Urban by Default: Mennonites in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia

Johann Funk, *Okanagan University College, Kelowna, BC*
Ruth Kampen, *University of Victoria, Victoria, BC*

> [W]henever marginal peoples come into a historical or ethnographic space that has been defined by the Western imagination, "Entering the modern world," their distinct worlds quickly vanish. Swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West..., these suddenly "backward" peoples no longer invent local futures. What is different about them remains tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it.[1]

Introduction

The post World War II era proved a decisive turning point for British Columbia society and drew Mennonites into its wake. The 1950s signaled an end to their concentrated rural settlements of Yarrow, Greendale and Abbotsford, and a pronounced migration to Vancouver. This was soon followed by urban encroachment into the Fraser Valley to transform the remaining farms into agribusinesses and small rural towns into edge cities.

The record suggests that the Mennonites' initial resolve to establish separate rural communities in which the Mennonite tradition could be preserved was eclipsed by societal pressures and historical change. The Mennonite's early tight-knit communities were a product of a social stigma reflected in public attitudes and policy as much as Mennonite intentionality. Developments following W.W.II resulted in a progressive shedding of the social stigma attached to being Mennonite and rapid conformity to the demands of urbanization and modernization. In the process Mennonites lost their sub-cultural identity. Rather than being seen as unassimilatible and undesirable citizens Mennonites were redefined as potential citizens. The change in public representation of Mennonite identity was not entirely of their own choosing but its homogenizing direction has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The community's values were no match for the social pressure to conform and the individual impulse underlying urbanization and modernity. In the generative process, the ethnic identity of Mennonites in the Lower Mainland has become largely symbolic and their religious identity has fragmented and merged with North American expressions of evangelical theologies. Socially, economically, politically most contemporary Mennonites in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia differ little from their non-Mennonite neighbors.

The paper is organized into four sections. Firstly, a generative model for analysis is outlined as an alternative to the conventional linear and circular models for understanding Mennonite experiences as a minority living in a host society. The emphasis is on representation, counter-representation and self-definition involved in the social construction of Mennonite identity. Secondly, library and archival materials are used to summarize the historically significant generative nature of the Dutch, North German, Prussian, Russian and Canadian Anabaptist/ Mennonite experience. The summary establishes the fact that Mennonites were left with either resisting or conforming to the conditions prevailing in each era but had little control over the conditions themselves. Thirdly, the content of 30 semi-structured extended interviews, 7 narrowly focused interviews, 8 life histories, and 3 intergenerational women's focus groups are organized and summarized to document contemporary expressions of Mennonite theology, gender relations, politics and economics in the Lower Mainland. The 14 women participating in the focus groups were divided into 3 cohorts with average ages of 68, 40 and 22 respectively. The participants were members or affiliates of Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church British Columbia and Church of God in Christ churches in the Lower Mainland. Finally, the concluding discussion offers some generalizations which can be drawn from the historical and contemporary sources.

A Generative Framework for Analysis

Two primary types of conventional analysis have been posited to explain Mennonite responses to urbanization and its modernizing influence.[2] The classical analysis develops a linear model in which Mennonites moved through stages of

rural retreat, integration, accommodation and assimilation moderated by modified pluralism when they participated in the rapid urbanization and modernization of Canadian society after W.W.II.[3] Mennonite scholars have also applied Troeltch[4] and Niebuhr's[5] church/sect cycle to explain the Mennonite shift from a sectarian to a denominational identity. The argument is that Mennonites have gone from being "a community apart" to "engagement with the world." Change can be seen as a reinterpretation or reinvention of traditional values and beliefs to link present experience with the past. Driedger concludes that "[a]s Mennonites become more educated and urban, they tend to embrace Anabaptism more, which includes commitment to peace."[6] Laura Jean Beattie[7] and Ruth Gump[8] argue that Mennonite Brethren identity in Vancouver has successfully evolved into a modern form of religious expression which has integrity and relevance in the urban context. Gump concludes that an openness to ethnic pluralism has led to the revival of the "neighborhood church" typified by Mennonite residential clustering earlier in their urban experience. Beattie interprets the openness to other cultures as evidence of a resurgence of an Anabaptist missionary focus. However, the documentation of changing forms can become too deterministic and cannot account for historical and societal change which provide new opportunities and/or new constraints for group intentionality.

Peter Hamm suggests a circular model for understanding the effect of urbanization on Mennonites. He proposes that the corroding forces of urbanization are kept in check by the process of sacralization that provides continuity and secularization that is the engine of change[9]. Similarly, Doug Klassen[10] concludes that the Mennonite Brethren in Vancouver have retained only symbolic remnants of their ethnic identity and recaptured the primacy of religion attributed to the early Anabaptists. Circular models are useful in identifying persistent patterns but fail to evaluate or compare the content of succeeding cycles and run the risk of legitimizing all existing or emergent forms as "having been" or "in the process of becoming."

An alternate approach to linear or circular models for understanding the experiences of minority cultures is proposed by Fredrik Barth. He states that, "Explanation is not achieved by a description of the patterns of regularity, no matter how meticulous and adequate, nor by replacing this description by other abstractions congruent with it, but by exhibiting what makes the pattern, i.e. certain processes."[11] The emphasis is on the generative nature of most human activity containing elements systematically governed by status, strategy and reciprocity. Williams cautions that cultural production and reproduction is not simply procedural. "No community. . . can ever be fully conscious of itself, ever fully know itself."[12] Similarly Foucault proposes replacing structuralist explanations with a recovery of the comprehensive and multifaceted importance of events and the uniqueness of historical moments.[13] Generative models supplement conventional models by exploring another level of analysis which attempts to expand our consciousness of the complexity of life as "it is really lived."

Urbanization and modernization have often been used as synonymous terms. For purposes of this study modernization is defined as the shift from traditional

family and community loyalties to individual autonomy and impersonal but interdependent social relations documented by Tonnies[14] as *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and Durkheim[15] as mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. The historical transformation in Western society synthesized the influences of the Enlightenment which introduced the modern age and the Industrial Revolution accompanied by rapid urbanization and industrialization.

One of the debates between Marx and Weber in classical sociology has to do with whether economics or "mind" determines the direction in which human history evolves. Marx believed that ideas arose out of material conditions[16] while Weber contended rationality gave rise to material conditions.[17] Each provide considerable evidence in an attempt to explain the generative forces behind modernization. What is clear is that the free market principles of industrial capitalism are intensified in the urban context. It follows that the modern urban environment promotes societalization (a rational technical social system)[18] and that modernity is marked by abstraction (relativity), futurity (ahistoricism), anomie (normlessness), liberation (individualism) and secularization (methodological atheism).[19] It is these that Mennonite historical values could either resist or embrace but had no part in producing in British Columbia society.

Generativity in Historical Context

Mennonites in British Columbia trace their roots to Anabaptists in the Netherlands. The pattern of Anabaptist-state relations that emerged in the sixteenth century is instructive for understanding the unfolding of the Anabaptist/Mennonite story through successive migrations to north Germany, Prussia, Russia and Canada.

The apocalyptic nature of the early Anabaptists in the Netherlands was initially tolerated by liberal magistrates in Amsterdam. Revolutionary Anabaptists at times raged through the city calling sinners to repentance and announcing the coming judgment. They advocated a radical transformation of society. April 7, 1535 Anabaptists occupying the Olde Kloster near Bolsward were routed by the state militia. On May 10, of the same year, an Anabaptist mob stormed Amsterdam city hall and killed a number of city officials.[20] Hence, liberal magistrates were replaced and the restrictions on dissenting groups were rigidly enforced. A period of severe persecution ensued which engulfed Waterlander, Flemish and Frisian Anabaptists who were now associated with the violent Anabaptist occupation of Muenster and seen as a threat to social order. Many migrated to more tolerant city states in northern Germany and Prussia but some found accommodation and moderated their more strident demands.[21] Voolstra documents that Anabaptism persisted in the Netherlands because the community contained a number of prominent merchants, industrialists, artists and intellectuals. Thus "the merchant had triumphed over the preacher."[22] In the process the Anabaptist theology became spiritualized into a moderately rationalist, pietist and ethical faith. "It is this subjective, affective, internalized, reasonable and moral religion which [made] the

continuing assimilation of the Mennonites possible and [guided] it."[23] During this period the principles of the separation of church and state, non-resistance and the non-swearing of oaths were consolidated into a coherent theology.[24] Rather than transforming the Netherlands into a community without "spot or wrinkle" as the early Anabaptists proposed they were themselves transformed into solid Dutch citizens. By the end of the 17th century being Mennonite no longer risked persecution.

> At worst, there was the stigma of belonging to some peculiar people, peculiar at least in the eyes of many of their fellow citizens. But even this peculiarity, . . might eventually prove of material advantage, for it channeled the energies released by religious asceticism into such outlets as trade and industry.[25]

The generative process continued when Dutch Mennonites took refuge in the city states of Hamburg-Altona during the severe persecution in the Netherlands after 1535. Up until 1814 when Mennonites received official recognition as a religious body, were granted the right to vote and to hold office, they were the subject of considerable debate between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Hamburg city officials tended to ignore official policy on the swearing of oaths, restrictions on unrecognized religions and compulsory military service. This tolerance was possible because the Lutheran authorities were divided among themselves and merchants dominated the local magistrates. Public perceptions viewed Mennonites as obedient to the state. "In response to public charges of rebellion and fanaticism, representatives explained publicly that Mennonites were especially governable nonconformist."[26] Mennonite leaders had grasped the essential relationship between civil obedience and state protection. Mennonite prominence in trade, shipping, whaling, textiles and tanning promoted tolerance for their sectarian beliefs as long as these retained the Dutch spiritualized and quietist character. As in the Netherlands, forces of liberalization centered in the free city states lent themselves to individual enterprise, and professions often at the expense of the Mennonite community values. To be sure Mennonites remained irritants to the ecclesiastical authorities but again economic considerations overruled their objections and guided the process of incorporating Mennonites into the city. Even the treasured principle of non-resistance faded out of existence among north German Mennonites by the mid 1800s.

The Dutch Mennonites who found refuge in the Vistula Delta in Prussia were alternately represented as experts on reclaiming marshland and undesirable nonconformists by the authorities. Mennonites found protection and were expelled on the whims of changing political conditions. The final blow came when in 1789 Frederick William II restricted the purchase of land by Mennonites and extracted sever penalties for continued military exemption. [27] The mainly rural Mennonites faced several choices: emigrate or find refuge in the free city states. Between 1788 and 1850 nearly 10,000 accepted the invitation of Catherine II of Russia who offered

generous land grants and guaranteed religious freedom in perpetuity.[28] Those remaining began an 80 year losing struggle to retain their sectarian ideals. However, in the free cities of Danzig and Elbing, Mennonites did find a degree of tolerance because of their involvement in trades and business. By 1867 Mennonites had been granted Prussian citizenship and abandoned much of their nonconformist ethnic and religious character.[29]

Russian representations of Mennonites as model farmers provided the potential for the emergence of an autonomous theocratic state enshrined in the *Privilegium* which guaranteed religious, political and social freedom. However, these concessions proved to be conditional and subject to change depending on the prevailing attitudes of the state towards foreign nationals. Soon internal tensions also arose between the rising Mennonite political, economic and intellectual elites and the traditional religious authority vested in the congregation.

> In the early years the local government leaders, who came from the more worldly, the more secular minded of the group, often clashed with the religious leaders, sometimes so seriously as to lead to their ex-communication. Later on the religious leaders, usually themselves members of the propertied class who controlled the local government sometimes worked so closely with the secular leaders, compromising their principles for worldly ends.[30]

A crisis in accommodating landless Mennonites was averted through the establishment of new colonies and more significantly the promotion of individual entrepreneurial spirit. Rather than migrating to the nearby cities, the surplus Mennonite population was accommodated in privately owned Mennonite enterprises. The middle and upper class which emerged began an impressive program of industrial expansion and institution building.[31] The process was temporarily interrupted when the Russian Tzar began a program of Russification in 1870. 16,931 Mennonites emigrated to Canada which made generous concessions to attract settlers to Western Canada.[32] The entire *Kleine Gemeinde*, and most of the *Fuerstenlaender* and *Bergthaler* colonies emigrated between 1874 and 1885. The 100,000 Mennonites who remained made accommodations they could live with and continued to progress economically until 1917.

The new Bolshevik government viewed Mennonites very differently. Mennonites represented a hostile foreign nationality, the *Kulak* class and a religious community, all of which were to be suppressed in the new Soviet Union. 20,201 managed to leave before the Soviet regime sealed the borders in 1929.[33] This group contained a large number of the former Mennonite intellectual and economic elites. Most settled in Canada. Another 6,153 emigrated to Canada between 1947 and 1950 as refugees after W.W.II.[34]

E.K. Francis attributes Mennonite urbanization in Canada to the middle-class origins of the *Russlaender* immigrants and the harsh conditions of the 1930s depression.

> [P]erhaps as many as half of the immigrant settlers lost their farms during the Depression....The main reason for urbanization among the Russlaender group, however, must be sought in the middle-class origin of many of the refugees, who included a disproportionate number of former estate owners, teachers, physicians, nurses, businessmen, clerks, bankers, and so on. At first the provisions under which they were admitted to Canada compelled all of them to work in agriculture. Yet, in the face of great hardships and difficulties, a majority of these new farmers took up more familiar occupations when opportunities presented themselves after they became naturalized.[35]

By the 1970s rural dominance gave way to greater urban influence among Mennonites in Canada. The 1981 Census reports 51.4% of Mennonites living in urban centers.[36]

Urbanization of Mennonites in British Columbia followed a similar pattern with some notable exceptions. Migration to the city in significant numbers was initially stalled because of public and government resistance to their presence in the province and the entrenchment of Mennonites in relatively closed rural communities. The social distance between Mennonites and British Columbia society resulted in societies representation of Mennonites as subcultural and undesirable citizens and Mennonites representation of modern urban society as "worldly." The Mennonite belief in being a rural community apart "without spot or wrinkle" and society's determination to maintain Anglo-Saxon hegemony facilitated these conflicting representations.

Mennonites were first reported in Vancouver in the early 1920s when *Aeltester* Nickolai Bahnman and Jacob B. Wiens visited Vancouver to investigate the possibility of starting a Mennonite church on the West Coast for the Home Missions Board of the General Conference of Mennonites in North America. They discovered quite a number of Mennonites who had either settled in existing German speaking churches (Eben-Ezer Baptist) or were no longer attending church. Their offer to organize a Mennonite church was rejected.[37] The desire to remain invisible is understandable since by the 1920s the British Columbia government's attitude towards Mennonites had solidified after a group of Mennonite Brethren from the United States settled at Engen near Vanderhoof in 1918 claiming exemption from military service under the July 23, 1873 Order in Council.[38] The government moved quickly by declaring Mennonite settlers "Detrimental to District."[39] Legislation was soon passed restricting Mennonite settlements.

> [T]he Provincial Department of Lands had instructed its agents that in all applications for pre-emption or purchase of Crown Lands it must be established conclusively whether the applicant is entitled to or claims exemption from Military Service or other duties of citizenship....he will see to it that Crown Lands are not acquired by that class of citizen who finds it convenient to attempt to evade the first principles which war has prescribed as necessary to secure protection under the British flag.[40]

Mennonites were seen as utopian "dreamers after liberty without any limitations."[41]

In 1928 a larger group of Mennonites arriving in British Columbia again caught government and public attention. This group consisted of mainly *Russlaender* who's prospects for settling on the prairies were bleak. Among them was a large homogenous Mennonite Brethren group and a scattering of other Mennonites later organized under the Mennonite Church British Columbia. The Provincial government acted quickly to enforce the earlier restrictions on the Mennonite purchase of Crown Land. However, Mennonites were able to buy private land offered for sale by Eckert and Crain in the *Free Press Weekly Farmer*. 22 families accepted their offer and were joined by another 15 families in 1929. In total 700-800 acres were originally purchased and a Russian village plan laid out.[42] The Provincial Department of Agriculture opposed the settlement, "anxious to avoid any step which would keep the best class of settlers away from the reclaimed land."[43] For the Anglo community Mennonites represented an undesirable class.

As had happened historically, non-resistance was to keep Mennonites in British Columbia from full citizenship rights. In 1931 the Provincial Elections Act was amended to disenfranchise all Doukhobor, Hutterite and Mennonite citizens who claim exemption from military service on the basis of the 1873 and 1899 Orders in Council.[44]

Mennonites continued to be represented as undesirable and unassimilatible. The comments of Mr. L. H. Eyres, Conservative M.P. for Chilliwack typifies the more radical objection to Mennonites in the Province under the headline "WANTS BRITISH STOCK":

> [W]e are having a peaceful penetration of the Chilliwack Valley. Three thousand Mennonites have settled in the Sumas district, where they have taken up land, are self-supporting and are gradually creeping into businesses. Their standard of living is lower than we should like to see and we are finding that penetration a problem which may have a more serious effect. We want our valley and the rest of British Columbia peopled by British stock.[45]

The sectarian label suited the Mennonites who expressed their reason for emigrating as the mild climate, greater earning capacity, and the possibility of a compact settlement that could facilitate fellowship and the separate education of their children.[46] This idealism masked the fact that most were economic migrants. Several were so poor on arrival that Chauncy Eckert, the developer is reported to have loaned them the dollar needed to register their land purchase.[47] Most had to find wage labor in surrounding enterprises such as Eddies Nursery and John I. Haas hop yards to support themselves.[48] Older girls were sent into Vancouver to find work as dayworkers or live-in maids to supplement the family income. Entrepreneurship at first focused on enterprises internal to the community's development. Farming remained marginal until a cooperative was formed in 1936 and received a boost when the Japanese monopoly in the berry market was broken

by their internment during W.W.II. Ironically the war intensified the government and public rhetoric against Mennonites but also created the conditions for Mennonite participation in the rapid urbanization that was to follow. Significant in this shift are the attempts at counter-representations by Mennonites which also prompted a change in their self-definition.

The pariah status of Mennonites intensified during the war years despite M.M. Vonelly, Liberal M.P.'s defense of the Mennonite concession as long as the Order in Council of 1873 was still in force.[49] In British Columbia the debate spilled over into the public domain. The Associated Trade Boards called Mennonites "a definite menace," "like a locust plague," and "insidious and as un-Canadian as ever the Japs were."[50] The newly elected president of the Board suspected Mennonites of potential fifth column activity.

> If it took a Pearl Harbour to get the Japanese out of the coast area, it will take a similar disaster to influence Ottawa to remove the Mennonites...It was the stupidity of the Ottawa government which brought them into the country in the first instance....The Government played into the hands of land speculators on the Prairies.[51]

Mennonites were accused of making threats, committing arson and having pictures of Hitler prominently displayed in their homes. None of these incidents were ever substantiated but the rumors heightened tensions between Mennonites and the host society. The Board drafted a strongly worded resolution protesting the expansion of Mennonite settlements in the valley. Mennonites for their part expressed their view of society and their determination to be "a community apart" in increasing strident terms.

> The slippery sheets of temptations in a large city are treacherous....The dangers are increased from lack of moral standards in a harbour city....I joyfully note that the number of working girls has decreased. But I regret the influx of young men, and many families, attracted by available jobs in shipyards, sawmills, etc. It is not beneficial for our people. City atmosphere is hazardous for our young men and family fathers who, attracted by greater earnings, settle down in the city and gamble with the future of their children.[52]

By 1943 Mennonite leaders felt compelled to defend themselves against the charges of disloyalty to Canada. Mennonites reiterated their efforts to support victims of the war through the Red Cross and Mennonite Central Committee, the purchase of Victory Bonds, and participation in forestry camps and farm labor by conscientious objectors even though the latter were mainly from Manitoba. However, the fact that 34 Mennonite men joined the Canadian forces proved the most persuasive[53]. While the claims cannot be substantiated, Henry Sukkau, mayor of Yarrow, stated ATwo-thirds of our young men of draft age are now in uniform-

only one-third of them are in conscientious objectors" camps. They are not ejected from church because they go into uniform.[54]

> By wars end sentiments against Mennonites had moderated considerably. Nancy Hodges expressed this shift in attitude in her newspaper column. Further, I am told by those who should know, that they are not only wonderful farmers but good citizens, in the sense that they are industrious, law abiding, and never do anybody any harm....And are gradually showing their assimilability into our Canadian pattern while retaining their ingrained moral and spiritual integrity. So, let us hope it will not be long before we see many Mennonites among the new Canadians taking part in the citizenship ceremonies projected under the new law. [55]

Another sign of the changing attitudes towards Mennonites in British Columbia, although still somewhat controversial was the reinstatement of the franchise Mennonites had lost in 1931, on April 20, 1948.[56] The legislation passed despite charges of political opportunism by the ruling Liberal party from the opposition C.C.F. "I am not charging anything directly, but this is surely coincidental. . . Perhaps if other minorities were more amenable they would get the vote, too." To which the Attorney General Gordon Wismer replied Mennonites are "fine citizens and entitled to the vote."[57] Clearly the barriers to Mennonite integration into the economic, political and social life of the province were coming down.

Many Mennonites in the Lower Mainland saw a change in public perceptions of Mennonites and formal recognition of full citizens as an opportunity to enter the mainstream which was rapidly urbanizing and modernizing. The incentive for the rural/urban shift came from the collapse of rural economies, increased migration of Mennonites from other parts of Canada and the influx of Mennonites among W.W.II Displaced Persons. The majority of the migrants and displaced persons could only find seasonal employment in agriculture and soon migrated to the city of Vancouver to join the wave of urbanization that accompanied post W.W.II industrialization. The extent of Mennonite urbanization is illustrated by the rapid rise in membership in First United Mennonite Church during this period. In 1951 the membership stood at 60. By 1961 membership had risen to 148 and rose again to 504 by 1971. To this needs to be added 149 members in 1961 and 165 members at Mountainview Mennonite church also affiliated with the Mennonite Church British Columbia conference.[58] The Vancouver Mennonite Brethren church experienced similar in-migration and soon founded several new churches to accommodate the newcomers.

MENNONITES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA[59]

	MB	MCBC	CGCM	TOTAL FOR B.C.
1901			(Mt. Lehman)	11
1911				191
1921				173
1931	230	80		1,095
1941	1,200	426		5,119
1951	3,915	1,629	42	12,387
1961	4,394	2,636	205	19,932
1971	5,608	3,364	235	26,520
1981	7,142	4,406	105	30,895
1991	11,918	4,527	155	n/a
2001	16,819	4,285	138	n/a

By 1960 the influence of the city and modernization also began engulfing the remaining Mennonites in the Lower Mainland. Many of the farms were converted into housing developments and remaining farms transformed into large scale industrial agriculture.[60] The process of rapid urbanization and suburbanization had serious social consequences for an agrarian people such as Mennonites.[61] Traditional close family and community ties were disrupted as most Mennonites had to find non-farm occupations taking them to Vancouver for education or work. The fabric of a close-knit Mennonite community life was inexorably shattered calling for a reorientation of values, beliefs and lifestyles to a modern individualist and pluralist urban environment. Mennonites were left with few options given the historical, social and geographical realities they faced.

> Further conformity, therefore, seems inevitable in social and cultural matters and in outward religious practices, if not basic ideals and principles, as well. A repetition of unified group action, such as mass movements from country to country that took place only some 3-4 decades ago, is difficult to imagine. Mennonitism, as have many other movements, has run into the sands of a modern, materialistic and urbanized environment, from which an extrication would seem almost impossible.[62]

With the exception of the Church of God in Christ Mennonites (Holdeman) who migrated to the Lower Mainland beginning in 1946, Siemen's conclusion has in large measure been born out. Pariah status had provided a clear focus to the process of representation and counter-representation on which to ground a distinct Mennonite identity. The conditions created by urbanization and modernization guiding societal change after 1950 proved to be more universal and coercive. For many Mennonites religious and community solidarity was no match for the seductive prospect of individual autonomy and particpation in a rapidly expanding

economy. While Mennonites continue to be seen as a ethno-religious minority this overgeneralization masks the internal generative processes which can only be defined as a struggle for self-definition in which Mennonites, detached from the constraints of tradition and social stigma, are left to reorient themselves to the expanding range of choices available to them within a liberal and pluralist social environment. As a result Mennonite identity has fragmented even as they scrambled to combine traditional elements with modern opportunities and constraints which informed their choices.

Generativity in Contemporary Experience

> I think right now everything is very pragmatic. We are more interested in things we are directly related to....Commitment to the church in historical terms is almost gone....For me, the important part is how can we adapt without losing our commitment to our faith instead of denying that is the way it is.

British Columbia society is a liberal democracy which shares in a common notion of equality that has developed into the worship of sameness and a marginalization of difference. In Canada this has translated into the "mythical construction of a multicultural society" in which "unity" is reconciled with "diversity," and "equality" and "harmony" are considered to be achievable, all within a time span of years, decades, if not "generations."[63] Out of this has grown a discourse that labels "the other" as alien and therefore insignificant in the ultimate movement of history. This view is underlined by Norris commenting on the absorption of immigrants in British Columbia, "in the long run there is really no freedom of choice. The second generation becomes totally assimilated."[64] The first characteristic of modern society relevant to its relationship to minority groups is the assumption of the legitimate supremacy of the host society and its vision for society.

Bryan Wilson suggests classifying sectarian attitudes as "world enhancing," "world indifferent" and "world denying."[65] On the "world-enhancing" extreme Mennonites self-consciously pursue the desire to experience a more joyful life than before, and practice a kind of impression management to the point of masking their distinctiveness to experience the benefits of conformity. On the other extreme there is evidence of "world-denial" where particularly Holdeman Mennonites define the modern world as evil, withdraw into closed communities where they can guard their ethnic and theological distinctives. Between these extremes Mennonites also take a "world-indifferent" position in which they tolerate the world but advocate a purer life in the world for its members. These broad categories help define the "theological palette" from which Mennonites in the Lower Mainland select their responses to urbanization: Traditional, Anabaptist, Evangelical and "Christian."

Theology: Will the real Mennonite theologian stand up?

Mennonites had been influenced by Lutheran pietism, Baptist revivalism and Moravian missionizing prior to migrating to British Columbia. In North America they have been influenced by the more contemporary expressions of Evangelicalism. Further influences have come via para-church and non-denominational organizations and institutions which promote narrowly defined theological orientations without accountability to church or denominational structures which by nature represent a more comprehensive theology. The extent to which these influences have been rejected, absorbed or adapted by Mennonites is determined by factors such as congregational autonomy, lack of central authority structures, shift from total to more open community, increasing individualism and outside influences. The result has been that no normative Mennonite theology beyond basic orthodoxy has emerged.

Traditionalism refers to the replication of the Mennonite tradition as it was practiced in Russia. In this orientation the emphasis is on the committed life expressed in pious living, peace, service, and a commitment and loyalty to Mennonite peoplehood. Detractors of the Traditional position argue that this expression of Christianity is too dated and has little relevance for the current generation. The more Evangelical orientation faults Traditional theology and practice for putting too much emphasis on "the committed life" while neglecting the primacy of personal conversion. The Anabaptist orientation has difficulty with the emphasis Traditionalism has given to economic and cultural achievements at the expense of Anabaptist beliefs and values.

Anabaptism refers to the attempt to recover the theological distinctiveness in sixteenth century Anabaptism. This orientation supports the relationship between belief, ethics and action. Salvation is seen to have personal and communal dimensions with the personal validated in its relationship to the community. Salvation is seen to be both an immediate and a future reality. The expressions of this orientation include holism that includes all of life, an evangelistic emphasis, focus on the hermeneutical community, priesthood of all believers, adult conversion and baptism, emphasis on non-resistance and peace, the acceptance of social responsibility and a commitment to community rather than individual autonomy. The Evangelical position has difficulty mainly with the comprehensiveness of the Anabaptist approach which they see as detracting from the primary concern in Christianity: personal crisis conversion. The Traditional and Evangelical perspectives argue that Anabaptism is not realistically accessible. The "Christian" position sees Anabaptism as too utopian and communal to be considered relevant in a more individualistic and competitive social context. In this interpretation the "kingdom" refers to a future state where God's rule is total.

Evangelicalism also defined as Conservative Protestantism[66] in this context is broadly seen as the form of the church Mennonites in British Columbia most easily identify with. The extent of this identification ranges from a recognition that the more open, mobile and individualistic social environment makes a distinct "decision

point" more important for entry into "the committed life" to the exclusive emphasis on revivalism and personal piety. It is this latter form that persons with strong traditional or Anabaptist orientations find most troubling. They observe that a movement in this direction erodes the Mennonite understanding of adult baptism, church membership, *Gelassenheit* and historical rootedness. Radical forms of Evangelicalism are characterized as being theologically too dogmatic, legalistic, individualistic and emotional to accurately reflect either the traditional or Anabaptist orientations.

A "Christian" orientation refers to an appeal to the notion of the universal church but defined in various ways. In its broadest form it is a recognition of a larger Christian presence in the world and valuing tolerance and cooperation in the interests of expressing Christian unity and solidarity. The difficulty with this position occurs when the rationale is used to support a narrow definition of "Christian." The term is commonly used to mean "evangelical Christian" which in British Columbia excludes much of Christendom and significantly blurs the boundaries between Alliance, Mennonite Brethren, Baptist, Evangelical Free, Pentecostal and Mennonite Church British Columbia. This position permits a free flow of members between them. It also prompts institutions such as Mennonite Educational Institute and Columbia Bible College to define themselves as "Christian" to remain relevant within the broader definition of Evangelicalism.

The most radical understanding of the term "Christian" comes out of the religious movements and non-denominational institutions that have influenced Mennonites in British Columbia. All of these either explicitly or implicitly developed out of anti-church and anti-denominational roots. The movements such as the Charismatic, Jesus and Vineyard Movements emphasize the primary importance of ecstatic religious experiences as opposed to the development of an intellectual faith. Non-denominational institutions such as Campus Crusade are exclusively concerned with evangelism and mission. The local church with its broader agenda and more mundane everyday demands pales in comparison to the high energy and profile these movements and institutions can generate. As a result they drain away traditional religious loyalties and make it more difficult to maintain Anabaptist/ Mennonite distinctive characteristics.

Mennonites in British Columbia exhibit general agreement on Christian orthodoxy but take divergent positions in emphasis and practice. The response to the influence of urbanization and modernity have been far from uniform. This has resulted in a loss of the integration of the economic and political domains with theological orientations. This separation is advanced by the increasing inroads of North American religious currents which place primary emphasis on personal conversion. The central internal debate among Mennonites in British Columbia. is over the definition of "a whole way of life" in its theology and practice. The choices available range from a theology that embraces all of human experience or redefining reality more exclusively in narrow spiritual terms.

To a large extent the Evangelical and "Christian" theology is favored by both the Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church British Columbia members who

share a number of key institutions but is championed by the Mennonite Brethren who have more decidedly embraced Evangelicalism. The influence of Evangelicalism is evident in the two institutions Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church British Columbia churches share. The Mennonite Educational Institute Board Meeting Minutes report a teacher being disqualified from teaching Bible because his views on "hell and eternal punishment" were judged to be doctrinally "on the fringe"[67] and another teacher was commended for presenting "a fine Christian model and teaches Creation Science in his Biology and Science classes."[68] The Columbia Bible College catalogue lists only one course in *Anabaptist History and Thought* which is a prerequisite for graduation. Clearly, the educational institutions have selectively identified with Anabaptism and retained its symbolic value in their institutional mission statements.

Evangelicalism has also influenced an ahistorical almost postmodern orientation which if not totally negating, downplays the significance of Mennonite/Anabaptist roots. The concern expressed is that emphasizing a singular history and culture makes the community too insular and inaccessible to persons from other traditions and denies the universality of the Christian church. One informant summarized the pragmatic side of this position in the statement, "I sense that historical symbols, and placing a value on them, are seen as an impediment. You trip up on those things. You can't get ahead by looking back." The ahistorical and eschatological emphasis in Evangelicalism carries postmodern overtones in that it dismisses the past and abstracts the future in terms of the "end times" which are beyond their control. The emphasis is then on immediate and experiential expressions of Christian piety.

Mennonite identification with history spans the entire spectrum from intense identification with Anabaptist/Mennonite history either from personal experience or through intellectual appropriation, to a total denial of any historical significance. In between people identify either formally or informally with selected aspects of this history. The debate within the community can be characterized as being over the extent to which history is accessible and relevant to contemporary social, political and economic realities in the city.

Women's Voices: Is anyone listening?

Being Mennonite encompassed many things for the 14 women participating in the focus groups, but most centrally, it meant identifying with a cultural/ethnic tradition and an Anabaptist theology. The older generation felt that Mennonite culture and faith were entwined as they were growing up but were no longer as closely linked. However, they did feel that Mennonite culture and heritage were ingrained in their experience. They defined Mennonite faith as based on scripture and having roots in Anabaptist theology. The middle generation recognized that Mennonite culture and traditions were a part of their heritage even if they didn't attend a Mennonite church, speak German or cook the ethnic foods. However, they

identified strongly with the emphasis on particularly pacifism, social justice concerns and a simple lifestyle in Anabaptist theology. For the youngest group, being a Mennonite meant being part of a cultural group with a strong family-oriented tradition. Anabaptist theology was not as central to their definition, although they did state that they thought Mennonites were distinctive because of their peace position.

All three generations of women agreed that Mennonite history and heritage were an important part of their identity. It was these roots that gave them a sense of belonging. The participants claimed that being a Mennonite meant being a part of something bigger, a larger cultural and faith community. They appreciated being connected to others across the country and around the world. Interestingly, one middle cohort participant stated, "I don't really like church. I go to church because I value community." The women in the youngest cohort stated that they appreciated the Mennonite emphasis on family and family history. They felt that they were privileged to be able to attend extended family gathering and meet relatives from across the country.

Although the women enjoyed sharing a sense of history and identity, they were quick to point out that exclusivity was an obvious drawback to emphasizing the ethnic/cultural side of being a Mennonite. Older generation women remembered being taught to be "leery of outsiders". One woman stated that when she was young, the fear ran so deep as to suggest that "anyone who spoke English wasn't a Christian." Younger women stated that this wasn't a concern for them since they had grown up in a more diverse society and were comfortable around people from various walks of life. Focusing mainly upon the cultural Mennonite identity was seen as a barrier for those who didn't identify with it. The middle group affirmed that other cultures brought new perspectives into the church and thus enriched it. Within the Mennonite church, particularly in the Mennonite Brethren churches in the Lower Mainland there is a movement to drop the Mennonite Brethren title and identify themselves as community churches. Although it was agreed that this was a way to be more inclusive, there was concern about forgetting their Mennonite heritage. Moreover, it was also seen as problematic since some people specifically desire to join a Mennonite church because of its Anabaptist theology. Several women were concerned that dropping the Mennonite name was actually deceiving people. Thus a conflict between preserving cultural identity and being open and inviting to those who do not share the same culture or traditions exists.

One *suggested* method of being less exclusive or insular was to teach not only the Mennonite history and heritage of the "Russian Experience" but focus on the broader Anabaptist history and tradition. Anabaptist theology, especially emphasizing living peaceful, simple lives which focus on others was extremely important to many of the women in the 3 different groups. Several of the women in the middle group defined Mennonites as being counter-cultural. Mennonites often raised a dissenting voice; speaking up against injustice. Mennonites, they argued, were and are a people of action, not just words. Reaching out to those in need was important. For these women, faith was intimately connected to action. They praised

Mennonite Central Committee as a very positive and effective relief and service organization which feeds the hungry and addresses social justice issues. Mennonites no longer live apart and are not "separate from the world," but this has allowed Mennonites to provide assistance and be a presence globally. This global concern and action may be a modern day expression of "living in the world" but not "being of it" ideologically and theologically.

With respect to how Mennonite theology has changed over the years, the older group felt that when they were young there was a great deal of negatives being taught from the pulpit. There was an overabundance of rules and regulations regarding what a Mennonite should NOT do. They felt that the church's focus was on salvation and discipleship and thus, discipline oriented. They expressed concern that there was not enough encouragement and little emphasis on being "called" or affirming other's gifts. Humility was an important trait to exhibit, especially for women, who were encouraged to be quiet and humble. They were taught that self-praise (now seen as self-esteem and confidence by these women) was considered wrong, if not sinful. These participants grew up in churches where women were silent and men held all of the positions of power. Growing up, it was not something they questioned, it was just accepted. However, one woman stated that for years she wished she was a man because she wanted to be a preacher.

Regarding the changing role of women with the Mennonite church, there were mixed feelings. The oldest cohort had seen many improvements during their lives. But as one older woman pointed out, "The church has followed the lead of the world, in putting women in subordination to men, whereas I believe the church should have been the leader in liberating women." Women in the middle cohort felt that the church was working toward greater equality between men and women, but that there was still "systemic and subtle discrimination." They pointed out women had found a voice in specific congregations and in inter-Mennonite forums ("Women Doing Theology" conferences, MCC sponsored sexual abuse conferences). Generally women were seen to have greater equality and political power outside of the church than within.

A specific example of the church maintaining inequality between men and women is the The Mennonite Brethren conference's refusal to allow women to be head pastors. This was a significant concern for many of the women, across the generations. If women were allowed to attend seminary and preach and teach as missionaries, why couldn't they be leaders in the church? Interestingly, except for one woman, the youngest group wasn't overly concerned about this issue. They admitted that they had not thought about it much. They accepted and "enjoy(ed) listening to a man more because that's the way I grew up." However, these young women recognized that there are many gifted women within the church and the church should provide the opportunity for women to exercise these gifts.

In addition, several women in the oldest and middle aged groups expressed concern over the "Brethren" in the Mennonite Brethren name. One participant stated that she knew of a number of women who had left Mennonite Brethren churches because of this. Although she felt accepted and affirmed, it was the

politics and policies within the larger conference which was leading her to consider withdrawing her membership. The concern over the name was seen as indicative of the larger issue of using inclusive language within church services.

The oldest generation of women grew up being told "that's the way things have always been" and were not encouraged or allowed to question things. After years of being the quietist of the "quiet in the land," women have begun to speak up and to speak boldly, although it hasn't always been well received. As one young woman claimed, "if they keep quiet, then they won't get anywhere." The younger generations were encouraged by their parents (often mothers) to question and challenge things. One woman stated that it was her children that really encouraged her to think through things. They felt that it was no longer assumed that women would only have certain roles. As one young woman declared, "women weren't created just to be Sunday School teachers."

The oldest generation suggested that Mennonite theology was becoming shallower, with many preachers being influenced by the current "me generation" thinking. Messages from the pulpit were for those who desired things to be comfortable and church to be a "feel good" experience. They felt that the words from the pulpit lacked real "meat". A woman in the youngest cohort expressed concern that churches, particularly Mennonite Brethren ones, were not emphasizing Anabaptist theology enough. Another women stated that she was very concerned about the Mennonite church teaching Evangelical fundamentalism. The oldest cohort stated that Mennonites have gained increasing economic power as the stigma of being Mennonite has been removed. They likened this to the golden era in Russia and felt that history was repeating itself with respect to powerful elites looking down on others. They felt the churches need to stress that the peace theology is not only non-resistance in times of war, but encompasses all of one's interactions, including how we treat neighbors and employees. Living as peaceful people is a way of life, not merely a stance in times when life is threatened. Several women expressed disappointment in the church for becoming assimilated into Canadian culture politically and economically, over-consumption and materialism being two examples of this.

Political Ideology: Whom do Mennonites speak for?

Mennonites in B.C. have not developed a common position on political involvement. For Holdeman Mennonites the separation of church and state prohibits even voting. Others limit their participation to avoiding party politics and the nature of political party solidarity which jeopardizes the exercise of the freedom of conscience. Running for office as an independent candidate is seen as the only appropriate alternative. At the same time there is a growing attitude that this position is politically naive. The rationale being that, "If we are not in the position of influencing people then we can only be the people being led or oppressed." The view is that as a Christian influence in society, Mennonites should be more

politically engaged to ensure that "Kingdom" (of God) values are represented in the political process and reflected in public policy.

Mennonite attitudes to politics are also described as "free enterprise, right wing politics written in the pavement." The reference is to the replication of the historical practice of negotiating with host societies to ensure conditions in which they could prosper. However, the position is more complex than the quote would indicate. Mennonites also support the status quo because it provides them a measure of autonomy and lessens the occasion for government interference in their internal affairs. In this sense Mennonites can be seen as supporting free enterprise politics because it represents their best interests.

However, the right-wing label needs to be qualified since it is inconsistent with the strong emphasis on mutual aid, social programs and activism. At this point Mennonites have achieved middle class lifestyles without the social status generally associated with it. In any case their political orientation will continue to be some blend of self-interest and altruism which confuses conventional political labels.

Economic Ideology: How much is too much?

The most simplistic explanation for Mennonite economic upward mobility is that first generation immigrants were preoccupied with "getting ahead" and ensuring their children *would* not need to suffer and struggle as they did. For some economic success is seen as the natural outcome of a Christian lifestyle characterized by hard work, frugality, honesty and simple living. In this view material success is synonymous with being a good Mennonite and finding favor with God.

Mennonites pride themselves for "getting ahead." Others claim, "If we have been given this gift of making money then we should use it." Regardless of how ethnocentric and egocentric these statements sound, the reality is that Mennonites have found financial success in the British Columbia economy. This success can be partly attributed to intensive Mennonite involvement in real estate and development in the Lower Mainland as the city encroached on their rural holdings. Wall Financial Services and Block Brothers Realty have developed into major players in the construction boom which accompanied the rapid urbanization of the Lower Mainland. For example Wall Financial Services, had amassed total assets of $243,991,000 in the fiscal year ending January 31, 2000.[69]

Unlike professionalism which offered a greater level of autonomy, entrepreneurship created several challenges to Mennonite community life. Successful entrepreneurs whose participation in a competitive economy depended on conforming to a capitalist business ethic and independent decision making felt alienated by the church. Jacob Redekop, a prominent entrepreneur's experience highlights the tension:

> [T]hat in failing to acknowledge and recognize the successful business person the church is alienating a vital part of its membership. After years of alienation, Jacob Redekop believes businesspeople are now starting to be accepted at the local levels, which is a positive step in building the kingdom of God.[70]

Evidence of the churches rehabilitation of entrepreneurs can be seen in the increase in institution building in British Columbia. Mennonite Central Committee, Columbia Bible College and the Mennonite Educational Institute have development offices to attract large donors for the expansion of facilities and major programs. Columbia Bible College recently received the capital to build a gymnasium on the condition the College first liquidate its operating deficit. The gym opened in time for graduation in April 2001. Mennonite Educational Institute is another focus of large donors and now offers K-12 courses on its Clearbrook campus, and K-9 classes on its newly purchased Chilliwack campus (formerly Valley Christian School). Plans are under way to build a middle-school. In 1986 several large donors dissatisfied with the financial management and lack of aggressive church growth in the Mennonite Church British Columbia conference formed the "Friends of the Conference" and designated their giving as a block to church growth. The pragmatic incorporation of individual effort has facilitated a significant range of institutions and programs but weakened the Anabaptist principle of community accountability when done "on my own terms."

The church serves as the central visible focus of Mennonite identification. In addition there is strong support for a theology which embraces a dynamic relationship between faith and action reflected in a high involvement in volunteerism, Mennonite Central Committee and local social programs (mediation, social services, Victim Offender Ministries, food banks, social housing etc.) The Mennonite Brethren have more aggressively embraced urbanization leaving the Mennonite Church British Columbia churches with a sense of inferiority about the adequacy of their response to the religious climate of British Columbia. Cited most often among Mennonite Church British Columbia members is a desire to emulate the Mennonite Brethren who are seen to have made the transition more successfully measured by their numerical growth in the last two decades. This and a pervading evangelical ideology that negates the significance of denominational distinctions have resulted in a significant drift of Mennonite Church British Columbia members and a pronounced movement of the children of members not only in the direction of the Mennonite Brethren churches but also to the Alliance, Evangelical Free and Baptist churches and, more recently, the Vineyard Movement. As a result Mennonites are free to circulate as religious consumers selecting from the offerings of what has become a competitive religious marketplace. Many Mennonites are proactive in the drive to attract new members which amounts to "recycling saints." In an urban and modern context which promotes individual autonomy church discipline loses its coercive potential over individual choices. Membership is more symbolic than a sign of commitment.

Alternately several churches continue to struggle with maintaining the Anabaptist community ethic as an alternative to the homogenizing effect of modernization. For the Holdeman Mennonites who settled in the Mt. Lehman district near Abbotsford the host society remained hostile to their self-definition as "a community apart." As the Mennonites before them, the Holdeman Mennonites were economic migrants from the prairie provinces but with a stronger determination to hold to their traditional Anabaptist values. Most were persons without farms of their own in the prairies looking to expand their opportunities for work and/or to purchase cheap land. The end of W.W.II brought more freedom of movement as restrictions on conscientious objectors were lifted. Between 1946 and 1948 three families arrived in the Lower Mainland. In 1948 and 1949 they were joined by 17 more families and three singles. These made up the charter members of a new congregation. The community grew to 247 in 1973 when their self-definition as being a community "without spot or wrinkle" was challenged on several fronts. The "worldly" influence of the public school system was seen as responsible for a significant number of young people rejecting the community's values. Secondly, the encroachment of the city into the Lower Mainland made contamination by secular influences a growing threat. Finally, the introduction of corporate farming, went against the ethic of avoiding being "unequally yoked" with non-members. The threats called for drastic action to safeguard their values and maintain their collective integrity as "the true church." The school issue was settled by opening their own private schools in 1975 and recruiting teachers from within the group. The "worldly" influence of the city evident in the group was purged by invoking strict church discipline and enforcing a ban on recalcitrant members. The corporate farming issue was resolved when a number of larger operations liquidated their holdings in the Lower Mainland and adopted more acceptable farming practices in rural settings where family and community values could more effectively be protected. Of all the Mennonites in the Lower Mainland the Holdeman Mennonites alone responded to a challenge to their core values much like many Mennonite groups before them: reentrenchment and strategic retreat. By 1981 the membership had shrunk to 105.

Discussion and Conclusions

It is clear that geographical isolation or concentration no longer serve as a determinant of Mennonite community. Only the Holdeman Mennonites continue to enforce church discipline and encourage strategic retreats to maintain community and family values. Most other Mennonites have not displayed the same resistance to urbanization. For the middle-aged and older Mennonites, urbanization came about either out of necessity or from urban encroachment. The fact that they were initially reluctant participants in this process and had an abhorrence of the city as "worldly" retarded their adaptation to urban life but could not prevent it. Urbanization has been less of a problem for most second generation Mennonites in

the Lower Mainland. Many have shed the ethnic distinctiveness of the closed rural past, reoriented their lifestyles to the realities of a pluralistic, competitive and cosmopolitan urban life and rationalized this development as a kind of "diaspora" to help Mennonites become more socially and religiously relevant within the urban context. Mennonites seek to reconstruct a distinct way of life and differ mainly in the degree to which they look to history to resist behavioral incorporation and structural adaptation.

As outlined earlier urbanization and modernization assume conformity to market driven economies and its attendant characteristics. To a large extent Mennonites in the Lower Mainland have embraced capitalism and become significant participants in its reproduction and legitimization. While some find shelter from direct class conflict in professions, they also benefit directly from the economic system as a whole. In this Mennonites in the Lower Mainland are responding as their ancestors did in the cities before them. The benefits which come from conformity to the dominant economic system as it evolved in frontier British Columbia society needs to be factored into any explanation for their upward mobility. Conformity to capitalist principles has naturally drawn many Mennonites into the conservative politics which has dominated most of the Provinces political history. While the materialist orientation is somewhat softened by strong support for charity and institution building, the results follow a pattern evident wherever Mennonites have settled in the city: Amsterdam, Hamburg and Danzig.

The on-going theological fragmentation among Mennonites in British Columbia can be explained in several ways. Firstly, urbanization and modernity make few demands beyond economic and political conformity. On religious matters the city tolerates pluralism as long as it does not interfere with its primary objective: economic growth. Without the constraints of community solidarity, individuals are exposed to a variety of religious expressions from which they are free to select elements to meet their individual needs. Religious values then take on the characteristics of the free market.

The second explanation which is more adequate for Mennonites in Lower Mainland recognizes the ideological gap between the demands of modernity and the strongly held community values of the past. While there is resistance to abandoning traditional and Anabaptist collective values and beliefs, North American expressions of Evangelicalism appear to offer a solution to the dilemma without adopting the ritualistic high church theologies of the mainline churches. These were too closely identified with the politics that had originally restrained Mennonite penetration into the province. This partly explains Mennonite reticence to consider liberal theology as an adaptive strategy. As a result Mennonites more naturally identified with Evangelical churches as co-religionists. More importantly evangelical theology shares individualist, abstract and ahistorical characteristics with modernity. In short, Evangelicalism solves the theological and secular value conflicts by reformulating Anabaptist/Mennonite theology in subjective spiritualized, affective, internalized and reasonable terms much like the Dutch Anabaptists did once they accepted their impotence as a force for shaping the

course of Dutch history.

Finally, as Mennonite churches become larger and more "seeker-friendly" they are dropping the Mennonite name and calling themselves community churches. This has often brought with it an increase in evangelical theology and a negation or downplaying of Mennonite history. Particularly older and middle aged women who often are the kin-keepers in a culture are more sensitive to the extent of the loss this shift represents. Most women strongly identified with Anabaptist theology, particularly emphasizing the importance of peace building, concern for social justice and adherence to a simple lifestyle. Interestingly, those most vocal about this tradition had attended Mennonite Bible colleges (most often Canadian Mennonite Bible College, now Canadian Mennonite University) and had worked for MCC. It appears that this stronger Anabaptist emphasis is not coming from the churches but from the Mennonite educational and service organizations. As one young woman explained, "I wasn't taught much about Anabaptist theology or Mennonite history growing up, I learned that in college." As Mennonite women's voices become stronger they may yet lead the Mennonite church back to its spiritual roots in Anabaptism provided churches structures become more inclusive of women and their voices are taken seriously.

The generative approach to analysis resists defining emerging forms in favor of understanding the variables which inform the selection and inspiration which produces them. Mennonite experience in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia suggests that their ethnic and religious identity was relatively well defined and stable as long as they were perceived as subsocial by the host society and Mennonites defined society as "worldly." Mennonite ethnic and religious values were protected by geographical isolation and social stigma. Full citizenship and social acceptance combined with the rapid urbanization and modernization assumed conformity to social forces over which Mennonites had no control. Economically and politically most Mennonites have become virtually indistinguishable from their non-Mennonite neighbors. Mennonite self-definition as an ethno-religious people has also become less distinct.

One thing all Mennonites in the Lower Mainland could not entirely avoid was engagement with the demands of urbanization and modernization. The Holdeman Church has maintained the strongest "world denying" stance and retained the ethnic and theological character of a "community apart" at the expense of strain associated with determined resistance. The Mennonite Brethren exhibit a more pronounced "world enhancing" response through behavioral conformity and a realignment of their theology to minimize value conflicts but experience the loss of historical continuity. While conforming to the central demands of urbanization, the Mennonite Church British Columbia churches stronger congregational polity has prevented a common theological response from developing. Their responses to the demands of urban life range across the Traditional, Anabaptist, Evangelical and "Christian" theological spectrum. Clearly, Mennonites in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia have been able to selectively retain elements of the Anabaptist/ Mennonite heritage but only within the constraints imposed by urbanization and

its corollary modernization. In the generative process as has happened throughout their history, once again it appears that "the merchant has triumphed over the preacher." Rather than transforming society or even themselves into communities "without spot or wrinkle" they have themselves been transformed into solid Canadian citizens.

Notes

[1] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 5.

[2] See Calvin Redekop, "The Sect Cycle in Perspective," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (962), 155-161; "Religion in Society: A State within a Church," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 47 (1973), 339-357; "A New Look at Sect Developement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 13 (1974), 345-352 and Howard J. Kaufman & Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethern in Christ Demoninations* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975) and Peter M. Hamm, *Continuity & Change among Canadian Mennonite Brethren* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1987).

[3] Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in the Global Village* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 1.

[4] See Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, Vols. I and II (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1960).

[5] See Richard C. Niebuhr, *The Social Forces of Demoninationalism* (Cleveland: Meridian, 1929). Chapters 2 and 3.

[6] Driedger, *Mennonites in the Global Village*, 232.

[7] Laura Jean Beattie, "The Ethnic Church and Immigrant Integration: Social Services, Cultural Preservation and the Re-definition of Cultural Identity," Doctoral Diss.: University of British Columbia, 1998.

[8] Ruth Gump, "Ethnicity and Assimilation: German Postwar Immigrants in Vancouver, 1945-1970," Masters Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1989.

[9] Peter M. Hamm, *Continuity & Change among Canadian Mennonite Brethren* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1987), 14.

[10] Doug Klassen, "Ethnicity as Process: an Examination of the Mennonite Brethren in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia," Masters Thesis: University of Victoria, 1995.

[11] Fredrik Barth, *Process and Form in Social Life, Selected Essays of Fredrick Barth*: Volume I. (London: Routlage & Kegan Paul, 1981), 35.

[12] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society*, 1780-1950 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), 334.

[13] Michael Foucault in Michael D. Driedger, "Mennonites? Heretics? Obedient Citizens? Categorizing People in Hamburg and Altona, 1648-1713," Doctoral Diss.: Queen's University, 1996, 31.

[14] See Ferdinand Tonnies, *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*. (London: Routlage, 1955. [1887]).

[15] See Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1938 [1893]).

[16] See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Theses on Feuerbach" and "Marx to P.V. Annenkov

in Paris," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Press, 1970), 28-30, 659-669.

[17] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's, 1958).

[18] Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 45-46.

[19] Peter L. Berger, *Facing Up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics, and Religion*. (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[20] Alastair Hamilton, "The Development of Dutch Anabaptism in the light of the European Magisterial and Radical Reformation." in Alastair Hamilton; Sjouke Voolstra & Piet Visser, eds. *From Martyr to Muppy: A Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation Processes of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands: The Mennonites*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 11-13.

[21] Ramseyer, Robert L., "A Consideration of the Fruitfulness of Wallace's Concept of the Revitalization Movement for Study of the Early Stages of the Biblical Anabaptist (Mennonite) Movement in Switzerland, Germany, and the Low Countries Between 1525 and 1560," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 44, 159-180.

[22] Sjouke Voolstra, "'The Colony of Heaven': The Mennonite Aspiration to be a Church Without Spot or Wrinkle in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth century," in Hamilton, Voolstra, & Visser, *From Martyr to Muppy*, 29.

[23] Ibid, 29.

[24] Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 162-212.

[25] Ibid, 175.

[26] M. Driedger, "Mennonites?," 30.

[27] James Urry, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989), 47-48 and John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethern Church*, (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1975), 14.

[28] Frank H Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), 49.

[29] Brock, *Pacifism in Europe*, 253-254.

[30] Adam Giesinger, *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans*. (Battleford: Marian Press, 1974), 183.

[31] Urry, *None but Saints* and John Staples, "Landless Without Crisis: Johann Cornies and Mennonite Reactions to Landlessness before 1861," Paper presented at Khortitza '99 Mennonites in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union' at Zaporizhia, Ukraine, May 27-30, 1999.

[32] Frank H Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), 200.

[33] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), 178.

[34] J.J. Thiessen to C. Lehn May 24, 1950.

[35] E.K.Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona: D.W. Friesen, 1955), 210.

[36] Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990), 83.

[37] Elsie Harder, "A Survey of the Development of Mennonites in Vancouver," Unpublished: Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, 1981), 1.

[38] J.V. Neufeld, "The Mennonite Settlement near Vanderhoof in the Nechako Valley British Columbia 1918," Unpublished manOuscript, undated.

[39] *Victoria Daily Times*, Oct. 2, 1918, p. 13.

[40] *Victoria Daily Times*, Nov. 7, 1918, p. 8.

[41] *The Daily Colonist*, May 14, 1920, p. 4.

[42] John J. Krahn, "A History of the Mennonites in British Columbia," Unpublishd paper: University of British Columbia, 1955, 26-27.

[43] *Victoria Daily Times*, Dec. 8, 1927, p.18.

[44] *Statutes of the Province of British Columbia*, (Victoria: Queens Printer 1931), 87.

[45] *The Daily Colonist*, Nov. 11, 1938, p.7.

[46] John A Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethern Church* (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1975), 167-171.

[47] G.G. Baerg, *Brief History of Mennonites in British Columbia* (Yarrow: Columbia Press, 1967), 4.

[48] Peter Kehler, "The History of the General Conference Church at Yarrow, B.C.," Unpublished: CMBC, 1951, 5.

[49] *Victoria Daily Times*, Jan. 28, 1942, 20.

[50] *The Vancouver Daily Province*, March 20, 1943, 5.

[51] *The Vancouver Sun*, March 20, 1943, 16.

[52] BCCM, Nov. 1942, 114-115 cited in J.P.Schmidt, "Pilgrims in Paradise: Sixty Years of Growth in the Mennonite Brethren Churches in British Columbia," Doctoral Diss.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991, 86.

[53] *Abbotsford Sumas and Matsqui News*, May 12, 1943, 43.

[54] *The Vancouver Sun*, Dec. 9, 1943, 17.

[55] *Victoria Daily Times*, Dec. 16, 1946, 22.

[56] *The Vancouver Sun*, April 21, 1948, 6.

[57] *The Vancouver Sun* April 27, 1948, 11.

[58] *Conference of Mennonites in Canada Yearbooks*, 1951, 1961, 1971.

[59] Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church British Columbia, CGCM Yearbooks & Census Canada

[60] Alfred H Siemens, "Mennonite Settlement in the Lower Fraser Valley," Masters Thesis: University of British Columbia, 1960.

[61] Ibid, 137.

[62] Ibid, 140.

[63]Brian M. Bullivant "Multiculturalism-Pluralist Orthodoxy or Ethnic Hegemony" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 13 (1981), 17.

[64] John Norris, *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia*. (Vancouver: Evergreen, 1971), 3.

[65] Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1982), 111-112.

[66] See Robert Kenneth Burkinshaw, *Strangers and Pilgrims in Lotus Land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia, 1917-1981* (Doctoral Dissertation: The University of British Columbia, 1988) and Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods* (Toronto: Irving, 1987)

[67] Mennonite Educational Institute Board Minutes, 90-39.

[68] Ibid, 90-45.

[69] *FP Survey Industrials 2000*, (Toronto: Financial Post, 2000), 942.

[70] Calvin W. Redekop & Benjamin W. Redekop, *Entrepreneurs in the Faith Community*, (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1996), 97.