Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, began to promote "preachers from our minority groups" for speaking engagements in local congregations.¹²⁷ After clarifying what Powell meant by a "minority congregation," Wenger urged local pastors on August 24, 1970, to invite speakers from a list he provided.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ A Proposal for the Use of Black Manifesto Funds, April 13 1970, Salunga, Pa., author's personal collection; Paul G. Landis to Richard Pannell and Harold Davenport, March 30 1970, Salunga, Pa., author's personal collection.

¹²⁷ Chester L. Wenger to Lancaster Conference Pastors, August 24 1970, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTERS' APPOINTMENTS 1970.

¹²⁸ Chester L. Wenger to John Powell, July 16 1970, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; John Powell to Chester L. Wenger, July 22 1970, Elkhart, Ind., EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; Wenger to Pastors.

Thus, over a year after Powell's dramatic intervention at the Mennonite General Conference gathering in Turner, Oregon, the Lancaster Conference ministers began to invite familiar African-American and Latino leaders into their congregations from a list of pastors who had been noticeably absent from the activities of the increasingly bold Minority Ministries Council.¹²⁹ Wenger asked pastors to allow his office to contact the speakers, a communication loop that allowed Wenger to itinerate a single speaker through several congregations while remaining in close control of the speakers' activities. Rather than unexpected takeovers by unknown outsiders, the Conference brought in trusted converts.

Powell and the Minority Ministries Council wanted more from the Lancaster Conference, however, than a list of speakers. In the early fall of 1970, council staff approached Landis about setting up a time to discuss "racist attitudes among" the Lancaster Conference constituency.¹³⁰ On November 13, Lynford Hershey, the white Minority Ministries Council staff person hired by Powell to educate white Mennonites, met with nine bishops and staff from Lancaster Conference. Hershey came to the meeting with close family ties to the Lancaster Conference, a long track record of civil rights activism, and a strong personal relationship with Powell. Hershey used the opportunity to describe how he was working in both "indirect and direct" ways to promote the "proper attitude" that would encourage white people to move aside so that African

¹²⁹ A number of the ten men listed in Wenger's August 24, 1970, letter to every pastor in the Lancaster Conference - Richard Pannell, Harold Davenport, George Richards, James Harris, Macon Gwinn, Raymond Jackson, Larry Crumbley, Artemio DeJesus, Jose Gonzalez, Jose Santiago - did go on to fulfill a variety of leadership posts in the Conference and throughout the church, but, as of Wenger's post, none of these Lancaster Conference pastors of color had held formal leadership posts with the Minority Ministries Council.

¹³⁰ James Thomas and Leon Stauffer, "Peace Committee," October 15 (Lancaster Conference, 1970), 2, LMHS - Peace Committee Minutes, 1962-1974.

Americans could help themselves.¹³¹ Landis and the other bishops in attendance told Hershey about their work on a new race relations document but did little else in response to his invitation to become more actively involved in education about racism in the Conference. Given that few members of the race statement subcommittee were involved with the Minority Ministries Council, Hershey had no reason to expect bold language from the new statement.¹³² The Lancaster Conference bishops once again hesitated instead of instituting proactive racial programs.

Bishops from the Lancaster Conference were not the only church leaders to hesitate when asked to support the direct methods employed by Powell, Hershey, and other Minority Ministries Council members. At meetings in Minneapolis held from November 18 through 19, members of the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns balked at Powell's and Hershey's proposal to "[p]recipitate a crisis in order to initiate discussion."¹³³ Committee members assigned to oversee Hershey's activities cautioned against such controversial methods out of concern that they

¹³¹ Leon Stauffer, "Special Meeting Lancaster Conference Bishop Board Leaders and Peace Committee with Linford [sic] Hershey Director Race Education Program, Minority Ministries Council, Elkhart, Indiana," November 13 (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), LMHS - Clarence E. Lutz Peace Committees (Lanc Conf, MCC, VS-IW).

¹³² Nelson Good chaired the committee and had attended the 1970 Minority Ministries annual meeting in Chicago. See: Nelson Good, "A Few Comments Concerning the Minority Ministries Council Meeting October 16, 17, 1970-Chicago," November 27 (Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church, Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1970), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71. Other members were Raymond Jackson, Jose Santiago and Robert Weaver. See: Leon Stauffer, "Peace Committee," March 2 (Lancaster Mennonite Conference Peace Committee, 1971), LMHS - Clarence E. Lutz Peace Committees (Lanc Conf, MCC, VS-IW) in folder "Clarence Lutz." The group thus included two white men, one African-American man, and one Latino man.

¹³³ "Minutes of the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns," November 18-19 (Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, 1970), 3.

“might produce counter productive results.”¹³⁴ After intense and lengthy discussion, the committee voted to support Hershey in his educational enterprise even if “problems may arise” or staff make mistakes.¹³⁵ Despite their pledge to stand by him even in the case of increased controversy, members of the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns registered their concern that Hershey not push too hard or too fast.

Hershey continued to encounter both hesitancy and reluctance at all church levels. By November 25, his itinerancy among white Mennonite congregations led him to comment on the “almost unbelievable” gap between white rural Mennonites and Mennonites, both white and from communities of color, who worshipped and worked in the city.¹³⁶ Despite that divide, Hershey nonetheless found more acceptance and support for his efforts to “deal with white racism” among lay members at the grassroots than among church leaders.¹³⁷ His efforts to plan cross-cultural weekend seminars, a decidedly less threatening form of confrontation than church takeovers, still bore little fruit by the end of 1970. Many white Mennonite leaders remained suspicious of the Minority Ministries Council almost two years after its initial appearance.

Leaders from the Lancaster Conference continued to demonstrate similar distrust through the first seven months of the following year. As 1971 opened, a Lancaster Conference executive affirmed two white church workers for their faithful efforts to develop African-American leadership at the Diamond Street Mennonite Church in Philadelphia. Along with affirmation for

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹³⁶ "C.P.S.C. At Minneapolis," *Hi-lights of the Mennonite Publishing House*, November 25 1970.

¹³⁷ Lynford Hershey, "Report To: Home Missions Council," (Minority Ministries Council, 1970), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

Homer and Ruth Schrock's ministry, Chester Wenger disparaged the Black Power Movement.¹³⁸ In so doing, he belittled groups like the Minority Ministries Council that followed the Black Power Movement's principles of self-determination. Rather than praise both the Schrocks and Minority Ministries staff for their mutual support of African-American leaders, Wenger lauded the former and criticized the latter. The racial disparity of his actions received no public comment.

Other leaders from the Lancaster Conference also curtailed efforts to institute agenda promoted by Minority Ministries staff. Contrary to earlier expectations, the Conference's race relations subcommittee drafted a statement that reflected the tenor of the Minority Ministries Council. On June 28, Nelson Good, Raymond Jackson, José Santiago, and Robert Weaver proposed multiple means to educate white constituents and support self-help efforts in African-American and Latino communities.¹³⁹ Despite earlier cautions from Landis and other Peace Committee members, the subcommittee members used strong language that described "racism" in the Conference, referred to "racists," and supported the "civil rights movement." In their statement, the group boldly suggested that the Conference discontinue the Fresh Air exchange program because it reinforced "patterns of racism in our brotherhood" and had proven "detrimental to the self concept of participating children."¹⁴⁰ All of these ideas had previously

¹³⁸ Chester L. Wenger to Homer Schrock and Ruth Schrock, January 4 1971, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 1st Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Home Ministries, Locations New York City, City Wisconsin 1964-1975 (1961), Folder: PHILADELPHIA DIAMOND STREET 1965-72.

¹³⁹ Leon Stauffer, "Peace Committee," June 28 (Lancaster Conference, 1971), LMHS - Peace Committee Minutes, 1962-1974.

¹⁴⁰ Stauffer, "Peace Committee."

been spoken to or recommended by Minority Ministries Council staff. Yet Landis and other staff from the Conference took no immediate action on any of them.

The Lancaster Conference leaders also set aside the subcommittee's appeal to appropriate funds for race relations programs. In a revised draft of the statement that would eventually form the basis of a study guide to be released the following year, Good and his colleagues focused on finances. They wrote that the Lancaster Conference Mennonites had collectively built "financial empires while praying for the less fortunate" and so would need to distribute "economic resources" as a means to share power equally with people of color.¹⁴¹ Likewise, several of the suggestions advanced by the subcommittee coupled education and support for African-American and Latino church members with significant financial contribution from the Lancaster Conference constituency. Yet again, no conference-wide fundraising campaigns or redistribution of financial resources followed the subcommittee's call.

The Conference's staff defended their race relations record rather than respond monetarily as Powell and Hershey applied increasing pressure. On July 14, 1971, Leon Stauffer, executive secretary of the Lancaster Conference's Peace Committee and colleague of Landis, assured Hershey that the Conference's subcommittee on race relations was hard at work.¹⁴² Stauffer's report on the Conference's cautious, statement-focused activity stood in stark contrast to the provocative steps taken by Powell and other council members. The day after Stauffer penned his report, Powell and Brown traveled to Atlanta to meet with Harding in order to discuss

¹⁴¹ "Statement on Racism," July 23 (Lancaster Conference, 1971), Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster Conference, Statements.

¹⁴² Leon Stauffer to Lynford Hershey, July 14 1971, Lancaster, Pa., AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: Education Program 1970-72, Lynford Hershey.

“methods... to liberate blacks in the church.”¹⁴³ No wonder that Hershey affirmed the programs proposed by the race relations statement subcommittee and noted how Minority Ministries staff were implementing similar measures in other locations. In a letter to the subcommittee, Hershey continued in this proactive vein by cautioning Stauffer against hiring “non-whites that we have taught to act white” and warning him not to pass a statement divorced from action.¹⁴⁴ Staff from the Lancaster Conference responded not by reconsidering the programs proposed by the race relations subcommittee but by recommending that pastors bring Hershey into their churches.¹⁴⁵ The invitation to itinerate Hershey spoke more to the existing tension between the Minority Ministries Council and the Lancaster Conference than to a shared agenda in as much as Hershey’s presence afforded leaders from the Conference a measure of political cover. Rather than redress ongoing racial inequities, the Conference leaders could point to Hershey’s itineration as a proactive step taken in support of Minority Ministries.

The Minority Ministry Council countered such lackluster support by holding an annual meeting in October 1971 that marked the apex of their influence. As council members gathered in Detroit, Powell highlighted a host of new activities. Leaders effectively employed caucuses to bring together the voices of African Americans and Latinos in the Mennonite church. Outspoken male council members like Brown and Lupe DeLeón held influential positions inside Minority

¹⁴³ John Powell to Vincent Harding, July 9 1971, Elkhart, Ind., AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: General Correspondence 1969-72.

¹⁴⁴ Lynford Hershey to Leon Stauffer, July 18 1971, Elkhart, Ind., AMC - IV-21-4 Box 1, MBM, Minority Ministries, Council, Data Files #1, A-K, Folder: Education Program 1970-72, Lynford Hershey.

¹⁴⁵ Chester L. Wenger to Mahlon Hess, July 27 1971, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

Ministries and within existing church structures.¹⁴⁶ The Compassion Fund had been tapped to disburse over seventy-five thousand dollars worth of grants, and the group laid plans for disbursing ninety-five thousand dollars more. A few white Mennonite executives even expressed support for the council. Boyd Nelson, the secretary of information services for Mennonite Board of Missions, actively supported the Compassion Fund as a means to “recognize our participation as white anglo Mennonites in the overall racist and discriminatory and insensitive patterns in our society.”¹⁴⁷ In public, Minority Ministries looked like a healthy, powerful conversation partner with church leaders.

The conversation between council and church leaders hummed with tension, however, and money shortages added to stress within the organization as well. The Compassion Fund’s first year receipts reached only one hundred thousand of the five hundred thousand dollar goal. Receipts in the second year dropped to sixty thousand dollars.¹⁴⁸ Powell asserted that denominational officials required council staff to submit more detailed financial reports than other departments, a requirement indicative of the church’s distrust of council staff that in turn slowed the pace of giving.¹⁴⁹ As funds failed to materialize, Powell tried to achieve self-sufficiency by proposing that the council develop credit unions and small businesses in racially

¹⁴⁶ "Minority Ministries Council Annual Assembly," October 15-16 (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

¹⁴⁷ John Powell, "Compassion Fund Report," (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

¹⁴⁸ "Minority Ministries Council Black Caucus," October 15 (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

oppressed communities.¹⁵⁰ At the same time, both the African-American and Hispanic caucuses considered an initial draft of a “Minority Statement to the Mennonite Church” that rejected integration, critiqued Mennonite paternalism, confessed to passive acceptance of second-class status, and again called for financial support of Minority Ministries’ initiatives.¹⁵¹ In light of the already greatly diminished financial response, a sizable number of members of the Black Caucus and even greater numbers of members of the Hispanic Caucus objected to the document because “it may hurt the very whites who were friends and were concerned.”¹⁵² As Minority Ministries staff struggled to raise money, tensions that had strained conversations with the broader church began to hamper internal discussion.

Those external and internal tensions limited the Minority Ministries Council’s ability to enter into conversation with the powerful Lancaster Conference by the end of 1971. A proposal to host a cross-cultural weekend suggested by Hershey never got beyond the planning stages despite glowing reports from white participants at similar events in other parts of the country.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ "Minority Statement to Mennonite Church," (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

¹⁵² "Minority Ministries Council Latin Concilio," October 15 (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

¹⁵³ For evidence of praise for cross cultural seminars hosted by Lynford Hershey and Minority Ministries Council members, see: Janet Snyder to Lynford Hershey, October 9 1971, Salem, Oregon, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; George Kauffman to Lynford Hershey, 1971, Salem, Oregon, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; Theron K. Hooks to Lynford Hershey and Jeannie Hershey, September 22 1971, Salem, Oregon, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; David

Even an otherwise engaged supporter such as Chester Wenger, the secretary for home missions and evangelism at Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, expressed doubts that constituents from the Lancaster Conference would be “interested enough in the subject” to attend a race-focused seminar.¹⁵⁴ Although Powell and Hershey had rallied past such tepid response in Minority Ministries’ first heady days, they could no longer make significant inroads into the Lancaster Conference as 1971 came to a close. Once demands for money and threats of violence dissipated, Landis and Wenger dropped the racial agenda through benign neglect.

* * *

Much of contemporary Black Power Movement historiography explains such white withdrawal in the aftermath of the Black Manifesto by placing blame on one party. In the instance of the Lancaster Conference and the Minority Ministries Council, such blame-focused analysis begins by noting the profound mismatch between a separatist religious community and a militant splinter group misguided in its promotion of Black Nationalist rhetoric and thought. Under this frame, the methods of the Black Manifesto employed by John Powell and his

L. Groh to Lynford Hershey, October 7 1971, Albany, Oregon, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; LeRoy Chupp to Lynford Hershey, 1971, Salem, Oregon, EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71; and Jim Bishop, "'Accept Us as Brothers,' Minority Speakers Say," *Gospel Herald*, May 11 1971. Although minutes of the October 30, 1972, Lancaster Conference Peace Committee make reference to plans to explore holding such an event, no follow-up activity appears in the minutes through 1975. See: Ray Geigley, "Peace Committee," October 30 (Lancaster Conference, 1972), LMHS - Peace Committee Minutes, 1962-1974.

¹⁵⁴ Chester L. Wenger to Lester Brubaker, November 30 1971, Salunga, Pa., EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

colleagues appear dramatic but ill chosen. This interpretation suggests that the Minority Ministries scheduled its own demise by demanding that the church dedicate substantial new funds to their projects instead of being content with the remainder sent their way after international programs claimed their share. This interpretation further concludes that Minority Ministries members chose diatribe before conversation, confrontation instead of dialogue, and disdain rather than collaboration. As an example of a common historical interpretation of the Black Manifesto, this frame treats the Minority Ministries Council as a scapegoat. Such historiography likewise suggests that the Lancaster Conference leaders cannot be held culpable for failing to meet inappropriately presented demands.

This chapter presents an alternative to placing blame or judging Black Manifesto methods ill chosen. When approached as a conversation between two parties with scant prior interaction, the exchanges between the Minority Ministries Council and the Lancaster Conference offer new insight into why an otherwise compassionate group would steer away from a financial response to the Black Manifesto. Rather than focusing on the appropriateness of the methods and rhetoric of Forman and his imitators, this narrative demonstrates how both parties contributed to an increasingly tension-filled conversation between white and African-American Mennonites. Despite starkly divergent racial identities and life experiences, the participants in the ensuing interracial dialogue concurred on the topic of the conversation. They agreed that the church should respond to the Black Manifesto. The crux of their disagreement, over what shape that response would take, led to two primary options. In the face of Black Manifesto worship takeovers, the church would either pay reparations or reinforce a commitment to nonresistance. In other words, African-American and white Mennonites talked at length about whether racial justice or nonviolence was most important.

The record of that conversation about money and violence first and foremost demonstrates that both national Black Manifesto activists and Minority Ministries Council members initiated a conversation with the white-led faith community. These African-American activists and their allies could have chosen other conversation partners. The United States government, social service agencies, and civic organizations such as Kiwanis or Rotary clubs all held as much or more influence in society than did the Christian community.¹⁵⁵ Forman and his colleagues brought their most intense challenge to Christendom because, despite Forman's atheism, those who passed the statement were themselves Christians.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, Forman's experience with parochial schooling and his past organizing efforts within the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee provided him with intimate knowledge of the leverage points that would move white Christians to action and new dialogue.¹⁵⁷ Forman's choice to interrupt, engage, and demand reparations in Christian churches and denominational offices resulted in new conversations within the church, albeit intense and tumultuous ones.

Those conversations about reparations and racial injustice became so intense in part because each party spoke a different language. The Black Manifesto included the familiar religious language of "faith and belief," "the Cross," and "the words of the prophets," but used

¹⁵⁵ Forman and those who followed him focused on white mainline denominations far more than the Jewish groups originally named in the Manifesto document. In the main, the Jewish community reacted more negatively from the onset of the Black Manifesto and experienced far fewer interruptions in their services than did the Christian community. Contemporary and historical accounts make no mention of Forman or his associations interrupting synagogue services. See: Lecky and Wright, "Reparations Now?" 17.

¹⁵⁶ Williams, "Christianity and Reparations: Revisiting James Forman's 'Black Manifesto,' 1969," 42.

¹⁵⁷ Carson, *In Struggle*, 31; Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, 123; Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights*, 188-89.

political terms anathema to Anabaptists and many other Christian groups such as “revolution,” “demands,” and “colonization.”¹⁵⁸ Within the Mennonite community a similar disjuncture existed. Whereas leaders from the Lancaster Conference preferred to speak about “racial prejudice,” Minority Ministries Council members discussed “racism”; when staff from the Conference talked about their “work with minority groups,” Council officials explored how to “liberate blacks in the church”; and when Conference authors focused on “the redemptive love of Christ,” Council staff identified “paternalism in our churches.”¹⁵⁹ Even on the most central of Mennonite doctrines, the two groups differed. The Lancaster Conference eschewed any association with the military and censured those who went “into military training or service.”¹⁶⁰ Powell and other council staff used military language to describe their plans for people of color to be “the ‘generals’ of our troops” while white Mennonites became “foot soldiers.”¹⁶¹ Politicized theology, racial self-determination, and military metaphors did not make sense to the white Lancaster Conference Mennonites’ conduct or doctrine. Conversation became difficult when each party used different terms to discuss common experience.

The conversation also proved difficult because the Lancaster Conference claimed a history of proper conduct in race relations. Although leaders in the Conference passed statements confessing to participation in racism, they did so with the knowledge that they held the record among Mennonites for the longest, most consistent, formally supported engagement with African

¹⁵⁸ "Black Manifesto."

¹⁵⁹ Good and Landis to Ministers; Landis, "Bishop Board Meeting"; Powell to Harding; Russel J. Baer, "Editorial," *Pastoral Messenger*, January 1970; "Minority Statement to Mennonite Church."

¹⁶⁰ "Rules and Discipline," 22.

¹⁶¹ "Minority Statement to Mennonite Church."

Americans. In addition to being the first to accept African-American members into their congregations, the Lancaster Conference hosted a Colored Workers Committee that had met faithfully since 1947, a span of twenty-two years.¹⁶² Such corporate commitment likewise expressed itself in the claim made in 1965 that a predominantly white Lancaster Conference church in Harlem offered “potentially greater gains for the claims of Christ than ... ten civil-rights marches led by Rev. M. L. King, Jr.”¹⁶³ This self-assurance received support from outside observers. Reports in Lancaster newspapers from 1963 proclaimed that “the Mennonites have been more helpful than any other single church group” in responding to African-American poverty.¹⁶⁴ Likewise, on February 15, 1967, New York Representative James H. Scheuer extolled the “ingenuity” of “robust,” self-sacrificing Mennonite volunteers from the Lancaster Conference who ran a non-profit sandwich shop in Harlem.¹⁶⁵ The history claimed by the Lancaster Conference leaders, supported by outsiders, and understood by most lay members told a story of race relations done well.

John Powell and the Minority Ministries Council told another story. In Powell’s tale, the Lancaster Conference leaders, pastors, and lay members – from Paul Landis through to elderly,

¹⁶² Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church*, 41; Ira J. Buckwalter, "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1947-1953," (Colored Workers Committee, 1947-1953), EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

¹⁶³ "Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church: Self-Analysis of Congregation in Response to Questionnaire Titled 'Some Questions to Ask When Describing a Church'," September 10 (Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church, 1965), 10, LMHS - Paul G. Landis New York - Seventh Ave.

¹⁶⁴ Marvin Miller, "Churches and Social Agencies Work in Slum Area with Little Success," *New Era*, October 16 1963.

¹⁶⁵ Loren Lind and James H. Scheuer, "The Glad Tidings Mennonite Church Makes Living a Little Bit Easier for Poor," *Congressional Record - House* (1967): H1367-H68.

covering-clad grandmothers – promoted paternalism. Powell and members of the Minority Ministries Council faulted white Mennonites in the Lancaster Conference and throughout the church for calling people of color to be more like them than to be like Christ. Their story roiled with anger and frustration at white Mennonites who preached a message of salvation that required converts to take on white customs, values, and demeanor. As they continued to tell their story into the early 1970s, Council members described a history in which they asked to be included on the church's pathways to power but were seldom ushered forward. Rather than continue to participate in a "false kind of integration," Powell and his associates, emboldened as they were by the examples of Harding and Forman before them, sought to write a new history in which they developed "indigenous congregations" and confronted their "white Christian brothers."¹⁶⁶ Powell's story upended and revised the prior tale told among the white Lancaster Conference Mennonites. The new story described interracial success with references to black autonomy, power distribution, and racial identity. Unfamiliar with this new story and the terms used to tell it, white Mennonites in Lancaster County and beyond grew defensive and distant. They felt that the Council members had unjustly dismissed white Mennonites' interracial efforts and contributions.

Powell, Brown, and other leaders of the Minority Ministries Council nonetheless remained in steadfast conversation with the Mennonite church. Even in 1971 when their rhetoric sounded the most brash, they sought "positive relationship" and open communication with white Mennonites and were willing to "make concessions and reconciliations wherever necessary."¹⁶⁷ Council members did not vie for separation but rather stated their desire to maintain membership

¹⁶⁶ "Minority Statement to Mennonite Church."

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

in the church. Minority Ministries leaders helped educate their white co-constituents and made room for white allies to attend council meetings and participate in caucuses. Through such action, council leaders demonstrated their intention to be a part of the Mennonite community rather than step out on their own. They spoke with the church because they were the church.

This conversation between equally committed Mennonite church members finally foundered because both parties were ill equipped to talk about money. Up until 1969, conversations about racial issues in the church had centered on evangelism, interracial marriage, civil rights protest, and service programs like Fresh Air exchanges. Except when associated with discussion of employment, education, or housing, money seldom surfaced as a conversation topic in the racial arena. Not surprisingly, the already touchy topic of finance became suddenly incendiary when fused with past and present racial injustice. Traditionally, white Mennonites rarely discussed finances in any setting, let alone in interracial settings. Although the concept of financial reparations for slavery had long been a topic of conversation and motive for political action among sectors of the African-American community, white Mennonites had seldom encountered the idea.¹⁶⁸ Thus, unaccustomed to linking financial power and race relations, Landis and his colleagues linked money and race only when threatened by the Black Manifesto and persistent questions from Minority Ministries staff. When that threat and forceful query disappeared, so did the conversation.

Landis and other leaders from the Lancaster Conference placed a greater value on maintaining an increasingly fragile commitment to nonviolence than on advancing the financial demands of racial justice. As unlikely an event as the takeover of a Lancaster Conference rural

¹⁶⁸ Mary Francis Berry, "Whatever Happened to the Civil Rights Movement and What Can or Should We Do About It?" in *Allison Davis Lecture* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 2006).

congregation might seem in retrospect, in 1969 the prospect appeared imminent to leaders of the community. They feared the possibility of white Mennonite ministers calling in the police or erupting in violence against an African-American intruder. The latter prospect in particular, that of a white Mennonite minister or burly farmer throwing a round house at a dashiki-clad Manifesto emissary, could have called into question the Conference's already fragile commitment to nonviolence in a way no leader wanted to imagine. Landis directed attention away from the violence of racism toward the violence of personal attack while proposing the solution of nonresistance rather than reparations.

Landis thus embodies one of the central ironies of this period. Landis's decision to second the motion that passed Powell's Urban Racial Council appeal in 1969 at Turner, Oregon, was not accidental. In his work with the Conference's Voluntary Service Program, his oversight of New York congregations, and his position as conference secretary, Landis actively promoted ministry to and by African-American and Latino leaders and received criticism from white constituents for what they perceived to be unbiblical support of King and other civil rights leaders.¹⁶⁹ At times Landis even led in calling for repentance from "white supremacy."¹⁷⁰ Yet as the conversation turned from rights to reparations, Landis found it difficult to make the shift. Those he had advocated to bring into leadership began discussing uncomfortable topics. Attempts to shift the conversation back into the familiar topic of nonviolence ended up alienating the African Americans who Landis and other leaders from the Lancaster Conference had worked so hard to bring into the discussion.

¹⁶⁹ Landis, interview with author; Paul G. Landis, interview with author, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., April 28, 2005.

¹⁷⁰ Landis, "Tribute Lauds King's Life, Work," 374.

In the end, the conversations collapsed because the money ran out. By the time educational resources on racism reached past the church elite to congregants, Minority Ministries Council staff felt deflated and discouraged by restrictions placed on their ability to promote the Compassion Fund, their fiduciary lifeline. Once the money dried up, so did much of their influence. Although Council members had once been able to demand that functionaries travel to meet with them, Powell and others soon had to travel to gain a hearing. By 1972, Mennonite Board of Missions administrators had cut the funds for Lynford Hershey's educational program.¹⁷¹ By September 1973, John Powell talked about feeling isolated.¹⁷² One month later, leaders of the (Old) Mennonite Church structured the Minority Ministries Council out of existence.¹⁷³ In its place, African-American and Latino leaders gained a few leadership posts, but the institution that had once advocated on their behalf no longer functioned. Less than a year later, Powell resigned and left the church.¹⁷⁴ Lupe DeLeon, Gracie and Neftali Torres, and many others followed in subsequent years.¹⁷⁵ In short, when the money left the table, the conversation died.

The short-lived, intense, multi-lingual conversation between the Minority Ministries Council and groups like the Lancaster Conference nonetheless brought change. Most principally,

¹⁷¹ *A Historical Timeline of Minority and Urban Ministry in the United States, 1910-1997* (Historical Committee, Mennonite Church USA, September 12, 2006 [cited December 18 2006]): available from <http://www.mcusa-archives.org/Resources/mimorityministriestimeline.html>.

¹⁷² John Powell, "Among Chaos, a Place to Belong," *The Mennonite*, September 25 1973.

¹⁷³ *A Historical Timeline of Minority and Urban Ministry in the United States, 1910-1997*.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

leaders from the Lancaster Conference recommitted themselves to nonresistance, a move that corresponded with unexpected support for young draft resisters and increased opposition to the Vietnam War. Additionally, administrators from the Lancaster Conference released new funds to hire African-American and Latino youth from New York City and other urban centers to work during the summer in their home neighborhoods. Summer service had once been the exclusive province of white rural Mennonite youth. It is doubtful whether this shift would have taken place as rapidly or at all without Powell and others agitating on behalf of such initiatives. The Fresh Air Program also received new attention. Although the Lancaster Conference leaders chose not to discontinue it immediately as recommended by the Conference's subcommittee on racism, they made initial attempts at reform by bringing in African-American administrators to work with the program and scheduling entire family visits to and from the city.¹⁷⁶ The Fresh Air Program eventually saw its demise two decades later, a slow and attenuated process that can be traced back to the initial doubts placed about the program when Powell called for a "stale-air" exchange in 1971.¹⁷⁷ The benefits derived from these changes, however tenuous and unexpected, came about because staff from the Minority Ministries Council forced the Lancaster Conference to modify its race relations narrative.

Yet the conversation provoked by Forman and sustained by the Minority Ministries Council left all parties bereft. As white leaders' reinforced nonviolence for the sake of ethical integrity, the destructive power of purity again became evident despite the benefits noted above. The Council's members left a church they loved. Members from the Lancaster Conference lost

¹⁷⁶ Paul Angstadt, Harold Davenport Talks with Kids (1973) EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets middle isle: Drawer marked: Information Services Picture File, File: Archives - Home Ministries, Children's Visitation Program.

¹⁷⁷ Hershey to Stauffer.

trust with African-American leaders and missed the opportunity to examine the ways in which their pocketbook priorities conflicted with their stated intentions. In choosing to look elsewhere, the white Conference members, like many other white Christians, turned away from the central topic leaders of the African-American community said they wanted to discuss.¹⁷⁸ Mennonites were unique only in that they used the occasion of the Black Manifesto to amplify their commitment to nonviolence. In essence, leaders from the Lancaster Conference protected the purity of their commitment to nonviolence in the wake of a threat that would have sullied them further by requiring a plunge into the murky waters of finance. By refusing to discuss the connections among race, money, and power, and by, in addition, turning all their energy toward a concern that seemed completely irrelevant to the needs expressed in the demands of their African American interlocutors, the Conference leaders made their home even more unwelcoming than it had been before. The debate between nonviolence and nonresistance proved not only irrelevant to Council members focused on advancing civil rights goals in the church but insulting as well. By insisting on a pure doctrine that criticized even nonviolent confrontation, Landis and his colleagues rejected even the most conciliatory efforts to bring about change. The Lancaster Conference leaders realized the danger of tying Mennonite identity to a particular, narrow notion of purity too late or not at all.

The unintended consequences arising from a new conversation about race marked the necessity of purity as a religious value alongside the palpable dangers inherent within any border-maintaining value. The conversation between Powell and white Mennonites was in great part a debate over who would control the language of purity. White Mennonites' concern for religious purity gave Powell and other Minority Ministries members theological leverage when

¹⁷⁸ Sousa, "The White Christian Churches' Responses to the Black Manifesto: A Thesis," 65.

they employed the language of ethical purity to express their demands. For example, Powell appealed to white Mennonites' desires for integrity of word and deed to bring about changes in summer service and Fresh Air programs. Likewise, the Minority Ministries Council would have received scant attention in a group unconcerned about separating themselves from a world tainted by corporate sins like racial prejudice. Finally, a group led by an unapologetic and assertive African-American man in a white-dominated and quietist community depended on religious and ethical purity to stay alive. Powell raised money by calling white Mennonites to support the council and, in so doing, remain free of the taint of racism and separate from the world. Although he rarely acknowledged his dependence on purity, Powell relied on the religious value all the same.

The conclusion that follows brings together the danger and necessity of religious expressions of purity in a way seldom realized by leaders from the Lancaster Conference and the Minority Ministries Council. The lives of three women show how all the manifestations of purity treated here – religious, ethical, sexual, and racial – shaped and transformed the Mennonite community. This final treatment of the multiple manifestations of purity acting in three women's lives during the period of this study suggests new insight into the life of the entire Mennonite church and the long civil rights era as a whole.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION – ‘A PURE FELLOWSHIP’ REVISITED:
UNPACKING THE DANGER AND THE NECESSITY OF PURITY

The five adults who gathered at Bethesda Mennonite Church in St. Louis on a Sunday morning in November 1957 represented the past and future of race relations among Mennonites

(see Figure 63). Rowena Lark,

seated on the right with an open

bible on her lap, peered intently

across the room. Lark had

worked for more than two

decades to invite African

Americans into Mennonite

congregations in St. Louis,

Chicago, and Harrisonburg,

Virginia. Shortly after the photographer captured her intense gaze and plain dress, she would

move to the West Coast to help start yet another church. Nettie Taylor, the object of Lark’s gaze

on the left of the photo, would eventually bring in more than twenty members to Bethesda. In the

rapidly deteriorating Pruitt-Igoe housing project, Taylor would help to build a vibrant



MRS. NETTIE TAYLOR, Mrs. Susie Smith, Mrs. June Swartzentruber, Louis Gray and Mrs. Rowena Lark, members of the Adult Bible Class, discuss Sunday's lesson

Figure 63: Nettie Taylor, Susie Smith, June Swartzentruber, Louis Gray, Rowena Lark, 1957 ("Mennonite Church Organized Here." *The Saint Louis Argus* 1957, 2C).

community that she would come to call a “pure fellowship.”¹ In the middle of the group, June Schwartzentruber also turned her gaze at Taylor. Married only six weeks prior to arriving in St. Louis, Schwartzentruber and her husband Hubert had recently moved from southern Ontario to serve the fledgling Bethesda congregation and take up residency as two of the very few white tenants in Pruitt-Igoe.² June would spend the next fifteen years at Bethesda serving in the unofficial roles of “pastor, teacher, counselor, and bishop.”³ Susie Smith and Louis Gray, who flanked Schwartzentruber in their intimate half-circle, filled out a Sunday school class replete with the promise and pain of a Mennonite community not yet certain how to live out their fresh commitment to racial egalitarianism or deal with the legacy of all-too-frequent segregation.

Lark, Taylor, and Schwartzentruber moved through that promise and pain by paying attention to purity’s multiple expressions. From her earliest days as a new Mennonite convert in Pennsylvania and throughout her brief time in St. Louis, Lark used theologically based religious purity to assert her claim as a Mennonite by modeling plain dress to other African-American women. By exhorting the women to wear their hair naturally under prayer coverings dictated by nonconformist doctrine, she exercised authority outside the purview of white church leaders.

¹ Nelson E. Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City," *Gospel Herald*, June 6 1961, 17; Katharine G. Bristol, "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Keith L. Eggener (New York: Routledge, 2004).

² Hubert Schwartzentruber, *Jesus in Back Alleys: The Story and Reflections of a Contemporary Prophet* (Telford, Pa.: Dreamseeker Books, 2002), 30; Lorraine Roth, *Willing Service: Stories of Ontario Mennonite Women* (Waterloo, Ontario: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1992), 115. One correspondent claimed that Fannie and Hubert were the “first and only white tenants in the dark section” of Pruitt-Igoe, but I have not been able to corroborate that claim. See: K. Ford to Hubert Schwartzentruber, St. Louis, Missouri.

³ Schwartzentruber, *Jesus in Back Alleys: The Story and Reflections of a Contemporary Prophet*, 33; Sam Steiner, *Hist. Mss. 1.114 - Schwartzentruber, Hubert* (Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Conrad Grebel University College, February 21 2007 [cited May 2 2007]): available from <http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao/manuscriptcollections/HM1.114.htm>

Unlike Lark, Taylor came to know Mennonites at Bethesda, a congregation located in a region where those most interested in enforcing purity-based dress codes had little influence. Unconcerned as she was with creedal expressions of religious purity, Taylor paid more attention to the racial and ethical expressions of that value. In a housing project originally designed to keep the races separate, Taylor demonstrated purity of word and deed by building a church where congregants came together across racial lines.⁴ Schwartzentruber joined Taylor in focusing on interracial integrity and likewise spent little energy on conforming to dress restrictions. Rather than accept the church's theological mandate to equate religious purity with female dress restrictions, Schwartzentruber strove to redefine nonconformity by calling for leaders in her denomination to renounce female subordination as fervently as they rejected worldly behaviors.⁵ For each of these three women, purity mattered.

The racialized expressions of purity that proved so significant to Lark, Taylor, and Schwartzentruber initially appear to be insignificant to the study of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, the women struggled with purity in a tiny arena. By 1971, the entire Mennonite population in the United States had not yet reached 200,000.⁶ Less than 2,500 African Americans had joined Mennonite congregations.⁷ Likewise, the women's struggles with purity seldom led to civil rights action. Few Mennonites – African-American or white – participated in civil rights

⁴ Lee Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), 8.

⁵ Schwartzentruber, *Jesus in Back Alleys: The Story and Reflections of a Contemporary Prophet*, 33; Roth, *Willing Service: Stories of Ontario Mennonite Women*, 116-17.

⁶ Levi Miller, ed., *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, vol. 63 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1972), 71.

⁷ Le Roy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 177.

demonstrations, wrote letters to congressional representatives, or took part in mass mobilizations. With minor exceptions, Mennonites distanced themselves from the visible foment of the Second Reconstruction.⁸ Those uninterested in the field of Anabaptist history seem to have little to gain from study of such a small community so far removed from centers of social unrest.

Despite Mennonites' apparent irrelevance, however, other white-led Christian churches responded to African Americans in much the same way as Mennonites featured in this work. Other religious communities also tried to match their race-focused actions with their race relations statements in a show of ethical integrity.⁹ In the same way, many white religious leaders sought to protect white women from the perceived threat of African-American men based on notions of sexual purity.¹⁰ Like many Mennonites, white people both within and outside the organized Christian church promoted similar notions of racial purity and expressed these commitments long past the eugenic heyday of the interwar era.¹¹ Although the doctrines they asserted and the clothes they wore set them apart from other Christians, most white Mennonites nonetheless related to African Americans in largely the same way as the rest of white society.

⁸ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 8.

⁹ Thomas A. Tweed, *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1997), 2.

¹⁰ Evandro Camara, *The Cultural One or the Racial Many: Religion, Culture and the Interethnic Experience, Research in Ethnic Relations* (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1997), 98; Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights, Religion in the South* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 146; John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 107.

¹¹ Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 22; Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 97; Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 89, 91, 92, 106.

Mennonite history thus reveals the deeper texture of the Civil Rights Movement because Mennonites, like most white Christians and other members of white society, responded to outside marches by making internal changes. As representatives of the narratives described in this dissertation, Lark, Taylor, and Schwartzentruber first demonstrate how those internal changes unfolded within congregations. Lark's purity-based commitment to wearing coverings and cape dresses exposes an intimate form of resistance in the midst of racial upheaval. Her strategy of claiming one cherished value – nonconformity – to challenge another – racial segregation – forced white Mennonites to relate to her as an equal in the same way that participants in sit-ins forced white waiters to serve them with respect. Likewise, Taylor's evangelical commitment to building an interracial fellowship that challenged notions of racial purity reveals an intimate site of significant change. By inviting other African Americans in St. Louis's Pruitt-Igoe housing project "to come and learn to love white people," Taylor prompted interracial relationships at a time when civil rights leaders critiqued segregated Sunday services.¹² Yet again, Schwartzentruber's commitment to match professed belief with daily

¹² Kauffman, "Light Shines out from the Inner City," 517. In her efforts to invite African Americans into fellowship with white people, Taylor remained true to the independent black church tradition from which she came. Northern antebellum African-American independent churches and the southern groups that broke away from white-led denominations in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War both established black-led churches in reaction to white racism and in pursuit of racial autonomy. African Americans rejected white Christian church structures and racist actions, not white Christians. As Taylor entered the integrated congregation at Bethesda, she sought out relationships with white co-believers that had long been maintained by African-American clergy and lay people alike. When James and Rowena Lark and then Hubert and June Schwartzentruber demonstrated that Bethesda would not operate in the racist manner of many other white churches, Taylor joined the small congregation to seek out church-based interracial relationships that had not been possible during a time of deliberate segregation. Taylor thus built on an independent African-American church tradition that called her to resist white racism even while maintaining relationships with white people. For treatments of the African-American antebellum northern independent churches, see: Monroe Fordham, *Major Themes in Northern Black Religious Thought, 1800-1860*, 1st ed. (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition

action shows how concern for ethical integrity motivated some people to act contrary to their best interests. Having been born with a hole in her heart that limited her stamina, Schwartzentruber could have stayed in the far less stressful environment of rural southern Ontario.¹³ Yet, like those who risked arrest in pursuit of civil rights, Schwartzentruber risked ill health in pursuit of racial justice by participating in the interracial community that gathered at Bethesda. Ironically, as representatives of a sectarian group that officially opposed civil rights agitation, these theologically motivated women nonetheless brought about changes within their congregations and the racial order by living out values promoted by leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

In the same way, the study of white and African-American Mennonites demonstrates that change during the civil rights era came about as much through interactions in the home as through demonstrations in the streets. In addition to the congregationally focused actions of Lark, Taylor, and Schwartzentruber, other home-based examples abound. In his home, a Fresh Air host stopped using racial epithets in order to decrease social distance and lessen political

Press, 1975), 154; Edward Franklin Frazier and C. Eric Lincoln, *The Negro Church in America/the Black Church since Frazier*, *Sourcebooks in Negro History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 32, 107; Marcia Y. Riggs, "African American Children, 'the Hope of the Race': Mary Church Terrell, the Social Gospel, and the Work of the Black Women's Club Movement," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000), 365; Joseph R. Washington, *Black Religion and Public Policy: Ethical and Historical Perspectives* (1978), iv; and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*, 3rd, rev. and enl. ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998), 272. For treatment of the post-Civil War exodus of African Americans from southern white denominations, see: Katharine L. Dvorak, *An African-American Exodus: The Segregation of the Southern Churches*, *Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub., 1991), 114-19.

¹³ Roth, *Willing Service: Stories of Ontario Mennonite Women*, 114.

tension.¹⁴ Around the dinner table, Sadie Conrad came to appreciate and enjoy her future son-in-law, Gerald Hughes, years before the Supreme Court made prohibition of interracial marriage illegal.¹⁵ Vincent and Rosemarie Harding shared many meals around a dinner table at Menno House in Atlanta as they bridged the world of civil rights activism and white Mennonite quietism.¹⁶ Conversations about segregated sacraments, integrating congregations, and the Black Manifesto took place while participants sat in dining room chairs, living room sofas, or porch-side rockers. Although not as visible as a street march or as arresting as a placard claiming “I Am A Man,” home-based interracial encounters offered just as much intensity and, as the Mennonites featured in this work demonstrate, often led to profound change. When white women struggled to bring themselves to comb young African-American girls’ hair, when African-American college students came to dinner in white Mennonite homes, and when burly white farmers discussed the threat of congregational takeovers with their families at the end of a long day spent plowing fields, the racial order shifted. Study of the Civil Rights Movement thus needs to attend to home-based encounters alongside mass agitation.

These home- and congregation-based interactions point to a set of forces at work alongside those marshaled in the streets. Although public actions brought about significant change, other less obvious forces were evident in Mennonite practices. Lark’s use of one community value against another, Taylor’s desire for interracial relationship, and

¹⁴ Harold Regier and Rosella Wiens Regier, interview with author, Newton, Kans./Evanston, Ill., July 12, 2005.

¹⁵ Annabelle Hughes and Gerald Hughes, interview with author, Cleveland Heights, Ohio/Evanston, Ill., August 29, 2006.

¹⁶ Vincent Harding, "Vincent Harding: A Black Historian," in *Peace-Makers: Christian Voices from the New Abolitionist Movement*, ed. Jim Wallis (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 89.

Schwartzentruber's intention to match word and deed could prove as persuasive and effective as a surging street march or gushing fire hose. Women in the Mennonite church, with many men beside them, did their most significant political work in homes, on farms, and in church sanctuaries. In those settings, multiple expressions of purity often guided Mennonite interracial exchange. The best way to apprehend these purities is to unravel them carefully.

Once unraveled, the multiple strands of purity present within these African-American and white Mennonite exchanges reveal a central cord best described as a heuristic. Defined here as a generalized rule based on the experience of those applying it, a heuristic orders group behavior. Providing a central strand of support for the theologically based purity strands noted below, heuristic purity distinguishes the pure from the impure and then erects boundaries between the two in order to protect group identity.¹⁷ Independent of whether their members use the language of purity, social groups of many kinds – religious, political, and cultural – apply this kind of rule through a process of trial and error in order to define themselves and demarcate insiders from outsiders. In the Mennonite case, as church members sought to distinguish themselves from the world through dress and conviction, they often used the language of purity. Their efforts to maintain boundaries did not, however, depend upon a purity-based vocabulary. Although purity cognates gradually fell out of favor among most Mennonites after the 1950s, the underlying purity heuristic remained in force. Thus, throughout Mennonites' interracial exchanges, heuristic and specific theological expressions of purity overlapped but were not mutually dependent.

Although they remained causally independent, purity vocabulary and the heuristic drive to divide did overlap in particular ways. In the main, white Mennonites referred to purity

¹⁷ As noted on pages 29-33 of the Introduction, anthropologist Mary Douglas provided significant insight into how this heuristic operates in cultural groups.

explicitly when they felt that their core beliefs were under attack. For example, when technological and social shifts threatened their separatist doctrine in the mid-1950s, church leaders used specific purity terms to articulate the need for nonconformity. White Mennonite individuals likewise followed a similar pattern in the midst of crisis. Mark Wagler, the white voluntary service worker from Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago who is quoted in the Introduction, drew on purity terms in the turbulent days following the April 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.¹⁸ At a time when he felt that the church's nonconformity doctrine might lose effectiveness entirely, Wagler attempted to jolt his fellow white Mennonites out of their acquiescence by accusing them of feeling "purified" by his service and of preaching "century-old racial purity."¹⁹ Wagler did exactly what the church had been doing for decades. He used purity language to protect a doctrine that he held dear.

This pattern of drawing on purity vocabulary during times of perceived attack suggests two additional insights into Mennonite race relations. First, the doctrine of nonconformity, the source for purity language among Mennonites, held the community's heuristic code. Nonconformity instructed Mennonites on the means through which to separate from the surrounding society. Thus, every time Mennonites used the language of purity, they reminded their co-believers of their collective commitment to withdraw. The rule that prompted them to separate had served them so well, however, that it became an accepted survival response. Rather than engage crisis directly, Mennonites learned a simple rule: when in crisis, withdraw. As noted in Chapter Four, Vincent Harding applied this kind of rule when he faced a racially explicit crisis

¹⁸ Introduction, 19.

¹⁹ Mark Wagler, "White Guilt and Black Power," *The Mennonite*, April 30 1968.

born of sexual infidelity.²⁰ By drawing on the heuristic of withdrawal coded within nonconformity doctrine, Harding demonstrated how much of a Mennonite he had become.

The community's core purity heuristic failed white Mennonites in the end, however, due to African-American intervention. Although it never completely disappeared, purity language held less sway in the church in the mid- to late-1960s as the doctrine of nonconformity dissipated. African-American Mennonites in part brought about that dissipation by challenging the church's integrity. They showed the rest of the Mennonite community that they were not as separate as they had claimed. By 1955, Rowena Lark made white Mennonite leaders admit that even though she dressed like them they still treated her and her covering-bedecked African-American sisters as curious spectacles and objects of exclamation. Fresh Air children challenged their white hosts to admit that they had the same fears, prejudices, and racial stereotypes as other well-meaning white people. The African-American men who sought to wed white Mennonite women encountered objections often indistinguishable from secular remonstrations. By the time John Powell and Minority Ministry Council members came to challenge patterns of racial subordination in the church, Paul Landis and his white colleagues no longer drew on the vocabulary of purity to chart a course of action. By 1969 and in the years that followed, the link between purity as a theologically informed vocabulary term and the heuristic purity at the core of nonconformity doctrine had been rent apart. African-American Mennonites had exposed nonconformity as lacking racial integrity. They demonstrated that white Mennonites, despite priding themselves on racial egalitarianism, frequently sided with the attitudes and assumptions of the racist world around them.

²⁰ Chapter 5, 214-15.

Consequently only a splintered purity rhetoric remained as of 1971. Like those around them, white Mennonites groped about for a new heuristic – a new way to protect the community through boundary placement. The old boundaries maintained by dress, language, food preferences, and even core nonconformist convictions no longer obtained.²¹ Even when Minority Ministries members employed the doctrine of nonconformity to cajole white Mennonites into supporting racially egalitarian efforts, they found that few Mennonites responded. Ironically, having exposed nonconformity as a racial sham, Council members could no longer prompt white Mennonites to action with a nonconformist prod. By 1971, the majority of white Mennonites found traditional appeals to nonconformity less and less motivating.²²

From the perspective of race relations, the demise of purity language should have been hopeful. Already in 1960, the church member who supported racial segregation based on the theological assertion that “Christ loves purity and Christ wants all his creatures to remain pure” was outside the mainstream. By 1971, such appeals had been deemed heterodox at best, indicative of mental imbalance at worst. Likewise, references to racial purity no longer supported anti-miscegenation arguments or congregational segregation. Yet African Americans and their white allies lost a way to prompt Mennonites to action. Without purity language, organized efforts to oppose racism within the church dissipated. The Minority Ministries’ Compassion Fund, a financial appeal dependent upon white Mennonites who cared about restoring integrity to the church’s nonconformity doctrine, dried up. African-American Mennonites could no longer even rely on the sartorial strategy used by Rowena Lark to gain membership. Since fewer and

²¹ Harold S. Bender et al., *Nonconformity* (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, 1989 [cited September 18 2007]): available from <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/n651me.html>.

²² Ibid.

fewer white Mennonites defined their religious identity through clothes, African Americans no longer asserted their membership through plain dress. Having lost key strategies for claiming membership and garnering financial resources in a church still reluctant to name the depth of its participation in society's racism, African Americans like John Powell followed Harding's example. They enacted the same lesson Harding learned from white Mennonites. In the case of crisis, they withdrew.

Even though the language of purity had dissipated, the function of setting boundaries had not. The ways in which Mennonites set those boundaries, however, had begun to change. The multiple expressions of purity – theological corollaries to the community's central purity heuristic – were not the same in 1971 as they were in 1935. As already noted, religious purity had lost purchase as clothing and coverings no longer clearly marked the community's boundaries. New markers had not yet emerged. Although a few white Mennonites expressed concerns about sexual purity, their objections lost purchase as couples like Annabelle and Gerald Hughes became established church members. The overt expression of racial purity – whether based on scientific appeals or common sense claims – had become more veiled and circumspect at the leadership level. At the grassroots level, as Minority Ministries staff member Lynford Hershey learned, the folk wisdom that “even the blackbirds and robins know better and do not cross-mate” maintained a certain cultural currency as late as 1971.²³ None of these purity expressions held the same force and saliency as they had had in the past. At best, they carried remnants of another age's concern into a new decade.

²³ Lynford Hershey, "What Is the Mennonite Attitude on Race Relations," *Gospel Herald*, March 23 1971, 263.

One expression of theologically based purity did, however, retain its force even while taking on a new form. White Mennonites continued to place great importance on ethical purity, the concern for integrity of word and deed. As traditional expressions of nonconformity lost traction, white Mennonite youth, adults, and seniors increasingly participated in short-term organized service programs in communities of color.²⁴ In place of clothing, food traditions, and, in some cases, pacifism, short-term service to African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos became a new boundary marker. To serve – even for a weekend – became a means of establishing one’s credentials as a Mennonite. By marking community boundaries in this way, the theologically mediated purity expression that least relied on purity vocabulary lasted the longest and proved the most adaptable. Short-term service initiatives grew in number and size through the following years. Another photo makes the point. In 1981, service program administrators featured a young white Mennonite and two young boys, one African-American, one Latino, on the cover of their annual report (see Figure 64).²⁵ Without comment or caption, the photo laid claim to renewed integrity through service to communities of color.

The photo points to another continuity within Mennonite interracial exchange. Mennonites have always expressed purity in relational forms. Swartzentruber and Lark challenged the church because of a relationship that spanned decades. The congregational Camelot at Woodlawn captured the attention of the church because of the integrated team –

²⁴ A host of Mennonite-run short-term service programs have arisen from this shift in application of nonconformity doctrine. Many of the programs relate to communities of color. See, for example: DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection), Learning Thru Service, RAD (Reaching and Discipling), SALT (Serving and Learning Together), Service Adventure, SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People), Urban Plunge, and YAMEN! (Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network).

²⁵ "1981 Voluntary Service," (Eastern Mennonite Board of Charity and Missions, 1981), MC - II-8 Box 9, Lancaster Conference, EMBMC, Folder: V. S. Booklet 1981.

Delton Franz and Vincent Harding – that led it. Fresh Air programs, integrated churches, interracial marriages, and the church's response to the Black Manifesto were all predicated on maintaining relationship. Even ethical purity in its intensified, stripped-down, post-1960s form relied on right relationship. The 1981 service program cover photo featured a service worker in close relationship with his two young charges. Although he would relate with them for a short time only, the photo demonstrates the comfort all three felt in each other's presence. Regardless of when or how they did so, Mennonites expressed purity in the context of relationship.

The arc of change embodied in these relationships thus reinforces the importance of diachronic analysis in the study of religion. Only by examining how Mennonites expressed their commitment

to nonconformity, sexual chastity, racial egalitarianism, and integrity of word and deed through each period of this study do patterns of mutual reinforcement and internal contradiction become apparent. The Mennonites who set religious boundaries in 1935 emphasized religious nonconformity before racial egalitarianism or sexual chastity. By 1955, the perceived threat posed by African-American women and men then populating the church led to a new emphasis

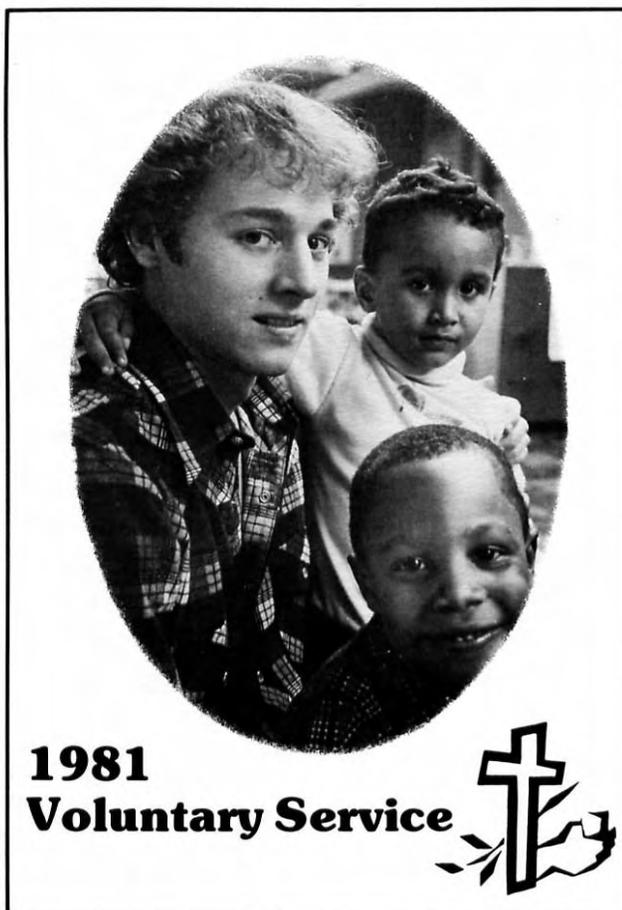


Figure 64: Tony Miller (left), Luis Gonzales, and Ronald Johnson (foreground), 1981 ("1981 Voluntary Service." Salunga, Pa.: Eastern Mennonite Board of Charity and Missions, 1981).

on racial and sexual purity that complicated ongoing support for religious nonconformity. By 1969, concern for ethical purity temporarily overshadowed religious, sexual, and racial expressions of purity in the wake of the Black Manifesto. As noted above, by 1971, few Mennonites mentioned purity in any form. These previously unrecognized shifts and turns within Mennonites' approach to purity suggest that even the most careful historians can misinterpret the past when they treat religious values as static or unitary. By attending to the multivocality of religious values over time, historians can better explicate otherwise unexamined forces that both complicate and enrich previously told stories.

The multiplicity of purity expressions examined in the home- and church-based encounters chronicled in this study likewise speak to two areas critical to the study of religion and race. First, religious practitioners appear as strong, independent agents in United States history rather than weak, dependent followers. To be sure, a number of Mennonites did respond directly to external events. Some reacted to Freedom Riders in the early 1960s by doubling their efforts to host Fresh Air children. Other white Mennonites changed their positions about civil disobedience because they witnessed the courage of those who integrated lunch counters and city buses. Nonetheless Mennonites acted independent of civil rights agitators. Members of the Mennonite community evangelized African Americans long before civil rights leaders garnered national white attention. As a result of that evangelism, many in the church changed their minds about interracial marriage. Likewise, Community Mennonite and Woodlawn members struggled through integration motivated by a desire for integrity of word and deed rather than civil rights demonstrations. These less obvious mechanisms demonstrate that members of the white-majority religious community challenged the racial order when motivated by concerns that legislatively focused studies of the Civil Rights Movement have long obscured.

Such independent action often proved volatile and provoked unexpected responses. For example, few could have anticipated Fannie Swartzentruber's dramatic exit from a segregated communion service at Gay Street Mission in 1944. Such behavior disrupted Mennonite propriety, challenged the church's male hierarchy, and demonstrated uncharacteristic female assertiveness in a male-dominated environment. Yet it was precisely the relational bond between Swartzentruber and Lark – a bond born of and bred by devotion to religious purity – rather than external social movements that prompted this otherwise cooperative Mennonite woman to resist Jim Crow. In the same manner, Vincent Harding confounded the expectations of Mennonites and civil rights leaders alike as he straddled the two communities. He demanded that the former take costly risks in keeping with their professed commitments to nonconformity and that the latter take love as seriously as they did strategy. Likewise, those who promoted the Black Manifesto could not have anticipated that leaders from the Lancaster Conference would use the threat of congregational takeovers to reinforce nonresistance among their constituency. In the heat of the moment, the leaders' commitment to the doctrine of peace supplanted claims of racial egalitarianism. This study thus demonstrates that members of religious communities often display a particularly vigorous independence that invites renewed historical attention.

In order to give Mennonites the attention due to such independent, purity-focused, religious actors, an additional lens of alterity proves helpful. Defined as the condition of radical difference between the Self and the Other, alterity suggests that among mid-century American Mennonites a racial binary and a doctrinal dichotomy combined to undergird purity's danger while establishing its necessity.²⁶ Note first the racial binary. From the mid-1930s through the

²⁶ Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich, *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 4.

course of much of the following three and a half decades, white judges, legislators, laborers, clergy, and scientists used a black-white dichotomy to describe racial difference.²⁷ Employing that binary framework, those same historical actors consistently defined members of the African-American community as the Other, a group different from and alien to white people.²⁸ Many white Mennonites also treated African Americans as fundamentally Other by publicizing the spectacle of a “Mennonite Colored” wedding in the 1940s, fondling Rowena Lark’s hair in the 1950s, and, in the 1960s, shunting suddenly strange Fresh Air children out of the home and into camp settings once they reached their teen years. The black-white binary thus promoted relationships based on a one-sided comparison: white Mennonites were normal; African-American Mennonites, different.

White Mennonites then amplified the Otherness of African Americans through the second binary, the dichotomous doctrine of nonconformity. According to this doctrine, Mennonites confronted two worlds: the sinful, fallen landscape of secular society and the redeemed, pristine terrain of nonconformed Christianity. Those who had inhabited the latter nonconformed world from birth viewed those who came from the former sinful world as alien

²⁷ Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America," in *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 182-90; Ian F. Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 1-15. At the same time, it must be noted that the black-white dichotomy was, to a degree, regionally focused. In various parts of the Southwest, for example, black-white relationships were complicated by the presence of Mexican-Americans. See: Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

²⁸ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 13; Thomas C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (1995): 7; George Lipsitz, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the 'White' Problem in American Studies," *American Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1995): 370.

and different. Sermons and talks by missionaries who ministered in worldly locations – whether Gulfport, Harlem, or Philadelphia – further emphasized the strangeness of African-American converts and service recipients. As emissaries from the worldly side of Mennonites’ doctrinal dichotomy and the black side of this country’s racial binary, African Americans appeared doubly different. White Mennonites encountered few people as fundamentally Other as the African Americans they served and evangelized.

African-American Mennonites’ double difference – of both race and worldliness – nonetheless proved appealing in part because of the racial hierarchy intrinsic to that difference. At a fundamental level, white Mennonites appear to have recognized that they could better protect their separatist purity by bringing in subordinate and well-behaved African-American converts than by focusing their conversion efforts on disruptive and transgressive white prostitutes, alcoholics, or bookies. Until African-American converts like Vincent Harding, Curtis Burrell, and John Powell emerged, the racial hierarchy remained in place and religious purity largely unthreatened. Separate chapters have already noted how these men and their contemporaries left the church when they began to encounter resistance to their challenges to Mennonites’ inherited racial hierarchy and closely linked theological purity values.

White Mennonites thus heightened the danger of purity while trying to overcome it. The very evangelical contact that brought Mennonites outside of their communities in a bid to venture beyond purity-inscribed boundaries ended up destructively reinforcing African-American alterity. Those viewed as fundamentally different could not fully join the community, the possibility of dialogue and mutual cooperation across racial lines dissipated, and the evangelical enterprise lost integrity. White Mennonites compromised the very rite of baptism when they did not fully welcome African Americans into the separated community. White

reports about and exchanges with African-American converts, Fresh Air children, and interracial couples often emphasized their racial and worldly Otherness. No wonder then that white Mennonites once lauded for their historic anti-slavery position, selfless service to the African-American community, and courageous statements on racial equality watched many African-American leaders grow dispirited and drift away. When combined with racial difference, Mennonites' collective predisposition to divide the world between the pure and the impure proved destructive enough to block the racially egalitarian passions of the Mennonite community.²⁹

Yet the necessity of purity becomes evident in the midst of racial and religious alterity. At Bethesda in St. Louis, for example, those who gathered for a Sunday school photo in 1957 recognized the racial difference in the room. Both Lark and Taylor claimed their racial identity and refused to traffic in color-blind rhetoric. Schwartzentruber, the only white person in the circle, never denied the significance of her race. All three women also emphasized the importance of separation from a sinful and impure world. Lark marked her separation by wearing nonconformist garb. Taylor invited her friends and family to leave an impure world for Bethesda's "pure fellowship." Schwartzentruber marked her separation by resisting the racism of white society and the sexism of the church. Their collective recognition of racial difference and commitment to separate from a sinful world in this case combined to draw people in rather than keep them out. At that moment in 1957, the church had just begun to realize how difficult it

²⁹ The irony of purity's danger shows up especially in the (Old) Mennonite Church where church leaders expressed their commitment to religious and sexual purity with particular vigor. Even though (Old) Mennonites were far more practiced and energetic in their mission to African Americans during the period of this study than their General Conference counterparts, they experienced corresponding greater frustration when their efforts bore little fruit due to the purity concerns they carried into evangelism and service efforts.

would be to live up to its 1955 statement on racial equality. As the class met at Bethesda, Vincent Harding had not yet brought his prophetic voice to bear on churchly inconsistencies. In the environs of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex, integrated congregations like Bethesda were still as rare as King suggested. Nonetheless, the close and sustained relationships represented in the Sunday school circle broke through the reified notions of alterity present elsewhere in the church. Purity drew Lark, Taylor, and Schwartzentruber together. In their union, they embodied the necessity of the church's commitment to purity in all its forms.

The diachronic study of heuristic and theological purities among Mennonites thus reveals a striking continuity: the danger and necessity of purity remained interlocked for four decades. Each time an expression of purity brought African Americans into the church, another purity expression made that entrance difficult. To summarize a complex and highly nuanced history, in the 1930s, Rowena Lark joined the church because she saw white Mennonites like Fannie and Ernest Swartzentruber acting out their beliefs. That purity of integrity brought about Lark's conversion even as she dealt with other Mennonites who treated her as racially impure. During the 1940s, missionaries from the Lancaster Conference evangelized Gerald Hughes and his brothers because the Andrews Bridge proselytizers refused to accept racial purity myths. At the same time, they forced new African-American members to wear plain clothes with a rigor not directed toward white converts. By the 1950s, African-American Fresh Air children such as Margie Middleton eagerly anticipated summer visits with rural white Mennonites who longed to serve the world while remaining separate from it. Often Middleton returned home from those visits confused and disappointed by hosts who judged her for dancing, wearing earrings, and not wearing a covering. In the turbulence of the 1960s, the necessity and danger of purity remained interlocked as white congregants in Markham and Woodlawn stayed true to their ethical

commitments by welcoming African Americans even though denominational leaders balked at the racial and religious impurities introduced by Curtis Burrell, Woodlawn's sole African-American pastor. Finally, in the first two years of the 1970s, John Powell raised funds for the Minority Ministries Council by drawing on nonconformity rhetoric. His use of the traditional language of religious purity to criticize white-led service programs could not, however, prevent defensive white Mennonites from withdrawing their financial support. Across this span of years, Mennonites expressed their commitment to purity in different ways, but the danger and necessity of that commitment remained constant.

The interlocking danger and necessity of purity nonetheless allowed space for home-centered exchanges and equally intimate congregation-based encounters to support civil rights goals. After years of working together at Gay Street Mission in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Rowena Lark and Fannie Swartzentruber cared enough about each other to defy segregation dictates, endure hair fondling, and correspond across the miles for the better part of three decades. By worshipping with African Americans at Diamond Street in Philadelphia, Seventh Avenue in New York City, Bethel in Chicago, and Bethesda in St. Louis, white Mennonites found their world views challenged, their assumptions about worship transformed, and their views about activism altered. Following intense conversations with Vincent Harding, church leaders like Guy Hershberger, Delton and Marion Franz, Edna and Orlo Kaufman, and Paul Landis took proactive measures to support the Civil Rights Movement. Although few of these Mennonites joined leaders like James Forman, Fannie Lou Hamer, or Martin Luther King in organizing marches, committing civil disobedience, or challenging political officials, they nonetheless supported civil rights measures throughout the church. Over meals of meatloaf and mashed potatoes, while

discussing Sunday school lessons, and during conversations in a narthex after Sunday morning services, the Mennonite church engaged an issue it had sought to avoid.

At the same time, those home-based encounters and congregation-based exchanges fell short of many civil rights and black power objectives. A sizeable group of white worshippers from Community Mennonite in Markham left their congregation after Harding preached a challenging sermon. Under the threat of congregational takeovers, white Mennonite leaders in the Lancaster Conference reinforced nonviolence commitments rather than address concerns raised by Forman, Powell, and other promoters of black self-determination. Even after the (Old) Mennonite Church officially opposed segregation and removed barriers to interracial marriage in 1955, many white congregants continued to raise objections to cross-racial unions at the very time African-American men married to white women accepted positions of national church leadership. As these examples make clear, close contact and intimate exchange did not always lead to more egalitarian relationships.

In the end, despite the irony and complexity that this history suggests, Nettie Taylor did find a pure fellowship at Bethesda. Those who sat in a room in the Pruitt-Igoe Project in 1957 challenged the church to sit as they did. The community represented by Louis Gray, Mrs. Susie Smith, Taylor, Lark, and Schwartzentruber clustered together with open Sunday school books in their laps striving to be something different than the church or society expected them to be. The sole white person in the class did not command the group's attention. They instead focused on Taylor. Under her leadership, they studied the word they held as truth to prepare them for ministry in a neighborhood reeling from the blows of racial and class oppression.³⁰ By all accounts, they then left to do as they said they would. Bethesda remained active in St. Louis

³⁰ Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls*, 5.

through Pruitt-Igoe's final demolition in 1976 and beyond. Although the danger and necessity of purity had been in place before they met and would still exist when they exited their classroom, on that Sunday morning in 1957, Taylor's pure fellowship was, for a short while, achieved.

APPENDIX 1

MENNONITE PRESS TITLES ON RACIAL THEMES, 1940-1971

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
1889		November 15: Kolb, A. B. "The Race Troubles." <i>Herald of Truth</i> , November 15 1889, 341-343.
1935		January 15: "Improving Our Attitude Toward The People of Other Races." <i>The Mennonite and the Christian Evangel</i> , January 15 1935, 14-15.
1940 January 23: Flint, A. J. "Liberty and Justice for All: Race Relations Sunday, Senior C. E. Topic for February 11, 1940" <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 23 1940, 9-10.		
1943 January 7: Kauffman, D. "Editorial." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , January 7 1943, 865.		
1945 February 6: Langenwaller, J. H. "White Inside." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 6 1945, 1-2. February 6: Mueller, H. H. "They are an asset to the School." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 6 1945, 9. February 6: Weinbrenner, R. "Right Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 6 1945, 3. July 13: Horst, I. B. "Mennonites and the Race Question." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , July 13 1945, 284-285.		
1946 February 5: Stucky, D. M. "Science Also Says, 'All of One Blood.'" <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 5 1946, 4. February 5: Weinbrenner, R. "From the Editor's point-of-view." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 5 1946, 2. August 13: Gingerich, M. "Looking at People of Other Races." <i>The Mennonite</i> , August 13 1946, 10.		
1947 March 4: Yake, C. F. "A Sunday Morning After dismissal At Lancaster Colored Mission, Lancaster, Pa." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , March 4 1947, 1069. August 12: "Race Barriers in the South." <i>The Mennonite</i> , August 12 1947, 11. October 14: "A Witness Against Race Prejudice." <i>The Mennonite</i> , October 14 1947, 15. October 28: Lapp, G. J. "My Colored Brother." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , October 28 1947, 666. December 2: Shenk, S. "A Mennonite Colored Wedding." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , December 2 1947, 782.		
1948 January 27: Erb, P. "Editorial: The Race Question." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , January 27 1948, 75.		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
February 24: "This scene shows the playground supervision...." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 24 1948, 15. August 17: Horst, L. "An Open Door." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , August 17 1948, 769-770.		
1949 January 11: Ediger, E. "Racial Tensions and Gulfport." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 11 1949, 14. January 25: Huston, O. I. "Program and Action Suggestions on Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 25 1949, 14. January 25: Prieb, W. "February is Brotherhood Month: What Are Our Racial Attitudes." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 25 1949, 13-14. May 3: Wedel, E. R. "God Led Us to Piney Woods." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , May 3 1949, 426-427. May 10: Kraus, H. L. "Will You Dare to Be Christian?" <i>Gospel Herald</i> , May 10 1949, 444-445. June 14: Gingerich, M. "Negroes and the Mennonites." <i>The Mennonite</i> , June 14 1949, 4.		
1950 February 12: Enz, J. J. "God's Key to Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 12 1950, 1. April 4: "In this Issue 'The Ministry of Reconciliation'." <i>The Mennonite</i> , April 4 1950, 1. April 4: Enz, J. J. "Editorials." <i>The Mennonite</i> , April 4 1950, 3. April 4: Krehbiel, O. A. "The Ministry of Reconciliation." <i>The Mennonite</i> , April 4 1950, 220, 224. November 28: Berg, F. "Nondiscrimination." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , November 28 1950, 1178.		
1951 February 6: "A Primer on Race." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 6 1951, 94-96. February 6: Nowak, S., Mrs. "One Family Meets the Racial Problem." <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 6 1951, 96-97.	1951 February 6: Loewen, E. "'What Do You Want to Do, Marry a Negro?'" <i>The Mennonite</i> , February 6 1951, 95. December 4: Toews, M. "Forgetting Our Own." <i>The Mennonite</i> , December 4 1951, 763.	
1952 January 8: Smucker, J. N. "Mennonites and the Race Question." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 8 1952, 19. February 26: Wenger, J. C. "The Long Hair of I Corinthians 11." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , February 26 1952, 198. March 4: Thompson, W. R. "The Negro and the Curse." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , March 4 1952, 220. March 25: Gering, W. "A Negro Mennonite Minister." <i>The Mennonite</i> , March 25 1952, 197. March 25: Hershberger, G. F. "Islands of Sanity." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , March 25 1952, 293-294. May 13: Labaree, R. M. "Can Christianity Solve the Race Problem." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , May 13 1952, 473. October: Harder, L. "Plockhoy and Slavery in America." <i>Mennonite Life</i> , October 1952, 187-189.	1952 January 8: Keeney, W. "Reborn Color-Blind." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 8 1952, 22, 25. January 8: Smucker, J. N. "Mennonites and the Race Question." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 8 1952, 19. June 24: Erb, P. "Interracial Marriage." <i>Gospel Herald</i> , June 24 1952, 611. October 28: B., D. W. "Do You Want Your Daughter to Marry a Negro?" <i>The Mennonite</i> , October 28 1952, 684.	1952 July: Stoltzfus, Luke G. "Is Christianity a Hindrance to Good Race Relations?" <i>Missionary Messenger</i> , July 1952, 5, 14.
1953 January 27: D., B. W. "Whiter Than Snow." <i>The Mennonite</i> , January 27 1953, 57. April: Fretz, J. W. "First Mennonites in Chicago." <i>Mennonite Life</i> , April 1953, 56-57. April: Harder, L. "First Mennonite Church." <i>Mennonite Life</i> , April 1953, 58-59. April: Hartzler, L. C. "Bethel Mennonite Church." <i>Mennonite Life</i> , April 1953, 60-61. April: Keeney, W. "Woodlawn Mennonite Church." <i>Mennonite Life</i> , April 1953, 66-67. April: Litwiler, J. T. N. "Iglesia Evangelica Mennonita." <i>Mennonite Life</i> , April 1953, 63.		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>April: Mendel, J. S. "Lincoln Avenue Gospel Mission." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 64.</p> <p>April: Neufeld, J. T. "Challenge of City Missions." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 57-58.</p> <p>April: Neufeld, J. T. "The Grace Mennonite Church." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 65-66.</p> <p>April: Pannabecker, S. F. "Mennonite Seminary in Chicago." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 68-71.</p> <p>April: Ratzlaff, R. "Brighton Mennonite Church." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 64-65.</p> <p>April: Shelly, A. R. "This Is Chicago." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 52-55.</p> <p>April: Yoder, J. O. "Mennonite Home Mission." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1953, 61-62.</p> <p>April 21: Landis, J. B. "The Test of Being White." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 21 1953, 361-362, 364.</p> <p>May 5: Erb, P. "The Ohio Camp." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 5 1953, 411.</p> <p>June 9: Conrad, A. "What Are You Doing for Christ?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 9 1953, 552.</p> <p>June 30: Harder, L. "New Frontiers in City Missions." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 30 1953, 406-407.</p> <p>July 28: Regier, H. "Why A Camp Landon." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 28 1953, 462.</p> <p>August 4: Brown, T. B. "Observations of Retreat." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 4 1953, 477.</p> <p>August 4: Kaufman, O. "Retreat for Gulfport Negro Youth." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 4 1953, 477.</p> <p>August 18: Smucker, J. N. "Black Dots." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 18 1953, 499.</p> <p>October 6: Roberts, D., A. Bohn, et al. "The Challenge of Summer Voluntary Service in Migrant Work." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 6 1953, 619-620.</p> <p>October 6: Soderholm, E. "White Supremacy." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 6 1953, 618.</p> <p>October 20: Smucker, J. N. "It is Not all Black." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 20 1953, 643.</p> <p>October 27: Miller, V. "Cleveland is Calling!" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 27 1953, 1030-1031.</p> <p>October 27: Smucker, J. N. "Pale-Face Religion." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 27 1953, 659.</p> <p>November 3: Lehman, E. K. "Lancaster, Pa. (S. Christian St. Mission)." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 3 1953, 1059.</p> <p>November 3: Saunders, C. M. "There's No White Blood." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 3 1953, 1060.</p> <p>November 24: Graber, J. D. "Camp Rehoboth at Hopkins Park, Illinois Now a General Mission Board Project." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 24 1953, 1126.</p> <p>November 24: King, P. and L. King. "Come to Bethel." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 24 1953, 1128.</p> <p>December 1: Erb, A. M. "Call No Man Common." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, December 1 1953, 1147.</p> <p>December 15: White, D. "Blessed are the Pure in Heart." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, December 15 1953, 1192.</p>		
<p>1954</p> <p>January 12: Graber, J. D. "An Open Letter to Ministers and Christian Workers of the Mennonite Church." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 12 1954, 40.</p> <p>January 12: Hartzler, L. C. "Color-blind Christians." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 12 1954, 41.</p> <p>March: Kauffman, J. H. "Are We All Brothers?" <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1954, 38.</p> <p>May 11: Berg, F. "The White and Doughy Man." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 11 1954, 439.</p>	<p>1954</p> <p>August: Kreider, C. "Negro Segregation." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1954, 36-37.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>June 8: Erb, P. "The Minority Prevails." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 8 1954, 531.</p> <p>June 29: "A Welcome and a Blessing Awaits Us." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 29 1954, 407.</p> <p>August: Kreider, C. "Negro Segregation." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1954, 36-37.</p> <p>August 3: Kaufman, O. "Reaction to Supreme Court Decision." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 3 1954, 475.</p> <p>September 7: Kaufman, O. "The Decision to End Segregation." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 7 1954, 860.</p> <p>October 5: Amstutz, H. "A Look at Woodlawn Children." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 5 1954, 619.</p> <p>October 12: Lind, M. "Bible Principles Governing Race Relations in the Church." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 12 1954, 961-962, 981.</p> <p>November 16: Shenk, J. H. "God Deals with Race Prejudice: A Radio Message from Acts 10." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 16 1954, 1081-1082, 1102.</p>		
<p>1955</p> <p>February 8: Smucker, J. N. "Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 8 1955, 83.</p> <p>February 22: Kaufman, O. "Is the Negro Happy?" <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 22 1955, 119.</p> <p>April: Yulzy, M. "Peace of Mind." <i>Christian Living</i>, April 1955, 27.</p> <p>May 2: Kauffman, O. and E. Ediger. "Evangelical Work at Camp Landon." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 2 1955, 280.</p> <p>May 24: "Center Program Expands." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 24 1955, 333.</p> <p>May 24: Regier, H. "Camp Landon - What Are Our Objectives." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 24 1955, 333.</p> <p>June: Wolseley, R. E. "America's Race Problem as Seen from Overseas." <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1955, 16-18.</p> <p>June 7: Erb, P. "Nonconformity in Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 7 1955, 531.</p> <p>June 28: Schroeder, D. "No Race Prejudice." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 28 1955, 404.</p> <p>July: Hertzler, D. "Toward Christian Race Relations." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1955, 26, 35.</p> <p>October: Weaver, E. L. "The Grace of God in Race Relations." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1955, 24-25.</p> <p>December 13: Kaufman, O. "Something Has to Give." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 13 1955, 779-780.</p>	<p>1955</p> <p>February 8: Hartzler, L. C. "Race Problem Unnecessary." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 8 1955, 137, 140.</p>	
<p>1956</p> <p>January 10: Unruh, W. F. "'That's What We Need fo' Our Chilluns.'" <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 10 1956, 28.</p> <p>February: Zehr, J. D. "All of One." <i>Christian Living</i>, February 1956, 4-5, 40.</p> <p>February 21: "Brotherhood Week, February 19-26." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 21 1956, 121.</p> <p>February 21: Smucker, J. N. "Who is My Brother." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 21 1956, 123.</p> <p>February 21: Waltner, E. "Mississippi, Murder, and Mennonites." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 21 1956, 130.</p> <p>March: Wenger, E. K. "Come Over and Play with Me." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1956, 34-35, 47.</p> <p>March: Zehr, J. D. "The Brotherhood of Sinners." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1956, 12-13.</p> <p>March 20: Grimm, H. B. "A Higher Loyalty Unites All." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 20 1956, 188.</p> <p>April: Zehr, J. D. "Everybody Invited." <i>Christian Living</i>, April 1956, 14-15, 38.</p> <p>May: Kreider, C. "Race Problems in the South." <i>Christian Living</i>, May 1956, 22-23.</p> <p>June: Robinson, J. H. "Journey Beyond Boundaries: A Backward</p>	<p>1956</p> <p>July: Zehr, J. D. "The Sin of Race Prejudice." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1956, 27-29.</p> <p>September: Zehr, J. D. "Can Church Answer the Race Question?" <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1956, 28-29.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>Look by one who Traveled around the World to Find out What People are Thinking." <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1956, 17-19, 43-44.</p> <p>June: Zehr, J. D. "The Fallacy of Race Prejudice." <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1956, 24-25, 44-46.</p> <p>June 19: "Gulfport Dream Comes True." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 19 1956, 404.</p> <p>August: Stoltzfus, R. "The Lord Made Room." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1956, 24-25.</p> <p>August: Zehr, J. D. "A Christian View of Segregation." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1956, 27-29, 47.</p> <p>October 16: Bertsche, J. "Something Concrete." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 16 1956, 664.</p> <p>October 16: Lee, M. I. "Feeling the Difference." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 16 1956, 664.</p> <p>November: Smiley, G. E. "They Do Not Walk Alone." <i>Christian Living</i>, November 1956, 13.</p>		
<p>1957</p> <p>January 1: Smucker, J. N. "Desegregation." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 1 1957, 3.</p> <p>January 29: King, M. L., Jr. "We Are Still Walking." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 29 1957, 68-71.</p> <p>January 29: Smucker, J. N. "Nonviolence Today." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 29 1957, 67.</p> <p>February 12: "Brotherhood week." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 12 1957, 98.</p> <p>February 12: Smucker, J. N. "Brotherhood week." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 12 1957, 99.</p> <p>February 19: Peachey, P. "Nonviolence in the South." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 19 1957, 177.</p> <p>February 19: Smucker, J. N. "One in Christ." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 19 1957, 115.</p> <p>March: "Migrant Workers Meet In Lancaster." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1957, 10.</p> <p>March 12: "Choose Chicago." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 12 1957, 172.</p> <p>March 19: Kaufman, O. "Go South for Service." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 19 1957, 186-188.</p> <p>April 30: Rosenberger, H. M. "People are Bridges." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 30 1957, 282.</p> <p>May 14: Swinford, B. "The Everlasting Arms." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 14 1957, 462.</p> <p>May 21: Franz, D. "The Mennonite Church on Trial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 21 1957, 324-325.</p> <p>May 21: Neufeld, E. "Visitation at Woodlawn." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 21 1957, 325-334.</p> <p>May 28: "No Neutrals." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 28 1957, 338.</p> <p>June 4: Koehn, L. H. "Four C's That Separate." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 4 1957, 356.</p> <p>June 4: Smucker, J. N. "When Tragedy Stimulates Unity." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 4 1957, 355.</p> <p>June 18: Peachey, P. "Travail in the South." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1957, 585.</p> <p>June 25: Weber, R. K. "Of One Blood." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 25 1957, 404, 414-415.</p> <p>September 17: "Racial Integration and Nonviolence." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 17 1957, 578.</p> <p>October 1: Schmidt, H. A., Mrs. "My Encounter with Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 1 1957, 612.</p> <p>October 15: "Woodlawn World." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 15 1957, 652.</p> <p>October 15: Smucker, J. N. "Little Rock." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 15 1957, 643.</p> <p>November: Kreider, C. "The Civil Rights Bill." <i>Christian Living</i>, November 1957, 18.</p>	<p>1957</p> <p>March 12: Teichroew, E. "Paul Learns: A Story based on observations during six weeks of summer VS in Chicago." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 12 1957, 171.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>November: Paul, W. "Bridges to People." <i>Christian Living</i>, November 1957, 28-29.</p> <p>November 5: Dreidger, L. "Faith Creates Colorblindness." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 5 1957, 695.</p> <p>November 12: Neufeld, E. "That the World Might Recognize Christ." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 12 1957, 709.</p> <p>December 31: Hartzler, L. C. "Looking At Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, December 31 1957, 1145.</p>		
<p>1958</p> <p>February 4: Nixon, R. "Brotherhood Week." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 4 1958, 70.</p> <p>February 11: Baldwin, F. "Not by Bread Alone." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 11 1958, 83.</p> <p>February 11: Smucker, J. N. "Brotherhood Week." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 11 1958, 82.</p> <p>February 18: Ranson, G. H. "On the Curse of Ham." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 18 1958, 151.</p> <p>March 4: Dreidger, L. "Koinonia Farm." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 4 1958, 133.</p> <p>March 11: King, M. L., Jr. "The Most Durable Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 11 1958, 152.</p> <p>April 15: Nottage, B. M. "You've Neglected My People." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 15 1958, 354.</p> <p>May 20: Schmidt, H. B. "Goodwill Tour to the South." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 20 1958, 312.</p> <p>July 8: Hartzler, L. C. "We and They." <i>Gospel Herald</i> 1958, 645.</p> <p>July 15: Dreidger, L. "The Brother who is Different." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 15 1958, 420.</p> <p>July 22: Stucky, H. J. "Goodwill Tour of the South." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 22 1958, 437-438.</p> <p>September 30: Harding, V. "To My Fellow Christians: An Open Letter to Mennonites." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 30 1958, 597-598.</p> <p>October: Ferguson, H. N. "Miracle at Piney Woods." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1958, 23-25.</p> <p>October: Lind, M. "Explanations That Don't Explain." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1958, 2.</p> <p>October: Fretz, J. H. "Germantown Anti-Slavery Protest." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, October 1958, 183-186.</p> <p>October 28: Kehler, M. "My Six Weeks at Koinonia." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 28 1958, 668.</p> <p>November: Russell, B. D. "Light." <i>Christian Living</i>, November 1958, 27.</p> <p>November 11: Fretz, J. H. "Enforced Integration/Voluntary Desegregation." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 11 1958, 694.</p>	<p>1958</p> <p>January 28: Erb, P. "Witnessing in Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 28 1958, 75.</p>	
<p>1959</p> <p>January: Stoneback, G. S. "Are We Opening the Door." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1959, 32-34.</p> <p>January 6: Franz, D. "Notes on a Southern Journey." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 6 1959, 4-6.</p> <p>February 24: Franz, D. "Island of Hope in a Sea of Despair." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 24 1959, 119.</p> <p>February 24: Preheim, B. "TOK." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 24 1959, 121.</p> <p>March: Kehler, M. "Observations at Koinonia." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1959, 32-33.</p> <p>March 3: Kehler, P. "The Unwanted." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 3 1959, 139.</p> <p>May 5: Kaufman, O. "Racial Tensions." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 5 1959, 278.</p> <p>May 5: Yoder, D., E. Schmidt, et al. "When You Pray Remember Nolan and Johnnie and Evelyn." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 5 1959, 282.</p> <p>May 19: "The Mennonite Churches and Race." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 19 1959, 460, 477.</p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>May 26: Bender, T. "Integration and the 'Colony of Heaven.'" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 26 1959, 481.</p> <p>May 26: Stoltzfus, E. "Which Side of the Road?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 26 1959, 485.</p> <p>June: Hostetter, J. A. "What Is a Growing Church Like?" <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1959, 4-7, 29.</p> <p>July 21: Hofstetter, L. K. "Pacific District Conference." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 21 1959, 437.</p>		
<p>1960</p> <p>January 19: Woelk, L. A. "Christ, the Church, and Race." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 19 1960, 39.</p> <p>February 9: Pope, L. "The Christian Mandate on Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 9 1960, 113-114, 121.</p> <p>February 9: Wenger, L. M. "Progress Report on Integration." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 9 1960, 117-118.</p> <p>March 29: Friesen, J. R. "Behind the Cotton Curtain." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 29 1960, 197.</p> <p>March 29: Smucker, J. N. "Non-Violent Resistance." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 29 1960, 194.</p> <p>April: Driedger, L. "Christian Witness in Race Relations." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, April 1960, 81-86.</p> <p>April 19: Wiebe, L. "Nonviolence or Nonresistance." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 19 1960, 250.</p> <p>April 26: Kubota, M. "The Right to be an American." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 26 1960, 264.</p> <p>May 10: Janzen, G. "Response Leads to Responsibility." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 10 1960, 295-296.</p> <p>May 17: "Integration: What is the Church's Role in It?" <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 17 1960, 315-316.</p> <p>May 31: Hershberger, G. F. "Questions of Social Concern for Christians." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 31 1960, 492.</p> <p>June: Kreider, C. "Civil Rights Here and Abroad." <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1960, 18, 23, 39.</p> <p>June 7: Kraus, C. N. "Report from Durham." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 7 1960, 509-510, 525.</p> <p>June 14: Hershberger, G. F. "Questions of Social Concern for Christians." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 14 1960, 532.</p> <p>June 21: Hershberger, G. F. "Questions of Social Concern for Christians." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 21 1960, 556.</p> <p>June 28: Hershberger, G. F. "Nonresistance, the Mennonite Church, and the Race Question." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 28 1960, 577, 578, 581, 582.</p> <p>July 5: Hershberger, G. F. "Questions of Social Concern for Christians." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 5 1960, 600.</p> <p>July 19: Hershberger, G. F. "Questions of Social Concern for Christians." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 19 1960, 620.</p> <p>July 19: Ellerbrake, R. "Prophet in a Magnolia Jungle." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 19 1960, 461.</p> <p>July 19: Kaufman, O. "Paul's Answer." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 19 1960, 462.</p> <p>July 19: Riddick, E. "Matterhorn." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 19 1960, 463.</p> <p>August 16: King, M. L., Jr. "Suffering and Faith." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 16 1960, 711.</p> <p>November 8: Harding, V. "Peace Witness to Racial Strife." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 8 1960, 718, 727.</p>	<p>1960</p> <p>March 8: Pannell, W. "The Evangelical and Minority Groups." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 8 1960, 205-206.</p> <p>April 5: Regier, H. "Roots of Prejudice." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 5 1960, 215-216.</p> <p>April 12: Preheim, V. "Steps to Integration." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 12 1960, 232.</p>	<p>1960</p> <p>January: Landis, P. G. "Building Interracial Churches." <i>Missionary Messenger</i>, January 1960, 6-7.</p> <p>January 7: Neufeld, J. T. "What About Racial Inter-marriage." <i>Mennonite Weekly Review</i>, January 7 1960, 1.</p>
<p>1961</p> <p>January: Peterson, A. M. "I Attended a School for Negro Women." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 16, no. 1 (1961): 4-16.</p> <p>January 17: Gingerich, M. "The American Dream." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 17 1961, 57, 69.</p> <p>February 7: Smucker, J. N. "Race Relations Sunday." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 7 1961, 82.</p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>February 28: Graham, B. and K. Singer. "God Knows no Colorline." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 28 1961, 133.</p> <p>February 28: Neufeld, W. "Voting Was Their Crime." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 28 1961, 133.</p> <p>June 6: Kauffman, N. E. "Light Shines Out from the Inner City." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 6 1961, 516-517.</p> <p>June 6: Blanchard, J. "Africa Came to Bluffton." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 6 1961, 377-378.</p> <p>June 13: "Lee Heights Congregation." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 13 1961, 543.</p> <p>June 20: Epp, H. "The Number One Problem." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 20 1961, 408.</p> <p>July: Hess, J. D. "That Amazing Voluntary Service." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1961, [cover], 3-5, 37.</p> <p>August 15: Glenn, J. and H. Bartel. "Race Relations in Detroit." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 15 1961, 515-518.</p> <p>October: Vogt, V. "Emergent Church in Cleveland." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1961, 14-17, 34-35.</p> <p>October 17: Juhnke, J. "Pardon Me, But" <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 17 1961, 666.</p> <p>October 17: Shelly, M. "Race Relations Record." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 17 1961, 658.</p> <p>October 24: Gingerich, S. "The Cry of the Inner City." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 24 1961, 940-941.</p>		
<p>1962</p> <p>February 6: Bittinger, D. W. "A Time to Hold Hands." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 6 1962, 84.</p> <p>February 13: McCracken, R. J. "Actions Always Speak Louder Than Words." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 13 1962, 137-138, 158-159.</p> <p>February 13: Russell, B. D. "God's Truth." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 13 1962, 138.</p> <p>March 6: Bryan, V. "Christian Responsibility in Personal Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 6 1962, 224.</p> <p>June 12: Aschliman, K. "Living Family Worship." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 12 1962, 538-539, 550.</p> <p>June 12: Erb, P. "The Eichmann Case." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 12 1962, 531.</p> <p>June 12: Friesen, J. J. "Unsound Mission Mindedness." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 12 1962, 396.</p> <p>July 17: "Cash Views African Work." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 17 1962, 633.</p> <p>August 14: "Mennonite Faith Called 'Total Love.'" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 14 1962, 720-721.</p> <p>August 14: "MCC Representative in Albany Arrests." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 14 1962, 519.</p> <p>September 4: Gardner, I. "Little Rock Arkansas, 1957: Dedicated to the Nine Children." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 4 1962, 576.</p> <p>October: Stoltzfus, V. "A Talk with Vincent Harding." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1962, 10-11, 37-38, 40.</p> <p>December: Kreider, C. "Strife at the University of Mississippi." <i>Christian Living</i>, December 1962, 18, 34-35.</p>	<p>1962</p> <p>October 9: Louw, M. "Our Children Are Part Negro." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 9 1962, 644-646.</p>	
<p>1963</p> <p>January 8: "Church Serves Coffee." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 8 1963, 25.</p> <p>January 22: Harding, R. and V. Harding. "Pilgrimage to Albany." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 22 1963, 50-52.</p> <p>January 22: Harding, R. and V. Harding. "An Experiment in Peace." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 22 1963, 52-53.</p> <p>February: Aschliman, K. "One Nursery Named Bethel." <i>Christian Living</i>, February 1963, 27-28, 40.</p> <p>February: Hertzler, D. "Brotherhood at a Distance?" <i>Christian Living</i>, February 1963, 2.</p> <p>February 5: "The Wall Must Go!" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 5 1963,</p>	<p>1963</p> <p>October 22: Dyck, C. J. "Pronouncements - Then What?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 22 1963, 939, 949.</p> <p>October 29: Dyck, C. J. "Dialogue on Race." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 29 1963, 648-49.</p> <p>November: Louw, M. "Our Children are Part Negro." <i>Christian Living</i>,</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>113. February 5: Buswell, J. O., III. "Segregation - Is It Biblical." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 5 1963, 118-120. February 5: Drescher, J. M. "The Christian and Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 5 1963, 115. February 5: Kraus, C. N., G. Stoltzfus, et al. "Personal Responsibility in Improving Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 5 1963, 116,117, 132, 133, 134. February 5: Miller, E. M. "Of One Blood." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 5 1963, 122-123. February 5: "Ten Cities Marked for Race Crusade." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 5 1963, 88. February 12: Harding, V., D. Franz, et al. "Church and Race in 6 Cities." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 12 1963, 98-101. February 12: Regier, H. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 12 1963, 112. February 19: "The Church at Hamilton Street." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 19 1963, 148. February 26: Landes, C. J. "Powerful Witness." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 26 1963, 139. March 5: Harding, R. and V. Harding. "They Went to Atlanta." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 5 1963, 157-159. March 26: "MCC Annual Report." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 26 1963, 201-216. March 26: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 26 1963, 224. April 9: Sheldon, R. "Way Down in Georgia Land: The Freedom Songs of the New Negro Crusade." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 9 1963, 245-246. May 7: "Negro-White Visits." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 7 1963, 318. May 21: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 21 1963, 356. June 4: Burkholder, H. "The Color of Christ." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 4 1963, 384. June 11: Dirks, V. A. "Prayer for the South." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 11 1963, 400. June 11: Peterson, A. M. "I Came -- You May Too." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 11 1963, 401. June 18: Coates, P. V. "He Broke the Color Barrier." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1963, 417-419. June 18: King, M. L., Jr. "Letter From Jail." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1963, 409. June 18: Regier, M. J. "Noah's Curse." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1963, 416. June 25: Harding, V. "Harding Aided Birmingham Conciliation." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 25 1963, 428-429. June 25: Taylor, J. A., Mrs. "Cursed and Redeemed." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 25 1963, 431. July 9: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 9 1963, 600. July 9: "Harding At White House." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 449. July 9: Anonymous. "Dear Editor." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Bestvater, J. "Gentlemen." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Boese, G. L. "Dear Editor." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Burkholder, H. "Infallible, Inerrant, Inspired." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Gramlich, M. J. "Dear Editor." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Harding, V. "First Steps in Birmingham." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 438-443. July 9: Kaufman, O. "To the Editor." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Leber, W. G. "Dear Editor." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 455. July 9: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1963, 459. July 23: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel</i></p>	<p>November 1963, 12-14.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p><i>Herald</i>, July 23 1963, 648.</p> <p>July 23: Swartzentruber, H. "Where Do We Stand?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 23 1963, 631.</p> <p>July 23: "Mississippi Workers Join Race Drive." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 23 1963, 470-471.</p> <p>July 23: Regier, H. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 23 1963, 484.</p> <p>July 30: Drescher, J. M. "Race in Grace." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 30 1963, 651.</p> <p>July 30: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 30 1963, 664.</p> <p>August 6: Cook, S. J., Mrs. "The Hunter and the Hunted." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 675.</p> <p>August 6: Drescher, J. M. "Our Mission and Race." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 667.</p> <p>August 6: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 688.</p> <p>August 6: Drescher, J. M. "Integration - What It Will Mean for the Church." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 671-672.</p> <p>August 6: Harding, V. "The Christian and the Race Question." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 669-671.</p> <p>August 6: Metzler, E. "The Mennonite Churches and the Current Race Crisis." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 683-684.</p> <p>August 6: Towne, O. "Lesson in Tolerance." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 675.</p> <p>August 6: Wolfe, O. O., M. Lehman, et al. "Integration - What It Will Mean for the Church." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 6 1963, 671-672.</p> <p>August 6: "Schoolmen Aid Race Witness." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 6 1963, 492-493.</p> <p>August 6: "Churches Respond to Race." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 6 1963, 493-494.</p> <p>August 6: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 6 1963, 499.</p> <p>August 6: Younger, J. A., C. I. White, Jr., et al. "Congressional Response." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 6 1963, 490-491.</p> <p>August 13: Hershberger, E. N. "A Man Went Down." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 13 1963, 691, 699.</p> <p>August 13: Hershberger, G. F. "Letter to the United States Congress on Civil Rights." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 13 1963, 705.</p> <p>August 20: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 20 1963, 736.</p> <p>September: Kreider, C. "Civil Rights for the Negro?" <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1963, 18, 37-38.</p> <p>September 10: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 10 1963, 816.</p> <p>September 10: "Mennonite Brethren Act on Race and Baptism." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 10 1963, 540.</p> <p>September 10: Unruh, J. D., Jr. and E. Loewen. "Is This Our Revolution." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 10 1963, 534-536.</p> <p>September 17: Preheim, L. and J. D. Unruh, Jr. "Washington March Presses Equality Now." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 17 1963, 555.</p> <p>October 1: "Goshen College." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 1 1963, 867.</p> <p>October 1: "After the Birmingham Bomb." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 1 1963, 587.</p> <p>October 1: Platt, L. "No Freedom Until All Are Free." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 1 1963, 592.</p> <p>October 8: "Confession, Pardon, Commitment." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 8 1963, 889.</p> <p>October 8: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 8 1963, 904.</p> <p>October 8: Reston, J. "The First Significant Test of the Freedom March." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 8 1963, 889.</p> <p>October 8: "Birmingham Troubles Mennonite Conscience." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 8 1963, 604-605.</p> <p>October 8: Fast, H. A. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 8 1963,</p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>612. October 15: "Resolution Adopted at Indiana-Michigan Christian Worker's Conference, August 7, 1963." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 15 1963, 924. October 29: "Seminary Works on Race." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 29 1963, 653. November 5: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 5 1963, 1000. November 19: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 19 1963, 1047-1048. November 19: Groves, E. "Gulfport at the Crossroads." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 19 1963, 697-699. December 10: Drescher, J. M. "Items and Comments by the Editor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, December 10 1963, 1088. December 24: Dyck, C. J. "Foster Racial Harmony." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 24 1963, 782. December 24: Groves, E. "Chicago Volunteers." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 24 1963, 776-777. December 31: Drescher, J. M. "The Past Year." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, December 31 1963, 1131. December 31: "Race and Mennonites." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 31 1963, 799-800. December 31: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 31 1963, 808.</p>		
<p>1964 January: Harding, V. "Light in the Asphalt Jungle." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1964, 39-41. January 7: "Racial Problems Grip National Council." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 7 1964, 8-10. January 14: "E.M.C. Faculty Statement on Racial Discrimination." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 14 1964, 42-43. January 14: Vaughan, J. "I Was An Outside Agitator." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 14 1964, 21-22. January 21: "That Middle Wall Falls Again." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 21 1964, 59. February: King, M. L., Jr. "Transformed Nonconformist." <i>Christian Living</i>, February 1964, 8-10, 38. February 4: Housing, C. O. R. A. and A. F. S. Committee. "Myths About Real Estate." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 4 1964, 66-69. February 18: Lapp, J. E. "The Churches of Hatfield Speak on Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 18 1964, 121, 131-132. February 18: Metzler, J. and R. Metzler. "The Confession of a Southerner." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 18 1964, 121. February 18: "Race Crisis Moves North as Struggle for Justice Hardens." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 18 1964, 103. February 18: "Mennonites in South and Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 18 1964, 103-104. February 25: Buhr, M. "Georgia Farm Seeks Farms and Businessmen." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 25 1964, 119. February 25: McCleary, W. "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 25 1964, 125-126. March 17: Kaiser, W. L. "The Christian Mission Hits a Roadblock." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 17 1964, 174-175. March 17: Souder, E. "Virginia Churches Mend local Race Injustices." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 17 1964, 169. March 24: "Northern Ministers Work for Southern Civil Rights." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 24 1964, 182-183. March 24: Peterson, A. M. "Laura's Essay: A Southern White Girl Writes About Brotherhood." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 24 1964, 184-187. March 24: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 24 1964, 196. March 31: "Mennonite Churches in South Hold Conference on Race." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 31 1964, 203-204. March 31: Friesen, R. "The Signs Are Down but the Custom Still</p>		<p>1964 May 14: Regier, H. "Understanding the Southern Viewpoint." <i>Mennonite Weekly Review</i>, May 14 1964, 4-5.</p>

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>Remains." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 31 1964, 201-202.</p> <p>April: Wells, C. A. "Commenting on an Earthquake." <i>Christian Living</i>, April 1964, 22-23.</p> <p>April 7: "Teachers in Cleveland Slum Schools Can Break Segregation Barriers." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 7 1964, 234.</p> <p>April 7: Waltner, O. A. and V. Preheim. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 7 1964, 244.</p> <p>April 14: Fretz, D. "True Grace." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 14 1964, 256.</p> <p>April 21: "Evangelicals Take Civil Rights Stand." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 21 1964, 267-268.</p> <p>April 28: Graber, R. F. "The Christian's Approach to the Problem of Prejudice." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 28 1964, 288.</p> <p>April 28: Rich, E. S. "Harvard Professor Jailed in Civil Rights Test." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 28 1964, 283-284.</p> <p>May 12: Drescher, J. M. "Chain Letter Campaign." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 12 1964, 395.</p> <p>May 19: Hershberger, G. F. "A Christian Witness on Race Relations Now." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 19 1964, 425.</p> <p>May 19: Fast, H. A. "Vigil for Rights Bill Begins." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 19 1964, 334.</p> <p>June 30: Graber, R. F. "Men Striving to Overcome Racial Prejudice." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 30 1964, 431.</p> <p>June 30: Hochstedler, E. "I Went to Jail." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 30 1964, 433-434.</p> <p>July: Hertzler, D. "Can the Church Lead?" <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1964, 2.</p> <p>July: Pannell, W. "An Evangelical Speaks for Negroes." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1964, 8-11.</p> <p>July 14: "Gaeddert to Mississippi: Goes as Peace Emissary." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 14 1964, 447.</p> <p>July 28: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: First in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 28 1964, 647.</p> <p>August: Harding, R. "Sing a Song for Freedom." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1964, 22-24.</p> <p>August 4: Hershberger, G. F. "A Senator Speaks to the Churches." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 4 1964, 666.</p> <p>August 4: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Second in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 4 1964, 664-665.</p> <p>August 4: Shank, J. W. "The Christian and the Problem of Racial Distinctions." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 4 1964, 663-664.</p> <p>August 11: Drescher, J. M. "Race Relations Responsibility." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 11 1964, 683, 701.</p> <p>August 11: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Third in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 11 1964, 689.</p> <p>August 11: Bohn, S. "Still Time for the Church in Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 11 1964, 502.</p> <p>August 18: Cressman, A. W. "No Problem?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 18 1964, 710-711.</p> <p>August 18: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Fourth in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 18 1964, 712.</p> <p>August 25: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Fifth in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 25 1964, 735.</p> <p>September 1: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Sixth in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 1 1964, 754.</p> <p>September 8: Hubert, H. "Let My People Go." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 8 1964, 777.</p> <p>September 8: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Seventh in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 8 1964, 777.</p> <p>September 15: Helmuth, D. "What Are We Saying?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 15 1964, 811-812.</p> <p>September 15: Landis, P. G. "The Bible and Race: Eighth in a Series." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 15 1964, 803, 814.</p> <p>September 22: Miller, W. C. "God Has a Color Scheme?" <i>The</i></p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p><i>Mennonite</i>, September 22 1964, 593. October 13: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 13 1964, 644. October 27: Schierling, D. "God's People in East Harlem." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 27 1964, 674-675. November 10: Drescher, J. M. "Some Can't Live with Their Fears." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 10 1964, 985. November 10: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 10 1964, 708. December 1: Loh, J. "Newsmen Get Religion." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 1 1964, 743. December 8: Miller, P. M. "My Repentings Are Kindled Together." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, December 8 1964, 1052-1053.</p>		
<p>1965 January 5: King, M. L., Jr. "The Quiet Conviction of Nonviolence." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 5 1965, 2-4. January 12: Lederach, N. K. "After a Race Relations Conference." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, January 12 1965, 44. February: Harding, V. "Letter From Jail." <i>Christian Living</i>, February 1965, 33-35. February: Lapp, J. A. "The Negro Revolution: Year Two." <i>Christian Living</i>, February 1965, 18-19. February 9: "Newton Racial Needs Studied." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 9 1965, 90. February 9: Lehman, M. "The Wall." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 9 1965, 82-83. February 16: Hershberger, G. F. "From Words to Deeds in Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 16 1965, 121, 130. February 16: Burgess, J. S. "Willowcreek." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 16 1965, 108-111. February 16: Schrag, R. "Mennonite Disaster Service Builds Churches in Mississippi: Positive Action Led by Interfaith and Interracial Group." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 16 1965, 102-104. March 2: "Aid for Racial Loss: Boards Back Congregations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 2 1965, 137. March 2: "Seminary Hailed for Witness: Award for Racial Teamwork." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 2 1965, 137. March 2: "Volunteers Go to Mississippi to Listen and Serve." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 2 1965, 134-136. March 2: Spaeth, H. "Try Living Instead of Talking." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 2 1965, 139. March 9: Hostetler, M. "Negroes in a White Neighborhood." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 9 1965, 201. March 16: "Experiments Can Dispel Apathy." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 16 1965, 169-170. March 16: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 16 1965, 175. March 23: Hostetler, M. "Racism." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 23 1965, 259. March 23: Johnson, M. A. "I Am Only One Person." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 23 1965, 180. April 6: "Reaching People at Gulfport." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 6 1965, 231. April 6: Friesen, J. "Value of the Negro Church." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 6 1965, 236. April 6: Metzler, E. "Breakthru for Brotherhood." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 6 1965, 235-236. April 20: Preheim, V. "Freedom March Aids Racial Peace." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 20 1965, 266. April 27: Drescher, J. M. "Racism or Reconciliation." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 27 1965, 359. April 27: Cheney, I., Jr. "An Evening with the Ku Klux Klan." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 27 1965, 288-291. May 11: Miller, V. "We Are Concerned." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 11 1965,</p>	<p>1965 June 22: Lewis, M. "Why Men on Mars Are Green." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 22 1965, 419. October 12: Hawkins, C. L. "Questions About Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 12 1965, 643.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>403. May 18: Mueller, P. "Tears and Lumps." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 18 1965, 336. May 18: Platt, D. "College Action in Race Walk." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 18 1965, 332-333. July: Goldsmith, K. and H. Huebert. "They Went to Alabama." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1965, 23-25, 27. July 6: Hershey, L. "Souls and Civil Rights." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 6 1965, 581-582. July 20: Shetler, S. G. "Is This Our Task?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 20 1965, 629-630. July 20: "Jeremiah Appears in Chicago." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 20 1965, 467-468. August 17: Bixler, J., Mr. and J. Bixler, Mrs. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 731. August 17: Glick, M. A. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 730. August 17: Graber, J. D. "Jesus and Race." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 723. August 17: Haines, L. M. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 730. August 17: Hershey, L. D. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 730. August 17: Hertzler, M. L. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 730. August 17: Townsend, J. W. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1965, 730-731. August 17: Keeler, E. "Tracts for Jeremiah." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 17 1965, 523. August 31: Landis, M. W. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 31 1965, 771. August 31: Regier, M. J. "Lots of Education Needed." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 31 1965, 538. September: Sauder, B. "Employment Regardless of Race or Religion." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1965, 18-19. September 7: Burrell, C. E., Jr. "Our Mennonite Oppressors." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 7 1965, 783. September 7: Halteman, E. H. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 7 1965, 794. September 7: Hershberger, J. L. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 7 1965, 794. September 7: Dalke, D. U. "Revolted Alliance." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 7 1965, 560. September 14: Wenger, J. S. "Radical Right and Mennonites." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, September 14 1965, 808. September 28: Franz, D. "King Comes to Woodlawn." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 28 1965, 607-608. October 5: Lind, L. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 5 1965, 886. October 5: Regier, M. J. "Focus on Demonstrations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 5 1965, 624. October 12: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 12 1965, 644. October 26: Histand, A. H. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 26 1965, 951. October 26: Lehman, T. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 26 1965, 950-951. October 26: Ott, M. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 26 1965, 951-952. November 16: Graber, J. D. "Who Is Superior?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 16 1965, 1008. November 16: Knox, M. "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 16 1965, 1022.</p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
December 21: Biskin, M. "Black Word at the Board." <i>The Mennonite</i> , December 21 1965, 802-803.		
<p>1966</p> <p>January 11: "Mississippi Project Begins; Aims to Reduce Fear and Prejudice." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 11 1966, 25.</p> <p>February 8: Cobb, C. "Standard Procedure." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 8 1966, 90-93.</p> <p>March 8: Lehman, M. "About the South - and Mennonites." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 8 1966, 208-210.</p> <p>March 22: "Police Officers Sift Through the Ruins of the Nanih Waiya Mennonite Church." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 22 1966, 266.</p> <p>March 29: "Virginians Work for Racial Harmony." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 29 1966, 223-224.</p> <p>March 29: Friesen, I. D. "He's One of Us." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 29 1966, 231.</p> <p>April 5: Waltner, O. "Surveys Oppression of Negro." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 5 1966, 243.</p> <p>May 3: "Changing and Rearranging in South." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 3 1966, 304.</p> <p>May 24: Jordan, J. "Why I Missed my Graduation." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 24 1966, 356-357.</p> <p>June 28: "Rebombed Church Rebuilt." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 28 1966, 432.</p> <p>July 19: "Negroes and Property." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 19 1966, 464.</p> <p>August: "Black Man, Get Out of My Church." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1966, 40.</p> <p>August: Boyle, S. P. "Are Rights Demonstrations Right?" <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1966, 5-8.</p> <p>August 30: Drescher, J. M. "At Work Amid Violence." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 30 1966, 775.</p> <p>September: Hertzler, D. "Christian Living Looks At Prejudice." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1966, 19.</p> <p>September: Martens, P. "Walled Out." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1966, 20-22.</p> <p>September: Yoder, D. R. "How I am Making My Mind About Negroes." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1966, 30-31.</p> <p>September 6: Lamb, E. S. "Plea." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 6 1966, 532.</p> <p>September 13: Bohn, S. "Black Power and Nonviolence." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 13 1966, 557.</p> <p>September 20: Stringfellow, W. "Jews and Negroes Clash." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 20 1966, 567-568.</p> <p>September 27: Bohn, S. "Fair Housing Bill Lingers." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 27 1966, 582-583.</p> <p>October: Hymen, R. "The Different Boy." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1966, 5.</p> <p>October: Lapp, J. A. "The Coming of Black Power." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1966, 18-19.</p> <p>October 4: "Fair Housing In Oklahoma: Churches Fret About Role." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 4 1966, 601-602.</p> <p>October 11: Burrell, C. "Response to Black Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 11 1966, 620-621.</p> <p>October 25: Stackley, M. T. "Tightrope Walker." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 25 1966, 654-655.</p> <p>November 1: Bender, D. "Deep Unrest in Atlanta." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 1 1966, 665.</p> <p>November 8: Miller, V. "No CORE Association." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 8 1966, 683.</p> <p>November 29: Regier, H. "Progress in Race Relations But Reconciliation Lags." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 29 1966, 726.</p> <p>December 13: King, M. L., Jr. "Bread at Midnight." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 13 1966, 754-756.</p> <p>December 27: Harding, V. "What Answer to Black Power?" <i>Gospel</i></p>	<p>1966</p> <p>February 8: Engh, J. and R. Engh. "An Interview with James Farmer." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 8 1966, 100-103.</p> <p>September: Burrell, C. E., Jr. "How My Mind Has Changed About Whites." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1966, 28-29.</p> <p>September: Spock, B. "Children and Discrimination." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1966, 23-27.</p>	<p>February 15: "Burrell New Associate at Woodlawn." <i>The Mennonite/Central District Reporter</i>, February 15 1966, A-1.</p>

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p><i>Herald</i>, December 27 1966, 1114-1115.</p> <p>1967</p> <p>January: Lind, L. "400 'Heroes' a Day." <i>Christian Living</i>, January 1967, 1, 3-5.</p> <p>January: Ewert, D. "The Church in a Racially Changing Neighborhood." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 44-45.</p> <p>January: Moore, W. "Ethnic Mennonites?" <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 25.</p> <p>January: "[Photo of Martin Luther King, Jr. Being Arrested]." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 1.</p> <p>January: Harding, V. "Where Have All the Lovers Gone?" <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 5-13.</p> <p>January: Bohn, S. "Toward a New Understanding of Nonresistance." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 14-17.</p> <p>January: Riddick, G. E. "Black Power in the White Perspective." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 29-34.</p> <p>January: Waltner, O. A. "A Ministry of Reconciliation." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 35-36.</p> <p>January: Heinrichs, A. "The Indian and the Canadian Mennonites." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 1 (1967): 7-28.</p> <p>January: Jacobs, D. "Race, An International Problem." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 1 (1967): 3-25.</p> <p>January: Martin, P. "Teaching in a Segregated School." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 1 (1967): 7-39.</p> <p>January: Suderman, E. F. "The Comfortable Pew and the Tangled World." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 1 (1967): -4.</p> <p>January 17: "Mississippi Church Bombed Third Time in Two Years." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 17 1967, 39.</p> <p>January 24: Bohn, S. "U. S. Money Aids Racism in Africa." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 24 1967, 55.</p> <p>February 7: Wohlgemuth, E. "My Friends in the Ghetto." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 7 1967, 84-85.</p> <p>February 14: Ewert, K. "Reaffirmation." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 14 1967, 100.</p> <p>March 7: Kreider, E. "Answer for Black Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 7 1967, 172.</p> <p>March 7: Schroeder, R. "Reply to Vincent Harding." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 7 1967, 171-172.</p> <p>April: Stringfellow, W. "The Irony of Negro Anti-Semitism." <i>Christian Living</i>, April 1967, 40.</p> <p>April 18: Bender, M. "Bombed Three Times." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 18 1967, 260-261.</p> <p>April 25: Kaufman, D. D. "Non-western Mennonites." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 25 1967, 286.</p> <p>June 13: Burrell, C. "The Conscience of a Heavyweight." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 13 1967, 397-398.</p> <p>July 18: Flaming, V. M. "Slander of Country." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 18 1967, 461.</p> <p>July 18: Mast, K., Mrs. "Disgusted with Clay." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 18 1967, 461.</p> <p>July 18: Woelk, R. W. "Not Every Black Man." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 18 1967, 460.</p> <p>August 8: Drescher, J. M. "Mennonite Church in Detroit Not Damaged in Recent Rioting." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 8 1967, 719.</p> <p>August 15: Drescher, J. M. "Negroes in Elkhart Speak Out About Mennonites." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 15 1967, 742.</p> <p>August 15: Norton, J. "Detroit Pastor Reports on Rioting Last Month." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 15 1967, 743-744.</p> <p>August 22: "Items and Comments." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 22 1967, 771.</p> <p>September 19: "Charles Smith Has Nothing: Answers to those City Riots." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 19 1967, 563.</p> <p>October: Harding, V. "The Beggars Are Rising . . . Where Are the</p>	<p>1967</p> <p>January: Akar, J. T. "An African Views America." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1967, 19-23.</p> <p>February 7: Harding, V. "Do We Have An Answer for Black Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 7 1967, 82-83.</p>	<p>1967</p> <p>July: Wenger, A. G. "'No Room' - in Lancaster?" <i>Missionary Messenger</i>, July 1967, 5-7.</p>

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>Saints?" <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 4 (1967): 52-153. October: Zeeuw, R. d., J. W. Along, et al. "Echoes from Amsterdam." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 4 (1967): 73-177. October: Harding, V. "The Peace Witness and Revolutionary Movements." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 4 (1967): 61-165. October 3: Yoder, H. "Reflections on Riots." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 3 1967, 894-895. October 3: Harding, V. "Voices of Revolution." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 3 1967, 590-593. October 24: Enns, J. H. "Full of Hatred." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 24 1967, 648. October 24: Mueller, H. H. "Shook up by Voices." <i>The Mennonite</i>, October 24 1967, 648. November 7: Jackman, A. "Suffering for the Faith." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 7 1967, 679-680. November 7: Mueller, P. "Shook up but different." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 7 1967, 679. November 7: Shelly, M. "Editorial." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 7 1967, 684. November 28: Friesen, J. and J. Friesen. "New Understanding From Mississippi." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 28 1967, 730-731. November 28: Stucky, A., Mrs. "We Better Be Listening." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 28 1967, 727. December 5: "Interracial Church Tested." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 5 1967, 739. December 5: Kaufman, F. "A Prejudice to Overcome." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 5 1967, 745. December 5: Mueller, A. "The Reason for Persecution." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 5 1967, 744. December 12: Friesen, J. "Expert on Nonviolence." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 12 1967, 761. December 12: Krausz, C. E. "Good Folks Take Stand." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 12 1967, 761.</p>		
<p>1968 January: Burkholder, J. L. "A People in Community - Contemporary Relevance." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, January 1968, 5-12. January 2: "Teachers in Negro School: Kansans are Only Whites." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 2 1968, 8. January 9: Jackman, A. "Tossed Out of Context." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 9 1968, 28. January 30: Spaulding, J. "Shrinking From Revolution: Memo on Conference." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 30 1968, 70. February 6: Raber, B. "Concepts." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 6 1968, 102. February 20: "Race Drive in Washington: Church Asked to Comment." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 20 1968, 126. March 12: Lapp, J. E. "The Gospel in Reconciliation." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 12 1968, 228-229. March 12: Headings, V. "Another Interpretation." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 12 1968, 195. March 19: Ediger, P. J. "An Anglo-Pharaoh's Nightmare." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 19 1968, 216. March 26: Cressman, A. W. "Is Peace Too Late?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 26 1968, 268. April 2: "White Racism Blamed for City Riots." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 2 1968, 237. April 9: Commission, C. L. and S. B. Convention. "What Shall We Do About Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 9 1968, 319-323. April 16: Shelly, M. and F. Zenger. "Students Study Society." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 16 1968, 277-278. April 23: Landis, P. G. "Tribute Lauds King's Life, Work." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 23 1968, 374.</p>	<p>1968 February 13: Sedziol, P. "A Little Knowledge." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 13 1968, 118-119. September 10: Regier, H. "Intermarriage, Riots, Black Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 10 1968, 554-557.</p>	<p>1968 January-April: Regier, H. and R. Regier. "Learning by Leaving." <i>The Gulfbreeze</i>, January-April 1968, 6.</p>

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>April 23: Leber, W. G. "Slow on Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 23 1968, 300.</p> <p>April 30: Denbrook, B. "Moving Day." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 30 1968, 316-319.</p> <p>April 30: Regier, M. J. "To Preach or Demonstrate?" <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 30 1968, 319.</p> <p>April 30: Wagler, M. "White Guilt and Black Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 30 1968, 306-308.</p> <p>May 7: "A Time to Learn Compassion." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 7 1968, 325-326.</p> <p>May 7: Froese, S. "The American Dream." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 7 1968, 329.</p> <p>May 7: Regier, H. "He Lives On." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 7 1968, 336.</p> <p>May 14: Miller, V. "We Shall Overcome." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 14 1968, 425.</p> <p>May 14: Stoesz, E. "A Mennonite Reflects on Martin Luther King." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 14 1968, 437.</p> <p>May 21: "Who Was He?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 21 1968, 449.</p> <p>May 28: Neuen, E. I. "Nausea on White Hate." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 28 1968, 379.</p> <p>May 28: Schrag, G. "Translate Black Power." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 28 1968, 379.</p> <p>June: Hertzler, D. "On the Death of King." <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1968, 40.</p> <p>June: Lapp, J. A. "The Greatness of Martin Luther King, Jr." <i>Christian Living</i>, June 1968, 18-19.</p> <p>June 4: Augsburg, D. "Who Called You a 'Racist?'" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 4 1968, 498-499.</p> <p>June 4: Epp, F. H. "NAE Has Change of Heart on Race." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 4 1968, 389-390.</p> <p>June 4: Keidel, L. "Where Our Race Troubles Began." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 4 1968, 397-399.</p> <p>June 11: Keidel, L. "Ghetto's Building Blocks." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 11 1968, 413-414.</p> <p>June 11: Schmidt, D. "On the Dynamic Bypass." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 11 1968, 411.</p> <p>June 18: "Urban Pastors Meet to Air Views." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 552.</p> <p>June 18: Bertsche, J. "International Dimensions of the Urban Crisis." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 540-542.</p> <p>June 18: Burrell, C. E., Jr. "Causes for Urban Rebellion." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 534-536.</p> <p>June 18: Drescher, J. M. "Do We Want to Listen?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 537.</p> <p>June 18: Freed, J. L. "An Angry Pastor." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 548-549.</p> <p>June 18: Harding, V. "The History of a Wall." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 543-545.</p> <p>June 18: Kauffman, I. "Are We the Problem?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 545-547.</p> <p>June 18: Kraus, C. N. "A Theology for Action." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 537-540.</p> <p>June 18: Miller, C. "To Keep a Home in the Slums." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 548.</p> <p>June 18: Miller, V. L. "What Can Be Done?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 549-550.</p> <p>June 18: Regier, H. "Poverty-American Style." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 547-548.</p> <p>June 18: Schwartztruber, H. "Will Freedom Ring in the Pew?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 550-551.</p> <p>June 18: Zook, J. "Christian Life and Action." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 18 1968, 551.</p> <p>June 18: Bertsche, J. "The Mission Field that Came to Us." <i>The</i></p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p><i>Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 427-428.</p> <p>June 18: Burrell, C. E., Jr. "A Primer on the Urban Rebellion." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 418-420.</p> <p>June 18: Franz, D. "Dangers of 'Get Tough'." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 431.</p> <p>June 18: Good, C. L. "Time for Radical Servanthood." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 432-434.</p> <p>June 18: Harding, V. "Wall of Bitterness." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 424-426.</p> <p>June 18: Kauffman. "Racism - Color It White." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 431.</p> <p>June 18: Miller, C. "Home in the Slums." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 434.</p> <p>June 18: Miller, V. L. "Start Where You are." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 435.</p> <p>June 18: Regier, H. "Despair Breeds Violence." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 426.</p> <p>June 18: Schwartzentruber, H. "No One Will Escape." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 18 1968, 423.</p> <p>June 25: Keidel, L. "The People of the Ghetto." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 25 1968, 454-455.</p> <p>July: Berry, L. "Of Such is the Kingdom." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1968, 8-9.</p> <p>July: Rezmerski, J. C. "For Martin L. King, Jr." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, July 1968, 99.</p> <p>July: Littell, F. H. "Martin Luther King, Jr." <i>Mennonite Life</i>, July 1968, 99.</p> <p>July: Snider, H. "Separate and Unequal: A Summary of the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders and Some Observation." <i>Mennonite Life</i> 22, no. 3 (1968): 00-103.</p> <p>July 2: Keidel, L. "Where Our Race Trouble Began." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 2 1968, 586-587.</p> <p>July 9: Keidel, L. O., Jr. "Ghetto's Building Blocks." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 9 1968, 610.</p> <p>July 9: Keidel, L. "Let's Look at Our Suspicions." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1968, 469-470.</p> <p>July 9: Smucker, C. F. "Twenty-three Years in Gulfport." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 9 1968, 471.</p> <p>July 16: Keidel, L. O., Jr. "The People of the Ghetto." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 16 1968, 634.</p> <p>July 23: "Interracial Council Approved." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 23 1968, 669.</p> <p>July 23: Keidel, L. O., Jr. "Let's Look at Our Suspicions." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, July 23 1968, 658.</p> <p>July 23: Keidel, L. "Healing Love in Race Relations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 23 1968, 485-486.</p> <p>August 6: "Revelators Jab at Racism." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 6 1968, 492.</p> <p>August 6: "White Society Saved When Miss America is Black." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 6 1968, 495.</p> <p>August 20: Herndon, A. "The Same One Hundred Years." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 20 1968, 514-525.</p> <p>September: Pannell, W. E. "Somewhere in the Middle." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1968, 22-24.</p> <p>September 17: Eck, J. "No Distinction." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 17 1968, 579.</p> <p>November 12: Gerber, G. "Dry Grass Singing." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 12 1968, 709-710.</p> <p>November 19: Lowery, L., Mrs. "I Witnessed God's Love." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 19 1968, 1038-1039.</p> <p>November 19: Miller, V. "White Power." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 19 1968, 1036.</p> <p>November 19: Loganbill, C. "One Night in Alabama." <i>The Mennonite</i>,</p>		

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>November 19 1968, 725. November 19: Miller, W. R. "The Misunderstanding of Martin Luther King." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 19 1968, 714-717. November 26: Baker, R. J. "Mennonite Church in Atlanta." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 26 1968, 1056-1057. November 26: Graber, J. D. "We're Just People." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 26 1968, 1062-1063. November 26: Regier, M. J. "Bitter Harvest of Hate." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 26 1968, 732. December 10: Unruh, P. "Deceived for a Long Time." <i>The Mennonite</i>, December 10 1968, 772.</p>		
<p>1969 January 14: Baer, O. W. "Suggested Readings." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 14 1969, 30. February 11: Good, I. M. "From Across the Tracks." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 11 1969, 93. March 18: Tolbert, L. "A Black Man's Prayer." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 18 1969, 188. April 1: Gingerich, M. "The Race Revolution in America." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 1 1969, 292-293. April 1: "Gains Seen In Mississippi: Black Leadership Advances." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 1 1969, 225. April 8: Bender, D. "Black and White Together: Days of Optimism Passed." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 8 1969, 239-240. April 15: Krehbiel, H. P. "Race Relations - a Voice from the Past." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 15 1969, 254. April 29: Newfeldt, D. "Answer." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 29 1969, 293. May 6: Shenk, D. "Black Youth Rally: A 24-Hour Happening." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 6 1969, 414-415. May 13: Bender, D. "Whites in A Black Community." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 13 1969, 428. June 3: "Black Group Asks \$500 Million in Reparations." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 3 1969, 378. June 10: "Special Funds for Summer City Needs." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 10 1969, 390. June 10: "Way to a Raceless Church: Turn Whites into Blacks." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 10 1969, 390-391. July: Shisler, B. E. "Fresh-Air Child." <i>Christian Living</i>, July 1969, 25. July 15: Klassen, J. and A. Klassen. "Respond to Black Manifesto." <i>The Mennonite</i>, July 15 1969, 459-460. August: Keim, A. "Black Studies: Another Chapter in Civil Rights." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1969, 14-15. August 12: "Lancaster Conference Peace Committee Responds to Black Manifesto." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 12 1969, 702. September 2: Regier, H. "The Black Manifesto and Christ's." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 2 1969, 514-516. October: Hostetter, R. "White Like Me." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1969, 23. October: Mathias, F. "The Negro's Place Is America." <i>Christian Living</i>, October 1969, 14-16. October 7: "Mennonite General Conference Urban-Racial Concerns." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 7 1969, 871. October 14: Shrock, S. "One Thing You Lack." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, October 14 1969, 887-888. November 4: Brown, H. "Mennonites are Guilty." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 4 1969, 968. November 11: Pannell, W. "The Americanization of Sambo." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 11 1969, 982-983. November 18: "Powell Joins Board Staff." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 18 1969, 1017-1018. November 25: Mosemann, J. H. "Why An Urban-Racial Council?" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, November 25 1969, 1026-1027. December 9: Lavelle, R. "Black Life in Pittsburgh." <i>The Mennonite</i>,</p>	<p>1969 June 17: Shutt, J. "Words are Not Enough." <i>The Mennonite</i>, June 17 1969, 412. September: Gingerich, W. "Black Subway Child." <i>Christian Living</i>, September 1969, 24-25.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<p>December 9 1969, 738-740.</p> <p>1970</p> <p>January 13: "Racial Barrier Restored After Hurricane Aid Work." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 13 1970, 25.</p> <p>February 17: "Readers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, February 17 1970, 158.</p> <p>March: Berry, B. and L. R. Berry. "Commit Yourselves, Mennonites." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1970, 9.</p> <p>March: Jackson, C. and J. Burkholder. "Interacting Where Asked." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1970, 7-9.</p> <p>March: Rensberger, L. "White ... In a Black World." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1970, 10-12, 39.</p> <p>March 24: Augsburg, D. "Instant Maturity." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 24 1970, 274-275.</p> <p>March 24: Daehlin, M. and L. Keidel. "We Adopted a Negro Child." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 24 1970, 272.</p> <p>March 24: Powell, J. "The Compassion Fund Is." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 24 1970, 271.</p> <p>March 31: Powell, J. "The Minority Ministries Council: A Call to Action." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 31 1970, 294.</p> <p>April 7: Cragg, K. "You Can't Be Crucified..." <i>The Mennonite</i>, April 7 1970, 241.</p> <p>April 14: Powell, J. "How Few His Followers." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, April 14 1970, 342.</p> <p>May: Beechy, W. "Put Yourself in Another Man's skin." <i>Christian Living</i>, May 1970, 23-25.</p> <p>May: Hershberger, J. "Black Literature for White Children." <i>Christian Living</i>, May 1970, 34.</p> <p>May: Imhoff, R. "Consider Transracial Adoption." <i>Christian Living</i>, May 1970, 31-33.</p> <p>May 5: Harder, G. "Dark Face Against the Sky." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 5 1970, 318.</p> <p>May 5: Juhnke, J. "Disturbed by Color of Hand." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 5 1970, 316.</p> <p>May 5: Klassen, J. "White Fist for Black." <i>The Mennonite</i>, May 5 1970, 316.</p> <p>August 25: "Arsonists Set Fire to Woodlawn Church." <i>The Mennonite</i>, August 25 1970, 507-508.</p> <p>September 8: Kaufman, O. "Racial Tension Increases: Mississippi Future Grim." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 8 1970, 540.</p> <p>September 29: S., M. "Christians Still Reflect A Racist Society." <i>The Mennonite</i>, September 29 1970, 587-588.</p> <p>November 17: Ediger, P. J. "Psalm 95 and Voices from Black America." <i>The Mennonite</i>, November 17 1970, 709.</p>	<p>1970</p> <p>January: Berry, L. R., Jr. "You May Be A Worldly Christian." <i>Christian Living</i>, January 1970, 16-17.</p> <p>March: Lehman, M. L. "Mennonites and Pittsburgh." <i>Christian Living</i>, March 1970, 2-7.</p>	
<p>1971</p> <p>January 12: Powell, J. "Out of the Voices of the Oppressed - God." <i>The Mennonite</i>, January 12 1971, 18-19.</p> <p>February 16: Pannell, W. "Little Black Sambo Still Lives." <i>The Mennonite</i>, February 16 1971, 98-100.</p> <p>March 2: Fretz, J. E. "Hard to Face It as It Is." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 2 1971, 150.</p> <p>March 2: Jurgensen, B. "Nobody's Going to Take Advantage of Me." <i>The Mennonite</i>, March 2 1971, 152.</p> <p>May: Fairfield, J. "Curtis Burrell: A Bullet Hole in the Window." <i>Christian Living</i>, May 1971, 20-24.</p> <p>May 4: Schwartzentruber, H. "Let Me In!" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 4 1971, 396-398.</p> <p>June 1: Gerber, C. "Verdict - Not Guilty!" <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 1 1971, 497-498.</p> <p>June 22: Brown, A. H. "Black Influence on a White Mind." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, June 22 1971, 562-563.</p> <p>August 17: Hershey, L. "God's Altar and Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, August 17 1971, 682-683.</p> <p>December: Gregory, B. "We Learned to Draw Black Angels."</p>	<p>1971</p> <p>March 23: Hershey, L. "What is the Mennonite Attitude on Race Relations." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, March 23 1971, 262-264.</p> <p>May 11: Bishop, I. "Accept us as Brothers,' Minority Speakers Say." <i>Gospel Herald</i>, May 11 1971, 418-419.</p> <p>August: Baker, Robert J. "Black, Like Lee Roy." <i>Christian Living</i>, August 1971, 2-5.</p>	

Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that do <u>not</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Articles in <i>Christian Living</i> , <i>Gospel Herald</i> , <i>The Mennonite</i> , and <i>Mennonite Life</i> on race-related topics that <u>do</u> mention interracial marriage: 1940-1971	Other Mennonite publications that mention interracial marriage: 1889-1971
<i>Christian Living</i> , December 1971, 26-27.		

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF MENNONITE STATEMENTS ON RACIAL THEMES

1940

11-Nov, Harrisonburg, VA

Virginia Mennonite Conference Executive Committee

Title: Policy Governing the Organization of A Mennonite Colored Organization
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: In view of the general attitude of society in the South toward the intermingling of the two races and inasmuch as we desire to adopt a practical working policy with the view of promoting the best interests for both colored and white, and since as a matter of expediency we must make some distinction to meet existing conditions, we propose the following course of procedure in establishing a Mennonite colored congregation.

Scripture: unidentified
 Action: keep African-American congregation separate; do separate baptisms; do separate holy kiss; do separate footwashing; have separate communion cups;
 Reaction: heavy protest from Ernest and Fannie Swartzentruber
 Reference: "Policy Governing the Organization of a Mennonite Colored Organization," November 11 (Virginia Mennonite Conference; Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions And Charities, 1940), Virginia Mennonite Conference archives, Papers of Va. Menn. Bd. of Missions and Charities, Box "I-D-1, Box 1 Board/Executive Minutes 1904-1969 Restricted," Folder "Board/Executive Committee Minutes (retyped) 1931-1947."

1948

Southwestern Pennsylvania Conference

Title: unidentified
 Denomination: unidentified
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: The Southwestern Pennsylvania Conference "officially acknowledge prejudices and discrimination against minority groups to be worldly and

sinful"; "we encourage our people and congregations to their Christian duty of love toward all minority groups in our respective communities."
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: unidentified
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Weaver, "The Mennonite Church and the American Negro," (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1970), AMC - I-3-3.5 Box 11 John Horsch Mennonites History Essay Contest. Denny Weaver: The Mennonite Church and the American Negro.

1951

27-Jul, Laurelville, PA

Study Conference on Christian Community Relations

Title: Statement of Concern of the Study Conference on Christian Community Relations
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: Grant Stoltzfus (?); Guy F. Hershberger (?);
 Key Phrases: God is no respecter of persons; there is no Jew nor Greek; no scientific basis for racial differences
 Scripture: Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 3:28
 Action: evangelism; service; constituent education; witness against racial segregation and discrimination; abolish it in the community
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Statement of Concerns of the Study Conference on Christian Community Relations," July 24-27 (1951), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 2, Folder 35.

1951

12-Mar, Rohrerstown, PA

Lancaster Conference Bishop Board

Title: statement on racialism
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: C. K. Lehman; Amos Horst; J. Paul Graybill; Stoner Krady
 Key Phrases: unidentified
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: unidentified
 Reaction: No documentation of actual statement ever being passed
 Reference: "Lancaster Conference Bishop Board Minutes," March 12 (Lancaster Conference, 1951).

1955

24-Aug, Hesston, KS

Mennonite Church General Conference

Title: The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: Guy F. Hershberger
 Key Phrases: all people are one people; each person bears the image of the Creator; all have sinned; new union created in Christ; nonresistance = resistance to racism; God is no respecter of persons; all are accepted; cleansed their hearts; racial prejudice and discrimination is a sin; scars the soul of the perpetrator; supports communism; prejudice and discrimination = conformity; have acted passively in the face of racism and prejudice and discrimination; repentance means turning away from that which keeps us from God; science provides no basis for qualitative differences among races;
 Scripture: Matthew 5:9-11; Matthew 5:21-48; Luke 13:29; John 3:16; John 10:16; John 17:11; Acts 10:34-35; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 17:26; Romans 3:22-24; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 3:11
 Action: evangelism; nonconformity; church unity; integration; stop institutional discrimination; relationship building; business equality; grateful for government action; support community efforts as possible; witness to prejudice and discrimination; education; be at ease with other races; interracial marriage okay;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Conference, "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations," August 24, 1955 (Mennonite General Conference, 1955).

1955

29-Jul, Harrisonburg, VA

Virginia Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting

Title: Christian Attitudes in Race Relations
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: Nelson Burkholder (?); Grant Stoltzfus (?)
 Key Phrases: The teachings of Christ and the apostles declare the equality of men before God, the universal need for grace in the experience of salvation (Rom. 3:23-26), and the oneness of the body of Christ (Col. 3:11); That we confess our former spiritual immaturity, and That we give ourselves to diligent heart-searching, praying God to remove any present un-Christlike attitudes, and; That we call ourselves and our brotherhood to exercise the true spirit of Christ in every aspect of this issue.
 Scripture: Romans 3:23-26; Colossians 3:11; Acts 10:34-35
 Action: rescind 1940 action; confess spiritual immaturity; pray for removal of unchristian attitudes; change individual relationships; pray for better relationships; exercise Christian spirit in all areas

Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Minutes Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting Virginia Mennonite Conference," July 26-29 (Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1967).

1955

May, Bluffton, OH

Bluffton College

Title: Attitude of Bluffton College on Relationships between Races on the Campus
 Denomination: General Conference
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: It has always taken the position that all races should participate equally in the various events on the campus.; The College further feels that scripturally there are no grounds for condemning intermarriage for reasons of color.; The College feels that young people need to consider the grave responsibilities of intermarriage, both the potential richness of such marriages and the painful consequences in some situations, which consequences are often caused by the hardness of men's hearts and by cultural differences. Because the possible involvements of intermarriage are so great, the College strongly urges students who feel led to interracial dating to discuss the issues with some faculty member on the campus, their parents, and their home minister.
 Scripture: Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 3:28
 Action: choose roommates, athletic teams, organizational officers, honors based on personality and skill not race; those who date interracially should seek the counsel of faculty, parents, and minister at home.
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Attitude of Bluffton College on Relationships between Races on the Campus," May (Bluffton College, 1955), AMC - III-25-8 Box 3, Bethesda Mennonite Church, St. Louis, Mo., H. Schwartzentruber Files - data files, Folder: Race Relations Data.

1955

20-Aug, Hesston, KS

South Central Conference

Title: Statement of Christian doctrine, church practice and personal witness with the constitution and discipline of the South Central Mennonite Conference
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: We believe that God created of one blood all nations. Therefore, no discrimination should be made between classes, economic differences, social differences, or racial differences; for all men are equal before God, are equally eligible to His grace and redemption, and are equally eligible to His grace and

redemption, and are upon being redeemed established in one kingdom and are brothers and sisters in the Lord and children of one heavenly Father

Scripture: John 10:16: 1:12; 3:16; Acts 17:26; Rom. 8:14;
 Action: none specified; perhaps include all in services
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Conference, South Central Mennonite. *Statement of Christian Doctrine, Church Practice and Personal Witness with the Constitution and Discipline of the South Central Mennonite Conference*. Hesston, Kansas: South Central Mennonite Conference, 1955.

1957

25-Sep, Lancaster, PA

Colored Workers Committee

Title: unidentified
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: Ira Buckwalter
 Key Phrases: unidentified
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: unidentified
 Reaction: Action was to write to Secretary of Conference to have them act on the General Conference statement
 Reference: "Colored Workers Committee Notes 1953-1957," (1953-57), EMM - Record Room: File Cabinets far wall, first cabinet, top drawer: Drawer marked: Home Missions Locations and Other General 1956-1964, File: Four numbered notebooks.

1959

17-Aug, Bluffton, OH

General Conference Mennonite Church

Title: A Christian Declaration on Race Relations
 Denomination: General Conference
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: Christian people cannot remain silent; God is no respecter of persons; God has made people of one blood; all are sinners before God; racial prejudice is sin; all are gathered under Jesus Christ; neither Jew nor Greek; we are all white here; have we acted with love in our institutions?; is there not ironies that courts are more sensitive than churches?; purge yourselves of prejudiced attitudes and practices; oppose practices in congregations, institutions, and communities;
 Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7; Acts 10:34-35; Acts 17:26; Galatians 3:28; Romans 3:23

Action: declare racially welcoming congregations; institutions declare hiring of all peoples; purge ourselves of prejudice; oppose prejudice in congregations, institutions, and communities;

Reaction: unidentified

Reference: "A Christian Declaration on Race Relations," August 17 (General Conference Mennonite Church, 1959), AMC - IX-7-12, #2 Box 6, entitled "Race Relations 1955-70."

1960

17-Mar, Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Conference Bishop Board

Title: From the East West North South: God is no respecter of persons are you?

Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church

Authors: J. Paul Graybill, Clayton Kraybill, others?

Key Phrases: unity of mankind; "basically no race is inferior or superior to any other"; basically the fellowship in the Gospel shall be entirely mutual"; need to consider the region, social, and cultural "situations" regarding race relations; God is no respecter of persons; remove all barriers real and imaginary to complete fellowship; [T - text from earlier version that did not make it in to final version "In further explanation -°-we would state that for the sake of expediency it may often be necessary to have separate congregations of fellowship for certain minorities who, because of social and geographical backgrounds, would, appreciate to have it so. Again where the lesson of complete equality has not yet been learned by groups concerned it may be necessary to continue the practice of segregation in some cases until the fuller gospel standards of mutual fellowship have been realized. We recognize that the Lord has "set the bounds of their habitations" and therefore there are reasons and occasions for a limited segregation. We would feel that the general import of this truth is that there should not be |marriages between peoples who are too far removed from one another's background and understanding. But we do believe that with a proper teaching and understanding a number of these things may be removed from the realm of expediency and may be placed on the basis of mutual practice and fellowship.]

Scripture: Acts 10 and 11; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-19; Collossians 3:11; James 2:1-10

Action: no congregational segregation; no missionary segregation; no church institutional segregation; no church officials segregation; personal relationships; congregational and institutional cross-racial connections; remove all labels in publications that are prejudiced; end segregation in institutions and development of complete mutuality; personal relationships;

Reaction: Note that an earlier draft of "From the East West North South" said "therefore there are reasons and occasions for a limited segregation." and "there should not be | marriages between peoples who are too far removed from one another's

background and understanding." in 1959 (Graybill, "Statement on Race Relations," March 16 (Lancaster Mennonite Conference, 1959)).

Reference: "From the East West North South: God Is No Respector of Persons.... Are You?" 4. Salunga, Pa.: Lancaster Mennonite Conference, 1960.

1961

3-Nov, Chicago, IL

Church and Society Study Conference

Title: The Christian in Race Relations

Denomination: General Conference

Authors: Vincent Harding; Delton Franz; Curtis Janzen; Ed Riddick; Julius Belzer; Paul King; Richard Harmon; John Miller;

Key Phrases: in the field of race relations; all are sinners; all reconciled; all subject to grace; when we call ourselves a peace church in racial strife without doing anything, we open ourselves to judgment; isolation has been intentionally continued; barriers of class and emotional immaturity in existing congregations among one race; we have been at best apathetic; words will no longer suffice; so long a period of disobedience ... will involve a great price; action must be taken; consider protest movements as protests against humiliation and injustice and ... for reconciliation between the races; some young persons, especially, are asking whether or not we should be involved in such protest movements ourselves; our Lord expects us to resist and protest evil; there is a major task of protest to be taken up within our own walls; Our own lives are demanded within the Mennonite churches, before the sit-ins reach us.

Scripture: Luke 17:3; James 2:14-17; Galatians 3:28 [The scriptures above quoted but not cited] Matthew 18

Action: leave farms and move to the city; leave suburbs and materialism; use denominational reserve monies; divide up large churches; study 1959 statement; evaluate what each congregation has done on the statement; stay in the city of Philadelphia; offer seminar land for integrated housing; Mennonite realtors give opportunities for black buyers; Mennonite business men hire qualified African Americans for responsible positions; gain housing and employment and through that friendships and then church membership; have children invite friends to their Sunday School; support Indians in Canada through education, vocational training, and spiritual nurture; hire people of color in local schools and businesses and adopt African-American children; Mennonite institutions should recruit workers and students; work in integrated communities through VS; consider protest movements and perhaps participate in them; call for a formal group to form a united testimony against racial discrimination and prejudice; hold sit-ins in Mennonite churches;

Reaction: adapted and printed in *The Mennonite* on February 12, 1963

Reference: Harding, Vincent, Delton Franz, Curtis Janzen, Ed Riddick, Julius Belzer, Paul King, Richard Harmon, and John Miller. "The Christian in Race Relations." In *Church and Society Study Conference, YMCA Hotel, 826 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago 5, Illinois, October 31-November 3, 1961*. Newton, Kan.: General Conference Mennonite Church, 1961.

1963

7-Jun, New York, NY

National Council of Churches

Title: Resolution on Church Action for Racial Justice
 Denomination: NCC
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: Up to now there always has seemed to be time for gradual change... but now ... the issue is being sharply focused; put aside every lesser engagement, ... confess sins of omission and delay, and to move forward to witness ... that every child of God is a brother to every other; now is the time for action; words and declarations no longer useful ... unless accompanied by sacrifice and commitment;
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: join with RC and Jewish groups in action to desegregate the US; press congregants to join in negotiation and demonstration; end all discrimination and injustice in the church; present to the US congress on civil rights legislation; hold D. C. assembly; appoint commission on religion and race;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Resolution on Church Action for Racial Justice," June 7 (National Council of Churches, 1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 18.

1963

23-Aug, Kalona, IA

Mennonite Church General Conference

Title: Reconciliation
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: upon the recommendation of PPC-CESR (Hershberger, "The Committee on Peace and Social Concerns (of the Mennonite Church) and Its Predecessors: A Summary Review of the Witness of the Mennonite Church (through the CPSC and Its Predecessors) to Other Christians, to the State, and to Society, with Respect to Peace and Social Implications of the Gospel (1915-1966)," December 1 (Mennonite Church, 1966)).
 Key Phrases: may not be listened to even if effective in translating words into deeds; find immediate and specific ways in which our practical testimony of redemptive

love shall be clearly heard, understood and experience; minority religious group with call to reconciliation needs to show the God's grace is not in vain;

Scripture: unidentified

Action: declaring churches and institutions open to all; develop personal relationships; study and change prejudice and discrimination in local communities; provide jobs and housing; support state rulers in their efforts to give freedom and equal opportunity;

Reaction: unidentified

Reference: "Reconciliation," August 23 (Mennonite General Conference, 1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 6, Folder 11.

1963

7-Aug, Winnipeg, MB

Mennonite Brethren

Title: Race Relations

Denomination: MB

Authors: unidentified

Key Phrases: duty of church to bring gospel to all people; there is no respect of persons with God;

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 3:16; Acts 1:8; Acts 10:34; Ephesians 1:17; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; Romas 2:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; 1 John 2:2; Revelation 7:14;

Action: congregations declare themselves open; congregations stay in cities and don't move; institutions, agencies, and offices make no distinction on race or color in entrance requirements or employment policies; work as Christian citizens to eliminate discrimination in community, city, state, nation, and the world

Reaction: printed in *The Mennonite* on September 10

Reference: "Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches 1878-1963," (The Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1964).

1963

17-Jan, Chicago, IL

National Conference for Religion and Race

Title: An Appeal to the Conscience of the American People

Denomination: eccumenical

Authors: unidentified

Key Phrases: racism is our most serious domestic evil; patterns of segregation remain entrenched everywhere; work, pray and act courageously in the cause of human equality and dignity where there is still time left

Scripture: unidentified

Action: work, pray and act courageously; develop community programs, remove racial bias in housing, churches, and employment
 Reaction: printed in *The Mennonite* on February 5
 Reference: "Ten Cities Marked for Race Crusade." *The Mennonite*, February 5 1963, 88.

1963

7-Aug,

Indiana-Michigan Christian Worker's Conference

Title: Resolution Adopted at Indiana-Michigan Christian Worker's Conference, August 7, 1963
 Denomination: General Conference
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: God is no respecter of persons; God made everyone of one blood; the scriptures do not support segregation or concept of superior races;
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: endorse (Old) Mennonite Church race relations statement; deplore unchristian attitudes and actions; examine scripture in bring lives in keeping; participate in and encourage regional and congregational discussions on race; congregations and institutions prepare for and assimilate people into the life and work of the church; support efforts of people of color in economic and social life; stop segregation in the church; support civil leaders as they establish equal opportunities; give ourselves to prayer;
 Reaction: printed in the *Gospel Herald* on October 15
 Reference: "Resolution Adopted at Indiana-Michigan Christian Worker's Conference, August 7, 1963." *Gospel Herald*, October 15 1963, 924.

1963

June

Mennonite Board of Missions

Title: [Resolution adopted by Mennonite Church Mission Board]
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: That we declare our sympathy with the current desire of the American Negro for equality of opportunity, and that we re-examine our own attitudes toward persons of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds and seek to express a Christian concern for justice and peaceful change in the fulfilment of our mission in the world.
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: endorse (Old) Mennonite Church race relations statement; board and agencies to implement the statement

- Reaction: printed in the *Gospel Herald* on July 2; mentioned by Ed Metzler in *Gospel Herald* on August 6, 1963;
- Reference: Hershberger, "To the Members of the Committee on Economic and Social Relations," July 5 (Committee on Economic and Social Relations, 1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 7; Metzler, "The Mennonite Churches and the Current Race Crisis," August 6 (1963).

1963

October, Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Conference Bishop Board

- Title: Racial Conflict
- Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
- Authors: unidentified
- Key Phrases: we call upon our brotherhood for sincere prayer in behalf of this crisis situation and urge that we continually manifest proper Christian attitudes in race relations
- Scripture: unidentified
- Action: pray on behalf of the crisis situation; show proper Christian attitudes in race relations; teach on race relations
- Reaction: printed in the *Pastoral Messenger*, October 1963
- Reference: Landis, "Lancaster Mennonite Conference Report, Mellinger Meetinghouse, Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, Pennsylvania," October (1963).

1963

23-Aug, Kalona, IA

Mennonite Church General Conference

- Title: Telegram Sent to President Kennedy
- Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
- Authors: John R. Mumaw; upon the recommendation of PPC-CESR (Hershberger, "The Committee on Peace and Social Concerns (of the Mennonite Church) and Its Predecessors: A Summary Review of the Witness of the Mennonite Church (through the Cpsc and Its Predecessors) to Other Christians, to the State, and to Society, with Respect to Peace and Social Implications of the Gospel (1915-1966)," December 1 (Mennonite Church, 1966)).
- Key Phrases: We also express our strong support for proposed measures designed to assure equal opportunity and justice for all citizens regardless of race or color. We believe it is especially urgent that these measures include provisions removing the humiliation and inconvenience suffered by our fellow citizens of Negro and other minority groups in regard to access to public accommodations.
- Scripture: unidentified

Action: calls on President to support measures that end humiliation and inconvenience to African Americans and provides equal opportunity and justice

Reaction: unidentified

Reference: Mumaw, "Telegram Sent to President Kennedy by Mennonite General Conference," August (Mennonite General Conference, 1963), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 7.

1963

July, Pettisville, OH

Group of urban pastors of integrated congregations

Title: [Suggestiosn by group of urban pastors]

Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church

Authors: Mark Lehman; Gerald Hughes; O. O. Wolfe; Vern Miller;

Key Phrases: Confess that we pastors have ourselves been too passive and ineffective in our witness and concern for those less fortunate.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: do pastoral education in human relations; pass board support for equal opportunity; congregations declare themselves open; assist in transitional communities; educate I-W volunteers; create church-based opportunities for multi-racial fellowship; do not participate in restrictive covenants;

Reaction: printed in *Gospel Herald* on August 6, 1963

Reference: Wolfe, O. O., Mark Lehman, and Vern Miller. "Integration - What It Will Mean for the Church." *Gospel Herald*, August 6 1963, 671-72.

1963

Elgin, IL

Church of the Brethren, Emergency Committee on Race Relations

Title: Suggestions on Race Relations to Implement the Annual Conference Statement "The Time Is Now"

Denomination: CoB

Authors: unidentified

Key Phrases: This study is recommended even though there may be no Negroes residing in your community since the racial crisis is nation-wide and cannot be solved apart from the attitudes and intelligent involvement of all citizens.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: recommended actions divided into 14 Individual actions and 11 Congregational actions and 9 cross-congregational actions. clustered as; Individual; Friendship/cross racial - 3; Rent/sell/live near to non-whites - 2; Join community agencies/corporation action - 2; Business practices - 3; Write government - 1; self-education - 1; Others education - 2; Congregational/Cross congregations; Discussion/internal education/research - 3; Open door policy -

2; Appoint a board - 1; Ask Negro leaders to lead start moderate interracial groups - 1; Or start an aggressive civil rights agency - 1; Become involved in jail support for demonstrators - 1; Work with urban leaders - 1; Family visitation/exchange - 1; Do non-violent direct action - 1; Contribute money - 1; Do worship on race - 1; Have prayer vigil - 1; Church visitation exchange - 1; Interfaith activities - 1; and participate in "non-violent direct action projects" and contribute money to civil rights organizations like NAACP, CORE, SCLC, Urban League

Reaction: unidentified

Reference: "Suggestions on Race Relations to Implement the Annual Conference Statement 'The Time Is Now,'" (Emergency Committee on Race Relations, Church of the Brethren General Offices, 1963), AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/6.

1963

15-Oct, Harrisonburg, VA

Eastern Mennonite College Faculty

Title: Statement on Racial Discrimination

Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church

Authors: unidentified

Key Phrases: The evil, we know, is prevalent throughout the entire country but presents problems of particular intensity in our own area. We are humbled because this crisis has come upon us after many decades of opportunity to remedy racial segregation in the various aspects of our community life. We are especially humbled by the existence of segregated churches in the community of Christ. We are humbled, too, by the continued presence of segregation in the public facilities of our own state and country.; We are committed to the way of Christian love and reject any recourse to acts of violence and reject any recourse to acts of violence and coercion. In keeping with the principles of our Mennonite heritage, and the current position of the Mennonite Church expressed in her statement, "The Way of Love in Race Relations" (1955), we feel morally bound to witness against the evils of racial discrimination.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: seek means of ending racial inequities

Reaction: appeared in the January 14, 1964 edition of the *Gospel Herald*

Reference: "E.M.C. Faculty Statement on Racial Discrimination," January 14 (1964), LMHS - Christian E. Charles Collection, Race Relations.

1963

Hatfield, PA

Churches of Hatfield, PA, including the Plains Mennonite Church congregation

Title: [Hatfield Churches speak against racial discrimination]
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: We cannot take sides with those who demand preferred treatment for either Negroes or whites simply because of the color of their skins. True [page break] integration will come only when men learn to love and accept one another without noticing color at all.; We urge the citizens of this community to come to an inward, personal decision for complete racial justice and freedom now before it becomes a local, and possibly an emotional issue. ; While better legislation in this field may be necessary, and while there is certainly a need for stricter enforcement of laws already in existence, the final solution is not to be found in laws, but in the hearts of men. We therefore challenge every person simply to accept, with heart and with head, every other person as a child of God, made in his image, and as an equal in every respect.

Scripture: unidentified
 Action: welcome all to church; decide individually for racial justice; support legislation but only with knowledge that final solution comes through individual acceptance

Reaction: appeared in the February 18, 1964, edition of the *Gospel Herald*
 Reference: Lapp, John E. "The Churches of Hatfield Speak on Race Relations." *Gospel Herald*, February 18 1964, 121, 31-32.

1964

Scottdale, PA

Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section

Title: From Words to Deeds in Race Relations
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church/General Conference
 Authors: Guy F. Hershberger, others
 Key Phrases: Believing that many of our brethren, congregations, or other groups are willing and ready to do their part as they have opportunity, we are publishing below a statement of suggestions prepared by the MCC Peace Section. From these many fruitful suggestions, each congregation and individual can find at least one thing which can be done.; Could the present crisis have been avoided if the church had taken the lead in translating its words about love and justice and concern for the oppressed into action?

Scripture: 1 John 3:18;
 Action: the 28 suggested actions include 4 "understanding" (U); 10 "congregational witness" (CW); and 14 "Family and Individual" (FI) ideas. Of these :
 - 6 are directed toward internal education (U1, U2, U3, CW3, CW6, FI14);
 - 6 toward interracial dialogue/friendship (U4, CW2, CW9, FI1, FI2, FI3);
 - 1 toward research into the situation of racial inequities (CW5);
 - 5 toward external education (CW1, CW4, FI4, FI5, FI6);
 - 3 toward service (including Fresh-Air programs)(CW7, CW8, CW10);

-6 toward individual protest/proactive intervention (FI7, FI8, FI9, FI10, FI11, FI12); - including writing legislators and letters to the editor
 - 1 toward considering involvement with a local civil rights organization (FI13)
 - no money is mentioned at any time or any direct, corporate involvement, or visiting other churches as a congregation also mentions fresh-air programs;
 Reaction: Appeared in February 16, 1965, edition of *Gospel Herald*
 Reference: "From Words to Deeds in Race Relations," (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1964), AMC - Hist. Mss. 1-48 Box 60, John H. Yoder (1927-1997) Collection Race/Urban issues, file 60/4; "From Words to Deeds in Race Relations (Tentative Draft)," (Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 1963); Hershberger, "From Words to Deeds in Race Relations," February 16 (1965).

1964

July, Harrisonburg, VA

Virginia Mennonite Conference Executive Committee

Title: Statement on Race
 Denomination: MC
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: We call upon them to do all in their power to achieve equal rights and privileges for all citizens in sharing without discrimination the benefits of education, public transportation, choice of residence, job opportunities and all such blessings of a democratic community.
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: pray for national leaders in time of crisis
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Hershberger, "Executive Secretary's Report," (Committee on Economic and Social Relations, 1965); Wenger, "Executive Committee Virginia Mennonite Conference," April 22, 1964 (Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1964), Virginia Mennonite Archives, Box "I-B-I Box 1 Executive Committee Board Minutes RESTRICTED," Folder "Executive Committee Minutes 1963-1967."

1964

Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, Peace Problems Committee

Title: [statement to United States Senators and congressmen]
 Denomination: unidentified
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: We sincerely believe and are committed to the principle that all men are created equal. That every race and color of mankind deserve, under God, no difference in fair and equal opportunity and treatment because of race, color, or social standing; whether this be in personal or public relations, business or

employment considerations, or above all, spiritual or religious opportunity or affiliation ...; In support of the above, we may humbly state the fact that our churches in the North and South of this great nation are open and refuse no one because of race differences.

Scripture: unidentified
 Action: all should receive equal opportunity in jobs and business
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Issues Statement on Race." *Mennonite Weekly Review*, May 14 1964, 6.

1964

Illinois Mennonite Conference

Title: [Conference Action]
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: "affirming our sympathy with the aspirations of American minority groups for equal human rights."; It acknowledged with humility Mennonite failures in the past, pledged wholehearted support to the government's effort to effect "justice and equality for all men as evidenced in civil rights legislation," and reaffirmed the statement "The Way of Christian Love In Race Relations."
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: unidentified
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Smith, Willard H. *Mennonites in Illinois*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983.

1965

12-Mar, St. Louis, MO

Urban Racial Meeting, Findings Committee

Title: Report of the Findings Committee, Urban Racial Meeting
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: There was an atmosphere of deep concern and a spirit of humility and trust that made it possible for pastors of newer churches to share with conference leaders some of their deepest concerns relative to the building of urban and interracial congregations.; It was the sentiment of a number of persons at the meeting that members of our churches should witness in various kinds of demonstrations that relieve tensions and pinpoint evils in our society and the blindness of Christians to be true to the gospel of Christ. Several persons cautioned that such participation in civil rights demonstrations could tend to violate our basic principle of nonresistance by bringing a kind of force to bear on unwilling persons to change attitudes and conduct. ; ... We also profess that the ultimate

solution to the evils in our society and in our life lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in surrender to Him as Lord.

Scripture: unidentified
 Action: create better communication between races; do home and congregational visits across racial lines; hire an educator in the area of human relations to educate institutions and congregations; support and become involved in civil rights activities;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Report of the Findings Committee Urban Racial Meetings," March 11-12 (1965), CESR papers I-3-7, Box 7, Folder 12.

1965

5-Mar, Youngstown, OH

Urban Racial Meeting, Findings Committee

Title: Report of the Findings Committee, Urban Racial Meeting
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: Speakers for the day were planned to include: Vern Miller, James Harris, Nelson Burkholder, William Yovanovich, Fred Augsburg, Elam Stauffer, John Eby, Norman Adams, Guy Hershberger, John H. Kraybill, Stanley Smucker, Mahlon Blosser, Nelson E. Kauffman
 Key Phrases: Because of our basic convictions we cannot, in conscience, avoid positive witness for righteousness in the presence of injustices of our society.; it was generally agreed by the attendees at the conference that we ought to give sympathetic approval to the purposes and the activities of the non-violent movement to win justice and civil liberties in our society. While we expect individuals to have different personal conviction about the measure of participation in these activities, yet we agreed that, in conscience, we cannot have a negative attitude toward the non-violent efforts that are being made to win justice and freedom in our society. As Christians, we need to continue to be a witnessing, redeeming, reconciling influence in the world.
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: education brethren on prejudice; home visitation; watch films; read books; demonstrate interracial fellowship and worship; intentionally integrate housing; white families move into "non-white" neighborhoods; white professionals work in neglected communities and schools; have positive attitude toward civil rights demonstrations but participate only as conscience allows; hire a staff person to work in the area of race relations;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Gingerich, "Report of the Findings Committee Urban Racial Meeting, Youngstown, Ohio," March 4, 5 (Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1965), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Third Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: URBAN RACIAL COUNCIL.

1967

24-Aug, Lansdale, PA

Mennonite Church General Conference

Title: Urban Riots
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: Let us resolve, (1) To reaffirm our support of the government's just maintenance of law and order, (2) In penitence to find ways of going beyond mere charity and handouts in effecting healing and reconciliation and in building bridges of love to all people whether in our cities or rural communities, (3) To renounce and witness against all acts of discrimination and injustice in race relations, (4) To encourage our businessmen, educators, professional people, and all who bear community responsibilities to participate constructively [t – sic] in the revolutionary changes which our country is undergoing, (5) To encourage our people, both congregations and church agencies, to participate actively in these tasks including the witness to personal repentance and regeneration in Christ, and (6) To request the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns to give attention, to this problem.

Scripture: unidentified
 Action: affirm law and order; work for reconciliation and healing through relationship; witness against discrimination and injustice; participated in reconciliation tasks; have peace committee do something

Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: Conference, Mennonite General. *Urban Riots*. Lansdale, Pa.: Mennonite General Conference, 1967.

1968

17-Jul, Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Conference Bishop Board

Title: [Nonresistance - rules and discipline]
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: In a world of violence, racism, and extreme selfishness, God calls us to love and helpfulness to all men. As followers of Christ, we can have no part in race discrimination in any form.; As we have opportunity we should witness by word and deed to all men including government leaders, concerning principles of righteousness and justice, rather than by public demonstrations and obstruction practices inconsistent with Gospel principles.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: witness by word and deed to all people including governmental leaders but not by public demonstrations or obstruction practices

Reaction: printed in *The Pastoral Messenger*, October 1970

Reference: "Report to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Mellinger Mennonite Meetinghouse, Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, Pennsylvania," October (1970); "Statement of Christian Doctrine and Rules and Discipline of the Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church," July 17 (Lancaster Conference, 1968).

1968

Salunga, PA

Menno Housing

Title: Statement of Purpose

Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church

Authors: unidentified

Key Phrases: We believe that the New Testament teaches Christians to be concerned with meeting the total needs of persons, that others best understand the love of God in the context of action, and that the call to be peacemakers means to help remove the barriers that separate man from man as well as man from God.; We commit ourselves to work at the combined problems of poverty and racial discrimination in Lancaster City and County, thus meeting human need, giving a witness to the love of Christ, and promoting peace in the community by helping to alleviate the conditions which breed hatred, crime, and violence.; To provide for white families as well as minority group families, who want to stay in such areas as the Seventh Ward, good housing at rates they can afford.; To provide for minority group families housing in white neighborhoods, to work for their acceptance there, and to help improve such neighborhoods by maintaining properties which will be a credit to the community.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: provide housing free from discrimination in Seventh Ward of Lancaster City and throughout Lancaster County

Reaction: unidentified

Reference: "Statement of Purpose," (Menno Housing, Inc., 1968), LMHS - Menno Housing.

1969

18-Aug, Turner, OR

Mennonite Church General Conference

Title: [Resolution adopted by the Mennonite Church General Conference]

Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church

Authors: unidentified

Key Phrases: 6. We shall strive to understand the cry of minority groups in our society, and to do what we are able to bring healing and help in all our relationships and remove by every means possible the prejudices which persist.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: understand minority groups; bring healing; remove presisting prejudices

Reaction: unidentified

Reference: "Goals for the 1969-1971 Biennium," August 18 (Old Mennonite General Conference, 1969), AMC, I-1-1, Mennonite General Conference, 1898-1971, 1969 Session materials, Folder 5/8.

1969

19-Aug, Turner, OR

Mennonite Church, Urban-Racial Concerns Committee

Title: Urban-Racial Concerns Statement

Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church

Authors: John Powell, others

Key Phrases: That the Mennonite Church confess in word and action to the sins committed against black people and that we understand why some black people have felt it necessary to bring to the Christians of America the document known as the Black Manifesto. The Mennonite Church, since it is a religious minority, should be able to identify with other minorities and work toward implementation of needed reform in our society.; That the Mennonite Church commit itself to a war against prejudice and discrimination by each member demonstrating by personal action in special activities and in their daily affairs that they are not biased against minority people.

Scripture: unidentified

Action: remove barriers to full employment in Menno businesses; train inner city workers; open housing in suburbs; become involved in black pride exhibits; contribute and become involved in black self-help projects; create alternatives to welfare; becoming involved in minority communities through VS; provide scholarships to minority youth to Menonite colleges and high schools; employ minorities in Mennonite agencies; congregations gain education on black Americans; congregations help initiate and maintain racially balanced communities; invite minorities to pastor; raise 500,000 now and 500,000 in the next five years to support poor and minority communities; use money to develop co-ops, urban training centers, secondary ed, housing, recreation, leadership training; do racial sensitivity training in white congregations

Reaction: strongly positive and negative in church; did not meet financial goals

Reference: Powell, "Urban-Racial Concerns Statement," August 19 (Mennonite General Conference, 1969).

1971

OR

Group of Oregon mennonites

Title: What Some Oregon Mennonites Want to Say to the Total Mennonite Church
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: it was strongly suggested by individual groups that those involved in this conference need to speak to persons who were not involved;
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: educate children; speak up about racial problems; subscribe to black magazines; develop relationships with minority people; show positive spirit of Christ to all;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "What Some Oregon Mennonites Want to Say to the Total Mennonite Church," (1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

1971

Elkhart, IN

Mennonite Minority Ministries Council

Title: Minority Statement to Mennonite Church
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: Even more importantly, we are deeply hurt by the Mennonite church's participation in the things which keep minority people from rising to an economic and spiritual level guaranteed to us by God and the Constitution of the United States; We confess our inability to affirm ourselves as minority peoples; We confess that we have accepted a "false kind of integration" in which all power remained in the hands of white brothers; We believe that this is the position we must take as Christians at this point in history. We pray that God will continue to be with us as we serve Him and that the Mennonite Church will be supportive of us as we move boldly to be SALT in a chaotic world.
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: speak truthfully to white people; become indigenous congregations; receive spiritual and economic support from white people but as generals;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Minority Statement to Mennonite Church," (Minority Ministries Council, 1971), EMM Record Room - 4th Cabinet of row on far left wall upon entering room, Second Drawer: Unmarked, Folder: MINORITY MINISTRY COUNCIL 1970-71.

1971

9-Mar, Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Conference Bishop Board

Title: statement on race; [state on race in discipline, Article IV, Section 5]
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: We further encourage the Peace Committee to give leadership in helping us in our Conference to deal with the problem by providing helpful and suitable releases on the subject of race relations.; In a world of violence, racism, and extreme selfishness, God calls us to love and helpfulness to all men. As followers of Christ, we can have no part in race discrimination in any form.; As we have opportunity we should witness by word and deed to all men including government leaders, concerning principles of righteousness and justice, rather than by public demonstrations and obstruction practices inconsistent with Gospel principles.
 Scripture: unidentified
 Action: include statement on race in Discipline; make available Way of christian Love in Race relations;
 Reaction: unidentified
 Reference: "Lancaster Conference Bishop Board Minutes," March 9-11 (Lancaster Conference, 1971); "Statement of Christian Doctrine and Rules and Discipline of the Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church," July 17 (Lancaster Conference, 1968).

1979

5-Oct, Harrisonburg, VA

Harrisonburg Mennonite Church

Title: [Letter about interracial marriage]
 Denomination: (Old) Mennonite Church
 Authors: unidentified
 Key Phrases: There has been a concern among us on the question of the "acceptability of interracial marriage in the Christian community."; We recognize that "cross cultural" or "interracial marriage" may bring stress and strain to the marriage relationship. It is true also of marriages that have differences in "economic background," in professional diversity, and in religious views.; We believe these Biblical principles teach us that we should not limit interracially married persons in becoming members or in being free to serve in the congregation. We believe that commitment to Christ should be the basis for membership and the God-given gifts of our members should be the basis for their call to serve and minister among us.
 Scripture: Acts 15:25; Acts 15:28; Acts 15:31; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-28

Action: talk with one another; accept all members regardless of race;
Reaction: unidentified
Reference: Janzen, et al., "To All Families of the Congregation," October 5 (Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, 1979), Author's collection.

APPENDIX 3

BLACK MANIFESTO TO THE WHITE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE JEWISH
SYNAGOGUES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND ALL OTHER RACIST
INSTITUTIONS

B L A C K M A N I F E S T O

TO THE WHITE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUES IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND ALL OTHER RACIST INSTITUTIONS

PRESENTATION BY JAMES FORMAN DELIVERED AND ADOPTED BY THE
NATIONAL BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE IN DETROIT
MICHIGAN ON APRIL 26, 1969

C O P Y

INTRODUCTION

TOTAL CONTROL AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF BLACK PEOPLE

Brothers and Sisters:

We have come from all over the country, burning with anger and despair not only with the miserable economic plight of our people, but fully aware that the racism on which the Western World was built dominates our lives. There can be no separation of the problems of racism from the problems of our economic, political, and cultural degradation. To any black man, this is clear.

But there are still some of our people who are clinging to the rhetoric of the Negro and we must separate ourselves from those Negroes who go around the country promoting all types of schemes for Black Capitalism.

Ironically, some of the most militant Black Nationalists, as they call themselves, have been the first to jump on the bandwagon of black capitalism. They are pimps; Black Power Pimps and fraudulent leaders and the people must be educated to understand that any black man or Negro who is advocating a perpetuation of capitalism inside the United States is in fact seeking not only his ultimate destruction and death, but is contributing to the continuous exploitation of black people all around the world. For it is the power of the United States Government, this racist, imperialist government that is choking the life of all people around the world.

We are an African people. We sit back and watch the Jews in this country make Israel a powerful conservative state in the Middle East, but we are not concerned actively about the plight of our brothers in Africa. We are the most advanced technological group of black people in the world, and there are many skills that could be offered to Africa. At the same time, it must be publicly stated that many African leaders are in disarray themselves, having been duped into following the lines as laid out by the Western Imperialist governments.

Africans themselves subcumbed to and are victims of the power of the United States. For instance, during the summer of 1967, as the representatives of SNCC, Howard Moore and I traveled extensively in Tanzania and Zambia. We talked to high, very high, governmental officials. We told them there were many black people in the United States who were willing to come and work in Africa. All these government officials who were part of the leadership in their respective governments, said they wanted us to send as many skilled people that we could contact. But this program never came into fruition and we do not know the exact reasons, for I assure you that we talked and were committed to making this a successful program. It is our guess that the United States put the squeeze on these countries, for such a program directed by SNCC would have been too dangerous to the international prestige of the U.S. It is also possible that some of the wild statements by some black leader frightened the Africans.

In Africa today, there is a great suspicion of black people in this country. This is a correct suspicion since most of the Negroes who have left the States for work in Africa usually work for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or the State Department. But the respect for us as a people continues to mount and the day will come when we can return to our homelands as brothers and sisters. But we should not think of going back to

2.

Africa today, for we are located in a strategic position. We live inside the U.S. which is the most barbaric country in the world and we have a chance to help bring this government down.

Time is short and we do not have much time and it is time we stop mincing words. Caution is fine, but no oppressed people ever gained their liberation until they were ready to fight, to use whatever means necessary, including the use of force and power of the gun to bring down the colonizer.

We have heard the rhetoric, but we have not heard the rhetoric which says that black people in this country must understand that we are the Vanguard Force. We shall liberate all the people in the U.S. and we will be instrumental in the liberation of colored people the world around. We must understand this point very clearly so that we are not trapped into diversionary and reactionary movements. Any class analysis of the U.S. shows very clearly that black people are the most oppressed group of people inside the United States. We have suffered the most from racism and exploitation, cultural degradation and lack of political power. It follows from the laws of revolution that the most oppressed will make the revolution, but we are not talking about just making the revolution. All the parties on the left who consider themselves revolutionary will say that blacks are the Vanguard, but we are saying that not only are we the Vanguard, but we must assume leadership, total control and we must exercise the humanity which is inherent in us. We are the most humane people within the U.S. We have suffered and we understand suffering. Our hearts go out to the Vietnamese for we know what it is to suffer under the domination of racist America. Our hearts, our soul and all the compassion we can mount goes out to our brothers in Africa, Santa Domingo, Latin American and Asia who are being tricked by the power structure of the U.S. which is dominating the world today. These ruthless, barbaric men have systematically tried to kill all people and organizations opposed to its imperialism. We no longer can just get by with the use of the word capitalism to describe the U.S., for it is an imperial power, sending money, missionaries and the army throughout the world to protect this government and the few rich whites who control it. General Motors and all the major auto industries are operating in South Africa, yet the white dominated leadership of the United Auto Workers sees no relationship to the exploitation of black people in South Africa and the exploitation of black people in the U.S. If they understand it, they certainly do not put it into practice which is the actual test. We as black people must be concerned with the total conditions of all black people in the world.

But while we talk of revolution which will be an armed confrontation and long years of sustained guerilla warfare inside this country, we must also talk of the type of world we want to live in. We must commit ourselves to a society where the total means of production are taken from the rich and placed into the hands of the state for the welfare of all the people. This is what we mean when we say total control. And we mean that black people who have suffered the most from exploitation and racism must move to protect their black interest by assuming leadership inside of the United States of everything that exists. The time has passed when we are second in command and the white boy stands on top. This is especially true of the Welfare Agencies in this country, but it is not enough to say that a black man is on top. He must be committed to building the new society, to taking the wealth away from the rich people such as General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, the Duponts, the Rockefellers, the Mellons, and all the other rich white exploiters and racists who run this world.

3.

Where do we begin? We have already started. We started the moment we were brought to this country. In fact, we started on the shores of Africa, for we have always resisted attempts to make us slaves and now we must resist the attempts to make us capitalists. It is the financial interest of the U.S. to make us capitalist, for this will be the same line as that of integration into the mainstream of American life. Therefore, brothers and sisters, there is no need to fall into the trap that we have to get an ideology. We HAVE an ideology. Our fight is against racism, capitalism, and imperialism and we are dedicated to building a socialist society inside the United States where the total means of production and distribution are in the hands of the State and that must be led by black people, by revolutionary blacks who are concerned about the total humanity of this world. And, therefore, we obviously are different from some of those who seek a black nation in the United States, for there is no way for that nation to be viable if in fact the United States remains in the hands of white racists. Then too, let us deal with some arguments that we should share power with whites. We say that there must be a revolutionary black Vanguard and that white people in this country must be willing to accept black leadership, for that is the only protection that black people have to protect ourselves from racism rising again in this country.

Racism in the U.S. is so pervasive in the mentality of whites that only an armed, well-disciplined, black-controlled government can inspire the stamping out of racism in this country. And that is why we plead with black people not to be talking about a few crumbs, a few thousand dollars for this cooperative, or a thousand dollars which splits black people into fighting over the dollar. That is the intention of the government. We say...think in terms of total control of the U.S. Prepare ourselves to seize state power. Do not hedge, for time is short and all around the world, the forces of liberation are directing their attacks against the U.S. It is a powerful country, but that power is not greater than that of black people. We work the chief industries in this country and we could cripple the economy while the brothers fought guerilla warfare in the streets. This will take some long range planning, but whether it happens in a thousand years is of no consequence. It cannot happen unless we start. How then is all of this related to this conference?

First of all, this conference is called by a set of religious people, Christians, who have been involved in the exploitation and rape of black people since the country was founded. The missionary goes hand in hand with the power of the states. We must begin seizing power wherever we are and we must say to the planners of this conference that you are no longer in charge. We the people who have assembled here thank you for getting us here, but we are going to assume power over the conference and determine from this moment on the direction in which we want it to go. We are not saying that the conference was planned badly. The staff of the conference has worked hard and have done a magnificent job in bringing all of us together and we must include them in the new membership which must surface from this point on. The conference is now the property of the people who are assembled here. This we proclaim as fact and not rhetoric and there are demands that we are going to make and we insist that the planners of this conference help us implement them.

4.

We maintain we have the revolutionary right to do this. We have the same rights, if you will, as the Christians had in going into Africa and raping our Motherland and bringing us away from our continent of peace and into this hostile and alien environment where we have been living in perpetual warfare since 1619.

Our seizure of power at this conference is based on a program and our program is contained in the following MANIFESTO:

BLACK MANIFESTO

We the black people assembled in Detroit, Michigan for the National Black Economic Development Conference are fully aware that we have been forced to come together because racist white America has exploited our resources, our minds, our bodies, our labor. For centuries we have been forced to live as colonized people inside the United States, victimized by the most vicious, racist system in the world. We have helped to build the most industrial country in the world.

We are therefore demanding of the white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues which are part and parcel of the system of capitalism, that they begin to pay reparations to black people in this country. We are demanding \$500,000,000 from the Christian white churches and the Jewish synagogues. This total comes to 15 dollars per nigger. This is a low estimate for we maintain there are probably more than 30,000,000 black people in this country. \$15 a nigger is not a large sum of money and we know that the churches and synagogues have a tremendous wealth and its membership, white America, has profited and still exploits black people. We are also not unaware that the exploitation of colored peoples around the world is aided and abetted by the white Christian churches and synagogues. This demand for \$500,000,000 is not an idle resolution or empty words. Fifteen dollars for every black brother and sister in the United States is only a beginning of the reparations due us as people who have been exploited and degraded, brutalized, killed and persecuted. Underneath all of this exploitation, the racism of this country has produced a psychological effect upon us that we are beginning to shake off. We are no longer afraid to demand our full rights as a people in this decadent society.

We are demanding \$500,000,000 to be spent in the following way:

1. We call for the establishment of a Southern land bank to help our brothers and sisters who have to leave their land because of racist pressure for people who want to establish cooperative farms, but who have no funds. We have seen too many farmers evicted from their homes because they have dared to defy the white racism of this country. We need money for land. We must fight for massive sums of money for this Southern Land Bank. We call for \$200,000,000 to implement this program.
2. We call for the establishment of four major publishing and printing industries in the United States to be funded with ten million dollars each. These publishing houses are to be located in Detroit, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York. They will help to generate capital for further cooperative investments in the black community, provide jobs and an alternative to the white-dominated and controlled printing field.
3. We call for the establishment of four of the most advanced scientific and futuristic audio-visual network to be located in Detroit, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. These TV networks will provide an alternative to the racist propaganda that fills the current television networks. Each of these TV networks will be funded by ten million dollars each.

6.

4. We call for a research skills center which will provide futuristic research on the problems of black people. This center must be funded with no less than 30 million dollars.

5. We call for the establishment of a training center for the teaching of skills in community organization, photography, movie making, television making and repair, radio building and repair and all other skills needed in communication. This training center shall be funded with no less than ten million dollars.

6. We recognize the role of the National Welfare Rights Organization and we intend to work with them. We call for ten million dollars to assist in the organization of welfare recipients. We want to organize the welfare workers in this country so that they may demand more money from the government and better administration of the welfare system of this country.

7. We call for \$20,000,000 to establish a National Black Labor Strike and Defense Fund. This is necessary for the protection of black workers and their families who are fighting racist working conditions in this country.

*8. We call for the establishment of the United Black Appeal. (UBA) This United Black Appeal will be funded with no less than \$20,000,000. The UBA is charged with producing more capital for the establishment of cooperative businesses in the United States and in Africa, our Motherland. The United Black Appeal is one of the most important demands that we are making for we know that it can generate and raise funds throughout the United States and help our African brothers. The UBA is charged with three functions and shall be headed by James Forman:

- (a) Raising money for the program of the National Black Economic Development Conference
- (b) The development of cooperatives in African countries and support of African Liberation movements.
- (c) Establishment of a Black Anti-Defamation League which will protect our African image.

9. We call for the establishment of a Black University to be funded with \$130,000,000 to be located in the South. Negotiations are presently under way with a Southern University.

10. We demand that IFCO allocate all unused funds in the planning budget to implement the demands of this conference.

In order to win our demands we are aware that we will have to have massive support, therefore:

(1) We call upon all black people throughout the United States to consider themselves as members of the National Black Economic Development Conference and to act in unity to help force the racist white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues to implement these demands.

*(Revised and approved by Steering Committee)

7.

(2) We call upon all the concerned black people across the country to contact black workers, black women, black students and the black unemployed, community groups, welfare organizations, church leaders and organizations explaining how these demands are vital to the black community of the U.S. Pressure by whatever means necessary should be applied to the white power structure of the racist white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues. All black people should act boldly in confronting our white oppressors and demanding this modest reparation of 15 dollars per black man.

(3) Delegates and members of the National Black Economic Development Conference are urged to call press conferences in the cities and to attempt to get as many black organizations as possible to support the demands of the conference. The quick use of the press in the local areas will heighten the tension and these demands must be attempted to be won in a short period of time, although we are prepared for protracted and long range struggle.

(4) We call for the total disruption of selected church sponsored agencies operating anywhere in the U.S. and the world. Black workers, black women, black students and the black unemployed are encouraged to seize the offices, telephones, and printing apparatus of all church sponsored agencies and to hold these in trusteeship until our demands are met.

(5) We call upon all delegates and members of the National Black Economic Development Conference to stage sit-in demonstrations at selected black and white churches. This is not to be interpreted as a continuation of the sit-in movement of the early sixties but we know that active confrontation inside white churches is possible and will strengthen the possibility of meeting our demands. Such confrontation can take the form of reading the Black Manifesto instead of a sermon or passing it out to church members. The principle of self-defense should be applied if attacked.

(6) On May 4, 1969 or a date thereafter, depending upon local conditions, we call upon black people to commence the disruption of the racist churches and synagogues throughout the United States.

(7) We call upon IFCO to serve as a central staff to coordinate the mandate of the conference and to reproduce and distribute en mass literature, leaflets, news items, press releases and other material.

(8) We call upon all delegates to find within the white community those forces which will work under the leadership of blacks to implement these demands by whatever means necessary. By taking such actions, white Americans will demonstrate concretely that they are willing to fight the white skin privilege and the white supremacy and racism which has forced us as black people to make these demands.

(9) We call upon all white Christians and Jews to practice patience, tolerance, understanding and non violence as they have encouraged, advised and demanded that we as black people should to throughout our entire enforced slavery in the United States. The true test of their faith and belief in the Cross and the words of the prophets will certainly be put to a test as we seek legitimate and extremely modest reparations for our role in developing the industrial base of the Western world through our slave labor. But we are no longer slaves, we are men and women, proud of our African heritage, determined to have our dignity.

8.

(10) We are so proud of our African heritage and realize concretely that our struggle is not only to make revolution in the United States, but to protect our brothers and sisters in Africa and to help them rid themselves of racism, capitalism, and imperialism by whatever means necessary, including armed struggle. We are and must be willing to fight the defamation of our African image wherever it rears its ugly head. We are therefore charging the Steering Committee to create a Black Anti-Defamation League to be funded by money raised from the United Black Appeal.

(11) We fully recognize that revolution in the United States and Africa, our Motherland, is more than a one dimensional operation. It will require the total integration of the political, economic, and military components and therefore, we call upon all our brothers and sisters who have acquired training and expertise in the fields of engineering, electronics, research, community organization, physics, biology, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, military science and warfare to assist the National Black Economic Development Conference in the implementation of its program.

(12) To implement these demands we must have a fearless leadership. We must have a leadership which is willing to battle the church establishment to implement these demands. To win our demands we will have to declare war on the white Christian churches and synagogues and this means we may have to fight the total government structure of this country. Let no one here think that these demands will be met by our mere stating them. For the sake of the churches and synagogues, we hope that they have the wisdom to understand that these demands are modest and reasonable. But if the white Christians and Jews are not willing to meet our demands through peace and good will, then we declare war and we are prepared to fight by whatever means necessary. We are, therefore, proposing the election of the following Steering Committee:

Lucius Walker	Mark Comfort
Renny Freeman	Earl Allen
Luke Tripp	Robert Browne
Howard Fuller	Vincent Harding
James Forman	Mike Hamlin
John Watson	Len Holt
Dan Aldridge	Peter Bernard
John Williams	Michael Wright
Ken Cockrel	Muhammed Kenyatta
Chuck Wooten	Mel Jackson
Fannie Lou Hamer	Howard Moore
Julian Bond	Harold Holmes

Brothers and sisters, we no longer are shuffling our feet and scratching our heads. We are tall, black, and proud.

And we say to the white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, to the government of this country and to all the white racist imperialists who compose it, there is only one thing left that you can do to further degrade black people and that is to kill us. But we have been dying too long for this country. We have died in every war. We are dying in Vietnam today fighting the wrong enemy.

9.

The new black man wants to live and to live means that we must not become static or merely believe in self-defense. We must boldly go out and attack the white Western world at its power centers. The white Christian churches are another form of government in this country and they are used by the government of this country to exploit the people of Latin America, Asia and Africa, but the day is soon coming to an end. Therefore, brothers and sisters, the demands we make upon the white Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues are small demands. They represent 15 dollars per black person in these United States. We can legitimately demand this from the church power structure. We must demand more from the United States Government.

But to win our demands from the church which is linked up with the United States Government, we must not forget that it will ultimately be by force and power that we will win.

We are not threatening the churches. We are saying that we know the churches came with the military might of the colonizers and have been sustained by the military might of the colonizers. Hence, if the churches in colonial territories were established by military might, we know deep within our hearts that we must be prepared to use force to get our demands. We are not saying that this is the road we want to take. It is not, but let us be very clear that we are not opposed to force and we are not opposed to violence. We were captured in Africa by violence. We were kept in bondage and political servitude and forced to work as slaves by the military machinery and the Christian church working hand in hand.

We recognize that in issuing this manifesto we must prepare for a long range educational campaign in all communities of this country, but we know that the Christian Churches have contributed to our oppression in white America. We do not intend to abuse our black brothers and sisters in black churches who have uncritically accepted Christianity. We want them to understand how the racist white Christian church with its hypocritical declarations and doctrines of brotherhood has abused our trust and faith. An attack on the religious beliefs of black people is not our major objective even though we know that we were not Christians when we were brought to this country, but that Christianity was used to help enslave us. Our objective in issuing this Manifesto is to force the racist white Christian Church to begin the payment of reparations which are due to all black people, not only by the Church but also by private business and the U.S. government. We see this focus on the Christian Church as an effort around which all black people can unite.

Our demands are negotiable, but they cannot be minimized, they can only be increased and the Church is asked to come up with larger sums of money than we are asking. Our slogans are:

ALL ROADS MUST LEAD TO REVOLUTION
 UNITE WITH WHOMEVER YOU CAN UNITE
 NEUTRALIZE WHEREVER POSSIBLE
 FIGHT OUR ENEMIES RELENTLESSLY
 VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE
 LIFE AND GOOD HEALTH TO MANKIND
 RESISTANCE TO DOMINATION BY THE WHITE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE
 JEWISH SYNAGOGUES
 REVOLUTIONARY BLACK POWER
 WE SHALL WIN WITHOUT A DOUBT

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

All interviews conducted by author.

Berry, Lee Roy and Beth Berry, Goshen, Ind./Evanston, Ill., August 29, 2006; 60 minutes; phone.

Brock, Thomas W., Harrisonburg, Va./Evanston, Ill., May 17, 2005; 45 minutes; phone.

Burklow, Don and Grace Burklow, Markham, Ill., April 15, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

Curry, Peggy, Harrisonburg, Va., March 29, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

Dagan, Paul L., Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 15, 2003, 2003; 60 minutes; phone.

Douple, Betty, Long Beach, Miss., May 25, 2005; 75 minutes; in person.

Eby, John, Philadelphia/Evanston, Ill., February 28, 2003; 60 minutes; phone.

Geil, Libby, Gulfport, Miss., May 25, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

Hershey, Lynford, Payette, Id./Evanston, Ill., March 2, 2003; 90 minutes; phone.

---, Payette, Id./Evanston, Ill., March 6, 2004; 30 minutes; phone.

Horst, Barbara, Ephrata, Pa./Evanston, Ill., April 22, 2003; 10 minutes; phone.

Horst, Samuel, Harrisonburg, Va., March 31, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

Huber, Harold, Harrisonburg, Va./Evanston, Ill., February 26, 2005; thirty minutes; phone.

Huber, Harold and Vida Huber, Harrisonburg, Va., March 29, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

Hughes, Annabelle and Gerald Hughes, Cleveland Heights, Ohio/Evanston, Ill., August 29, 2006; 60 minutes; phone.

- Kennel, Ron, Goshen, Ind./Evanston, Ill., February 26, 2004; 20 minutes; phone.
- Krehbiel, Ronald, Hesston, Kans./Evanston, Ill., April 25, 2007; 20 minutes; phone.
- Landis, Paul G., Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 8, 2003; 70 minutes; phone.
- , Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., April 28, 2005; 80 minutes; phone.
- Mares, Gerald and Dolores Mares, Markham, Ill., September 17, 2006; 40 minutes; in person.
- Miller, Oren and Dorothy Miller, Gulfport, Miss., May 26, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.
- Moran, Edna, Gulfport, Miss., May 24, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.
- Odom, Mertis, Markham, Ill., July 3, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.
- Peachey, Paul and Ellen Peachey, Harrisonburg, Va., April 1, 2005; 75 minutes; in person.
- Powell, John, Buffalo, New York/Evanston, Ill., March 16, 2003; 60 minutes; phone.
- Redekop, Calvin, Harrisonburg, Va./Evanston, Ill., April 27, 2004; 20 minutes; phone.
- Regier, Harold and Rosella Wiens Regier, Newton, Kans./Evanston, Ill., July 12, 2005; 90 minutes; phone.
- Shenk, Michael, Harrisonburg, Va./Evanston, Ill., March 19, 2003; 20 minutes; phone.
- Shenk, Norman G., Salunga, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 22, 2005; 60 minutes; phone.
- Stoltzfus, Miriam, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 15, 2003; 60 minutes; phone.
- Swartzentruber, Homer, Shipshewanna, Ind./Evanston, Ill., May 19, 2005; 60 minutes; phone.
- , Shipshewanna, Ind./Evanston, Ill., February 24, 2007; 15 minutes; phone.
- Vogt, Virgil, Evanston, Ill., May 6, 2004; 20 minutes; phone.
- Weaver, Dave and Sue Weaver, Gulfport, Miss., May 26, 2005; 90 minutes; in person.
- Weaver, Richard and Virginia Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va., March 30, 2005, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.
- Williams, Sue, Gulfport, Miss., May 25, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

Woods, Mary Ann, Markham, Ill., April 29, 2005; 60 minutes; in person.

468

Zehr, Paul, Lancaster, Pa./Evanston, Ill., March 1, 2003; 30 minutes; phone.

AUTHOR VITA

TOBIN MILLER SHEARER

EDUCATION: **Northwestern University**, Evanston, Illinois
 A.B.D., 2004; M.A. in History and Religion, 2003
 Dissertation: *'A Pure Fellowship': The Danger and Necessity of Purity in White and African-American Mennonite Racial Exchange, 1935 – 1971*
 Advisors: Josef Barton (History), Fred Kniss (Sociology), Sarah Taylor (Religion), Cristina Traina (Religion)

Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia
 B.A. in English Literature, summa cum laude, 1987

GRANTS AND
AWARDS:

2007, First Place, John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest, Graduate School Category, **Mennonite Historical Committee**, for the paper "Looking Past Legality: Interracial Marriage and the Mennonite Church, 1930-1971"

2006, Lacy Baldwin Smith Prize for Teaching Excellence, awarded annually by **Northwestern University's** History Department to the student instructor with the highest teaching evaluations

2006, Presidential Fellowship, **Northwestern University**, one of six, two-year full fellowships annually awarded to graduate students, described by the graduate school as Northwestern's most prestigious graduate honor

2006, **Louisville Institute** Dissertation Year Fellowship, a competitive national fellowship for the study of Christianity

2005, Internet Technologies Humanities Committee Dissertation Support Grant, **Northwestern University**

2005, Lacy Baldwin Smith Prize for Teaching Excellence, awarded annually by **Northwestern University's** History Department to the student teaching assistant with the highest teaching evaluations

2005, Northwestern University Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award, awarded annually to one student in the Humanities from all practicing student instructors, **Northwestern University**

2005, **Northwestern University** History Department Graduate Travel Grant

2004, **Northwestern University** Graduate Research Grant

2004, Recipient of **Northwestern University** African American Studies Department Research Grant

1995, Finalist in **New York International Film Festival** for *FREE INDEED: Of White Privileges and How We Play the Game* (1995), screenplay co-author

BOOKS: *Set Free: A Journey Toward Solidarity Against Racism*. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2001 (co-authored with Iris de León-Hartshorn and Regina Shands Stoltzfus).

Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege to Racial Reconciliation. Herald Press, 1994.

CHAPTERS: “The Beemer Surprise: Grounding Rudolph Otto’s Numinous in Mennonite Ethics and Alterity,” chapter in *Encountering the Other* (Eerdman’s Press, forthcoming).

“Feathering Forman: Reframing the Black Manifesto, 1965-1971,” chapter in *At the Intersection of Race and Religion* (forthcoming).

“Race and Power,” chapter in *Making Peace with Conflict: Practical Skills for Conflict Transformation*. Herald Press, 1999 (co-authored with Angel Ocasio).

ARTICLES: “Moving Beyond Charisma in Civil Rights Scholarship: Vincent Harding’s Sojourn With the Mennonites, 1958-1966,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* April 2008.

“How I Became a Worse Teacher Who Was Also a Good Bit Better,” *Searle Center for Teaching Excellence Newsletter*, Spring 2006

PRESENTATIONS: “From Streets and Sidewalks to Living Rooms and Lounges: Shifting the Civil Rights Gaze,” On the Whys, Hows and Wheretofores of Graduate School, **Northwestern University**, May 2007

“Religious Instruction: Graduate Students Reflect on the Pitfalls and Pleasures of Teaching Religion in a Secular University,” **Midwest American Academy of Religion**, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois (presider and panelist), March 2007

“Beneath a Velvet Covering: How Women Resisted Mennonite Racial Segregation, 1940-1971,” **Midwest American Academy of Religion**, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois, March 2007

“The Danger of Purity,” **Louisville Institute**, Lilly Endowment program for the study of American religion, National Winter Conference for Dissertation Year Fellowship winners, Louisville, Kentucky, January 2007

“From Purity to Pollutants: Interracial Marriage, Mennonites, and Petri Dishes,” **Northwestern University** Presidential Fellows Fall Retreat, Northbrook, Illinois, October 2006

“Religion and the Civil Rights Movement,” Guest Lecture, **Northwestern University**, The U.S. Civil Rights Movement, July 2006

“Christianity and Judaism in Conversation,” Guest Lecture, **Northwestern University**, Religion in the Human Experience, July 2006

“The Tottering Torah: Prayer as Community-controlling Narrative Among Reconstructionist Jews,” Narrative Matters: An Interdisciplinary Conference on the Storied Nature of Human Experience: Fact & Fiction, **Acadia University**, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada, May 2006

“The Beemer Surprise: An Ethical Ground for Otto’s Numinous,” Encountering The Other: A Conference on Religious Arguments for Tolerance and Hospitality, **Notre Dame University**, Notre Dame, Indiana, April 2006

“The Violence of Purity: Northeastern Mennonites and the Black Manifesto, 1969,” **Midwest American Academy of Religion**, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois, April 2006

“Building Religious Identity Through Mission Activity: White Mennonite Involvement in ‘Fresh Air’ Rural Visitation Programs, 1949-1971,” Conference on the History of Religion, **Boston College**, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, March 2006

“Transformation of databases of documents, images, sound into an integrated body of documentation for work on Mennonite social

movements,” Graduate Student Panel: Presentation of Digital Projects, Electronic Resources Forum, **Northwestern University**, September 2005

“Engagement in the Guise of Separation: How White Mennonites Engaged African Americans from 1940 to 1969,” Mellon Dissertation Forum, **Alice Berline Kaplan Center for the Humanities**, Northwestern University, May 2005

“Anabaptism and Modernity,” Guest Lecture, Introduction to Christianity, **Northwestern University**, February 2005

“Considering the Canon: The Plurality of the Christian Bible,” Guest Lecture, Introduction to Christianity, **Northwestern University**, January 2005

“Symbol and Myth: Ganesh, Prayer Coverings, Star Wars, and Spit,” Guest Lecture, Religion in the Human Experience, **Northwestern University**, October 2004

“Historians (and Other Scholars) Need Religion,” The **Midwestern Region of the American Academy of Religion**, DePaul University, Chicago, Ill., April 2004

“The Ultimate In Christianity,” Guest Lecture, Religion in the Human Experience, **Northwestern University**, April 2004

“Prayers and Puppet Strings – Religious Ritual and Jewish Reconstructionist Responses to Prayer,” Chicago School of Ethnography: Past, Present, Future, **Northwestern University**, February 2004

“How Different is Paul from the Gospels?” Guest Lecture, Introduction to the New Testament, **Northwestern University**, February 2004

TEACHING:

2006, Instructor, **Northwestern University**, “Racing Through the Movies: Race in Twentieth-Century Film.” Freshman writing seminar.

2005, Teaching Assistant, **Northwestern University**, Introduction to the New Testament.

2005, Teaching Assistant, **Northwestern University**, Introduction to Christianity.

2004, Teaching Assistant, **Northwestern University**, Religion in the Human Experience.

2004, Teaching Assistant, **Northwestern University**, Religion in the Human Experience.

2004, Teaching Assistant, **Northwestern University**, Introduction to the New Testament.

ACADEMIC
SERVICE:

2007-2008, coordinator, **Cross Honors Colloquia**, Northwestern University, a monthly forum for undergraduate students interested in learning about graduate student life and research

2006-present, Teaching Consultant, **Searle Center for Teaching Excellence**, Northwestern University, worked with faculty and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines on student feedback, teaching methodology, course design, evaluation, and assessment

2006-present, Coordinator, **Center for African-American History Dissertators Group**, Northwestern University

2005-present, Teaching Assistant Coordinator, **Religion Department**, Northwestern University

2006-2007, **Presidential Fellows Fall Retreat**, Chair of planning committee, Northwestern University

WORK
EXPERIENCE:

Freelance writer and anti-racism consultant, Lancaster, Pa. Wrote more than forty articles on racial identity, poverty, conflict resolution, and identity formation for national church-based publications; devised four curricula for high school age youth on anti-racism and non-violence; developed trainer's manual for national anti-racism educating and organizing seminars, June 1987 – June 2002

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Racism Awareness Program Director, Akron, Pa. Co-founded and led Damascus Road, a national anti-racism training program active among forty-five colleges, mission agencies, congregations, and church-wide conference bodies. Led more than 400 presentations in twenty-five states including sixty-three workshops of a day or more in length and hundreds of lectures, half-day workshops and classroom lessons, April 1993 – April 2001

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Program Coordinator, New Orleans, La. Administered and co-designed city-wide program for families

of homicide victims that served over 100 members per year through self-help groups. Provided administrative support and direction for new peer mediation program in public middle schools that grew from one pilot project to a city-wide cross-curricular program in the space of four years, August 1988 – March 1993

Editor, Loyola University, New Orleans, La. Edited the *Blueprint for Social Justice*, a monthly national publication of Loyola University's Twomey Center for Peace through Justice, July 1987 – December 1990

MEMBERSHIPS IN
PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS:

American Academy of Religion

American Historical Association

Chicago Area Group for the Study of Religion