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A Confluence of Alternatives : The Merging of Mennonites and Peace Projects in Kenya

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2012-06-13 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 石田, 慎一郎 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00002503

A Confluence of Alternatives: The Merging of Mennonites and Peace Projects in Kenya

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the relationship between worldwide trends in alternative justice (Ishida ed. 2011) and the pacifism of Anabaptist Mennonites¹⁾.

According to Katano (2008: 140), ‘traditional Mennonite pacifism is said to be non-resistance, emphasising a humble, passive, withdrawn attitude, refusing to pursue lawsuits, abstaining from participation in labour unions and practising conscientious objection’. In the 20th century, Mennonite pacifism transitioned its typical style ‘from passive to active, from withdrawn to participatory’ (*ibid.*: 152), and replaced the above-mentioned ‘traditional non-resistance/non-participation’ (*ibid.*: 141) with activism, which endorsed mediation/conflict resolution and peace building²⁾.

In the context of present international trends in alternative justice, Mennonite pacifism is making its presence felt in various ways. To offer several concrete examples, as described below, Mennonite intellectuals are acknowledged as proponents of the theory and practice of restorative justice as well as conflict transformation; the Mennonite Conciliation Service is known as one of the trailblazing attempts to practise popular justice; and the Mennonite Central Committee is engaged in various peace projects in

Asian and African countries³). In Kenya, where I am carrying out anthropological research, the involvement of the Mennonite Central Committee can be seen in activities that promote ‘alternative peace’.

Thus, the relationship between the international trend toward alternative justice and Mennonite pacifism demands attention. This relationship is acknowledged by observations regarding the development of restorative justice in Canada such as ‘Mennonite adherent Howard Zehr is said to be the founder of restorative justice, and in both Canada and the United States, the development of restorative justice programs, particularly their early diffusion, cannot be discussed without mentioning the efforts of religious groups like the Mennonites’ (Kishimoto 2004: 331).

While it is a fact that the Mennonite influence is acknowledged in this sense, it is incorrect to assume that Mennonite doctrine and ideology is reflected in a consistent form in international trends in alternative justice, or that the trends are shaped by Mennonite activities.

I treat ‘trailblazing’ Mennonite involvement in the theory and practice of alternative justice—including popular justice, restorative justice, and conflict transformation—not as one-way ‘propagation’ of unique Mennonite doctrine and ideology, but as a ‘merging’ with various approaches marginalised within traditional forms of law/justice. Further, I regard this as the result of a confluence of numerous alternatives, including Mennonite efforts.

To illustrate perspectives such as those above, Part 2 of this paper describes the views disseminated by Mennonite intellectuals (2.1) and the activities practised globally by a Mennonite organisation (2.2). Then, this paper focuses on the nature of the contact point shared by Mennonite ideology and action when such exists in specific social contexts where various alternative justice efforts are disseminated and received—treated here in this paper as ‘merging’. Lastly, Part 3 focuses upon peace projects in East Africa/Kenya in which the Mennonite Central Committee has directly participated.

2. The Views Disseminated by Mennonites

2.1 Theory and Methods

First, this section focuses upon Howard Zehr and John Paul Lederach, two Mennonite intellectuals. These two individuals are pragmatists with experience in victim offender reconciliation programs within the Mennonite community as well as mediation projects, and are known as proponents of two approaches which are heavily influential in the context of worldwide trends in alternative justice, namely restorative justice and conflict transformation.

The point I would like to emphasise here is that Zehr and Lederach acknowledge that their approaches, which have attracted a wide range of supporters, are based upon Mennonite’s original ideology, but they refuse to expand these into universal models, insisting instead upon a position that recognises the cultural diversity of different methodologies. Specifically, Zehr says that the concrete method of restorative justice he advocates is unique in that it is based upon his experiences as a North American

Mennonite, and that this should be redesigned in an original form when practised in other regions. Lederach, meanwhile, advocates a concrete methodology for discovering/developing approaches to reconciliation and conflict management which are unique to the regions in which they are practised.

Howard Zehr, who has many years of experience operating the Mennonite Victim Offender Reconciliation Program⁴⁾ and is the author of *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Zehr 2003), is known as a pioneer of restorative justice⁵⁾. Restorative justice, as an alternative approach to criminal justice, contrasts with retributive justice. Retributive justice is characterised by strict application of rules and harsh punishments against offenders. Restorative justice, on the other hand, places healing for the victim above all else, with the aim of restoring the relationship between victim and offender. Restorative justice does not uniformly negate strict punishment for offenders. However, strict punishment alone neglects aid for the victim and the restoration of the living environment and the social relationships which surround the victim. This approach to problems lies at the root of ideas of restorative justice.

Zehr says the following, acknowledging that his methodology stands against a unique social and religious background: 'I write from my own "lens," and that is shaped by who I am: a white, middle-class male of European ancestry, a Christian, a Mennonite. This biography and these, as well as other, interests necessarily shape my voice and vision' (Zehr 2002: 7). In *Changing Lenses* (Zehr 2003), Zehr discusses the need to heal victims and offenders, stating that remorse and forgiveness are preconditions for this. This perhaps indicates that he acknowledges fragments of the Anabaptist ideology and view on conflict in the need for healing and forgiveness he describes.

This paper will not pinpoint one by one those portions of Zehr's restorative justice theory which appear to be influenced by his social, religious, or historical background⁶⁾. Here, rather, I will focus on the claim that it should be adapted in an appropriate manner when applied in different regions. Specifically, in the preface to the Japanese version of *Changing Lenses*, Zehr states that because restorative justice can take on many diverse forms, various communities and various cultures must come up with systems and methods of using them that fit with their needs and traditions (Zehr 2003: 6).

With regard to Anabaptist Amish forgiveness, Kraybill, et al. (2008) have, like Zehr, added a warning to the effect that methods based on one's own history and faith should not be applied directly in other regions. On October 2, 2006, a shooting occurred at an Anabaptist Amish school in Pennsylvania. The suspect restrained ten girls, of whom he killed five. The perpetrator, who committed suicide after the crime, was not Amish. However, Amish people including the parents of the slain girls visited the home of the perpetrator following the incident to express forgiveness. How were relatives of the victims able to immediately express forgiveness? The Anabaptist researchers point out that forgiveness does not depend upon regrets or apologies on the part of the perpetrator, that it is not an individual but a community which shoulders the burden of forgiveness, and that this was not in fact an expression of heartfelt forgiveness but a decision that recourse would not be pursued through negative behaviours. They also state that Amish forgiveness is based upon a unique history, faith, and way of life, and should not be

viewed as a methodology which may be applied only in part in other regions. Further, they say if an attempt were to be made to apply it, a courteous and discrete method of application would have to be devised (Kraybill, et al. 2008: 275).

The theory of conflict transformation proposed by John Paul Lederach (Lederach 1995; Katano 2009), who has many years of experience working with the Mennonite Conciliation Service⁷), has received attention in the field of peace studies, particularly as an elicitive approach for developing conflict resolution abilities (for instance, Ishida 2003; International Alert 2002: 249-250; Avruch 1998: 73). Lederach states clearly that his conflict transformation theory originates with Anabaptist Mennonite ideology (Lederach 2003). In this sense he is like Zehr, whose theory is described above.

Lederach's theory of conflict resolution holds that to make it possible to implement peacebuilding in regions experiencing conflict, it is vital to develop human resources, and that to this end 'popular education, particularly of the Freirean school; appropriate technology emerging from the field of international development; and ethnographic research' are three absolutely indispensable techniques (Lederach 1995: 25). First, popular education requires not one-way transmission of knowledge but interactive participatory education of human resources. Second, regarding appropriate technology, rather than simply importing European or American knowledge and techniques, it is necessary to thoroughly mobilise local resources. Third, ethnographies require study of the nature of the local resources. Lederach points out that people in the conflicted region are not simply recipients of support, but an indispensable resource in the peacebuilding process. The technique of developing models rooted in the region as part of this process is called an elicitive approach, and this is in contrast with normative approaches that tend to apply universal models to differing societies (Lederach 1995).

In 1995 and 1996, I spent a total of four months in the Enga Province of the Papua New Guinea highlands. During this time, I became aware of a peace project operating in the area. I later looked into this and learned that it was being operated by a Catholic missionary named Douglas Young who was engaged in the development of a model of mediation based on Lederach's elicitive approach. At that time, in Enga chronic conflicts between different local groups were becoming a social problem. Various government policies aimed at addressing this problem, primarily legislation enabling crackdowns, severe punishment and the use of riot police, had failed to produce the intended effects. Young, therefore, undertook a peace project based on a plan to develop mediation techniques rooted in the region and to reinforce the mediation skills of local people, who were facing severe conflicts between clans. He organised and managed workshops, which included Roderic Lacey, a pioneering researcher into oral tradition in the New Guinea highlands, as well as local intellectuals. It is very fascinating to note that these workshops, which used the elicitive approach, designated ethnographic studies of Enga society as one portion of the foundation of a pragmatic approach for resolving conflicts (Ishida 2002; 2003).

2.2 The Activities of the Mennonite Central Committee

Above, I have pointed out that Mennonite intellectuals are recognised as the proponents

of two trailblazing methodologies, restorative justice theory and conflict transformation theory, which have been very influential in worldwide trends in alternative justice. I have focused upon the fact that these two intellectuals have refused to standardize specific methods as universally applicable, and have instead insisted upon a view that recognises the cultural diversity of methodologies.

Below, I will examine the global activities undertaken by the Mennonite Central Committee, which participates in peace projects in conflicted regions, focusing upon the fact that rather than widely propagating Anabaptist pacifism itself, they emphasise the specific cultures and views of various regions and their search for a method of support that merges the two.

The Mennonite Central Committee (referred to below as the MCC) originated with the Anabaptist sect and practices various activities through branches it has opened around the world. To briefly sum up the unique characteristics of its activities, the Committee is an international aid organisation, which originates with a Christian group, and one of its major activities is providing support for private peace projects. In addition to peace projects, the MCC also 'aids refugees, provides materials, manages an international relief fund and an aid ministry organisation, and supports activities of volunteer staff in 57 countries with an annual budget of \$60 million' (Suzuki 2005: 94).

As a concrete example of aid provided to a popular justice program, I will discuss examples from Zambia and the Philippines. The text below was found while browsing newsletters issued on the web by the MCC peace office. These are portions of an interview conducted with the leaders of a Mennonite-supported grassroots peace project when they were invited to and attended the 1999 Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) held at Eastern Mennonite University. These words demonstrate two unique characteristics, the introduction of restorative justice and consideration for regional diversity.

One of the courses that we plan to introduce is restorative justice. Of course, there are a lot of principles that go with that kind of justice in the North American context. We want to draw from the traditional setting. We are trying to say, in fact, that restorative justice is not a new concept, because it is something people have lived with for ages. (Katongo 2000)

[T]he Philippine government, dominated as it has been for the past century by the United States, has largely bought into Western ways of addressing conflict through courts and the legal system, at the expense of effective ways of addressing conflict that are embedded in the cultures of the peoples of the Philippines...So local ways of resolving conflict are being eroded. It's important to reaffirm the experience of hundreds and hundreds of years of settling our own conflict rather than importing this lawyering that is so commercialized. (Onalan 2000)

The points above may be summarised as follows. Mennonite intellectuals as well as the MCC are known as important actors in worldwide trends in alternative justice. Yet,

they do not ‘propagate’ Anabaptist doctrine and ideology⁸), but rather ‘merge’ with the venue for disseminating a form of alternative justice ideology that emphasises the unique cultures and ways of thinking found in various regions. They also collect the faintest voices that had been marginalised in the past. I assume this could be the current situation of the relationship between worldwide trends in alternative justice and Mennonites. The word ‘merge’ has been used based on the following words from Zehr.

For some time the restorative justice stream was driven underground by our modern legal systems. In the last quarter century, however, that stream has resurfaced, growing into a widening river. Restorative justice today is acknowledged worldwide by governments and communities concerned about crime. Thousands of people around the globe bring their experience and expertise to the river. This river, like all rivers, exists because it is being fed by numerous tributaries flowing in from around the world.

Some of the feeder streams are practical programs, such as those being implemented in many countries throughout the globe. The river is also being fed by a variety of indigenous traditions and current adaptations which draw upon those traditions: family group conferences adapted from Maori traditions in New Zealand, for example; sentencing circles from aboriginal communities in the Canadian north; Navajo peacemaking courts; African customary law; or the Afghani practice of *jirga*. (Zehr 2002: 61-62)

The next section offers detailed descriptions of cases in which the Mennonite Central Committee has participated in local peace projects in Kenya, showing an understanding of the relationship between the two as an act of ‘merging’.

3. Mennonite Kenya

3.1 Development Program in Kenya

The MCC Kenya head office is located in a quiet residential section of the Westlands district in the capital city, Nairobi. Its primary domestic activities in Kenya are projects related to development support, including supplying water to dry lands, offering food support to disaster-stricken areas, providing educational support and creating strategies for handling HIV/AIDS. Unique Mennonite characteristics are apparent in support for a series of peace projects, which will be described in this section.

The peace projects currently supported by Mennonite Kenya originate with the Pastoralist Community Development Program (PCDP), which it initiated in 1994. Initially, the aid project targeted pastoral groups (the Maasai, Borana, Turkana, Rendille, Pokot, Gabra, Somali and Samburu). Later, it changed its name to the Community Peace Museum Program (CPMP) and expanded the project’s scope to include farming communities (including the Gikuyu, Embu, Meru, Luhya, Gusii and Suba), so that in 2000, it targeted 31 ethnic groups. As of 2000, 35 field assistants were engaged in creating records and teaching materials related to the diverse ‘peace culture’ of each region/group, displaying these in a privately established peace museum in each region and beginning to carry out peace education at primary and secondary schools. In July

2007, workers held a memorial event in which trees, which symbolise peace in Gikuyu society, were planted at the site of a massacre, which occurred during the Mau Mau Uprising (the Kenyan war of independence). The Mennonite Central Committee's workbook for the year 2000 (MCC 2001: 18-21) states a plan in which peace projects were established as the primary task facing Mennonite Kenya.

In 2002, the peace museum project splintered off as African Initiative for Alternative Peace and Development (AFRIPAD) and began activities as a Mennonite partner organisation. However, the head office was established on the premises of Mennonite Kenya headquarters, and there was no change in the provision of funding for activities by Mennonites. According to the 2005 workbook (MCC 2006a), of 17 AFRIPAD staff, one worked as coordinator and 16 worked as field assistants. This single coordinator was a man named Kariuki Thuku.

I first met Kariuki Thuku, the coordinator, in August 2006 at AFRIPAD's head office. The head office held specialised files for each ethnic group in Kenya in which various documents created by field assistants were organised and stored. There had been no significant changes since the initiation of the peace museum project, and implementation of surveys/creation of records regarding peace culture for use at schools continued (Muhando and Thuku 2005). As described in a pamphlet introducing the project's activities, at the time, it operated peace museums in five Kenyan ethnic societies (Gikuyu, Embu, Suba, Borana and Elmolo).

AFRIPAD has implemented a museum education project in which primary school classes come to the museum for field trips. By listening to explanations of exhibits given by museum staff, the primary school students learn conflict management methods specific to the region. These explanations of exhibits adhere to a predetermined syllabus. After the field trips, the students use predetermined teaching materials to review the content of the exhibits.

AFRIPAD does not operate grassroots mediation forums on its own. Its main activities are educational campaigns aimed at applying peacebuilding and conflict management methods unique to the region. With regard to peacebuilding and reconciliation as well as general conflict management, it particularly emphasises research of the traditional methods as well as education based on the results.

The concrete nature of the activities carried out by AFRIPAD will be discussed in the two sections below.

3.2 The Agikuyu Peace Museum

During the period of colonial rule, which lasted from the end of the 19th century to 1963, the relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Kenya was not a simple antagonistic model with the British rulers (the government) on one side and the Africans (citizens) subject to their rule on the other. Even among people who shared common ancestors, languages, lifestyles and customs, unfortunate disputes arose between those who sided with the rulers and those forced into being ruled. Many of those on the ruled side organised armed conflicts and lost their lives in battles to the bitter end. Protracted, forced conflicts among local people left deep scars on the society of the region. The

conflicts were especially severe in the Mount Kenya region. The scars have yet to heal.

Those whose land and families were taken away through use of devastating military force are now mostly of advanced age. The younger generation has not experienced the violent rule of the past; however, recollections of the violence are engraved into the memory of the local society, and the suspicion and mistrust created by the past remain deeply rooted.

In July 2007, I visited Nyeri, a town on the south-western highland at the foot of Mount Kenya. Nyeri is located 150 km to the northwest of the capital city Nairobi. As befits the capital of the Central Province, it possesses ample urban functionality. It is an important transit centre and hub for highways that run throughout the country. The inner city bus terminal is packed with buses bound for a wide variety of domestic destinations. The town is full of shops selling all types of goods, *nyama choma* barbecue restaurants billowing with smoke from charcoal fires, urban banks equipped with ATMs, bars in which one can watch European football broadcasts, cyber cafes in which the Internet may be used, and so on. In contrast with the congestion and tumult of the inner city, the suburbs are dotted with quiet, high-class hotels devoted entirely to use by foreign tourists who have come to see Mount Kenya and the wildlife preserve. The fertile highland zone that surrounds the town is used to cultivate important cash crops such as tea and coffee.

The base for AFRIPAD's peace project in Nyeri is the Agikuyu Peace Museum located on the outskirts of a shopping district. This museum, which was privately established by AFRIPAD coordinator Kariuki Thuku, is a facility dedicated entirely to the purpose of peace education. Instead of Kariuki, who works in the office of the capital city Nairobi, management of the museum is generally handled by curator Francis Muritu.

The museum possesses a cloister-style second floor, with the first floor having an open ceiling design. The walls of both the first and second floors are lined with everyday tools, instruments and accoutrements once used by the Agikuyu (Gikuyu people) who lived in the Central Province, as well as old photographs, which appear to have been taken over the course of the 60-year span between the beginning of the 20th century and Kenyan independence. At a glance, it is a museum displaying materials related to local history and indigenous culture.

While listening to the explanations given by the curator, I went around the exhibition area, which is filled to the brim with numerous everyday articles and old photographs. By the end, I understood clearly that the exhibition area was designed carefully with peace education as its goal. Visitors learn about the connection between the daily lives of the people and the richly productive land, which existed in pre-colonial Agikuyu society as well as the human bondage that emerged as the land was used. The land is the mother, and the people are children.

How was 'beauty' understood in Agikuyu society? To find this out, visitors continue to the exhibition area where accoutrements are displayed. The people who lived in harmony with the earth gave beauty tangible form through the medium of these accoutrements. The exhibit labels introduce a proverb in the Gikuyu language meaning, 'Where there is beauty, there is peace'. A life in tandem with the beauty of nature is also given expression in the song and dance of the Gikuyu people. The visitor continues to

the display of traditional music instruments in the exhibition area. Strife within the community was solved through meetings with local elders. The next display after that of the traditional instruments features artefacts related to the grass roots conflict management once practised by these wise men.

Then colonial rule begins. The exhibition area displays numerous photos of atrocities, clubs, manacles, bombs, munitions and tax receipts, all genuine historical artefacts. These artefacts demonstrate that the tranquil nature of pre-colonial life was shattered by devastating military force.

This series of exhibits is structured in such a way that the visitor is exposed to violent realities only after learning about the life of the people during the age of peace, so that it is possible to make a comparison between the two.

The DVD video program produced by the MCC (MCC 2006b)⁹⁾ contains footage of a day when a group of primary and secondary school children came to the Peace Museum for a field trip. The video also contains a scene in which Kariuki Thuku explains various cultural methods used in both the past and present by Africans for conflict resolution, as well as a scene in which Kariuki's father Paul Migwi Thuku urges children to reconsider the fact that they have been led to believe their own traditions are backward.

3.3 Alternative Peace

AFRIPAD is an acronym for African Initiative for Alternative Peace and Development. The term 'alternative peace' indicates the notion that unique methods of peacebuilding exist in each region and that Western values/concepts of peace are not absolute.

Kariuki has exchanged opinions with Mennonite intellectuals including Howard Zehr while visiting the United States and also with Mennonite Kenya staff and Agikuyu elders within Kenya. The explanations attached to the series of exhibits in the Agikuyu Museum are structured by ideas gained through this process of discussion.

After visiting the museum, I left on a two-day excursion in the Nyeri area with curator Muritu as well as the elder brother of the founder Kariuki, Muthee Thuku, known as a human rights activist. AFRIPAD, which is organised by Kariuki, implements projects similar to the Agikuyu Peace Museum throughout Kenya and also conducts peace projects to restore ties in the scarred community and to repair the land, that is, the ties binding people and nature. The objective of our excursion was to visit sites related to peace projects in the Nyeri area.

On the first day, we visited the Kariba caves. These are naturally formed caves, which served as hiding places for those who resisted the colonial government. One of the caves is located in a ravine surrounding a beautiful mountain stream, and while we were visiting, a woman carrying a Bible was there praying.

The next day, Muritu, Muthee and I were joined by a journalist named Mumbi Murage, and the four of us continued our excursion. First, we visited the site where rebel army leader Dedan Kimathi was pursued and captured by the colonial army. This was an empty plot within a giant tea field to which we were guided via a trackless path by a local youth. There we found a monument, which seemed surprisingly small for a national

hero as well as young memorial trees planted by volunteers. The concrete monument was newer than its weathered appearance would suggest, having been carved on 2 April 2001. One of the young memorial trees had been planted by Kariuki's father and others in 2005.

Next, we visited Othaya, a site located 17 km from Nyeri where a massacre occurred during the struggle for independence. The area where vast numbers of corpses were buried is called 'the Othaya massacre site'. AFRIPAD conducted a memorial event at this site and planted trees in a gesture of desire for peace. This ceremony was attended by those who were once on the ruling side, those who were oppressed, those who fought to the bitter end and numerous children who knew nothing of this time.

The town of Lari in the Kiambu district also holds a memorial event on the site of the Othaya massacre, and footage of this is shown in the previously mentioned DVD video program produced by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC 2006b). The program contains a scene in which both the people who fiercely resisted colonial rule and those who joined the colonists to viciously oppress the uprising have gathered together to participate in the event, and a man who once served as a policeman on the colonial side confesses before the participants that he supported military activities by the whites and murdered other Africans. Then, this man is joined by another man who fiercely resisted colonial rule, and the two plant a tree together.

Finally, on the second day of our excursion at the outskirts of Nyeri, we visited an ancient sacred forest. This forested area, which covers approximately 265 acres along mountain ridges, is called 'Karima', a word that refers to a hill in the Gikuyu language. The area is covered by imported trees planted during the colonial period (cedar and eucalyptus), completely disrupting the original natural environment. Colonial rule destroyed even the sacred forest treasured by the Gikuyu people. The destruction of the forest has threatened the sanctity of various ceremonies occurring on this ground as well as the livelihood of people who rely upon agriculture. The local people say that these imported trees stretched throughout the hills completely absorb the rain that falls in the hills, drastically reducing the amount of water that flows to the area below via natural rivers.

At present, Kariuki Thuku and local resident volunteers have come together to work on a project to restore the original natural environment of the commercialised forest. This project is being conducted with Sharin (a Finnish NGO) as a donor, with Porini Association, which is headed by Kariuki Thuku, acting as the recipient on the Kenyan side (Thuku n.d.).

3.4 Merging and Diverging

I have stated in summary that the peace museum project splintered off from Mennonite Kenya in 2002 to form AFRIPAD, and my description of the situation may give the reader an incorrect impression that without support from Mennonites, the peace project conducted through a series of activities described in detail above could not have come true¹⁰). However, this is not the case. As described below, it is my observation, at the level of concrete individual exchange, this chain of developments should be construed

not as ‘propagation’ of doctrine by the Mennonites, but as ‘merging’.

According to an article published in the East African weekly newspaper *The East African*, ‘Peace by Local Means’¹¹, in 1993, an idea contributed by Janice Jenner, representative of MCC Kenya at that time, led to an effort to practice a type of conflict resolution rooted in the local cultures of various areas in Kenya. As part of this effort, a project of collecting folk materials related to peace culture was initiated. In 1994, Sultan Somjee, then head of the National Museums of Kenya (ethnographic research department) and an ethnographic scholar who published in that same year a book on material culture (Somjee 1994; 2000), became involved in the Mennonite peace project as an expert in the field. Somjee implemented this effort as a community peace museum project with support from Mennonite Kenya, and in doing so, he became acquainted with Kariuki Thuku, who was already operating a private museum in Nyeri at that time. This was the beginning of the collaboration between Somjee and Kariuki. In 2002, when Somjee immigrated to Canada, the entire peace project, including the peace museum effort as well as the tree-planting ceremony at the Othaya massacre site, was handed over to Kariuki, who established AFRIPAD. The above is the history of the establishment of AFRIPAD reported in the web version of *The East African*, the weekly newspaper issued on 5 May 2008.

Janice Jenner, who began to work on the peace project as MCC’s Kenya representative, served as a representative of Mennonite Kenya for seven years and presently works at the Eastern Mennonite University Center for Justice & Peacebuilding. At the Center, she is a colleague of Howard Zehr and John Paul Lederach, and has conducted collaborative research with Lederach, publishing a jointly authored book (Lederach and Jenner 2002). According to the Center’s website, she has obtained a Master’s degree in conflict transformation from the Eastern Mennonite University graduate school in Virginia¹².

Briefly, the AFRIPAD peace project supported by Mennonite Kenya, which I have described in this paper, may be understood as a collaborative project based on interactions with Janice Jenner, a Mennonite practical person; Sultan Somjee, an ethnographic scholar at the National Museums of Kenya; and Kariuki Thuku, founder of the Agikuyu Peace Museum. Janice Jenner’s initiative recalls the methodology of Lederach, which emphasises the three techniques of popular education, appropriate technology and ethnographic research. On the basis of this network of exchange between individuals, the Mennonite merging with the Kenyan peace project was realized successfully.

Incidentally, this type of exchange is free-flowing, and does not signify systematic unification. In fact, the three individuals mentioned above unified for a brief time period and then diverged. I have already briefly mentioned Sultan Somjee’s immigration to Canada; in May 2008, when the above-mentioned article ‘Peace by Local Means’ was written, Kariuki Thuku in fact suspended AFRIPAD’s activities and merged them with the activities of another group, the Porini Association, he heads. In July 2007, after my visit to the Agikuyu Peace Museum and the excursion to the outskirts of Nyeri, I called on Kariuki in Nairobi. When I visited him one year earlier in August 2006, he was

setting up AFRIPAD's office on Mennonite grounds on the outskirts of Nairobi's Westlands district. He conducted his official duties at this location, but by the time of my second visit, he had already moved into a room in an office building in the urbanised area of the Westlands. This move to a new office was concurrent with the divergence of the peace project and Mennonite Kenya initiated by Kariuki.

4. Conclusion

Present-day critical ideologies that pursue alternatives have permeated the fields of law and justice. On this basis, various existing approaches marginalised within the formal law/justice system¹³), such as conflict resolution, mediation, reconciliation and peacebuilding, have gained a new audience. Mennonite intellectuals and international organisations have succeeded at this and have become sources of mainstream ideas. In addition, Mennonite intellectuals and groups seem to have exceeded the boundaries of their own community and begun to lead international trends in alternative justice.

However, as clarified by observations of the site in question, they are 'merging' with these once-marginalised existing approaches, and are not necessarily 'propagating' Mennonite-devised doctrines and ideologies regarding peace. It would seem that the reason Mennonites have been widely recognised as playing an important role in worldwide trends in alternative justice, while remaining one small 'alternative' among many other actors who disseminate other ideas, is that they have cemented their position as originators of mainstream ideas, kept their ears to the ground and rolled out intermediary activities on a global scale. In other words, rather than broadcasting their own voices, Mennonites have devoted their energies to listening to and converging with small, grassroots voices¹⁴), and have thus been accepted around the world as important intermediaries in worldwide trends in alternative justice.

Acknowledgment

My observation in this paper is based on a field research in Kenya carried out in 2006 and 2007. I wish to thank Njuguna Gichere and Muthee Thuku for wonderful research assistance and invaluable suggestions. My sincere thanks also go to Kariuki Thuku, who sadly passed away in February 2010.

Notes

- 1) The origins of Anabaptism can be traced back to the Swiss Brethren, a sect which participated in the 16th century Radical Reformation. The Brethren, who criticised inconsistencies in the contemporary Reformation effort, insisted that one should only be baptised upon declaring allegiance to Christ of one's own free will, and were derisively referred to as 'Anabaptists' for performing adult rebaptisms (Suzuki 2003; 2005). Consequently, Anabaptists fled from religious persecution and immigrated to North America, with many settling in the area around

- present-day Pennsylvania. Both Mennonite and Amish Anabaptist sects are discussed in this paper. The two sects split in 1693 and immigrated separately to North America, but in some cases, they settled in the same areas and reunited (Kraybill, et al. 2008: 288-289).
- 2) Katano's paper further advances the argument, expounding upon the development of Mennonite pacifism since 9/11.
 - 3) According to Suzuki (2005: 94), the Mennonite Central Committee takes up activities related to violence, conflicts, racism, and sexism, aiming to achieve peace and justice, the Mennonite Conciliation Service trains experts in conciliation and conflict resolution, and Christian Peacemaker Teams provide cooperative programs for training peace activists in international conflicts.
 - 4) A restorative justice program implemented in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada as a trial to handle a juvenile incident which occurred in 1974 is frequently mentioned as an early example of restorative justice (Kishimoto 2004: 331; Zehr 2003: 161-162; Takahashi 1997: 94; Peachey 1989). However, some have pointed out that other similar programs (the Columbus Night Prosecutor Program, etc.) were seen before the trial in Kitchener (Joseph 1996: 207). Kishimoto (2004) outlines the development of restorative justice in Canada following this incident, and Tsutsumi (2004) is one example of a report on the present-day participation of Mennonites in restorative justice efforts in Canada (Calgary).
 - 5) For instance, Senzu(2004: 59-61 as well as note 64) considers the influence of Zehr's New Zealand Visit from 1993 to 1995 upon the development of restorative justice in New Zealand, stating that it is not difficult to imagine the strength of this influence.
 - 6) Although it is not a study of Anabaptism or restorative justice, an ethnography by Greenhouse (1986) takes note of the tendency toward conflict avoidance in the Baptist community of Georgia, shedding light on the religious, social, and historical background that created these conflict avoidance mechanisms. According to Greenhouse, for people who attempt to avoid situations in which internal psychological conflicts would transform into visible confrontations between different viewpoints, conflicts can only be handled by strengthening one's own psychological endurance. The idea that repeating such acts of endurance will ultimately lead to salvation by God offers support to believers who aim to achieve psychological discipline. Greenhouse explains the principles behind this conflict avoidance on the part of Baptists in terms of its relation to the historical consciousness and selective erasure which appear in individuals' narratives concerning past experiences in local communities rent by the Civil War.
 - 7) This undertaking mediates conflicts which occur on a scale in which participants are able to see each other's faces, as in families, faith-based groups and communities, and is based upon traditional techniques for restoring human relationships. For a detailed discussion of the actual content of its activities, see Kraybill 2000; Lederach and Kraybill 1993.
 - 8) According to Kraybill, the Amish do not practise systematic propagation of their doctrine, preferring to offer material support to refugees and disaster victims rather than attempting to convert others to their own beliefs (Kraybill, et al. 2008: 288-289).
 - 9) This DVD video may be purchased on the MCC website's *MCC store* (operational as of December 2009).
 - 10) A comment at a collaborative conference proved instructive with regard to this point. A previous work of mine (Ishida 2007) may also give a similar mistaken impression.

- 11) An article posted to the website version of the paper on 5th May, 2008.
- 12) <http://www.emu.edu/personnel/people/show/jennerjm?ssi=ctp> (accessed on 25th December 2009)
- 13) The various marginalised approaches I mention here include private techniques, grassroots techniques and indigenous techniques for conflict management, various approaches that have been hitherto referred to as 'extra-judicial' or 'informal' conflict handling. Regarding criticisms of this marginalisation see Avuruch 1998; Lederach 1995; Walker 2004; etc.
- 14) Englund, assuming a stance that treats rumours in the Malawian capital of Lilongwe as originating in anger on the part of citizens, argues that the problem lies not with the fact that the people do not have voices worth hearing, but that foreign human rights activists, NGOs and media organisations are not listening (Englund 2006: Chapter 7).

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