

Rad!cal Renewal?

Witnessing to a New Heaven and a New Earth

Amsterdam 2025

20th Believers Church Conference

A SPIRITUALITY OF RADICAL PARTICIPATION FOR INTERRELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

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Anabaptist/Mennonite -- Christocentric Spirituality



- The Anabaptist tradition has tended to emphasize the centrality of Jesus Christ in its theology, spirituality, and ethics
- The church community as disciples of Jesus. The church is called to be a model of Christ that imitates, follows, and presents Him in praxis
- The church as an ideal community in the midst of the world (*messianic community, alternative community*)
- This spirituality inspires the church to promote peace and justice in daily life as the disciples of Jesus

Anabaptist/Mennonite -- Christocentric Spirituality

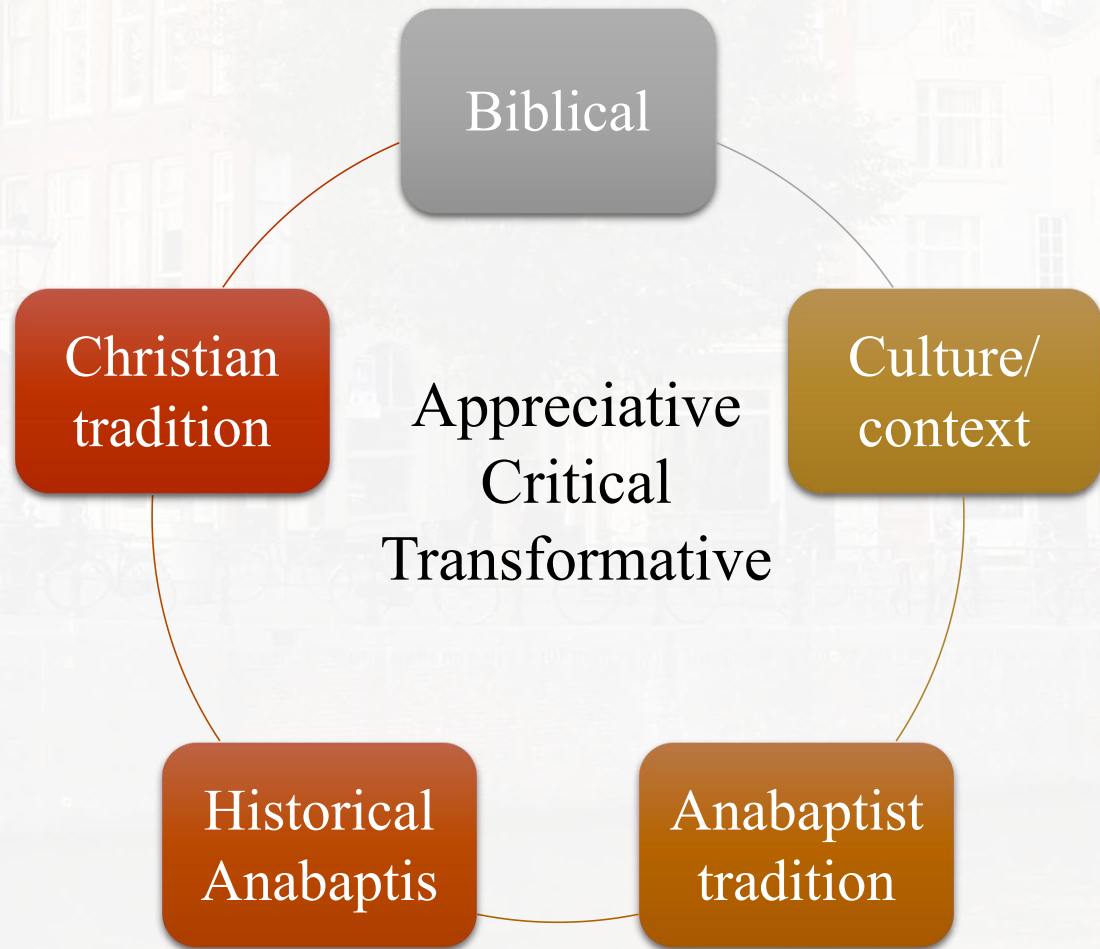


- Idealistic! Ignoring many weakness in the church.
 - Superior feeling of the church. Church and world in subject - object relation
 - Mission: conquering others
 - Making peace, bringing peace, present peace, being a *peacemaker*?

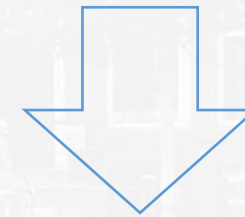
Spirituality of Radical Participation

How do to construct or cultivate an Anabaptist-Mennonite spirituality that encourages the church or believers to participate and engage with all people -- including those from other cultures and religions or belief systems -- in God's mission of renewing creation?

Multi-Textual Approach



Trinitarian Christocosmic & Liberative Mystical

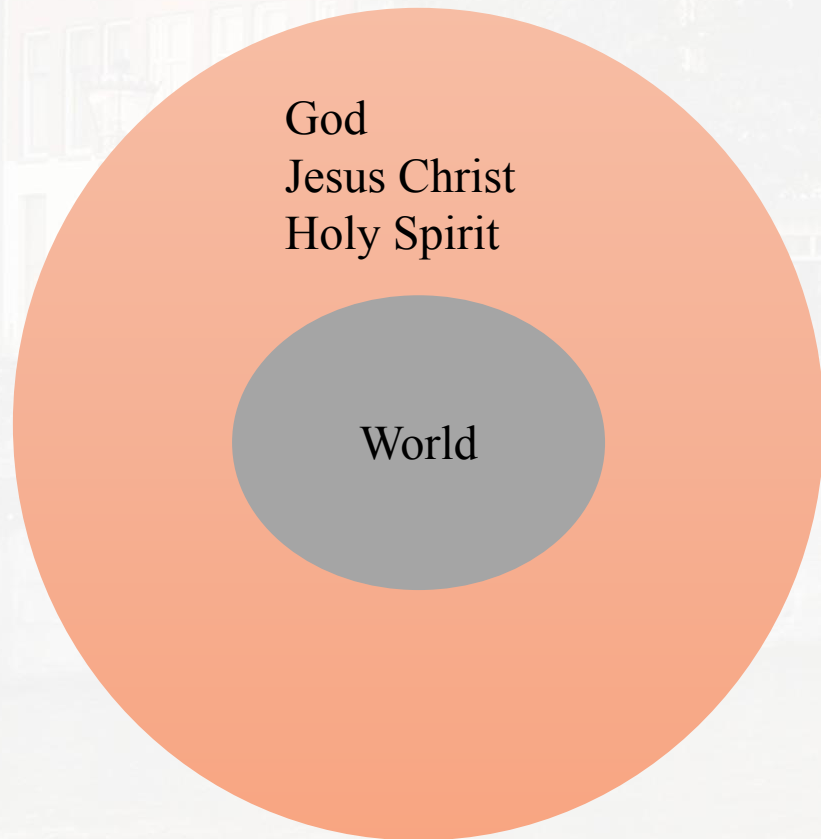


1. Participation in Interreligious context
2. Participation in Ecojustpeace

Radical Participation: Trinitarian Christocosmic and Liberative Mysticism

Expanding from Christo-centric to Trinitarian Christo-cosmic

- God who loves the world, at work in the world through the Son in the power of Holy Spirit.
- This trinitarian awareness will widen our focus from *the church working in the world* to *God working and embracing the world*.
- The church as a community of faith *participates in God's work in the world*. The main subject of every work is God, and believers are involved in God's work.
- *God's work is much bigger and wider than the church*. God works in all because all is in the embrace of God. That means *all things in the world can participate in God's work*.
- Realizing the work of the Trinity will invite believers to come together with all people from various cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in God's work.

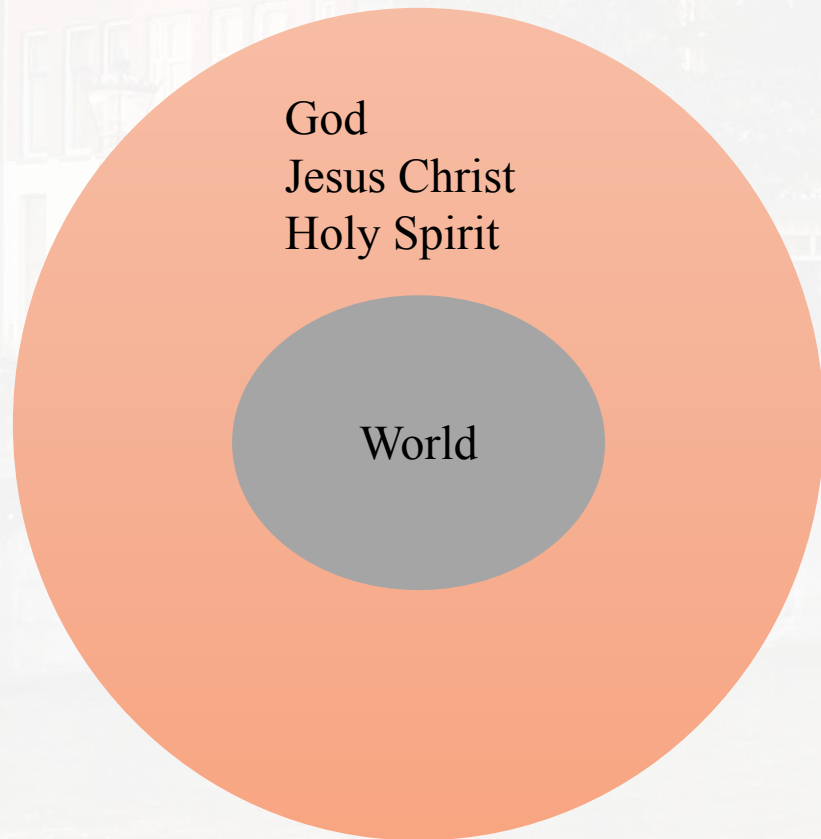


Radical Participation: Trinitarian Christocosmic and Liberative Mysticism

Expanding from Christo-centric to Trinitarian Christo-cosmic

Colossians 1:16-17 for *in him* were *all things created*, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; *all things have been created through him, and unto him*; and he is before all things, and *in him all things consist*.

- If all things created and in Christ -- *there is no reality outside of Christ*
- Christ-centered -- embracing reality/cosmic in Christ (Christo-cosmic)
- Embracing reality appreciatively, critically, and transformatively: *Openness - Commitment - Renewing*



Radical Participation: Trinitarian Christocosmic and Liberative Mysticism

Ecclesiological impact:

Incarnation of Christ that embraces and *reconciles universe inside himself* (*Colossians* 1:20) and called church as a disciple of Christ to *participate* in reconciliation of the creation

- ▶ If the church believes that God, the Creative Creator is Love, then the church must *participate to actualize love creatively*
- ▶ If the church confesses itself as the Body of Christ, then the church is called to *participate in Christ works by embracing others and the creation*
- ▶ If the church is filled by the Holy Spirit, the church will *connect* with everyone and all creation to *participate in the reconciliation* of Christ in the embrace of God's love



From this perspective, participating with others is not just a *method* for peace but is so *central to the identity* of the church that without it the church ignores its own identity as church !

Radical Participation: Trinitarian Christocosmic and Liberative Mysticism

Liberative Mysticism

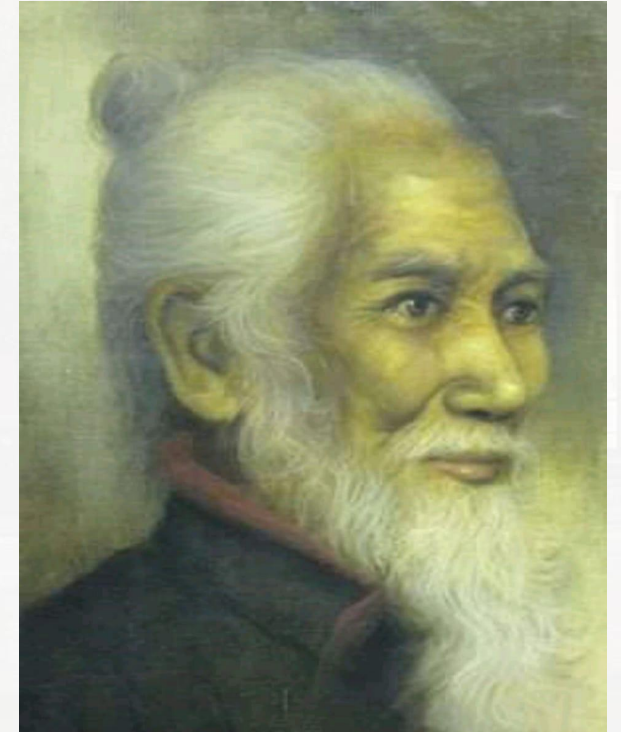
- The spirituality of Gelassenheit in the 16th century
 - *Gelassenheit*: “tenacious serenity” (David Augsburger), yielding fully to will of God. Manifest on abandon self-interest, self-surrender, radical obedience
 - Hans Denck: Gelassenheit indicated an attitude of worship in daily life (lifestyle-worship). Gelassenheit means a *resignation* from the right of his life and the full devotion to the will of God
- Implication of the spirituality of Gelassenheit in the Anabaptist/Mennonite life
 - Surrender to suffering: Martyrdom
 - Commitment to live in peace
 - Commitment to solidarity with the Body of Christ (members of the congregation)
 - Should be extended in *commitment to solidarity with others and creation that embraced in Christ*

Radical Participation: Trinitarian Christocosmic and Liberative Mysticism

Liberative Mysticism

- Surrender in Javanese culture/belief: emptying oneself, overcoming oneself, to unite in fellowship (*patunggilan*) with God.
- Reality (creation) is window to God, a “holy text” to encounter and experience God
- The “father” of Javanese Mennonite community: Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung (1800-1880)

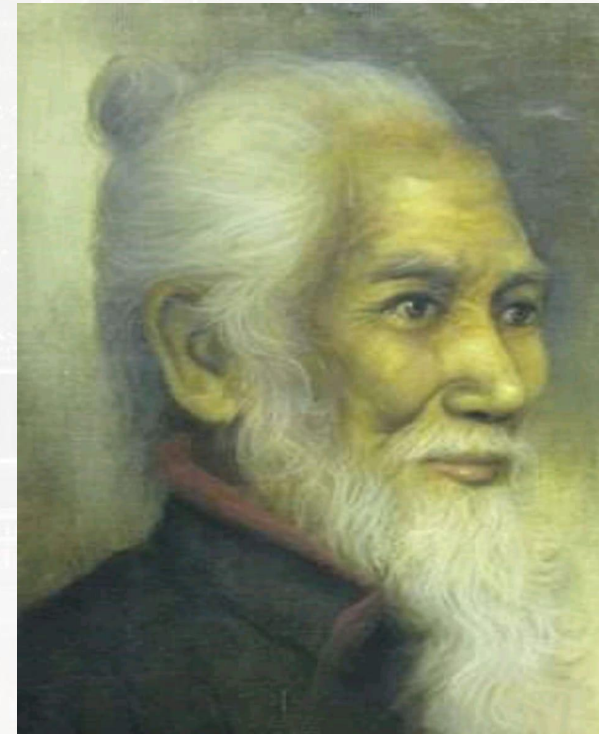
"It is mistaken to think that Javanese people follow the Jesus brought by European missionaries. Javanese people must become Javanese Christians and discover Christ for themselves."



Radical Participation: Trinitarian Christocosmic and Liberative Mysticism

Liberative Mysticism

- Christ for Javanese people: *Queen of Justice* (Ratu Adil)
 - Influenced Javanese messianic-peasant movement in 19th century: resistance movement to liberating from colonialism
 - resonate memory of Thomas Muntzer in 16 century
 - Creating and envisioning a community of the “*Free Javanese Christian*”
- *Liberative Mysticism: Surrender to Jesus, a commitment to participate in surrendering the community of faith (church), and to the universe -- including the others because all are created and in Christ -- and creatively engaging in the work of liberation.*



1. Participation in Interreligious contexts

- The humility of "surrendering" to meet and be with other religions/beliefs
- Goal: Transformation

Self alone (me)

someone else (you)

Relationship (Us)

Context (Home us)



Interreligious encountering is *not just a tool* to make something (peace, shalom, changing the world), instead *is that shalom* itself

1. Participation in Interreligious contexts

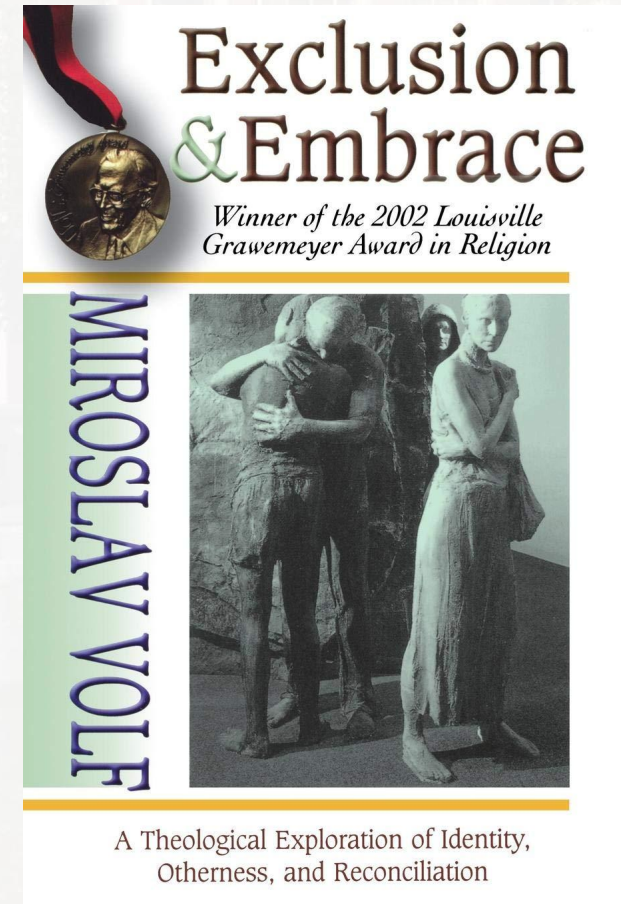
1. Openness for vulnerability (*appreciative*).
There is no participation without willingness to be vulnerable. It places us as "host " as well as "guest " .
2. Commitment of identity (*critical*).
Authentic participation made possible if we realize *who we are and what we believe* .
3. Creative Imagination (*transformative*).
beyond self to see something new



1. Participation in Interreligious context

Imagination: Interreligious embracing (Miroslav Volf)

“In an embrace I open my arms to create space within myself for others. Opening my arms is a sign that I don't want to just be myself, an invitation for others to come and feel at home with me. In one embrace I also wrap my arms around the other. Closing my arms is a sign that I want other people to be a part of me, other people enrich me. In this state of embracing each other, nothing remains the same because each enriches the other, but both remain who they are.”



2. Participation in Ecojustpeace

- Spirituality of participation will invite us to participate in creation care, just as God creates and works creatively in the creation through Christ and Holy Spirit. Following Jesus will encourage us to respect creation. Creation is not understood as an object, but as something sacred because it was created in Christ.
- This is in line with mystical traditions that see nature as a window to God. One strength of traditional Javanese society is that it sees nature as a subject. There is a close relationship between humans and nature, not just a functional dependence, but also an emotional one. We can say that humans and nature come from the same womb, which is Christ. Therefore, *following Jesus and encountering Christ will make us respect all creatures. Christ's reconciliation is a reconciliation for all creatures.*
- With all religions and belief to *participate* in God's work in creation for **ecojustpeace**.

Interreligious dialogue can strengthen the theological commitment to eco-justice and peace. This dialogue mutually enriches our theological understanding as well as corrects biases in our theology.



Interfaith rituals, public prayers, and art performances to promote ecojustice



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