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Ontological Obedience: Examining Bonhoeffer's Hermeneutics of Nonviolence in Light of the Bruderhof Community

In 1987 John Howard Yoder presented a paper to the Bonhoeffer Society entitled, "The Christological Presuppositions of Discipleship." Yoder's paper argues that Bonhoeffer's vision of discipleship, while thoroughly biblical and Christocentric, employs a different Christology than the discipleship envisioned by Anabaptist forefathers. Where Anabaptists employ a radical allegiance to the person of Jesus in discipleship, Yoder suggests that Bonhoeffer's discipleship philosophy is not, to use Yoder's term, "jesological." Yoder believes that Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* and *Discipleship* might best be described as "legal" or "mystical," but not as books that are fully focused on the person of Jesus. Yoder states, "As [Bonhoeffer's] Christological preoccupations were more dogmatic than exegetical or historical, he was not driven either to concreteness about the pre-passion Jesus nor to any abiding challenge to the axioms of Constantinian political ethics."ⁱ In short, Yoder is dissatisfied with Bonhoeffer's picture of discipleship, because, in Yoder's opinion, Bonhoeffer's Jesus is not focused on "his life, his decisions, and his fate," but instead upon "the Master's words, or on the creed's words about him."ⁱⁱ To draw from a familiar dichotomy, Yoder accuses Bonhoeffer of following the Christ of faith rather than the Jesus of history.

I find Yoder's allegations against Bonhoeffer's vision of discipleship faulty on at least two accounts. First, I am a member of the Anabaptist tradition, and I read Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* in high school as part of my church's discipleship training. And, frankly, no such disconnect seemed present, to either myself or those leading the reading group. But, if the happenings of a youth group in Gainesville, Texas, are not proof enough, I also disagree with Yoder's reading of Bonhoeffer based on Bonhoeffer's exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount present in Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship*. Instead, I would like to argue that Yoder has missed a primary influence upon Bonhoeffer's notion of discipleship, and as a result, incorrectly disseminated his argument.

Yoder outlines his dissatisfaction with Bonhoeffer's picture of discipleship focusing around four key arguments (paraphrased here):

1. Bonhoeffer's discipleship focuses on devotion and piety, while Anabaptist discipleship focuses on Jesus' obedience, i.e., history.
2. Bonhoeffer's discipleship centers on the Master's words, while Anabaptist discipleship focuses on Jesus' life, decisions, and fate.
3. Bonhoeffer's discipleship cannot accept exclusion from secular sovereignty, while Anabaptist discipleship can.
4. Bonhoeffer's discipleship holds the incarnation as a concept of God's ratification of human activity in the world, while Anabaptist discipleship sees the incarnation as an event that serves as a model for humanity.ⁱⁱⁱ

In this paper I will take issue with the arguments suggested by Yoder, reading Bonhoeffer's hermeneutics of nonviolence as a case study. Furthermore, I will suggest using the Brüderhof community founded by Eberhard Arnold as a foil that may help to elucidate the problems presented by Yoder with regards to Bonhoeffer's discipleship strategy. I believe that reading Arnold will demonstrate how Bonhoeffer's vision of discipleship may be more Anabaptist in thought and practice than originally suspected by Yoder. In addition, reading Eberhard Arnold, I believe, will elucidate some of Bonhoeffer's theological strategy, particularly with regards to nonviolence under a rubric of ontological obedience.

II

Before I explore Yoder's arguments, however, it may prove profitable to explain why I am suggesting the Brüderhof community might be a possible influence on Bonhoeffer's philosophy of discipleship.

In October 1933, Bonhoeffer took the pastorate of two German-speaking congregations in the London area (The German Evangelical Church, Sydenham and Reformed Church of St. Paul in London). This was an active season in Bonhoeffer's life, and he was quite involved with ecumenical work. As a result, Bonhoeffer had opportunity to speak with church and religious leaders from a wide variety of circles. Hardy Arnold, Eberhard Arnold's eldest son, spent the summer of 1934 in London in order to build support for the Brüderhof.^{iv} Through common acquaintance with Martin Niemöller, Bonhoeffer and Arnold became acquainted and, on at least two different occasions, held lengthy discussions regarding communal life and its role within the church.

When Hardy Arnold wrote his memoirs in July 1979, he recounted his meetings with Bonhoeffer. He notes that Bonhoeffer "asked me a lot about the communal life of the Brüderhof and our attitude to National Socialism and the Church," particularly focusing on "his conviction that Christians should live in community of goods."^v Arnold indicates that he and Bonhoeffer discussed much of the details of community life, particularly practical suggestions on the management of such a community. These discussions are hardly surprising, given that Bonhoeffer had been doing research on community for some time.

Hardy Arnold describes those conversations in letters to his father and in his unpublished memoirs. In summation, the conversations between Bonhoeffer and Arnold focused around the formation of Christian community. Bonhoeffer was pondering the formation of community for theological training; Arnold was concerned about community existing as church. Their differing projects led to a diverging of ideas. Arnold and Bonhoeffer disagreed about the role of marriage within the community and whether there might be a distinction between theologians and laypeople. However, while Arnold notes distinctions between the thought of the Brüderhof community and Bonhoeffer, he also writes to his father that "in the essential points we agree with Bonhoeffer: 1. no private property but the communal management of property, and 2. non-violence."^{vi} These two common properties, along with the common theme of the Sermon on the Mount united Bonhoeffer and Arnold, providing a basis for their

discussions. These small common themes begin a trace of influence within Bonhoeffer's thought and work.

What I find to be at least somewhat surprising are some of the tangible signs of Brüderhof influence that surface in the Finkenwalde seminary. For example, in his biography, Eberhard Bethge notes that Bonhoeffer "asked the ordinands to observe only one rule—never to speak about a fellow ordinand in his absence or, if this should happen, to tell him about it afterwards."^{vii} Talking about this only rule, Bethge writes that "almost as much was learned from the failure to observe this simple rule and from the renewed resolution to keep it as from sermons and exegeses."^{viii} Much has been made of this single rule; it has been mentioned in numerous publications, and it has been the focus of Bonhoeffer's communitarian thought. Rightfully so, I believe, for it emphasizes the importance of anthropology within Bonhoeffer's theology.

Coincidentally (or perhaps not so coincidentally), the Brüderhof has only one written rule. In 1925, Eberhard Arnold wrote the following words regarding the handling of communal life:

There is no law but love. Love is joy in others. What, then, is anger at them? Words of love convey the joy we have in the presence of our brothers and sisters. It is out of the question to speak about another person in a spirit of irritation or vexation.

There must never be talk, either in open remarks or by insinuation, against any brother or sister, or against their individual characteristics—and under no circumstances behind their back. Gossiping in one's family is no exception. Without this rule of silence there can be no loyalty and thus no community. Direct address is the only way possible. It is a service we owe anyone whose weaknesses cause a negative reaction in us.

An honest word spoken openly and directly deepens friendship and will not be resented. Only when two people do not come to an agreement quickly is it necessary to draw in a third person whom both of them trust. In this way they can be led to a solution that unites them on the highest and deepest levels [Emphasis mine].^{ix}

The fact that both Bonhoeffer's Bruderhaus and Arnold's Brüderhof employ one rule is an interesting coincidence. But the fact that the rules are essentially one and the same indicate a link between the two parties that has not been previously noted. It would be reasonable to state, I believe, that Bonhoeffer found the rule of direct address at the Brüderhof community so important that he employed it at the Finkenwalde seminary as well.

In addition to the one rule, as Geoffrey Kelley states in the editorial notes to *Life Together*, the "Daily Texts" of the Moravian Brethren begun by Count Zinzendorf became quite influential in Bonhoeffer's life, not only with regard to personal devotion, but also within the practice of the seminarians.^x Exactly how and why Bonhoeffer began using the "Daily Texts" is unknown, but it is interesting that Zinzendorf became influential in the lives of both Arnold and Bonhoeffer. In addition, it is at least

worthwhile to note that during their second encounter Hardy Arnold sold Bonhoeffer a set of books published by the Brüderhof. These books, used for fundraising purposes, are called *Quellen Books*. The *Quellen* [or “source”] series began as a dream of Eberhard Arnold to draw “from the living testimony of Christ from across the centuries.”^{xi} Arnold hoped that the series would eventually reach one hundred volumes and would place early church fathers alongside such “heretics” as John Hus and John Wycliffe. Coincidentally, the first volume published by the Brüderhof in the set sold to Bonhoeffer is a book written by Otto Herpel entitled *Zinzendorf: On Faith and Life*.^{xii} The book details the work and thought of Zinzendorf, and it emphasizes the importance of the daily texts. It should also be noted that Eberhard Arnold, while searching for a place to found his community, purchased land in Herrnhag, formerly a Zinzendorf settlement and after that, according to Herpel, home to “Anabaptists and sectarians of every kind.”^{xiii} The continuous resurfacing of Zinzendorf lends itself to at least an indirect connection between Bonhoeffer and Arnold.

Last, but not least, one must at least notice the similarity in name to the community within the Finkenwalde seminary. “Brüderhaus” cannot help but recall the name “Brüderhof,” at least in my opinion. Granted, academics (German academics in particular) are rarely accused of creating catchy names. But I find it interesting that the “inner circle” at Finkenwalde carried at least some similarities to the Brüderhof community, in name and practice.

Granted, the similarities that I have listed here are not particularly earth shattering. In a courtroom, this would probably be filed under “circumstantial evidence.” But I am not attempting to demonstrate that Bonhoeffer was highly influenced by the Brüderhof or even hoping to model his seminary after the Brüderhof in its entirety. Instead, I am hoping to open a door of comparison, given that there is at least a tangential connection between Bonhoeffer and the Arnold family. I believe that the conversations between Bonhoeffer and Hardy Arnold open that door quite wide.

III

For both Eberhard Arnold and Bonhoeffer, the biblical story plays an integral part in discipleship, so it seems fair to explore examples of exegesis from both Bonhoeffer and Arnold in order to better understand their thought regarding discipleship.

Arnold was like Bonhoeffer in that he never took the time (or had the opportunity, perhaps) to write a systematic theology. Influenced by the revivals led by Dwight L. Moody in Germany in the 1920s, Arnold was caught up in a spirit of fervor and enthusiasm that seemed unprecedented in many ways. It was during this time that Arnold began to read and think about what it would mean to live in radical allegiance to Jesus. As a result, much of what Arnold wrote was occasional; most of the writing are lectures on a specific topic or an article intended to interact with political happenings. But despite this lack of systemization, a common theme remains throughout Arnold’s writing: the theme of obedience to Jesus. And this obedience is different than piety or devotion, as Yoder has accurately noted. Instead, it is an ontological obedience—an obedience that demands concrete correlative action. I use the term “ontological obedience,” hoping to emphasize the contrast Arnold noted between ontology and epistemology. While Arnold would definitely hope the thought life of a disciple would be patterned after the life of

Jesus, it is safe to say that Arnold would not consider such epistemological exercises a complete discipleship. In fact, Arnold was quite familiar with the pious followers of his day, and he did not reject their piety at all. But he hoped to couple their piety with a hermeneutic that would move their devotion to Jesus from an inward thought to outward obedience. The Brüderhof was formed, at least in part, so that Christians might have a model of how the church is supposed to live in ontological obedience.

But even here it should be noted that while Arnold is concerned with the life of Jesus, Arnold is also concerned with the words of Jesus, something Yoder claims true Anabaptist discipleship does not focus on. Arnold's vision of discipleship is a combination of Jesus' words and life. Arnold writes, "We ought constantly to occupy our minds and hearts with the person of Jesus: who He is, what He said, how He lived, how He died, what His resurrection means. We have to take in the full import of His words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and in the parables, and we have to represent to the world the same things He represented in His life."^{xiv} In short, Arnold's vision of discipleship encompassed both the words and life of Jesus, settling on the point of recreating Jesus' impact in the world.

Arnold's reading of the Sermon on the Mount is simple in its theory. Arnold examines the directives given by Jesus, and then he attempts to recreate those in every day living. The Brüderhof community was founded on Eberhard and Emmy Arnold's hopes that the Sermon on the Mount could in fact be practiced. Opting for a direct hermeneutic, Arnold writes, "The Sermon on the Mount tells us what that means in practice. To anyone who is sincere about it, the way is plain."^{xv} Speaking against the temptation to move away from a simple reading of the Sermon on the Mount, Arnold writes, "Nowhere among the early Christians do we find the cold light of intellectual understanding that constantly analyzes and differentiates."^{xvi} Instead, Arnold says, the church practiced a radical obedience to the teachings of Jesus. The *sensus literalis* becomes the most important aspect of the Scripture in the eyes of Arnold.

This notion of ontological obedience led Eberhard Arnold to embrace nonviolence as the best representation of conflict resolution as a disciple of Jesus. Taking the commands of loving enemies and turning the other cheek quite literally (Matthew 5:21-26, 43-48), Arnold found only one possibility with regard to radical discipleship. He would write, "In the name of Jesus Christ we can die, but not kill. This is where the Gospel leads us. If we really want to follow Christ, we must live as He lived and died. But this will not be clear to us until we understand how final His words are . . ."^{xvii} Arnold perceives the words of Jesus as final instructions to believers. There is no trump card. Jesus has commanded love and nonviolence, and the greatest love that can be shown is that of dying for another—not killing. "No one who has heard the clear call of Jesus' Spirit can resort to violence for protection. Jesus abandoned every privilege and defense. (1 Peter 2:21-23) He took the lowliest path. And that is His challenge to us: to follow Him on the same way that He went, never departing from it either to the left or the right. Do you really think you can go a different way from Jesus on such decisive points as poverty and violence and yet claim to be His disciple?"^{xviii} The disciple of Jesus, Eberhard wrote, has only one option when faced with enemies: love. "It makes no difference who our enemies are; God loves each one of them, and we have no right to pass a final judgment on them. True, we have to reject the evil we know they have done,

but they remain enemies whom we sincerely love.”^{xix} Countless times Arnold reiterates his point: obedience to Jesus’ command of nonviolence is the only way of the disciple.

IV

Having been presented with this position of ontological obedience present in the work of Eberhard Arnold, I would like to suggest that Bonhoeffer’s approach to the Sermon on the Mount envisioned a similar approach. In addition, I argue that Bonhoeffer’s approach to the Sermon on the Mount, and nonviolence in particular, can be better understood when it is read in light of the hermeneutic strategy exercised by Eberhard Arnold and the Brüderhof community.

Perhaps the best place to begin an exploration of Bonhoeffer’s concept of obedience is in the third chapter of Bonhoeffer’s book, *Discipleship*. In the opening paragraphs of this chapter, Bonhoeffer portrays the obedience required by a disciple of Jesus. Recounting the story of the rich young man, Bonhoeffer states that the rich young man had two options: obedience and disobedience. As Bonhoeffer notes, there were plenty of reasons to not take Jesus’ call seriously. He writes, “The forces that wanted to get between the word of Jesus and obedience were just as great back then as they are today. Reason objected; Conscience, responsibility, piety, even the law and the principle of Scripture intervened to inhibit this most extreme, this lawless “enthusiasm.” Jesus’ call broke through all of this and mandated obedience. It was God’s own word. Simple obedience was required.”^{xx} Bonhoeffer minces no words, making it clear that the obedience required of Jesus was not an epistemic move or an act of “religious” faith. Bonhoeffer believes his contemporaries would be guilty of explaining away the commands of Jesus. As he writes,

If Jesus Christ were to speak this way to one of us today through the Holy Scripture, then we would probably argue thus: Jesus is making a specific commandment; that’s true. But when Jesus commands, then I should know that he never demands legalistic obedience. Instead, he has only one expectation of me, namely, that I believe. My faith, however, is not tied to poverty or wealth or some such thing. On the contrary, in faith I can be both—rich and poor.^{xxi}

Speaking with tongue firmly planted in cheek, Bonhoeffer draws a distinction between spiritual obedience and ontological obedience. Referring to the case of the rich young man, Bonhoeffer points out a pious reading of this passage means that “I should possess goods as if I did not possess them, and inwardly I should be free of them. I should not set my heart on my possessions.”^{xxii} In other words, when the specific call of Jesus comes, the call cannot be allegorized or spiritualized. It must simply be followed. In the manner of Arnold, Bonhoeffer highlights the *sensus literalis*.

Regarding obedience, Bonhoeffer notes that if obedience is not the primary prerequisite of discipleship, then discipleship has no option but to become “cheap grace.” Because if obedience is not necessary, the disciple has entered a world where the sacraments are administered without penance. Suddenly, the cross of Christ has a much lower value. Bonhoeffer notes, “But in that case grace is also no longer the gift of the living God, rescuing us from the world for obedience to Christ. Rather, it becomes a

general divine law, a divine principle, whose only use is its application to special cases.”^{xxiii} In fact, as Bonhoeffer notes, a disciple cannot properly understand Scripture if simple obedience is not the default action of a disciple. In other words, an absence of obedience destroys Scriptural hermeneutics.

Fundamentally eliminating simple obedience introduces a principle of scripture foreign to the Gospel. According to it, in order to understand scripture, one must first have a key to interpreting it. But that key would not be the living Christ himself in judgment and grace, and using the key would not be according to the will of the living Holy Spirit alone. Rather, the key to scripture would be a general doctrine of grace, and we ourselves would decide its use. *The problem of following Christ shows itself here to be a hermeneutical problem.*

Yoder’s recognition of Bonhoeffer shying away from identifying with biblical history surfaces at this point. Bonhoeffer states, “Simple obedience would be misunderstood hermeneutically if we were to act and follow as if we were contemporaries of the biblical disciples. But the Christ proclaimed to us in scripture is, through every word he says, the one whose gift of faith is granted only to the obedient, faith to the obedient alone.”^{xxiv} So Bonhoeffer’s hermeneutic does not identify with history in an immediate sense. But, despite this point, it seems clear that Bonhoeffer is very concerned with an obedience based on the present calling of Jesus. So, where Bonhoeffer sees a primary emphasis placed upon the living Christ, Yoder seems to call for a primary emphasis upon the historical Jesus. Either way, obedience is clearly the driving force behind Bonhoeffer’s hermeneutic.

Ontological obedience, then, becomes the centerpiece of Bonhoeffer’s discussion of nonviolence in *Discipleship*. The command has come forth from Jesus: “Turn the other cheek.” And, as a result, the disciple of Christ has no choice but to do so. As Bonhoeffer notes, such a directive essentially “releases his community from the political and legal order, from the national form of the people of Israel, and makes it into what it truly is, namely, the community of the faithful that is not bound by political or national ties.”^{xxv} In other words, obedience to Jesus transcends all worldly powers, and obedience is the reasoning for such radical actions. Bonhoeffer approaches nonviolence as the only alternative for those who have decided to follow Jesus, much like Arnold. “Our voluntary renunciation of counterviolence confirms and proclaims our unconditional allegiance to Jesus as his followers . . . and it is only in the exclusivity of this adherence that evil can be overcome.”^{xxvi} Bonhoeffer’s insistence that the passion and suffering of Jesus is God’s message and call for believers in today’s world seems to be hand-in-hand with the obedience message of the Brüderhof. Bonhoeffer says, “The passion of Jesus as the overcoming of evil by divine love is the only solid foundation for the disciples obedience.”^{xxvii}

On the point of nonviolence, one would be hard-pressed to find a hermeneutic distinction between Bonhoeffer and Arnold. I think it is not an accident that the facing page of Arnold’s book, *Salt and Light*, contains a quote from Bonhoeffer. It reads,

We have listened to the Sermon on the Mount and perhaps have understood it. But who has heard it aright? Jesus gives the answer at the end. He

does not allow his hearers to go away and make of his sayings what they will, picking and choosing from them whatever they find helpful and testing them to see if they work. He does not give them free rein to misuse his word with their mercenary hands, but gives it to them on condition that it retains exclusive power over them.

Humanly speaking, we could interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways. Jesus knows only one possibility: simple surrender and obedience, not interpreting it or applying it, but doing and obeying it. He does not want it to be discussed as an ideal; he really means us to get on with it.^{xxviii}

V

What, then, of Yoder's accusations? Is Bonhoeffer's vision of discipleship necessarily different from that of the Anabaptists? Or does Bonhoeffer's association with the Brüderhof—a community of Anabaptists (part of what Jim McClendon calls the "baptist vision"^{xxix})—pull his philosophy of discipleship closer to Anabaptists than originally suspected by Yoder? Or perhaps a better question to ask is this: is there really a distinctive hermeneutic between the Anabaptist community of the Brüderhof and Bonhoeffer?

Yoder first argues that Bonhoeffer's type of discipleship focuses on devotion and piety, while Anabaptist discipleship focuses on obedience, specifically speaking, history. While this argument has some teeth, Yoder's assertion about Anabaptist discipleship seems a bit incorrect. Bonhoeffer does emphasize the living Jesus over the historical Jesus, but I am not certain that this is an all out refusal of the historical Jesus. And, granted, Anabaptists have always taken pride in emphasizing the historical person of Jesus, but to create a dichotomy between piety and Jesus' obedience seems false. In the first place, Anabaptists have pointed to Jesus' historical piety as the basis for their piety. So piety has always had a home within Anabaptist discipleship. In fact, it should be noted that Arnold's friends scorned his Anabaptist community because Arnold had become too "pietistic."^{xxx} Secondly, Bonhoeffer opens his arms wide to the person of Jesus as a basis for discipleship and obedience. Citing the person of Jesus, his willing death, his teachings, and his search for nonviolent resistance, Bonhoeffer embraces the historical person of Jesus. In addition, the Brüderhof also used more than the historical Jesus as a model for living. Arnold wrote quite often of the leadership of the Spirit. So on this count, Yoder seems to have found some distinctions but taken those themes to an unnecessary extreme.

Yoder's second distinction is similar to the first one. He suggests that while Bonhoeffer places emphasis on the words of Jesus, Anabaptist discipleship focuses on Jesus' life, decisions, and fate. Once again, Yoder acts as if these two entities are separate. Would Jesus' life and fate have been the same if Jesus had not said the words that he did? Aren't the words of love, compassion, and grace spoken by Jesus part of his fate? Aren't the condemning words of religious self-righteousness part of Jesus' fate? I believe the answer is yes. And it seems to me that the Anabaptist discipleship has historically recognized these facts. Eberhard Arnold seemed to think so, at least, as his community of believers was "inspired . . . by the Sermon on the Mount." In fact, Arnold often quoted the book of James, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Anabaptist discipleship, particularly the discipleship of Arnold, has not been a separation of the life and words of Jesus. To the contrary, it has been marked by an attempt to marry them. Bonhoeffer, it seems to me, hoped to do the same thing, and his *Nachfolge* echoes the teachings of the Brüderhof in that regard.

Yoder's third assertion is the most puzzling of all. He argues that Bonhoeffer cannot imagine discipleship apart from secular sovereignty. But *Nachfolge* clearly states that:

With this statement, Jesus releases his community from the political and legal order, from the national form of the people of Israel, and makes it into what it truly is, namely the community of the faithful that is not bound by political or national ties.^{xxxii}

This statement, along with Bonhoeffer's readiness to participate in the "confessing church" and his willingness to speak out against Hitler in a public radio address seem to present Bonhoeffer as at least *willing* to undergo separation from secular sovereignty. Perhaps Yoder intended to suggest that Bonhoeffer did not *want* to live a life of discipleship separate from the secular sovereignty of the state. I could agree with that statement, as the letters written by Hardy Arnold note that Bonhoeffer cherished the state church and denomination, and he did not relish the thought of being separated from such an arrangement.^{xxxiii} But at the same time, Bonhoeffer's insistence on the Lordship of Jesus and its transcendence over governments seems to fly in the face of this assertion and land more squarely in line with Anabaptist discipleship. In short, I don't particularly see the divorce between Bonhoeffer and Anabaptist thought on this count, either.

Yoder's final point, though, may have merit. Speaking systematically, Bonhoeffer envisions the incarnation as God's act of embracing and approving of humanity. Anabaptists have historically viewed the incarnation as an event that serves as a model of humanity and a mode of atonement. This seems to be especially true in Bonhoeffer's Christology lectures, but I am not convinced that Bonhoeffer fully rejects Jesus as a model for humanity. At any rate, Bonhoeffer's view of the incarnation must incorporate at least some of the model ideal in order for his philosophy of discipleship to hold together in a theoretical model. Yoder, it seems, found this point to be true and therefore extrapolated the other three arguments. But, while Bonhoeffer's understanding of the incarnation may differ from Anabaptist thought, particularly the Brüderhof, I do not know if this difference makes it impossible for Bonhoeffer to have a similar philosophy of discipleship as Yoder previously thought.

What, then, if anything, does any of this mean? A few thoughts come to mind.

First, it seems to be at least plausible that Bonhoeffer found the Brüderhof hermeneutic influential, particularly in his penning of *Nachfolge*. Bonhoeffer would later state that this book was not a complete representation of his thought, but it seems that this stage of Bonhoeffer's life was at least partially influenced by the Anabaptist thought of Eberhard Arnold, particularly the ontological obedience of the Brüderhof community. Given the close timing of Bonhoeffer's encounter with Hardy Arnold and the founding of the Bruderhaus, I think that at least some sort of connection exists between Bonhoeffer and the Brüderhof, particularly in the area of nonviolence.

Second, Bonhoeffer's vision of discipleship, at least in my opinion, is much more Anabaptist in its makeup than has been previously suggested. I'm not suggesting that Bonhoeffer is an Anabaptist. He remains far from that, not least of which on the issue of baptism. And I have nothing but respect for Yoder; he is one of the most important—if not the most important—Anabaptist scholars of the twentieth century. But I feel that the hermeneutic of obedience present in Bonhoeffer's *Nachfolge* opens a view to Anabaptist discipleship, and I believe that the notion should be explored in more detail.

Third, Bonhoeffer's wide range of influences is becoming more and more clear, particularly given the influences present within the Finkenwalde seminary. Moravian piety, monastic orders, and Anabaptist hermeneutics are present, not to mention Luther's influence. This makes for quite an amalgamation of thought within Bonhoeffer's development at this stage, and it might open some doors to understanding some of Bonhoeffer's later work. I am sure that Bonhoeffer's ecumenical background ties into this openness, and I look forward to any discussion this paper might instigate toward that end.

At any rate, both Bonhoeffer and Arnold left a legacy of openness and love that centers around the communal love of the Triune God. I hope that this presentation serves to further that legacy and open valuable lines of communication toward understanding these two witnesses of Christ's love.

ⁱ John Howard Yoder, "The Christological Presuppositions of Discipleship," presented to the Bonhoeffer Group at the American Academy of Religion, 1987, page 23.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 24.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 23-4.

^{iv} Markus Baum, *Against the Wind: Eberhard Arnold and the Brüderhof* (Pough: Farmington, 1998), 236.

^v From the unpublished memoirs of Hardy Arnold, written July 1979 at Deer Spring Brüderhof in Norfolk, Connecticut, obtained from the Brüderhof Archives, Rifton, NY on February 11, 2003.

^{vi} Letter from Hardy Arnold in Birmingham, England on June 14, 1934, to Eberhard Arnold, Kurhaus Silum, Liechtenstein. Obtained from the Bruderhof Archives, Rifton, NY on February 11, 2003.

^{vii} Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 349.

^{viii} *Ibid.*, 350.

^{ix} Obtained from the official website of the Brüderhof on November 7, 2003, at http://www.bruderhof.com/us/Who_We_Are/NoLawbutLove.htm.

^x Cf. *Life Together/Prayerbook of the Bible*, 58-9, n.27.

^{xi} As quoted by Baum in *Against the Wind*, 166.

^{xii} This book was written earlier for some of Arnold's fledgling publishing ventures, but was re-issued for the *Quellen* series.

^{xiii} As quoted by Baum in *Against the Wind*, 119.

^{xiv} Eberhard Arnold, *God's Revolution: Justice, Community, and the Coming Kingdom* (Plough: Farmington, 1984), 14.

^{xv} *Ibid.*

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 18.

^{xvii} *Ibid.*, 158.

^{xviii} *Ibid.*, 158-9.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, 161.

^{xx} Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2001), 77.

^{xxi} *Ibid.*, 78.

^{xxii} *Ibid.*

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*, 81.

^{xxiv} *Ibid.*, 82.

^{xxv} *Ibid.*, 132.

^{xxvi} *Ibid.*, 133.

^{xxvii} *Ibid.*, 136.

^{xxviii} Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, quoted on the back cover of Eberhard Arnold, *Salt and Light: Living the Sermon on the Mount* (Plough: Farmington, 1967), facing page.

^{xxix} James McClendon, *Ethics: Systematic Theology, Volume One* (Abingdon: Nashville, 1986).

^{xxx} Johann Christoph Arnold, foreword to *Eberhard Arnold*, Modern Spiritual Masters Series, 19.

^{xxxi} Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 132.

^{xxxii} Arnold, June 14, 1934.