



Foreword	223
----------	-----

TEACHING HISTORY

Some Additions to the History Teacher's Toolbox: The Scylla of Trivia and the Charybdis of Opinion <i>Michael Driedger</i>	224
Channeling Clio: Archives, Lecture Halls, and Western Canadian Conservatism <i>Brian Froese</i>	236
Geography Matters: Understanding the Lay of the Land <i>Valerie Rempel</i>	257
Teaching Christian History in Seminary: A Declension Story <i>Walter Sawatsky</i>	265
Apologia for an Informed Mennonite Citizenry: A Personal Journey <i>Mary S. Sprunger</i>	286
Anabaptist Identity, Pedagogy, Faith, Ethics, and Research in the Teaching of History <i>Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares</i>	299

BOOK REVIEWS

- | | |
|--|------------|
| <p>Anne Krabill Hershberger, ed. <i>Sexuality: God's Gift.</i>
 <i>Second edition.</i> Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 2010.
 Reviewed by <i>Susanne Guenther Loewen</i></p> | <p>315</p> |
| <p>Peter J. Leithart, <i>Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire
 and the Dawn of Christendom.</i> Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010.
 Reviewed by <i>Elmer J. Thiessen</i></p> | <p>317</p> |
| <p>William T. Cavanaugh. <i>Migrations of the Holy: God, State,
 and the Political Meaning of the Church.</i> Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
 Reviewed by <i>Brian R. Gumm</i></p> | <p>319</p> |
| <p>Elmer John Thiessen. <i>The Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defense
 of Proselytizing and Persuasion.</i> Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.
 Reviewed by <i>Christina Reimer</i></p> | <p>321</p> |
| <p>Angela H. Reed. <i>Quest for Spiritual Community:
 Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations.</i>
 New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.
 Reviewed by <i>Andrew C. Martin</i></p> | <p>323</p> |
| <p>J. Alexander Sider. <i>To See History Doxologically: History and Holiness
 in John Howard Yoder's Ecclesiology.</i> Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
 Reviewed by <i>Ben White</i></p> | <p>325</p> |
| <p>Shelly Rambo. <i>Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining.</i>
 Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.
 Reviewed by <i>Cheryl Woelk</i></p> | <p>327</p> |

Clio cover art image liscensed through the University of South Florida Center for Instructional Technology.

Foreword

This issue is devoted to the theme of Teaching History, and follows the path initially broken by our theme issue on Teaching the Bible (Spring 2010). Some months ago we invited a number of scholars who identify themselves as Anabaptist or Mennonite and/or are teaching some aspect of Mennonite history in institutional settings to submit material exploring this broad theme. We invited traditional academic essays as well as personal reflections – pieces arising out of the author’s personal experience. Invitees were not given strict guidelines but were urged to consider such matters as pedagogical challenges and learning opportunities, faith and critical methodologies, scholarly research and the classroom, acceptable and unacceptable instructional agendas, and helpful pedagogical resources. We are delighted with the response to the invitation, and we heartily thank everyone who made a submission. Our hope is that the papers published in this issue will provide a stimulating cross-section of views, engender a lively conversation, suggest directions for the future, and offer useful guidance for practitioners. Also in this issue are book reviews on a wide range of subjects.

* * * * *

Scheduled for upcoming issues in 2013, this journal’s thirtieth anniversary year, are the Bechtel Lectures by John Roth (“Blest be the Ties That Bind: In Search of the Global Anabaptist Church”), articles devoted to Mennonite writing, including the 2012 Sawatsky Lecture by Julia Kasdorf (“Mightier Than the Sword: *Martyrs’ Mirror* in the New World”), and other pieces that maintain CGR’s reputation as a leading forum for the sustained discussion of spirituality, ethics, theology and culture from a broadly-based Mennonite perspective.

Jeremy M. Bergen
Editor

Stephen A. Jones
Managing Editor

Some Additions to the History Teacher's Toolbox: The Scylla of Trivia and the Charybdis of Opinion

Michael Driedger

I teach courses in liberal arts, European history, and historiography at a public university in southern Ontario that is named after a far-too-glorified British general in the War of 1812. My Mennonite heritage and professional research interests in Anabaptist history certainly shape my allergy to the cult-like status that some at my university give to Sir Isaac Brock. Despite these misgivings, I feel at home in the diverse, non-denominational, secular environment of Brock University, and I enjoy teaching introductory classes there. Teaching forces me to read and think broadly, and I am sure that this helps me become a better historian, not just a narrow specialist. I do worry and wonder, however, how my students are faring.

Over the dozen years that I have taught at the university level I have tried to figure out how students learn history effectively and what stands in their way. I started my teaching career with the luxury of only having to lead smaller seminars, and I still think these are wonderful teaching venues – when the seminar groups are filled with committed students, which is not always or even often the case. In the last eight years I have frequently taught first-year lecture courses, and the sizes of my lecture classes have markedly increased. Given these challenges of varying student commitment and growing class sizes, it has become harder to cover course material in a satisfactory way, and tutorial sessions are often discouraging. It must be very frustrating for good students in these class settings; it certainly is for me.

I do not yet have definitive answers for how to deal with the challenges students and instructors face, but I can summarize where I stand now. While I used to do my best to make sure I presented students with the full range of course information, I have almost given up on “covering the material.” Instead, my goal is increasingly to help students think anew about history so that they can become better at doing history themselves. I share an understanding of history with the British medievalist John Arnold, who

defines it as “true stories about the past.”¹ This definition of history, I have come to suspect, is at odds with a deeply engrained preconception that most students bring to college and university history courses: They think of history as “the past.”

The word “history” does sometimes carry this very general meaning in everyday speech, but this meaning only stands in the way of clear thinking and learning in history courses. After all, if students are to learn about the past, which of the millions or billions or trillions or kajillions of details about it should they remember? I’m sure CGR readers who have even only brief experience teaching will have heard a much less philosophical version of this question coming from students themselves: Will that be on the exam? Facts and information are of course important in teaching and learning history, but far less than most students realize. If we think in terms of John Arnold’s definition, the preconception that history equals the past results in a belief that learning history in the first place involves memorizing a huge collection of data. From the standard perspective, history is not something students can learn to do or make; they think it just happens and their only job is to learn about it. History devolves into a grand game of trivia.

There is a flip side to students’ preconceptions of history as the past. In college and university history courses (and often in high school history classes) students quickly encounter conflicting true stories about historical events and issues. In my experience too many students want to shy away from complexity and competing perspectives. Good students in introductory courses (and even in advanced ones) are usually quick to see that real historical learning is more about interpretation than memorization, but their aversion to conflict or their deeply held preconceptions about history as the past bring them back to the idea that true stories about the past should be uncomplicated and unproblematic. Too often these students will arrive at a weak but common explanation for historians’ disagreements, namely bias. My colleagues and I try again and again to teach students to read historical writing for arguments supported by good reasons and evidence, and also to create their own histories with good arguments, reasons, and evidence.

The advanced lessons for students are that scholarship is an ongoing

¹ See John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* 10th ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000).

set of conversations aimed at evaluating existing knowledge and creating new knowledge, and that these conversations can sometimes be quite contentious. Debate is a fundamental part of our profession. I feel a sense of frustration and failure when I run across senior students who have not moved beyond beginners' preconceptions and still think about differing views in simplistic terms. When we ask students to learn about historiographical debates, I fear that far too many equate this with reading blogs and social media entries online. Historians, some students think, are just expressing their personal views about the past, and students should have a turn expressing theirs. Having to learn about the history of debates, reasons, and evidence in support of arguments, and the strengths or weaknesses of various methods for studying evidence from the past, only gets in the way of self-expression. For students who imagine they love "history" but are impatient with disciplinary standards for dealing with plural perspectives, one frequent reaction is to want to "get their own views out there." For them, history devolves into opinion about the past, and they want their opinions to be heard.

My current approach aims at helping students learn to steer between the Scylla of trivia and the Charybdis of opinion. I want to keep the enthusiasm that so many bring to history courses in their first days at university while I also try to transform the way they think about and practice historical scholarship. This is not an easy balance, because most people resist giving up long held views and habits. My goals and the challenges associated with them are certainly not new, and many (maybe most) other teachers share them with me. What is new (or new-ish) are the tools, both practical and conceptual, that I have discovered in the last several years. I share them with students at all levels in my "historian's toolbox," an online resource folder I make available through the course learning management system (Sakai, at my university). Below is a summary and discussion of some of those resources.

Digital Tools for Use in the Classroom

I want students to become better readers, listeners, analysts, and questioners. The new digital worlds that young people know so well are both a blessing and a curse in this regard. On the one hand, digital life means students read and write a great deal, but, on the other hand, I and many of my colleagues

worry about the quality of that textual life and the increasingly distracted and fractured attentions it helps encourage. “Turn off your devices!” demand some of my colleagues. I toy with making this demand, but so far I have not taken their path. I fear I’ll start a losing battle against the students’ wired selves. What I have tried to do is to become more aware of how students learn (or don’t) from the technologies I do use in the classroom.

Connected with this concern is the question, What is the value of lectures? Among my worries is whether I’m inadvertently sending contradictory messages in my attempts to engage students. Like the great majority of my colleagues, I use digital slides in my lectures. I used to fill the slides with text so that I could better communicate information – or so I thought. For several years I have practiced reducing the textual detail in slides whenever possible, because I fear I am not helping students but rather reinforcing misconceptions about history as information about the past. As a consequence, when I employ PowerPoint or other similar linear slide projection tools, I try to use the slides as subjects of analysis and discussion whenever possible. I want students to listen and question rather than copy and forget.

This leads me to introduce my first tool: Prezi.² I discovered this relatively new presentation system just over a year ago, and I have increasingly made it my main platform for visual aids in lectures. What is most valuable about Prezi for history teaching is that it allows students to see relationships between images and information.³ Slide projection has the limitation of showing one frame after another; it encourages linear thinking. By contrast, Prezi presentations consist of only one canvas, and I can show the audience the whole canvas or zoom in on parts; it encourages relational thinking. I prefer the latter, because I can use Prezi to illustrate to students how perspective makes a difference to knowledge, and I can better teach them about relationships between people, ideas, and events in time.⁴

² See www.prezi.com.

³ For a quick example of Prezi’s potential to illustrate perspective, see the template created by Adam Somlai-Fischer, <http://prezi.com/cqmxgc-xv9jh/template-reveal-a-new-perspective/>, accessed on May 23, 2012. For an excellent example of a Prezi integrated into a presentation, see James Geary, “Mixing Mind and Metaphor,” TEDGlobal, Oxford, UK, July 2009, available through ted.com.

⁴ Prezi is especially good, I think, at showing chronological relationships. For a Prezi I

Another tool that has changed my classroom practice as I shift from covering material to trying to transform student thinking about history is audience-response systems (sometimes called “clickers”). I have known about these for quite a while, but I began using them in my larger classes just three years ago. While some significant administrative and organizational challenges are associated with their use, my biggest initial concern stemmed from my reluctance to employ multiple-choice questions in history teaching. However, David DiBattista, a senior colleague in Psychology at Brock, has helped me see the possibilities of carefully conceived and well-constructed multiple-choice questions.

There are several advantages to using clickers or web-based audience-response systems in large classes. The first and most obvious is that they help test student knowledge. Multiple-choice polling gives me (and the students) instant feedback about the degree to which a class has understood, misunderstood, or not attempted to understand pre-class reading or in-class subjects. The danger, of course, is that I will reinforce the preconception of history as trivia if I ask only straightforward, knowledge-based questions. To counteract this, I repeatedly stress throughout a semester that knowledge is important in historical learning, but more important are higher-order skills such as the application and analysis of knowledge.

With a little training and preparation, instructors can really challenge students in larger classes with questions that test these higher-order skills. Examples include following up an explanation of thesis statements with a question about where in a text selection an author states an argument most clearly; or following up a discussion of perspective with a question about whose interests a primary source selection best articulates. Both kinds of questions have the strong potential to spark discussion even in the largest of classes, or, failing this, at least to allow a chance to provide further explanations based on a clearer sense of student learning. These higher-order skills are very important, and we must help students practice and improve them even before they attempt to write course essays.

used over several weeks in a first-year history course in winter 2010, see <http://prezi.com/pfcvraip3h9i/thinking-about-the-renaissance-and-reformation/>. I have modified the paths to give general viewers a sense of the presentation. Paths have to be adapted from lecture to lecture.

Another advantage of audience-response systems is that we do not have to ask students merely right-wrong questions. Instead we can ask them about their preferences and preconceptions. Because they don't see who among their classmates is answering a particular way, though they do see a summary chart of the entire class's answers, they get a sense of how their own answers compare with those of their peers. In my history classes I use questions about preferences to draw links between beliefs in class on that day and past beliefs that we are trying to learn about. Polling gives students – even shy ones – an active role in their own learning in lectures. And it has the possibility to reinforce my message, if I use it carefully, that historical scholarship is fundamentally about informed dialogue and debate. On this last point I occasionally poll students before a lecture about which of two or three competing arguments they think is strongest; I then spend the lecture making a case for one or more to illustrate the importance of persuasion; I end by polling them at the lecture's conclusion to see if I have changed any minds. Here the medium helps strengthen the message.⁵

Tools for Teaching Persuasive Communication

Clickers and lectures alone cannot transform student attitudes toward history as a persuasive enterprise. There are lots of good guides to the skills of historical study, research, and writing that are aimed at students. In the last three years I have come to favor a short writing manual aimed at a broad audience across the humanities and social sciences, namely Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (Norton, 2006). Some CGR readers might recognize Graff as a contributor to American "culture war" debates in the 1980s. His wise response to those heated public exchanges was to encourage literary scholars to "teach the conflicts"⁶ – advice that applies as well now as it did then, and in historical as well as literary studies. Since issues in history and religious studies were often heated (think of the Reformation) and have the potential

⁵ For more on related subjects, see Derek Bruff, *Teaching with Classroom Response Systems: Creating Active Learning Environments* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009). Also see his blog, "Agile Learning," at derekbruff.org.

⁶ Gerald Graff, "Teach the Conflicts," in *The Politics of Liberal Education*, eds. Darryl J. Gless and Barbara Herrnstein Smith (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1992), 57-73.

to become so again at any moment, we must ensure that we and our students can make sense of conflicting perspectives.

In *They Say / I Say* Graff and Birkenstein aim to demystify academic writing. They believe, as do I now, that students will be better able to understand why they should – and also, how they can – contribute to scholarly learning when they recognize that scholars do not work in a social vacuum but rather are constantly responding to past and current debates. Since reading this book, I find myself often referring to it in discussions with students inside and outside of class. One of its unique and powerful features is its use of templates. Academic writing, the authors argue, follows common patterns across the disciplines. From chapter to chapter and then in a summary appendix, they lay bare the common formulas academic authors use. These templates help students learn to write clearly and effectively. When I assigned this little guide in my graduate seminar this past year, the overwhelming majority of students told me they wished they had been required to read it much earlier in their studies.

Let me offer two examples of the book's transformative potential. First, it helps students think about, and me to explain more clearly, how they can formulate and develop arguments that matter in the disciplines to which they are relative newcomers. The trick, which good, established scholars know, is first to outline the state of knowledge on a subject and then to respond in a thoughtful way based on reasons and evidence. By contrast, students too often try to sound "objective" by erasing all traces of perspective in their writing about a subject. Because Graff and Birkenstein highlight the form persuasive writing takes and do so free of specific content, students can clearly see how and why their research and reasoning take on stronger relevance and significance only when they first compare their ideas to other arguments and points of view. *They Say / I Say* helps show in practical terms how history (and scholarship generally) functions as a rich debate and how students can participate, even before becoming experts.

Second, *They Say / I Say* helps me teach more effectively about the importance of academic integrity. Too often we warn students about the dangers of plagiarism without giving them powerful enough reasons for why it is so wrong. Sure, they're not allowed to copy, according to university regulations, but copying of various sorts goes on all the time in

a digital world. The results are very confusing for students. I try to resolve the confusion by explaining why plagiarism is a problem from a student's perspective: By blurring the line between other people's ideas and their own, they are obscuring their own unique voice. Honesty matters in part as a disciplinary and institutional standard but also for reasons that should matter to students. My teaching about plagiarism still involves warnings, but I now try to emphasize the positive message about the benefits and rewards integrity brings for self-expression in a community of scholars.

Another tool I have discovered relatively recently for teaching how persuasive communication works and why it matters is historical role-playing. I first learned about role-playing as a pedagogical approach in discussions with Gerald Hobbs at the Vancouver School of Theology. As part of a graduate course in church history Hobbs used a multi-day role-playing session in which each student had a unique role in Strasbourg of the 1520s. After several weeks of preparation, students spent several days negotiating with each other in character (e.g., as cathedral canons, popular preachers, nuns, prostitutes, town councilors, merchants) to achieve competing objectives. I found the idea intriguing when I first heard about it; after all, most courses on the Reformation do not include reenactments of iconoclastic rampages or shouting matches in the midst of sermons. Unfortunately, I was never a student in Hobbs's class, but his enthusiasm for this method of teaching made me pay more attention when I recently learned about the "Reacting to the Past" series of role-playing resources organized through Barnard College.

"Reacting to the Past" offers instructors practical guidance and resources for running successful role-playing units in courses. While I liked the idea of using role-playing, I was wary of the amount of pre-course planning and preparation that seemed (and is indeed) involved in making such projects work. However, when I discovered about four years ago that there was a large network of colleagues that offered support for history teaching using role-playing, I decided to take the plunge. The support takes a variety of forms. Most tangible are fully tested resources for nine role-playing scenarios. These include student game guides published through the Pearson company (a leading international provider of educational resources), and faculty guides available online through the "Reacting"

webpage.⁷ In addition, there are online discussion groups for instructors that are supplemented by conferences and training sessions. While I have not attended any of the conferences, I appreciate the network of support. So far I have used two scenarios (one set in ancient Athens and the other in revolutionary Paris) over several years in an introductory liberal arts course. The Reacting community has close to two dozen further scenarios in development. Settings range from the ancient world through to the present, and many will be of interest to CGR readers.

There are some limitations to role-playing as an approach to teaching history. Even with the resources and support that the Reacting community provides, role-playing takes a great deal of energy. I would not want all my courses in a given year to take this format, nor would I recommend it to all my colleagues, since this approach does not match well with everyone's strengths and brings with it real limitations for class size. I am also wary of role-playing if it only involves students embodying a role. All the Reacting resources involve scenarios in which students have to work out competing goals and interests using ideas that would have been available at a particular time and place. My experience with the Reacting pedagogy has convinced me that debate and competition are crucial for the success of this form of teaching.

While I do see limitations to role-playing and have reservations about it, I, like Gerald Hobbs, have become an enthusiastic proponent. I will outline several of its benefits briefly here.

First, scenario-based teaching helps students learn in a deep, lasting way about how and why ideas mattered in people's lives, and by extension how and why they matter today. Second, the competitions that are part of the scenarios not only force students to get involved but make them want to be active in class. One key reason is that they do not merely compete and debate with each other as individuals; their roles force them to use ideas to build alliances, much like people do outside the university. That is, role-playing builds upon the students' social nature to teach about the social nature of ideas.

⁷ See <http://reacting.barnard.edu/>. Also see the discussion of "Reacting" in Dan Berrett, "Mob Rule, Political Intrigue, Assassination: A Role-Playing Game Motivates History Students." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 9, 2012.

Third, role-playing is fun. We often refer to Reacting scenarios as “games,” and class sessions often involve boisterous debate that students initiate themselves. Fourth, the games help students think about past events not as fixed and discrete realities but as the contingent outcome of lots of factors. I often tell students that the results of past events could have been very different from what actually happened, but there is no better way of making this point than letting students discover it for themselves. For example, in my three experiences with the French Revolution scenario I have seen three different outcomes, two of which corresponded roughly with “the way things actually were” but one in which supporters of the monarchy were able to crush the Revolution with the help of Prussian troops. What better way is there to teach about true stories that could have turned out differently? Finally, role-playing debates and the Reacting resources to support them are a wonderfully effective way to teach the skills of persuasion. While we encourage debate by rewarding grade bonuses to the student or students who “win” a game, their grades ultimately depend on the quality of the arguments they make in support of their assigned objectives. Role-playing brings life and purpose to classroom debates that are otherwise sometimes (or often) staid and artificial.

Tools for Teaching Historical Thinking

By way of conclusion, let me say a little about some of the conceptual resources that, in addition to John Arnold’s brief introduction to history, have helped me change the way I organize my courses and my goals. Especially inspiring have been Lendol Calder’s essay and webpage, where he details how he transformed a survey course on American history into a course built on the principles of “uncoverage.” Rather than trying to cover the subject of American history, Calder now uses his survey course primarily as a vehicle for getting students to practice the skills that historians use.⁸ I too now conceive of all my courses, regardless of their format and size, in these terms. For example, if I assign a textbook (even in a first-year course), I do so only secondarily to provide students with knowledge about a subject or set of subjects; in the first place I use the textbook as an object for analysis.

⁸ Lendol Calder, “Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey,” *Journal of American History* 92 (2006): 1358-70.

To use Calder's terms, I want to uncover how historians make history so that students can become better at making it, too.

Calder's approach, and now mine, is based on important scholarship from the last several decades by educational psychologists with a special interest in how professional historians actually think and practice their craft. These scholars have used their insights to provide resources for better teaching. Good examples are the "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking" project based out of the University of British Columbia⁹ and the work of the Stanford History Education Group in the US.¹⁰ Scholars associated with both institutions have already provided a range of curricular resources.¹¹ While most of these are aimed at high school audiences, they are easily adaptable to university teaching, especially at the introductory level (see Calder's work).

These resources outline the discipline-specific skills and habits of mind that help explain to students what is unique about research and persuasive writing in history. While there are numerous ways of summarizing the elements of historical thinking, the "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking" are an excellent point of reference: "establish historical significance," "use primary source evidence," "identify continuity and change," "analyze cause and consequence," "take historical perspectives," and "understand ethical dimensions of history." My teaching – whether with Prezi, writing manuals, or role-playing games – aims to develop these habits of thinking.

Why should CGR readers pay attention to the elements of historical thinking? One reason is that scholars of Anabaptist studies usually conceive of their subjects in fundamentally historical terms (i.e., with reference to a beginning, whether biblical or in the Reformation), and occasional reference to basic cognitive steps involved in all historical thinking is a healthy exercise.

⁹ The project is run by the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia under the leadership of Peter Seixas. For details, see <http://historicalthinking.ca/>. In addition to literature at that website, also see Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the 21st Century* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2008).

¹⁰ See <http://sheg.stanford.edu/>.

¹¹ Here are two examples. Wineburg and his colleagues played a key role in the excellent webpage, "Historical Thinking Matters," <http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/>. The work of both Wineburg and Seixas has been influential for authors of the pedagogical resources at the "Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History" site: <http://canadianmysteries.ca/en/index.php>.

This exercise can help us to reflect at a meta-conceptual level on how stories about the Mennonite past are constructed and what they might mean. A second reason concerns the scholarly world beyond Anabaptist studies. Since our collection of fields is by no means unique in its historically shaped character, CGR readers have the possibility to contribute their expertise and experience to bigger discussions about historical thinking and educational psychology. Finally, many of us are teachers. I have come to agree with Sam Wineburg of the Stanford History Education Group that historical thinking is for many people “an unnatural act.”¹² Most people think about the world from their own perspective in the present, and they find it difficult to learn about different worlds from conflicting perspectives. Therefore, the better we (both in the CGR community and beyond) know how we do or do not think effectively in historical terms ourselves, the better we will be able to teach our students to think historically.

I think it is increasingly important in our rapidly changing world for us to teach these skills so that students can be active contributors to debates that shape their lives rather than passive consumers of stories that others tell them. I want to help students steer a course between the Scylla of trivia and the Charybdis of opinion, so that they one day can reach Ithaca – or Goshen, Princeton, McGill, Cambridge, or other dreamed-of destinations, both inside and outside the university world.

Michael Driedger is Associate Professor of History, Faculty of Humanities, at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

¹² Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2001).

Channeling Clio: Archives, Lecture Halls, and Western Canadian Conservatism*

Brian Froese

Introduction

In the *Kunsthistorisches* Museum in Vienna hangs Johannes Vermeer's "The Art of Painting." It portrays a man with his back to us painting a portrait of a young woman. Her head is adorned with a laurel wreath; in one hand she holds a book and in the other a trumpet. Though to all appearances she is a well-to-do woman of the 17th century, she has been with us since the Classical era. We find her in a long line of paintings, engravings, statues, vases, and drawings. Her name is Clio, the Muse of History. Many representations of Clio portray her as a winged woman, bearing a trumpet, surrounded by books, parchment, or scrolls, often writing upon or reading one.¹ Such a fortuitous lineage to the ancient past brings several significant themes into the present. Clio not only reads history but writes it, and with her trumpet proclaims it. History, in the image of our Muse, is, from the artistic record, a mixture of contemplation, reading, writing, and proclamation. For the 21st-century university, where historians are trained professionals often working in narrowly defined fields and writing on rarefied topics, Clio has much to offer as we probe two questions: What is the purpose of history? Why study and teach the past?

A constant tension for the historian in the university is the relationship between research and teaching. In part, the tension is creative, as these two key elements of scholarly practice inform and interrogate each other. This essay accordingly asks two related basic questions: What is the purpose of

* Some of the research in this essay was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant. I wish to thank Norma Jones for commenting on an early draft of this essay.

¹ Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. with assistance by Mari Griffith, "Johannes Vermeer: *The Art of Painting*," pamphlet, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1999. www.nga.gov/exhibitions/verm_pref.shtm, accessed October 16, 2011.

teaching history? In teaching history, why is it important to keep teaching and research close together? First, based on an examination of professional historians reflecting on teaching and research in *Perspectives* (published by the American Historical Association [AHA]) and presidential addresses for both the AHA and the Canadian Historical Association (CHA), I will identify recurring themes emerging over the last century that provide a starting point to assess how the profession in North America sees itself and its role in society. Second, from a personal perspective, I will discuss how some of my recent research in religion and politics in the Canadian west fits with the mission to teach my survey course in Canadian history.

Presidential addresses may seem a peculiar place to start. What these at times sermonic deliveries represent, however, is an annual snapshot of an aspect of the professional discipline. They are an opportunity for the head of the CHA or AHA to speak on any topic. Such talks are prepared for the broad swath of historians present and reflect broadly upon the discipline and profession. Many speakers have chosen to focus on their own research interests, others on historiography or the association itself. However, when the subject of teaching and research is addressed, a discernable set of themes has consistently appeared over the last century. These themes also assert the goals of a Liberal Arts education: inspiration, character shaping for an educated citizenry, and preparation of the next generation of educators at all levels.

In CHA's earliest years, classroom teaching was assumed to be as significant as scholarly research. Lawrence Burpee, delivering the presidential address in 1924, spoke primarily on the role of historians in public school education. He asked CHA to prepare "a series of outline lectures" for high school teachers on Canadian History, complete with slides, so teachers could build upon them for their own needs. The pedagogical value in the lecture outlines went beyond strengthening history in secondary schools; they were also "a very useful and patriotic piece of work" designed to correct "mistaken ideas" people entertained about Canada's past.²

Though the teaching of history received more attention earlier in the 20th century than later, it was never absent and it would appear again. In

² Lawrence J. Burpee, "Presidential Address," *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 3, no. 1 (1924): 9.

2007, Margaret Conrad brought teaching, scholarship, and the deepening digital realities of information sharing into her address. Though not as explicit as earlier speakers on the matter of history education and uplift of the citizenry, she defended the study of history based on its “connectedness” to what precedes us. History gives depth to our understanding of the present and our thinking about the future. Yet her conviction about teaching history as “disciplined inquiry” locates us in more than the sweep of time; history locates us in our country and world; it places us in the range of human actors exercising agency.³

Despite sincere pieties of connection, location, and agency, Conrad reveals that, while channeling Carl Becker’s “Everyman Thesis” (see below), she displays professional anxieties common to many in the guild: if everyone is an historian, where does that leave those of us who spent upwards of a decade in graduate school? Rightly concerned about standards of the profession—such as locating the past in context, understanding the passage of time, adherence to limitations of evidence—Conrad related the issue of connectedness to that of training. This is important, for “History” is a multi-billion-dollar industry in North America. Not only are we virtually alone among academic disciplines in having an ancient muse, we also have our own television channel.⁴

In an expanding marketplace, society demands that history be both an educational subject and a range of consumer products including movies, video games, biographies, novels, and sweeping romantic tales. If secondary schools too often assign the teaching of history courses to those without formal historical training, consider how much thinner is our presence in commercial enterprises.⁵ However, professional historians have something vital to offer. They often do the research and analysis on which much of the activity in the historical economy and teacher training is based. Thus their insistence on integrity of evidence, faithful and just interpretation, proper citation, acknowledgment of source materials, and understanding the

³ Margaret Conrad, “2007 Presidential Address of the CHA: Public History and its Discontents or History in the Age of Wikipedia,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 18, no. 1 (2007): 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10. See also Carl Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian,” *American Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (January 1932): 221-36.

⁵ Conrad, “2007 Presidential Address,” 10.

particular in the larger context serves not only the discipline but also public education and the economy.⁶

Despite these important functions, more is at work here than just standards and economic activity. History shapes character, as many historians asserted over the last hundred years. In the addresses of both AHA and CHA presidents, three main themes emerge around teaching. Though these themes shift as the decades pass, they all speak to the current context: the nature of historical education for individual development, the ideal of an educated citizenry, and pragmatic modeling of the discipline through research and communication for students and new generations of teachers from the primary levels to graduate school.

Why Study History?

When considering the relationship of teaching and research in the academy, we can hardly divorce it from reflecting on the nature of education itself. US President Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican who turned Progressive in 1912 at the time of his AHA presidency, delivered a tour-de-force address titled “History as Literature.” Criss-crossing the western world and millennia of history from Virgil to Gettysburg, he tells a tale of historical writing as heroic deed.⁷ Despite his inclination to view history as Homeric heroism, Roosevelt is pragmatic: “a utilitarian education should undoubtedly be the foundation of all education. But it is far from advisable, it is far from wise, to have it the end of all education.”⁸ His philosophy of education, mixing utilitarian needs with history, literature, and poetry, takes on a nearly mystical hue as it invokes the character of the citizen. “Side by side with the need for perfection of the individual in the technique of his special calling goes the need of broad human sympathy,” he says, “and the need of lofty and generous emotion in that individual. Only thus can the citizenship of the modern state rise level to the complex modern social needs.”⁹

For Roosevelt, education uplifts the individual, develops qualities of

⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, “History as Literature,” *American Historical Review* 18, no. 3 (April 1913): 473-89.

⁸ Ibid., 480.

⁹ Ibid.

citizenship, and raises the nation state to a level of nuance and complexity to tackle its problems effectively, all while training the individual in a trade. Yet there is more to this vision. Education must also “rivet our interest and stir our souls.” That is, in educating men and women, poets and historians should “inspire heroic deeds.” To demonstrate, Roosevelt rhetorically asks which is “on men’s minds more”: Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address, or legal and constitutional justifications for slavery and federal intervention. Great communication in an education rounded by utilitarian needs and poetic transcendence will not only equip citizens for productivity but shape their character for civic heroism.¹⁰

Carl Becker, in his famous 1931 address, “Everyman His Own Historian,” echoed the importance of communicating history.¹¹ His early volley in the profession’s positivism-relativism debate reminded historians that everyone works with the past. Therefore, the duty of professional historians is to shrug off liabilities of “omniscience,” gladly engage changing questions of changing generations, and strive to communicate their findings widely, because “the history that lies inert in unread books does no work in the world.”¹² These sentiments were common through the first half of the 20th century.

Historical education was something different from training; it was about knowledge, and about understanding and interpreting human experience. Therefore, history was to be as sweeping and grand in scope as the view of person sitting atop a mountain. In fact, history was more than eyeing prosaic landscapes, it was an act of virtue, an immortality bordering on metaphysics: history is “an act of piety to the dead and it is an extension of our own lives. It is a pushing back of the darkness that surrounds us all. We keep the past alive and so drive farther away the realm of night. We are not so conscious of our own loneliness.”¹³ Ultimately, these historians found

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian,” 221-36.

¹² Ibid., 234.

¹³ George E. Wilson, “Wider Horizons,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 30, no. 1 (1951): 1-5, quotation on 5. The only address to explore secondary school curriculum is Hugh M. Morrison, “History in the Canadian Public-School Curriculum,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 16, no. 1 (1937): 43-50.

the purpose of such an education was to mold character and citizenship, guide and develop society, and even reach deep into persons' souls with a metaphysical glow.

Towards an Educated Citizenry

The role of history in educating a populace in a liberal democratic society is the most common rationale for teaching the subject. As recently as 2007, an AHA roundtable discussion focused on the so-called research-teaching divide. The critical skills associated with research and writing were argued to be important to better “inculcate the critical and historical thinking skills students require to participate in a democratic society.”¹⁴

Even among historians as famous as Theodore Roosevelt, the entreaty is that history and historical education are needed for “democratic citizenship.” As Roosevelt, for example, unpacks his call for history to underpin democratic citizenship, he exalts the well-written history book, for “literary quality may be a permanent contribution to the sum of man’s wisdom, enjoyment, and inspiration. The writer of such a book must add wisdom to knowledge and the gift of expression to the gift of imagination.”¹⁵ If democratic citizenship carries with it assumptions of participation and social understanding, Roosevelt expands that to include wisdom, enjoyment, and inspiration brought forth by a command of rhetoric.

Within Canada, while teaching history was linked to nation-building in the late 19th and early 20th century, so was archival construction. As Duncan McArthur observed in 1934, the development of archives in Canada was especially important in the 1870s, as materials from Britain were brought to the new Dominion to develop a truly Canadian history. As the development of Canadian archives continued, these materials were increasingly used in graduate student theses and professional monographs from both sides of the border. In the early 1900s, Dominion Archivist Arthur Doughty expanded the archive holdings. He did so in the spirit of nation building, bringing materials from London and Paris to Canada: “[it was] one

¹⁴ Emily Sohmer Tai, “Research and Teaching: Imagined Divide?” *Perspectives* 45, no. 6 (September 2007). www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2007/0709/, accessed November 22, 2011.

¹⁵ Roosevelt, “History as Literature,” 476.

symptom of the development of a sense of national self-consciousness in the mind of the Canadian people.”¹⁶ Yet, even in Doughty’s enthusiasm there is caution: by the 1930s the materials available were becoming too much for any individual to exhaustively consult. More important, though the young nation may be flush with pride in crafting its own history separate from that of Britain and France, chauvinism and parochialism were to be avoided to properly interpret those materials.¹⁷

Though an explicit appeal to forming good Canadian citizens wanes in the post-war decades, during World War II it was part of the pedagogical front line. If universal suffrage was to be healthy and effective, then not only was an educated populace needed but one grounded in “a sound historic sense of the genius of its own institutions.”¹⁸ The responsibility of society to educate its citizens in its history naturally enough included its historians. For R.G. Trotter, the historian is “willy-nilly a citizen as well as a writer or a teacher of history.”¹⁹ Yet, in this wartime entreaty is a form of Canadian exceptionalism, where historians and historically in-tune citizens “realize to the full the high national destiny that beckons them in an interdependent world.”²⁰ The coalition of Allies in WW II was the context to speak grandly of Canadian history, destiny, fragile democracy, and universal suffrage in an interdependent world with the historian as teacher playing a crucial role.

When Joyce Appleby took to the AHA lectern in 1997, she described historical understanding as significant for the moral imagination, social uplift, and humane living. Along lines similar to those of Roosevelt and Becker, she challenged historians to think of the larger public in their work and to find ways to communicate how they move “from facts to narratives.”²¹ There is, naturally enough, discomfort, even anger, when

¹⁶ Duncan McArthur, “The Canadian Archives and the Writing of Canadian History: Presidential Address,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 13, no. 1 (1934): 7-13, quotation on 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14, 16.

¹⁸ R.G. Trotter, “Aims in the Study and Teaching of History in Canadian Universities Today,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 12, no. 1 (1943): 59.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Joyce Appleby, “The Power of History,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 1 (February 1998): 1.

the public encounters historical revisionism seemingly playing tricks on cherished mythologies. Such realities make it vital to communicate—in both teaching and writing—content, method, and historiography. Considering the numerous challenges to history over the 20th century from the social sciences, the linguistic turn, and postmodernism, she astutely observed that “the same public that hates and fears historical revisions rarely laments revisions in chemistry or medicine, which, like those in history, are the result of further investigations, a point that needs sharpening in public.”²² History has had its share of disillusionment, self-doubt, and scars from the culture wars, and one result is a sense that the discipline and its practitioners – similar to society at large – have been through threatening change before.

Models for Students and Future Teachers

In the most practical sense, research brings new content into the classroom. If the addresses so far recounted reasons for researching and teaching history, here we see one pragmatic reason why the two practices come together, namely to show students – many to be future teachers themselves – what we do and why we teach “only” a few courses a semester. Bringing research into the classroom helps scholars to begin assimilating research data into presentable form and to test it with an audience. Though a select audience of specialists and friends read our monographs, classrooms are filled over our careers with hundreds and thousands of individuals with all manner of interests, career ambitions, and purposes. The classroom, despite the primary weight of a historian’s reputation being given to research and writing, is where much of the dissemination of historical knowledge will occur. Lecture halls and seminar rooms are where we will likely have the most impact.²³

Dexter Perkins, AHA president in 1956, staked out the most obvious and often forgotten truism in the profession, namely that there is no real division between teaching and research. At the university level, these functions require each other for their relative fruitfulness. Research forces

²² Ibid., 12.

²³ Conyers Read, “The Social Responsibilities of the Historian,” *American Historical Review* 55, no. 2 (January 1950): 276; Dexter Perkins, “We Shall Gladly Teach,” *American Historical Review* 62, no. 2 (January 1957): 293-94.

discipline upon historians, makes them into students again, and updates and enhances classroom lectures and discussions. Engaging in research and communicating its results in print or spoken word models the profession for students. However, the relationship works both ways as students ask questions of our work, pulling our isolated selves from the archive into public light. If we are thinking of how to communicate our scholarship while bent over files in reading rooms around the world, then we are thinking of teaching.²⁴

Therefore, we must be engaged in our own projects, subjecting them to conference audiences and peer-review criticisms. These venues may remind us what it means to be a student submitting work for evaluation. Thus the archive and classroom are intimately connected – they demonstrate how history evolves, how new materials change older understandings, and even how, in the practical realities of writing and evaluating papers, professors and students share similar experiences.²⁵

We also model the discipline in our teaching by paying close attention to our biases and the temptation to oversimplify the past. That we condense and impose narratives is obvious, but we have a responsibility to be aware of our impositions and historical shorthand.²⁶ In such awareness, in our study of history and classroom experiences, we may avoid becoming what H.N. Fieldhouse calls “the handmaiden of politics” or “the tool of religious or patriotic propaganda.”²⁷ The need to present coherent narratives, analysis, and rigorous scholarship has another vital function for the university professor: Many of our students are future schoolteachers and professors themselves.²⁸ Therefore, the few history courses required for teacher certification involve a further responsibility. These courses should reveal something of how we

²⁴ Perkins, 293-94; Robert J. Young, *Forty Years Professing: Tips & Thoughts for Undergrads and Teachers* (Winnipeg, MB: Yaleave Books, 2006), 12, 17, 75-76.

²⁵ Paul D. Barclay, “Peer Review and the Liberal Arts Classroom,” *Perspectives* 45, no. 6 (September 2007), www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2007/0709/, accessed November 22, 2011; Young, 45-46.

²⁶ H.N. Fieldhouse, *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 21, no. 1 (1942): 53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 55; W.K. Ferguson, “Presidential Address,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 40, no. 1 (1961): 9.

²⁸ Trotter, “Aims in the Study and Teaching of History,” 53.

produce history, the research process, interpretive restraint, and the nature of peer-review and scholarly debate.²⁹

Whether we have been doing history “for its own sake,” to help mold a citizenry, impart inspired virtues, train teachers, nation build, or for scores of other reasons, history as a subject and craft is consequential. But the question remains: What about the classroom? To offer an answer I will sketch a current research project, and how it and the research process relate to teaching. I will also provide examples of how I present this relationship in courses I currently teach.

Premillennialism and Prairie Politics

Teaching history has its challenges, as the material is nearly endless and the tension between broad general interpretations and factual detail tests the historian. Survey texts in Canadian history cannot touch upon many local, even provincial or regional, issues and peculiarities. In the highly regarded survey by J.M. Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, a fine balance between national, local, and social histories is struck.³⁰ To maintain this balance, the political picture of Canada for much of the 1940s and 1950s is kept to six pages. The story of the prairies is told primarily as the story of socialism and Tommy Douglas. The spotlight on Douglas makes good sense: his provincial health care policy was the basis of a national system, and universal health care is currently a key point of Canadian identity and patriotism. Though reduced to a portion of a single sentence, Douglas’s training as a Baptist minister and his embrace of the social gospel was significant for his politics, especially the works of American social gospelers Walter Rauschenbusch and Harry Emerson Fosdick.³¹ Here one’s research

²⁹ Bruce Van Sledright, “Why Should Historians Care about History Teaching?” *Perspectives* 45, no. 2 (February 2007), www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2007/0702/, accessed November 22, 2011; Thomas Honsa, “Teaching History, Doing Research,” *Perspectives* 49, no. 6 (September 2011), www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2011/1109/, accessed November 22, 2011; Van Sledright.

³⁰ J.M. Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples* 3rd ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 382-88; A.W. Rasporich, “Utopia, Sect and Millennium in Western Canada, 1870-1940,” *Prairie Forum* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 233-38; Mark Noll, “Canadian Evangelicalism: A View from the United States,” *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G.A. Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Univ. Press, 1997), 16; George A. Rawlyk, “Politics, Religion, and

may work with excellent general narratives to unpack aspects of history for a survey course that explicitly connects the students' present with research into the past.

The 2011 Canadian federal election resulted in a Conservative party majority led by Stephen Harper, and with the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP) as the official opposition. What makes this result especially interesting is that both parties have their roots not only in the Canadian West but in evangelical Christianity. The evangelicalism of Tommy Douglas, an early leader of the Saskatchewan wing of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (a forerunner, along with other left-wing groups, of the NDP) and the only socialist government leader in North America as premier of Saskatchewan (1944-1961), emerged from the social gospel. The evangelicalism of William Aberhart, leader of the Social Credit Party and Premier of Alberta (1935-1943), emerged from the eschatology of premillennial dispensationalism. Both forms of evangelical Protestantism are grounded in a utopianism wrought from Christian millennialism. The story is of interest to Canadians, as demonstrated by the popularity of the recently published *Armageddon Factor* (2010) by Marci McDonald. To teach Canadian history, especially western Canadian history, the intersection of religion and politics is crucial.³²

Following Arthur Doughty's lead from the 1930s, it is obvious that a mass of historical information is too great for any individual to read and process, and from that reality comes humility: while the historian's task is important to the reading public and classroom student, there is no "final" word. To that end, as Doughty suggested, the historian must eschew provincialism and parochialism for a more proper reading of the sources. Further, to avoid becoming Fieldhouse's political "handmaiden" or propaganda instrument for patriotism and religion, this caution is vital. As all histories, without question, are incomplete and informed by interpretive predilection, I may emphasize in my own account a perspective largely overlooked, but I may do so honestly only by submitting to its inherent

the Canadian Experience: A Preliminary Probe," in Mark Noll, ed. *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), 269-70.

³² Marci McDonald, *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2011), 382; Rasporich, 233-38.

impermanence. Even where historical consensus has largely been established, the later decades of the 20th century have made our credo one that assumes the story is unfinished and remains constructed from a particular perspective in a particular location. And so it is with my reading and teaching of history.

Though Tommy Douglas is firmly and rightly ensconced in the Canadian pantheon, it is less well known that in neighboring Alberta evangelical Christianity was also coupled with politics. In the Social Credit party, led by William Aberhart, political conservatism from Social Credit to Progressive Conservatism (which transformed Social Credit conservatism into a more urban force, then decimated it) has controlled Alberta politics since 1935. The significance is that the political genealogy from Aberhart to Ernest Manning, Reform Party founder Preston Manning (Ernest's son), and even to the present-day Conservative Party of Canada and Prime Minister Harper reveals that both faith and conservative prairie politics are key to understanding Canada's national story.³³

In teaching I can show students not only an interesting story, or set of stories, but also something of the difficulty of researching, writing, and teaching history. Since time is limited, the first question is what to spend it on. In class I explain choices I made in how I constructed the course (topics, readings, assignments) and, where appropriate, I weave in my research work for its content or for illustrating certain problems. Thus, I have in a Canadian survey course had weekly readings on aspects of social or regional history (for example, tavern culture, hockey and borderlands, clothing, feasts). Regional readings are typically of the prairies, or places such as Banff and Niagara Falls. I use these materials to demonstrate different methods of historical research and the myriad topics that cannot be explored exhaustively in a survey course, and I use the discussion essay, survey textbook, and classroom experience to work together. Within discussions and at times in formal lectures, I bring in examples of my research and describe how I found it and plan to use it, and how course readings give ideas for interpretation, methods, and the larger context. In fact, early in the course I also explain

³³ John G. Stackhouse, Jr., "'Who Whom?': Evangelicalism and Canadian Society," *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G.A. Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1997), 64; Nelson Wiseman, "The American Imprint on Alberta Politics," *Great Plains Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 47-49.

how peer-reviewed journals operate and how scholarly books are published, in order to show that despite taking ownership of our work we also function within a larger critical community – something we partially replicate in class.

Thus, to introduce my class to a time different than ours I tell a tale about early Social Credit in Alberta to show that numerous experiments in Canadian democracy were taking place. With a sense of expectancy I begin that prior to being elected Premier of Alberta in 1935, William Aberhart was a Baptist radio preacher known as “Bible Bill” and founded the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute (CPBI) in 1927. He spoke on many issues of the day, including Pentecostalism, social gospel, liberalism, and evolution. As these issues marked a steep divide within North American Christianity – the fundamentalist-modernist controversy – Aberhart along with many conservative evangelicals meshed their concerns about modernity with an the eschatology of “dispensationalism.” By 1926 he was on the radio with a regular program that he maintained during his premiership.³⁴

Largely forgotten in broad historical analysis, these religious underpinnings to prairie politics were significant. With the exception of the account written by Marci McDonald, CPBI has mostly faded from view. Her investigative journalist’s treatment of the school and its impact on Albertan politics is likely the only source many readers will have read about the institution. Although she does not outline CPBI’s curriculum and history, she does provide background on the theology foundational to its mission. The transmission lines of dispensationalism flowed from England to the United States, where it was readily embraced in the aftermath of the devastating Civil War and brought into religious training curricula in schools such as Moody Bible Institute, and then headed north of the border into Canada. Dispensational preachers scorched the American Midwest and Canadian prairies, and many evangelicals took its timeline understanding of biblical prophecy to heart, mixing it with current events and key historical events to focus on when Christ might return. Within this number were Aberhart and Ernest Manning.³⁵

³⁴ David R. Elliott and Iris Miller, “Aberhart and the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute,” *Prairie Forum* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 61-64; Wiseman, “The American Imprint on Alberta Politics,” 47.

³⁵ McDonald, *The Armageddon Factor*, 312-14. This view of biblical prophecy and geopolitical

How to get such material into a survey course is not difficult. Within a course that is broad in scope, I have adopted an organizational approach which I describe as a clothesline: a long thread (the survey text) which holds the mass of material together, a set of clothespins (weekly focused readings, often primary sources), and bits of clothing pinned to the line (class time, usually a combination of lecture and discussion).³⁶ In this manner the relationship between primary source material and class time is focused on something local, regional, or very specific, and it all hangs off a larger structure provided by the arc of a survey text. I explain this in the opening class, reminding students of it a few times through the semester, and I make the connection to the larger structure clear as we go along. Thus, the specifics of source material, discussions of historical practices, and interpretations in the context of a larger narrative permit students by the end of the semester to have experienced not only “the history of X” but also something of the craft itself.

Topics raised through this pedagogy create fertile ground for classroom discussion, readings, and exploration. Through reading actual CPBI course materials, Alberta Social Credit pamphlets, and transcripts of sermons by Aberhart and Ernest Manning, a fuller picture arises of prairie populism, faith, and Anglo-American influences. At a basic level the class can examine such issues as how a provincial premier can also have a weekly Bible radio program, what the role of the premier really was, and how Albertans responded to his dual identities. We can get at these issues by reading letters “regular” people wrote their premier and his responses to them. Later, regarding the Manning government, we ask how the role of premier preacher evolved in the middle decades of the 20th century.

In the case of Manning, transcripts of broadcasts and correspondence with listeners and citizens on the specific issue of liquor laws, for example, when Manning’s government is relaxing such laws, is instructive. Students

interpretation was pervasive with conservative evangelicals, especially in the post-WW II decades. Later in the chapter McDonald threads this hermeneutic to US President George W. Bush as *ipso facto* war mongering, and ties the knot of the thread to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, while describing this genealogy as possibly “alien” and “alarming” for most Canadians. See 317-18.

³⁶ I am grateful to Bruce Guenther for this metaphor.

can read and respond to how political leaders discuss their proper function in society on a variety of issues. Within the historical questions I often add this caveat: Think of the writings you have left behind in diaries, journals, e-mails, websites etc., and ask how accurate these pieces are for explaining your life and what you hope future historians will do with them. A similar exercise is to ask students to read the section of a survey text covering the time they have been living, question whether what they read there parallels their own experience, and then consider how the judgment they make on that matter may apply throughout the text and the course.

During the 1935 political campaign Aberhart aired a regular radio program that mixed religious teaching with political commentary, including responses to letters and media criticisms. Through his use of radio we learn of the nature of his version of Social Credit policies, premillennial dispensational evangelicalism, and the relationship of these elements during the Great Depression. For his Easter 1935 message, after a brief reflection on Jesus' gospel message as one of hope and salvation that touched upon the feeding of the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, and the chasing of the moneychangers from the temple, he shifts to politics. There he links Easter to his audience's stresses and observes that the seasonal message of hope applies to their work-a-day world. What emerges is a political philosophy strongly anti-socialist and anti-communist, highly respectful of the individual, and expressing a conviction for economic fairness.³⁷

Aberhart makes his dislike of giant corporations and highly centralized banking clear, a point congruent with both Social Credit and premillennial dispensationalism, by describing the displacement and marginalization of workers through industrialism. He challenged his audience: "Think of 1% of the people owning over 90% of the wealth. Do you understand what I mean?"³⁸ He advocates for individual freedom, entrepreneurship, and industry, while the basic necessities of life are provided for anyone willing to contribute and co-operate with the new system. Though

³⁷ "Broadcast by William Aberhart [sic] Under the Auspices of the Alberta Social Credit League," 19 April [1935], 1-2. William Aberhart Fonds M6469 Aberhart, William, File: Misc. Aberhart Records 1935-1942. Glenbow Museum and Archives, Calgary, Alberta (hereafter GMA).

³⁸ Ibid., 3.

he believed in free enterprise, he also could not agree to have anyone exert his individual enterprise to the extent of denying his neighbors a chance to live.”³⁹ This was not 19th-century *laissez-faire* capitalism; Aberhart was advocating for a capitalism that mixed classical liberalism with reformist elements grounded in conservative evangelicalism. In fact, it may even be an early articulation – from a seemingly counterintuitive place, a conservative evangelical politician – of what emerged last winter in the “Occupy Movement” with its claims of class division along the lines of 99% and 1%. Here is a fine place to complicate the histories of social justice concerns, political philosophies, and religious imperatives over the past eighty years.

A year after winning the 1935 election, the Social Credit Party held a “Thanksgiving Service” for their victory. The event program, bathed in evangelical imagery, mixed politics, social justice, and faith. There were three songs with the words printed for the crowd to sing: “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” “Onward! Christian Soldiers” and “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” Aberhart’s address, “The Problem of the Hour,” based on James 5:4, concerned the exploitation of the “Producers . . . of the products of their labors, by those who hold the money monopoly of the country.” The speaker singled out manipulation of market prices, high interest rates, and “forced” farm foreclosures. He connected the interests of the contemporary moneyed elite to those of the moneychangers Jesus forced out of the Temple, “The Money Changers [earlier described as born from ‘the Germ’] must be removed from the field of co-operating Christianity.” Producers have their hands tied and cannot effectively challenge those entrenched interests; however, Aberhart celebrated that with Social Credit it was now possible to uproot those “voracious, insatiable creatures,” those “money changers [who] have gained access to the cabbages.”⁴⁰ It was a compelling blend of social Christianity, populist politics, and evangelical conservatism.

History and How it is Created

What does all this have to do with attending a history class? Even in my

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “First Anniversary of the Social Credit Victory Won August 22, 1935, Thanksgiving Service,” Service Program, August 30, 1936. William Aberhart Fonds M6469 Aberhart, William, File: Misc. Aberhart Records 1935-1942. GMA.

introductory survey courses I take students through not just the “history of X” but the ways history has been created. We consider ancient historians such as Herodotus or Sima Qian, or (in an American history course) we devote time to the significance of Charles Beard’s economic interpretation of the Constitution or Frederick Jackson Turner’s *Frontier Thesis* as ways of getting at the evolving nature of history and why continued research and writing is necessary. As the above Aberhart example shows in its fine detail, we get a captured mood and energy that makes explicit the complete blurring of religion and politics in depression-era Alberta, where popular stereotypes of politician and religious follower are complicated – making both the narrative and the lecture more intriguing for readers and students.

In pursuing my current research project on Canadian and American evangelicals in the Canadian West and their entanglements with missions (notably with Canadian First Nations) and politics, I have visited several archives and historical libraries. Of these three – Glenbow Museum and Archives in Calgary, the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the University of Alberta Archives, both in Edmonton – hold materials directly related to the William Aberhart and Ernest Manning story. Yet even this tremendous wealth of material, measured in meters of documents, dozens of audiocassettes, and dozens more microfilm reels, does not tell the whole story, nor could it. Moreover, it is clear that no one person can get to the whole, whether in research, writing, or teaching. Such is the nature of the historical craft – and such is its energy and excitement. Therefore, providing finished narratives for students is in some ways anti-historical; I see my task in teaching and researching history as to add to our understanding of some part of the past and to show others that in its incompleteness there is something to trust and much more to pursue.

Research is naturally restricted by the basics of life: time and money. How long can we afford to visit any particular archive? Choices are constantly made and I have focused mine, but as a quick skimming of archival finding aids demonstrates, another project on the same themes I am pursuing can be shaped in myriad ways. Thus, while an article or monograph on a topic can read as a polished final product, it is but one narrative. There are many well-researched elegantly written histories but none of them rests as the final telling, and, furthermore, the same is true of teaching. My primary problem

in research and writing is the same as in teaching: what to leave out?

That is why revisionism, in the best sense of the term, is important. We find new materials, use previously bypassed sources, and peer through newer lenses to find a clearer past – but never see the end. Like Becker, Roosevelt, and Appleby, the conscientious historian thinks of the audience, the public and the student, and then sets about the task of weaving straw facts into narrative gold. Why scholars read and write is different for everyone. Some read and write to build a refined and educated citizenry, others to embolden a certain morality or virtue, and still others to help the next generations of educators and students have a glimpse into complicated pasts possibly informing a complicated present. Among these complexities, curiosities, and passions are religion and politics, and are all combined in the focused activity of scholarly research and broader practice of university teaching.

As we continue down a path from 1930s Edmonton to 2000s Ottawa, we encounter Ernest Manning. He succeeded William Aberhart as Premier of Alberta in 1943, continuing to 1968, during which time he continued religious broadcasting. In his tenure as party leader he steered Social Credit away from the extreme religious aspects, especially in regard to biblical prophecy. His broadcasts maintained the practice of reflecting on politics through a conservative evangelical lens, calling his listeners to ask God for guidance, especially as “totalitarian nations openly renounce all allegiance to the God of Heaven,” with the urgency heightened as even “the Christian democratic nations are turning the[ir] backs upon God in just as positive a manner.” He returns to this theme throughout his radio career, including more than once taking cues from Abraham Lincoln’s description of American government, freedom, and ideals behind the Civil War as existing “under God.”⁴¹

Manning’s son Preston, in his early twenties, was writing in *The Prophetic Voice* and later became part of *Canada’s National Bible Hour* broadcast. As Ernest and Aberhart did in previous decades, Preston mixed

⁴¹ Ernest C. Manning, “Wake up and Live: Highlights from The Back to the Bible Broadcast,” *The Prophetic Voice* 9, no. 6 (November 1950): 2-3; Ernest C. Manning, “Wake up and Live: Highlights from The Back to the Bible Broadcast,” *The Prophetic Voice* 15, no. 5 (December 1956): 3, 7. Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute Fonds M1357 Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, Box 3, File 16: Magazine *The Prophetic Voice*, 1942-1965. GMA.

religious faith with politics in his writing and broadcasts. In 1961 he exhorted his generation to seek wisdom through “hard study” and repentance before God in “times like these,” likely a Cold War reference.⁴² In fact, Preston considered it troubling that despite Canada’s having a very high standard of education, it seemed as if the emerging generation was especially unreflective on geopolitics, particularly about the advance of Communism.⁴³

Speaking in the early 1980s on the *Bible Hour*, Preston combined exegetical analysis of a biblical text with a lesson on its relation to issues of the day. He challenged his evangelical listeners to think about where to “draw the line” in regard to faith practice and accommodation to society in regard to public education, mass media, business practices, arts, and politics. Though he did not offer answers to the questions that arose, he advised his audience to avoid religious enclaves separated from society but to see that while accommodation is important and useful, there may be times to disengage from society, depending on the context.⁴⁴ As these questions were approached by a young Preston, and earlier by Premiers Manning and Aberhart, they would regularly appear in Canada’s national media as well. What should be the proper relationship between religious faith and political practice? This easily lends itself to the classroom, whether we are discussing the issue on Manning’s mind while considering the source itself (a radio sermon by budding politician), or how archival research, historical writing, and classroom teaching come together while remaining intellectually aware of their limitations.

Though brief, the above account illustrates that bringing a research project into the teaching of western Canadian history deepens an aspect of necessary generalization. The details and depth that research brings adds more to the topic than simply flesh to bones. When students discover

⁴² Preston Manning, “In the Days of Thy Youth,” *The Prophetic Voice* 20, no. 4 (November 1961): 3. Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute Fonds M1357 Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, Box 3, File 16: Magazine *The Prophetic Voice*, 1942-1965. GMA.

⁴³ Preston Manning, “In the Days of Thy Youth,” *The Prophetic Voice* 23, no. 1 (August 1963), 3. Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute Fonds M1357 Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, Box 3, File 16: Magazine *The Prophetic Voice*, 1942-1965. GMA.

⁴⁴ RCT-945-2 Canada’s National Bible Hour (audio cassette) # 756 Manning “November Messages” 02-Nov-80; and, RCT-945-4 Canada’s National Bible Hour (audio cassette) # 773 Mannings “March Messages” 01-Mar-81. GMA.

shifts in what appears monolithic (preacher premiers with similar religio-political perspectives) and work on assignments asking them to trace and compare arguments on social issues (liquor, for example) or religious issues (prophecy, for example), this brings the excitement of research into the classroom. There, armed with primary sources, details, stories, and nuanced interpretations, any survey course can be deepened and timeworn narratives complicated. The narrowly defined research project finds a larger interpretive home. There will not be time in a fast-paced survey course to trace the various topographies of a region's history, but expanding the survey textbook's necessarily brief treatment of a topic on the basis of one's own research experience goes a long way to making history "come alive" as both a place of fascinating content and a process of constant decision making. It enlivens the classroom and connects the historian's research with a larger audience.

How exactly does it enliven the classroom? As we noted above, classroom reading – from archival sources – and discussions can bring both students and professor to consider, alongside the broad backdrop of a survey text, local nuance and national complexity. The mixing of religion and politics is controversial today, but that was not always the case. There are questions here to ask a class: What might it have been like to listen to one's premier on the radio for political pronouncements and spiritual nurture? What is the relative value (or potential use of) a radio sermon, Bible school handbook, and political pamphlet written by the same person? Then concluding such a section with a look at correspondence between Premier Manning and Albertans concerned with the loosening of liquor laws, for example, and how that relates to the Premier's Christianity reveals both that the past is complex and that contemporary questions of what it means to be a political leader and a religious figure are not new.

An effective way to conclude such a survey course section is to assign students to write a review essay of a book like *Armageddon Factor*, not only on its strengths and weaknesses but as a starting point for understanding current events through interpretations of the past, issues of archival based research, and the politics inherent in source selection. Moreover, this assignment comes with a reminder that as a history professor I have had to

do the same in teaching the course. Then, at the end of the course, I suggest that students treat it like a buffet dinner and to go back for seconds – in upper-level courses focused on selected items, thus making the connection between general survey courses and specialized senior level courses.

Conclusions

Joyce Appleby observed that in the process of bringing research and teaching together the historian must work to overcome dominant ideologies preventing scores of research projects and classroom encounters from ever taking place. She uses capitalism as an example, where the legacy of Progressive reforms in the early 20th century resulted in a persistent aversion to studying capitalism as a subject. The tremendous creativity, fertile use of human energy, and ambition of capitalism was typically put aside and instead cast as a dark pernicious force.⁴⁵ Likewise, in my brief example of conservative religion and politics in western Canada having national significance, coupling research and teaching offers alternatives to dominant interpretations and opens up conservatism as a creative force well represented in society, even if not in common narratives.

The brief sample from my current project discussed here simply posits that the teaching of western Canadian history influences my research just as the archives help form the classroom experience. The survey course and textbooks give structure to topics, but flesh is added in the process of research and communication – in the archive, on the written page, or shared in a room full of students. The historical landscape of the Canadian West gains added nuance through the interplay of research and teaching – and my making clear to the class the incomplete nature of both.

Therefore, like Clio, we historians must continue reading, contemplating, writing, and teaching history. Clio's image and instruction in the ancient world remains pertinent in the reflections of 20th century historians on research and teaching. She enjoins us as much today, in the early 21st century.

Brian Froese is Assistant Professor of History at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

⁴⁵ Appleby, 13-14.

Geography Matters: Understanding the Lay of the Land

Valerie Rempel

I

It was the end of the semester, the last day of class, and we were wrapping things up in a survey course on North American religious history. Students had talked a bit about their research projects, I had tried to finish up one last lecture and show one more piece of film, but we were really done. Still, the clock gave me the advantage, so I asked the question that I sometimes ask on the last day: “What did you learn this semester?”

They were silent, heads tilted, eyes gazing into space or down at their laptops as they mentally reviewed the semester’s worth of material they had tried to absorb. Or maybe they were just sneaking a glance at the clock. After a pause, one of the students, the quiet one who had spent most of the semester hugging the wall and holding his thoughts to himself, said “Geography matters.” The class, a bright group of seminarians who had worked hard and well throughout the course, burst into laughter, and I joined in. His dry delivery was a little different from mine, but we all recognized the line I had used over and over throughout the semester.

Military historians have always known that geography matters. Battles have been won and lost because of the contours of the land and the vagaries of its climate. But until I actually started teaching history, rather than just studying it, I don’t I think I fully appreciated quite how much I believe that geography matters.

The North American story provides multiple examples. Why, for instance, did southern slave owners in the United States find it easy to justify the “peculiar institution” with biblical support, while northern abolitionists used scripture to oppose the practice? The slave trade flourished in the south partly because the region was economically dependent on cotton and tobacco, crops that required warm climates and were labor intensive. The owners’ way of life depended on the cheap labor slaves provided. The northern states had far different farming patterns and little need for slaves.

What they had was flowing water that provided cheap energy and helped turn the northern region into a center for industry. It is far easier to read the Bible as a text of liberation when you have no need of slave labor, and far easier to read it as a text accepting of slavery when you do. Geography matters.

“Geography matters,” is, I suppose, my way of saying that *context* matters. As historians we revel in the context, the lay of the land. We work hard to understand the various influences that shaped people, events, and movements. We immerse ourselves in the period or subject we are studying, trying to understand motivations, influences, and the events themselves. If we are successful, we begin to develop an almost intuitive understanding of people and movements. Like detectives, we follow not only the clues but our hunches, always knowing that what we are following may lead us to a dead end or to some serendipitous discovery.

For students, however, the context of historical acts or actors is often abstract and difficult to fully appreciate. Students inhabit such a different world from that of the past that they need help in imagining some other reality. And unless they can do so, I think they will miss a much needed sense of connection to the past. They may fail to recognize how studying history can inform the present and offer examples either to emulate or avoid. My job as a teacher is to help acquaint them with that earlier landscape – to sketch it out and even color it in, so that they begin to realize and take note of the complex interweaving of impulses and events that create history.

Richard P. Heitzenrater has described this process of organizing and presenting historical material as “research, conjecture, and analysis,” or, as he quotes his grandson, historians “‘look it up,’ ‘make it up,’ and ‘spice it up.’”¹ This process of making research accessible, “spiced up” for a broad and varied audience, is part of what motivates me when I teach and, for that matter, when I write. I want to help people gain some sense of the past, to make that leap of imagination so that they can begin to more fully understand and appreciate the people and movements of an earlier age.

Making that leap is so important, because the temptation in presenting Christian history is to make it holy or, to extend Heitzenrater’s categories,

¹ Richard P. Heitzenrater, “Inventing Church History,” *Church History* 80, no. 4 (December 2011): 738.

to “clean it up.” This is the kind of historical study that glosses over less admirable actions or resorts to a simple “God made it happen.” Both do a disservice to the church and to God. The church has always been made up of very *human* beings with the accompanying flaws and character traits that distinguish all of humanity. To deny that is to deny what we are or have the potential to become. It is not just “those people” of a different culture or era who have the capacity to act with either extraordinary faith or apostasy. Attributing all human action to God seems equally troublesome. Human acts, especially failures, can too easily be dismissed if they are somehow simply a part of God’s mysterious will. God does not need our protection, as if by brushing over the less admirable actions of our forebears we will help preserve God’s good name.

Of course, to study and begin to understand historical events is always to be confronted, even confounded, by the question of how we discern God’s acts in human history. One of the central confessions of the Christian faith is that God continues to be involved in, even fascinated with, creation and all that is in it to the extent that God promises to ultimately “save” it. However, sorting out which are the acts of God is at the very least challenging and mostly impossible to ascertain with any confidence. Albert C. Outler’s presidential address to the American Society of Church History in 1964, reprinted in 1988, presents a case in point. His musings on the unexpected stumble of emperor Theodosius’s horse, an incident that led to the emperor’s untimely death and subsequently to the defining Christological work of the Council of Chalcedon, illustrate how seemingly inconsequential events can shape or reshape history’s trajectory. While attributing the Definition of Chalcedon to the stumble of a horse may appear to oversimplify things, it still stands that these seemingly disparate events are linked and thus support Outler’s observation that “historical existence is a tissue of laws and choices and chance.”²

For students, especially Christians studying the history of Christianity for the first time, that can be a difficult realization. Even in a survey course they begin to encounter some of the complexities of historical and theological narratives – the “tissue of laws and choices and chance” that come together

² Albert C. Outler, “Theodosius’ Horse: Reflections on the Predicament of the Church Historian,” *Church History* 57, Suppl. (January 1988): 11.

to form the story. Many find it disconcerting to learn something of the twists and turns in the church's history and especially in its theological deliberations. Is it accident or divine intervention when the horse stumbles? Is this even a question for consideration? Students also find it hard to accept the reality of power struggles, the persecution of people they recognize as Christian by others who also claim allegiance to Christ, or the institutionalization of racism, sexism, or some other form of oppression that is unacceptable by today's standards and reading of the biblical text. I am reminded of a mature student, back in the classroom after significant years in ministry, who looked up from his notes and asked plaintively, "What am I supposed to think about this?"

What, indeed? Tempting as it is, I do not see my role as a seminary professor primarily in terms of telling students what to think. Instead, I want to help them consider how and why various events took place and to begin to realize that human beings have built the church's structures and developed its theological constructs. I want them to wrestle with the implications of historical occurrences, and especially to understand something of the dynamics at play so that they begin to see that the course of history is not inevitable – at least not in the sense of a predetermined set of events or ideas. Not then, not now. I am aware that my Reformed sisters and brothers may view this differently, but I am persuaded that while God is working toward an end of God's choosing, the paths to that end are infinitely variable.

Students find this especially difficult, I think, in a historical theology course. Our strong preference for biblical theology at Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary, along with my own training as a historian, has resulted in a core course that is more historical theology than systematic theology. It is designed to acquaint students with the theological tradition itself – its categories, vocabulary, and critical thinkers – and to help them develop their own skills in theological reflection. I have frequently observed that they have difficulty understanding varying viewpoints on doctrinal positions they take as givens. These are students so shaped by a Christian tradition made up of views that have "won" theological debates and someone's coherent presentation of those views that they find it hard to see how anyone could have supported any other position. Sometimes they need help in sorting out why someone would even ask the question that we are

spending valuable class time exploring.

To that end, I frequently divide the class up into “Donatists” and “Catholics” to debate the necessity of a pure priesthood, “Arians” and “Athanasians” to outline and then argue the relationship of Jesus to God the Father, “Easterners” and “Westerners” to create appropriate images that describe the Trinity, or Lutherans, Zwinglians, and Catholics to try to explain exactly what happens when we observe the Lord’s Supper. I ask students to write fictitious letters to the pope, to argue various views on theodicy or atonement theories, or even whether to link or keep separate baptism and church membership.

Part of my role as a teacher in this environment is to help them get on the other side of the argument so that they can begin to grasp another way of looking at the issue. Here again, it soon becomes apparent that geography is important.

One simply cannot fully understand the debates that occupied earlier generations of Christians or the tensions that arose without a sense of where people lived. It becomes important to know not only that an “Eastern” church exists but something of the physical and political realities shaping the alliances that formed and eventually established a separate branch of the church. Politics and geography emerge again in the rise of Islam as a force helping spur development of a euro-centered “Western” church. In a contemporary context, Christians in South America may still want to call for separation from the Catholic Church, given the deep connection between the Church and oppressive political regimes, while North Americans find themselves linking with Catholics who have been shaped by the renewal movements in a post-Vatican II context. Put simply: geography matters.

II

Filling in the landscape becomes important for other reasons as well. The work Heitzenrater describes as “research, conjecture, and analysis” is done in order to craft a kind of usable and even plausible historical narrative. Especially for teachers, the narrative needs to be presented, to be made quickly intelligible over the course of a quarter or semester to an audience with varying degrees of interest or prior knowledge of the subject. Because we choose what to

present and how to present it, we exert considerable influence in the shape and content of that narrative. Our own interests and biases easily get worked out in what we include and exclude. While the increasing influence of social history has pushed us to pay more attention to the lives of ordinary people or groups of people traditionally underrepresented in historical narratives, it is still easy (and some would argue, essential) to focus on the big events, especially when we teach survey courses. Unfortunately, this often continues to obscure other key elements of the Christian story.

For example, when I teach the very occasional course on women in the Christian tradition, the response I get most often from students is “Why don’t I know this?” I find students, both male and female, to be consistently indignant about what they perceive as important omissions in their education. Why don’t they know about the deaconess tradition in the early church, or the leadership women offered in the establishment of early house churches? Why don’t they know about female mystics who challenged the authority of the church with their claims of direct and divine revelation? Why don’t they know about the many women who were martyred along with men during the turbulent years of the Protestant Reformation, or the impact women had on the worldwide missionary movement? Why have they never been asked to consider how the modern concept of the nuclear family owes much to 19th-century ideals regarding the appropriate spheres of men and women, or how those ideals continue to influence contemporary debates on the ministry roles of women? It is perhaps too easy simply to say “No one told them.” Presumably, they are enrolled in a graduate program to learn things they do not already know. The point remains, however, that by the texts and films we choose and the lectures we write we are engaged in shaping a narrative, in sketching a landscape. I would argue that we have a responsibility to paint it as completely as possible, so that students can begin to see how present reality is rooted in the past and to gain some appreciation for the breadth of the story and the multiplicity of its characters.

Here again, context matters – this time, our own. The longer I teach, the more I realize how my own social and geographic location informs my work. I become especially conscious of this when I teach a course in Anabaptist and Mennonite Brethren (MB) studies. While I can trace my family roots deep into the Mennonite tradition, I did not grow up in traditional

Mennonite communities, at least not until I was a teenager. I grew up in a “modern” Mennonite home that, outwardly at least, differed little from that of my suburban and later small town neighbors. Furthermore, I grew up in the western half of the US, in Washington and California, before landing in Kansas in my teens. I’ve lived most of my life on the West Coast, and I am primarily formed by the American MB story, which is in turn significantly impacted by American evangelicalism. These realities deeply influence both my experience and my understanding of what it means to be Mennonite, and even to be Christian.

As a westerner teaching in Fresno, California, I live far from the traditional centers of North American Mennonite life. The university that employs me, and even the denominational seminary I am lodged in as a faculty member, serves an increasingly diverse population, both culturally and religiously. I am as likely to have students in my class with Catholic roots as those with Mennonite connections. They are far more likely to speak Spanish than any form of the German my ancestors spoke. In a school claiming Anabaptist perspective and convictions, I actively help students prepare for military service as chaplains. As a result, I have become committed to hospitality as a fundamental value in the classroom, so that students feel free to express and explore the varying perspectives of their own theological traditions. More and more, I find myself trying to help them understand their own religious tradition so that they can critically embrace it. To that end, I am increasingly seeking to develop what Stuart Murray has termed “naked Anabaptists,” i.e., Christians who are shaped by Anabaptist theology and practices even though rooted in other church traditions.³ This perspective is helping broaden my sense of what it means to serve the church, especially as my institution wrestles with the changing denominational climate and an increasingly pluralistic environment.

I was assisted in this development by the practical reality of my first experience in teaching a Mennonite history course. I had expected it to be

³ Stuart Murray, *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2010). Murray uses this term to describe Christians who embrace an Anabaptist reading of the Bible but do not share the historic ethnic trappings of the Mennonite tradition as it arose in Europe and was transplanted to North and later South America. “Naked” Anabaptists may have joined Mennonite churches but are most often lodged in other church communities.

“family talk,” a chance for students who shared a Mennonite heritage and perspective to come together and explore their historical and theological roots. To my surprise, students had enrolled whose only connection to the Anabaptist or Mennonite tradition was the accident of their enrollment at a Mennonite Brethren school in the first place. Like seminaries across North America, ours had become the local seminary, and they had chosen to study here rather than relocate to their own denominational school. Short of talking them out of the class (I tried), I was left to wrestle with how to structure the course in a way that would not waste their time or leave them consistently on the fringe of classroom discussion. I started working harder to contextualize the Anabaptist story within the 16th-century Reformation, so that students from both the “left” and “right” of that movement could appreciate the spectrum of theological views and their relationship to each other.

I began to think of the Mennonite Brethren story as a case study for revival movements, and to try to help students see how early enthusiasms can become characteristics that both help and hinder a group’s later development. I found myself trying to draw parallels between the Mennonite experience in North America and the experiences of other immigrant groups. This prompted discussions around cultural and theological assimilation, as well as boundary maintenance, issues relating to a wide variety of church traditions. In short, the presence of these non-Mennonite students significantly impacted how I began to teach Anabaptist and Mennonite history. And, as it turns out, I think I have never taught the course without the presence of a “non-Mennonite” student.

It may have only been an urge to gently mock me that prompted my student to say that “geography matters” when asked what had been learned in a semester’s worth of study, but I want to believe he said it because he recognized an element of truth. It is certainly not the only thing to pay attention to when studying a people, a place, or a time. Still, I remain convinced that in trying to understand the lay of any land, geography does indeed matter.

Valerie Rempel is Associate Dean of the Biblical Seminary and Associate Professor of History and Theology at Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, California.

Teaching Christian History in Seminary: A Declension Story

Walter Sawatsky

Introduction

Do good theology and good pastoring necessarily require deep interest in the Church's history? A low view of Christian history has long been a free church affliction, apparently due to an exaggerated belief in the sole authority of Scripture. When scholars in my circle recently began talking about a "usable" history, I soon realized this discussion was not really about history. Rather, it was a theological misuse of history, an effort to achieve theological certainty where the history referred to fits the desired theology.

Christian history is about the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church – the "body of Christ" as the primary New Testament image – for which Christ gave himself. Sending the flawed human individuals making up the body of Christ into the world as ambassadors of the good news was a divine risk, done with a "sending" of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide that motley crew of humans "into all truth," to pick one of Jesus' descriptors for the Spirit's role in Christian history. It has proved very tempting to select out a usable "exceptional" chosen people to present a story line more easily seen as Holy Spirit-guided. So, I have often started a Christian history class with the question, Do you love the Church?, in order to start probing the light and shadow sides of the story.

This reflection on teaching history in a seminary is shaped by the conclusion I have come to that the troubling legacy of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, as seems true of most free churches, is that we do not love the Church and do not believe the Holy Spirit led it into all truth, except for our small part of the story, properly sanitized. This statement is a deliberately provocative way of posing the issue of teaching Christian history, and indicates the central ecumenical problem Christians have struggled with. The anxiety in Jesus' high priestly prayer – "that they may be one, so that the world may believe" – underlines what was and still is at stake. It also points to the intimate link between Christian history and mission. Those

areas of my scholarship – history and mission – were already in serious crisis when I settled on a history major in college. Their decline has continued. In what follows I limit myself to illustrating the challenge of teaching Christian history at a Mennonite seminary.

Sitz im Leben: The Scholar's and the Denomination's

My reflections include matters common to most historians of Christianity, but they have also been deeply shaped by my own context (*Sitz im Leben*) as part of the free church tradition. This tradition is statistically much larger than historians until recently have noticed because of its quite undisciplined plurality of expressions in the cultures of the world. Further, my thinking has developed as part of a relatively insignificant minority tradition, the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition of the past 500 years, which became global only in my lifetime. Years ago I had set out to do doctoral studies in history, drawing extensively on the social science disciplines and social theory, with the intention of helping my church community find its way forward. In the end I settled on Russian Mennonite history as a specialization, but in my dissertation on early 19th-century Russian history, my findings on the Russian Mennonites were but a minor section of a bigger story, namely one about the Pietist Reformation in its Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant expressions that were shaping the social, political, and cultural life of tsarist Russia.¹ By then, too, several articles by me on Russian Mennonites in the 20th century had appeared in Mennonite journals, based on research in London, England and resources in the USSR. In a book published a half-dozen years later, the Russian and Soviet Mennonite story got integrated into a larger story of the role of evangelicals in the dramatic modernization experiments of the 20th century.²

¹ I already knew before starting graduate school that the Russian Mennonite story I had learned was too self-congratulatory. It was being told from the inside, and even there puzzling aspects seemed unexplored. My actual dissertation focus was to write a biography of a key state official as a way to examine the broad social, political, and religious developments of the first quarter of the 19th century, a major reforming of the Russian Empire on the way to modernization, within which the Mennonite settlers formed their distinct story. The dissertation was titled “Prince Alexander N. Golitsyn 1773-1844: Tsarist Minister of Piety” (University of Minnesota, unpublished, 1976).

² Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981).

When at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in 1985-87, I taught Mennonite history, church and state in Europe and Soviet Russia, and a course on the Christian encounter with the many faces of Marxism. All were electives but attracted strong enrolment, perhaps because I was the strange new professor who knew the Soviet Union. Perhaps more puzzling was the fact that students from the Marxism and Christianity class decided to meet for further discussion at the beginning of the next semester. Today I would be astonished if a student knew anything about Marxism. Yet I still find the Marxist challenge to Christianity profoundly relevant and troubling.

When I returned to AMBS in 1990, I was asked to teach many of the general history courses, while remaining deeply involved in the post-communist world as an East-West consultant and research scholar sponsored by MCC.³ Initially, students were still likely to take four courses in general Christian history, and I offered about 10 history courses over a three-year rotation, but that ended when a more restrictive curriculum went into effect after 1994. When around 1996 I became the editor of both the ecumenical journal *Religion in Eastern Europe* (as part of my MCC work) and *Mission Focus: Annual Review*, my annual load of history or mission courses dropped to three. Those editing tasks have preoccupied me ever since and have acquainted me with a wider world of committed believers and scholars who often made me think again. Not only had I embraced the label of Mennonite historian and church historian, I had also become an ecumenical theologian and missiologist. Below I will concentrate on specific challenges to teaching history in the Mennonite setting, but I realize that colleagues and friends do not regard the fields of history, theology, and missiology as necessarily interlocking, as I have come to perceive them, given my extra-seminary life.

The book took on a second life when published in 1996 in Russian and is still used in schools in digital format (English and Russian). Through a Canada Council doctoral grant I was able to spend several months in successive years, exploring archival materials on religion in Leningrad and Moscow, and had begun, as a research scholar, a Mennonite Central Committee sponsored assignment at a research center newly established in London, England (1973-76) at what was known until recently as Keston Institute.

³ Aside from coordinating the completion of a multi-volume Bible commentary in Russian translation project and a new oral history project involving students from four theological colleges, that East/West consultant work focused on teaching history at many of the new theological schools, soon engaging and encouraging a new generation of Russian evangelical scholars.

Teaching history in a western free church seminary has become increasingly difficult over the century-and-a-half that seminaries have existed in North America. Not only has the United States been driven by an exceptionalist mythology; until recently historiography on American Christianity was essentially organized around Anglo-American Protestantism from Puritan roots to the many varieties of Evangelicalism. The skeleton in the historical closet, so one prominent historian once put it, was the immigrant and his/her God.⁴ That is, even the largest organized Christian body, the Roman Catholics, had to take on the sociological trappings of democratized revivalism in order to fit in.⁵ Even now, the variety of lived Christianities, including the Mennonite ones, that immigrants brought to North America, where they went through further transformations during the cultural adaptation process, remain more unexamined than known. The cultural preference for ignoring the past and “moving forward,” and for ignoring free church and Mennonite histories in particular, is why the current popularity of “Anabaptist theology” – of a dehistoricized, culturally neutral “naked Anabaptism” – makes any sense.

Teaching in the post-Communist world after 1991 made me contrast my North American context to a Soviet society both deeply interested in its past and very ignorant of its Christian story due to 70 years of limited access to written historical sources. The new Protestant (mainly Evangelical) theological schools were peopled mostly by teachers from Germany, Britain, and America. Those from the latter two countries represented worlds where Protestantism was predominant, and where the 20th century had marked an expanded cultural and political influence of the free churches, notably the many denominations of Baptists and Pentecostals, whose historical trajectories were more closely linked to the Mennonites. Teaching as if free church Protestants shape the world around them – the point of reference for British and American visiting professors – was noticed by Russian students keenly aware of their nation’s long tradition of societal hostility to sectarians.

⁴ Jay P. Dolan, “The Immigrants and Their Gods: A New Perspective on American Religious History,” *Church History* 57, no. 1 (March 1988): 61-72. By 1980 around 40 percent of the American population had German origins, and those of British origin were already a smaller minority.

⁵ For example, Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830-1900* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1978).

I also realized how much more my American students were surrounded by Anglo-American points of reference, Mennonites included. The non-English continental European renewal movements that had shaped and reshaped the thinking and practice of Mennonites in Russia and Germany, including their intertwining with Baptists, Brethren, and Pietists, were better recognized by some of the more recent Mennonite migrants to Canada and the US than by those living for generations on the US eastern seaboard or even in the midwest.

Teaching the Tradition

In an apparent effort, around the year 2000, to re-direct attention in American seminaries to the Christian tradition, several seminaries (AMBS included) participated in a grant-funded seminar series. One exercise was for each faculty member at my seminary to write a two-page statement of how they taught the Tradition.⁶ As I read the statements of my colleagues, whose specializations were Biblical studies, ministry praxis, ethics, or theology, what struck me was how “the tradition” was limited to notions about early Christianity and about early Anabaptism. It was a theology of beginnings. However, fundamental to the historian is the challenge of engaging a living tradition for the sake of the future.

The Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition is part of the Western Christian tradition. Walter Klaassen wrote a short book entitled *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* as a way to delineate the essential features of that tradition. Several years later he published a corrective essay in which he emphasized how the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition is *both* Catholic *and* Protestant. Though that essay is included in the later editions by Pandora Press, in the popular understanding of many AMBS alumni the neither/nor formulation seems to have prevailed.⁷ A variation on expressing that separatist understanding of the Anabaptist tradition is the notion of a third way – now popular through the Third Way Café website. I have come to see that Klaassen’s readers should have been much more sensitive to the Catholic-

⁶ I follow here the convention that “Tradition” capitalized refers to the Christian Tradition as a whole, and “tradition” to smaller parts of it.

⁷ Originally Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* (Waterloo, ON: Conrad Press, 1973); now 3rd ed. (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2001).

Protestant cultural dynamic for nation building in Canada that accounted for Klaassen's rhetorical device at the time. I have concluded that neither "Catholic" nor "Protestant" were meaningful categories to encapsulate the various traditions, except as straw figures without historical development. Rather, they served to set up categories of comparison that rendered the Anabaptist tradition as dynamic and unique.

To stimulate a rethinking of their theology, I had students read two journal articles. One was "Rerooting the Faith . . .,"⁸ Scott Hendrix's attempt to explain how he taught Reformation history. The many Reformation traditions that emerged in the 16th century had ended up teaching "the tradition" as if their own *part* of it was *all* of it, an exercise that not only involved seriously misrepresenting other traditions but resulted in forgetting what the Reformation project was about – namely to re-root the Christian tradition, to reform and renew by testing present practice against long tradition, and to recover the original essence or intention. The many Protestant and Catholic reformation traditions had each opted for particular aspects of Christian living and thinking that they gave priority, such as grace (*sola gratia*) versus misuse of indulgences, or the witness of good works versus mere forensic notions of justification, or *sola fidei* versus Pelagianism, and they differed on appropriate strategies for reform.

My own understanding of these traditions sees the renewal movements usually referred to as 18th-century continental Pietism and Anglo-American Evangelicalism as another major round of re-rooting the faith, which in the process again spawned new Protestant traditions such as those of the Methodists, Brethren, and others. The latter traditions eventually got their own historians, but too often the earlier confessional bodies were not seen to have participated in that new round of re-rooting in their own way.⁹ Yet

⁸ Scott Hendrix, "Rerooting the Faith: The Reformation as Re-Christianization," *Church History* 69, no. 3 (September 2000): 558-77; revised from *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 21 (2000): 63-80.

⁹ For knowledgeable Mennonite readers, I might point to Robert Friedman's thesis contrasting Anabaptism with harmful Pietism, as if it were about choosing theologies to follow rather than seeing traditions participating in changing contexts and being transformed by them. Only a rigid adherence to a theology of beginnings could take the thesis seriously, and thankfully Friedman's *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Goshen, IN: Mennonite Historical Society, 1949) offers rare and valuable data on Mennonite involvement in continental Pietism.

another phase of renewing and re-rooting resulted in what is now spoken of as the Third Wave or the Charismatic Reformations of the 20th century. Making sense of much of the global Mennonite world by the year 2000 requires examining how, and how much, Mennonites were re-shaped by those movements.¹⁰

The second assigned reading, usually the first task in a course on Eastern Christianity, was “‘Tradition’ in Eastern Orthodox Thought” by Greek Orthodox ethicist Stanley Harakas.¹¹ Invariably, students commented on the degree to which they had lacked much sense of tradition and now expressed an appreciation for the living tradition of Christianity. Harakas’s composite definition (drawn from many sources, not only Orthodox) saw Tradition as “the activity of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing life of the Church.” This is not only a more comprehensive understanding of Tradition than just an appeal to the authority of either Scripture or Tradition (later followed by appeals to the authority of Reason and Experience). Irenaeus’s remark that “where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is . . .” must be understood in this sense. It pre-dated the time when “outside the Church is no salvation” came to be an authority claim for one Christian tradition, most often the Roman Catholic. In resisting papal supremacy claims, too often we ignore the truth that indeed there is no salvation outside the Church.

In broadest terms, I now attempt to teach the Tradition by seeking more ways to notice “the activity of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing life of the Church” with the assumption that this will be richly diverse but never

¹⁰ See Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2012), a provocative and surely controversial argument for the consequences over a 500-year trajectory of central emphases of the 16th-century Reformation. Gregory argues that the authority of Church Tradition was rejected by virtually all reformers in favor of an insistence on scripture alone, yet “the wide range of incompatible truth claims that a shared commitment to *sola scriptura* produced” (95) we now view as a dizzying harvest of pluralist notions. Similarly, the confessionalization era that followed resulted in a permanence of a multi-confessional Christianity that explains the modern penchant, especially in North America, to prioritize denominational defensiveness over Christian unity, and accounts for the loss of credibility of the confessions among the general public. Even so, the Tradition was always bigger than the Latin Western Christianity that Gregory maintains as exclusive focus.

¹¹ “‘Tradition’ in Eastern Orthodox Thought,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 22, no. 2 (1992): 144-65.

disconnected from the historical continuity of the whole. It means that teaching the Tradition as if primitive Christianity (to the very limited extent we know it from New Testament and patristic sources) and Anabaptist renewal announcements in the 16th century are the primary criteria of authenticity is simply inadequate, and it is a sectarian approach that cannot offer enough understanding of the *Missio Dei*. Additionally it means that teaching from a global perspective today requires recognizing the power and limits of the westernization and modernization project of the last half-millennium, in particular seeing that Anabaptist renewal, even in today's de-historicized ideological form, is inherently Western and limited.

A curious trend in missiological, theological, and even some Mennonite historical writing is a focus on identifying a "Christendom" mindset as a central primary problem, best addressed by learning habits of piety from pre-Christendom. The world is already in a post-Christendom mentality, and for Christians to flourish or even survive, breaking with Christendom is assumed to be the key. At first glance, this tri-partite frame for summarizing Christian history seems preferable to fostering exclusivist claims for one's own Reformation tradition. Yet the more I have learned about the Christian story, the more this image of Christendom has become a barrier to understanding, for it assigns a major part of Christian history to apostasy, refusing to see the role of the Holy Spirit in that part of the story, except for one's own remnant. This form of thinking had emerged among numerous Anabaptist leaders after the first generation who were seeking a spiritual link to apostolic succession.¹² It has now taken on the status of theological partisanship, recent writers challenging John Howard Yoder's persistent use of the fall of the church or of Constantinianism as an ideal type.¹³

¹² So the argument of Geoffrey Dipple, "*Just as in the Time of the Apostles*": *Uses of History in the Radical Reformation* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2005). The Reformation era, more broadly, forced both historical research and theoretical reflection, gradually developing from very partisan concepts of Christian history to what is now named a "global perspective" or "ecumenical approach" to history. See below.

¹³ See the article series in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 85, no. 4 (October 2011): 547-656, debating theologian (not really historian) Peter J. Leithart's book, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010). The general thrust is to try to read Leithart carefully and to defend Yoder through

However, new studies of the Christendom era help us differentiate more carefully. Instead of listing key features of faithful early Christian practice that came under governmental control soon after Constantine, even the English language scholarly literature now conveys the great variety of ways that Christianity developed as it was translated into many cultures, including ways of resisting or subverting governmental interference in matters of faith. The Yoderian Constantinianism could at best be applied to some parts of the late feudal order of western Europe – perhaps between 1300 and 1700, to be generous. But eastern Byzantine Christianity followed a different formation in the relationship between emperor and patriarchs, not least because almost as soon as Islam emerged, the Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandrian patriarchates sank into tolerated ethnic minority status under the Caliphates. Nevertheless, Christian leaders both resisted and sought creative survival approaches that help account for the persistence of ancient churches to the present.¹⁴ Throughout most of Christianity's first millennium, a major wing – and a very missionary one at that – developed in Asia from Edessa in Syria to India and beyond, under imperial regimes that were not Christian.¹⁵ Contemplating those ways of living and bearing witness in medieval and modern eras is suggestively richer than looking in early Christianity for clues for living today. The current artifice of critiquing American Christianity as prisoner to Christendom thinking obscures more than it helps identify the particular contextual problems of Christian history in North America, which are not easily compared to those of most other continents.

various mild revisions, but it remains limited to a particular view of Anabaptist theology, not even a broadly Mennonite theological spectrum. Nor do Leithart or his critics seriously examine the Christendom era historically. (*Leithart's book is reviewed in this issue.* – Ed.)

¹⁴An excellent summary of much research that my students have found very enlightening is Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008).

¹⁵ A broadly informed survey, with current bibliographical suggestions, is Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement. Vol. 1: Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001). Completing the second volume (1453 to the present) has proved difficult, given the complexity and wealth of scholarship, but drafts of many chapters do include much new literature, suggesting this volume may come closest to a serious global history.

Teaching the Tradition with Critical Engagement

I regard the effort to recover (or even to discover) the capacity to think historically as fundamental to being true to Christianity, for it is a historical religion. It claims that God entered into human history, especially in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and this gives history meaning to a degree not evident in other religions. Yet Mennonite seminarians at AMBS and at other free church seminaries commonly receive an MDiv degree without gaining a critical overview of church history in its broad sweeping developments, of Christian history in North America, or of the Mennonite tradition.¹⁶ This has been our way of saying that much of that general history, or of more modern history, does not matter because we do not identify with it anyway when working theologically and pastorally.

When starting at AMBS in 1990, I had to critically assess the work of scholars outside my specialty to determine where general interpretations had shifted since my graduate studies before 1975. That assessment produced a series of questions that still guide my teaching today: Why should Christian history be conceived primarily in terms of institutions and ideas? Why should the church-state dichotomy, as it came to be understood in Western Christianity, be so central that Anabaptist-Mennonites saw the Constantinian conversion and consequent Constantinian era almost exclusively in church-state terms (and rejected the apparent outcome), and learned to think of dominant Christianity during the next thousand years as suspended in a state of apostasy? Realizing the inadequacy of many textbooks, I encouraged students to undertake more selective reading instead. I also wondered when a Mennonite scholar could or should attempt a published synthesis of the Christian story, and what difference it would make to Mennonite theologizing.

¹⁶ In recent decades many AMBS students met their history requirements with a required course on Anabaptist History and Theology (a 16th-century focus) and History of Christian Spirituality (usually conceived as reading the writings of the mystics, Catholic and Protestant). The type of theological probing for which the courses discussed below provide illustration happened with fewer students, as other curricular requirements reduced those electives in significance. The corrective I have advocated was not to increase history course requirements, but rather to convey how the predominance of other disciplines than the social-historical fosters a mindset where future pastors are expected to theologize from a smattering of knowledge.

How does one offer a historical foundation that works with recent commitments to women's concerns, worship and art, spirituality (private and corporate), preaching, or simply the history of God's people? Those issues and many more filled my course syllabi to the degree that many classic texts were reduced to their proper place, for example, to contrast elitist (largely monastic) writing with other faith expressions of the time.¹⁷

Teaching the Tradition to Mennonite and Other Students

My syllabus is normally the first introduction of my intention that students be theological when thinking historically, and that they notice the conceptualizations, the intellectual frameworks, within which historical information must be placed. I encourage them to read widely and comparatively with some of the above questions in mind, to notice what particular historians are speaking to, or what they appear to miss. Seminary students who thought they knew Mennonite history from a college class often say at the end of the course that their most surprising discovery was how little they knew, how narrowly focused and unphilosophical or theologically uncritical their understanding had been.

My approach in that course is to compare the known with the unknown, and to avoid making it a celebration of the developments of the Mennonite denominations that sponsor AMBS, since the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition is much bigger. This includes offering alternatives to the presupposition that the definitive descriptors of Anabaptism and of the Mennonites were published by Herald Press. It includes reading materials from leaders and from the marginalized, and offering distinctions between what the Anabaptist movement was and what its legacy is. Above all, it seeks to foster attention to how living and thinking the Tradition proceeded over the centuries, how it was translated across many cultures, the fruit of which now confronts us with global perspectives and Mennonite responsibilities

¹⁷ Observing recent theology doctoral graduates in their references to a historical past, I found it often seemed as if the historical background reading that their theology professors had done was the baseline for these students' grasp of Christian historiography. That generational lag for new theologians lacking a baseline in contemporary historiography for their theological work seems to be the fruit of disciplinary fragmentation, as well as of American culture's dismissive attitude to its own and others' history.

toward Christian unity in the face of a bewildering array of denominations with global pretensions.¹⁸

Even within the Mennonite world, I find it troubling that the majority of church communities emerging out of the deep testing of their faith in the USSR, who are now so energized in all spheres of ministry, no longer wish to be officially linked with Mennonite World Conference. Renewing the conversations with them requires deeper understanding about how this could have happened. The way the Russian Mennonite sense of heritage was sustained during the time of testing did not include a recovery of the 16th-century Anabaptist vision. Their subsequent celebration of a Menno Simons 500th anniversary in 1994, with an eye to reviewing their longer story, was linked mainly to the Dutch and Russian contexts. Most instructive too are articles in a new volume by international Mennonite Brethren scholars on the occasion of their 150th anniversary, particularly Alfredo Neufeld's keynote speech highlighting the common and the particular in the many historical trajectories of the Mennonite Brethren.¹⁹

The 50th anniversary celebrations of Harold S. Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" statement, held in Goshen in October 1994, caused me to ponder some contrasts. Observing which Mennonite traditions were best represented at the event, and the relative absence (and silence of those present) of Mennonite scholars from the North European (Dutch-Russian) tradition, I was struck by how alien or excluded I felt, a feeling already triggered by how the topics and papers were formulated. Both Irvin Horst and J. Denny Weaver, for example, argued for Bender's Vision statement as a necessary ideological (or teaching) tool. Weaver's failure to consider other than Old Mennonite experience as point of reference, plus his cavalier dismissal of

¹⁸ For a number of years, a nearly complete book manuscript draft of that course, titled "Mennonite History in Global Perspective," has served as a *de facto* orienting text. Its soon publication may assist readers of this paper to catch some of the lines of historical development emphasized there, which are mostly available so far in scattered articles either by me or by the many other scholars whose findings I have sought to integrate.

¹⁹ See Abe J. Dueck, Bruce L. Guenther, and Doug Heidebrecht, eds., *Renewing Identity and Mission: Mennonite Brethren Reflections After 150 Years* (Winnipeg, MB: Kindred Productions, 2011), as well as Abe J. Dueck, ed., *The Mennonite Brethren Church Around the World: Celebrating 150 Years* (Winnipeg, MB and Kitchener, ON: Kindred Productions and Pandora Press, 2010).

much of Christianity after the Constantinian conversion and his challenging the authority of the four ecumenical councils because they were a product of Constantinianism, made me conclude he was implicitly rejecting as nearly sub-Christian all but an Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Given how much more those attending should have known of developments since 313, his paper could not serve as a serious basis for theologizing.

In contrast, Mario Higueros of SEMILLA (Seminario Anabautista Latinoamerica), which provides theological education for Mennonite leaders in Central America from a Guatemala campus, had hardly spoken three paragraphs before I began noting his references to suffering, a relationship to the living Christ, hope, and a theology of The Way. This was the first time I heard these themes referred to at the conference as essential context for thinking – something I might have predicted from a Central American. These were the very themes around which I first learned about the Anabaptist experience, and how I continue to see it in Eastern Europe and globally where the Anabaptist heritage seems helpful. The structure of the conference kept us stuck in a sectarian celebration of history mode. That world of discourse excluded much, and seemed uninterested in what the world outside Mennonite Christianity in North America might be thinking.

How should I teach inclusively for Mennonites and other students? This has become an ever more urgent question. By the early 1990s, teaching church history globally and comparatively was already a common theme among historians. The better model was to see from many points of view.²⁰ Even one's denominational history should be presented in a comparative way that assumes that outsiders from another Christian family will appreciate it and that their critiques will be noted.

²⁰ See Justo L. Gonzalez, "Globalization in the Teaching of Church History," *ATS Theological Education* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 49-72, in which he engages in a frank assessment of the weaknesses of his own work from the perspective of globalization, trying to identify what more inclusive foci should be. Since the publication of Timothy J. Wengert and Charles W. Brockwell, Jr., eds., *Telling the Churches' Stories: Ecumenical Perspectives in Writing Christian History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), I have regularly presented as a minimum list the 14 principles for writing Christian history in an ecumenical perspective that Wengert and Brockwell summarize. Then I urge students to read more of the essays, most of which observe why this requires thinking from a global perspective. Doing that well is of course most difficult, but noticing the attempt to do so is what matters.

To teach Christianity historically is to notice almost constantly the challenge of translating the Gospel within a dynamically changing culture and across cultures. Further, the wholism of learning needs to speak to heart, mind, and soul. My “Nonviolence and Christian Faith in the 20th Century” course thus involved video clips, memoirs, poetry, songs, and comparative readings. It probed the impact of Christian complicity in the Holocaust, and the deep testing, including massive martyrdoms in the Soviet and Chinese communist experiments, as background for seeking to account for the nonviolent revolutions of 1989, the processes (actual and failed) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa, Chile, Germany, Russia, and so on. It also asked why Mennonite social ethics discourse has said so little about events that affected so many Mennonites.

On Truly Engaging Historical and Theological Traditions

A recent round of discourse on theological education is mirrored in the core values appearing in my seminary’s recent vision statement, none of which include thinking historically.²¹ Six educational goals for an M. Div degree as now assessed by the accrediting association contain, as the second aim, to “engage [the students’] historical and theological traditions in the context of the larger Christian church.” Earlier core values statements made more specific references to history. What the new, shorter statements convey is catch phrases that could point to the substance of “Scripture, theology and ministry” (core value one), depending on the orientation and emphases of professors and courses.

Given the current climate of discourse, however, at least three crucial seminary educational goals were no longer specified, particularly in curricular expectation statements. One was the importance of globalization for theological education, so that a pastor and other church leaders can attempt a constructive critique of the many forms of globalization, because it matters in every congregation. A second was an explicit interweaving of mission and ecclesiology as essential to the missional church agenda. As for the third, as numerous secular sociologists have contended over the past decade, churches are one of the few social entities still functioning in

²¹ This reference to AMBS is to my specific setting, yet it appears to reflect similar thinking in sister Mennonite seminaries in North America.

a pervasive climate of individualist atomization. So, church leaders have a special duty to be keepers of the social memory. Stated in more churchly terms, a crucial seminary task in such an individualized North America is to enable pastors and other leaders for perpetual, engaged conversation with the Tradition.

During a theological education consultation preceding the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Asuncion in 2009, I noted that many more schools are working at leadership formation across Latin America than in North America. Deep commitment by teachers and leaders was what they all had in common, yet contexts, approaches, and problems differed greatly. We sensed deep theological tensions (within the Latin American Mennonite world of educators) by the careful way presenters spoke, and I learned more from backgrounders during personal conversations. How much was this a deep sharing involving the North American theological educators who were present, I wondered. There were linguistic barriers to such sharing, but also the barriers of mission traditions still competing rather than working jointly with appropriate compromises.²²

The current staffing and agenda shifts in Mennonite publishing companies, and in other key Mennonite institutions, make me ponder why the literature on Mennonite history has declined, why popular summaries of the tradition marketed for congregational studies feel like the research level of a previous generation. One now needs to track college and seminary publications – Pandora, Bethel College, CMU Press, Bluffton, and Kindred

²² Since 1978, as an MCC representative in varying capacities, I have attended the annual Council of International Ministries (CIM) meetings of program directors of more than a dozen North American mission agencies (including MCC), plus many other related agencies that share with each other their visions, programs, and problems. Until just before MWC Calcutta 1997, this included reporting on theological education in many regions. Since then that feature has remained rather strong on Latin American reporting in its area committee. There had also been several meetings with MWC leaders to find a shared approach to global theological education through more systematic swapping of teachers and/or students. This failed to result in a set of commitments and programs, due to declining budgets or the readiness of agencies to support theological education at a more graduate level. As well, seminaries' budget projections were becoming more focused on their immediate constituency. Dalton Reimer now edits *Global Education Newsletter* on behalf of the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB), a most impressive resource showing what can be done by a community of goodwill.

Press – for the kind of serious engaging the tradition to be brought into one’s teaching. What I also find troubling, when tracking debates on a usable history for Anabaptist theology, or for formulating an Anabaptist ethic in the face of the American penchant for imperial interventionism, or for people seeking to foster the Yoder legacy, is how limited are the sources to which these writers refer (an insider group, essentially). The community discourse functions within a small circle of specialists, not really across the disciplines as was envisioned by *The Conrad Grebel Review* when it started. What would it take to get to a stronger sense within Mennonite seminaries and colleges of a common community of discourse? Clearly more face-to-face time between faculty, but rare is the venue where the necessary interdisciplinary assembly of teachers meets for serious talk. The Mennonite scholarly journals are an obvious vehicle for conversation, but too often what is said there is not cited because it was not noticed. Given the smallness of the Mennonite scholarly world, this suggests we are not serious enough about seeking to converse within our circle in an inclusive way, even as we must try even harder to converse ecumenically and globally.

Changing Paradigms for History

The tri-partite paradigm of pre-modern, modern, and postmodern has been with us a long time in spite of its inherent value-laden nature. A more interesting periodization (even for students, I often discover) employs more specific categories that can trigger thoughtful discussion, even the excessively broad seven major paradigm shifts in Christian history and mission advanced by scholars such as David Bosch and Hans Küng, or the sweeping interpretations popularized by Philip Jenkins. All of them convey at least a sense of major changes in organizing one’s world view, of change processes of long duration, even as specific events or sudden “paradigm shifts” prompt contemporary anxieties about “change” as threat. The most obvious such local and limited paradigm shift is the constant talk about a “post 9/11 world.”

The theological assumptions behind requiring a limited number of courses (at seminaries) for all, has to do with interpretations of Christian history that themselves need revision. Currently in Mennonite schools the loose but frequent invoking of “Anabaptist theology” presupposes a

common stance unchanging over 500 years, and in key matters remains rigid over against other Reformation traditions, including the Roman Catholic. The historical reality has been very diverse and contested constantly. What probably matters more is the reality of the ways in which recognizably common emphases of those Mennonite or Believers church communities that gradually developed church practices – a living heritage – were shaped extensively by their sharply contrasting contexts.

For example, patterns developed over 300 years in North America were formed by the absence of persecution, by the absence of war and destruction on American soil, and by a culture of denominational competition as a necessary and positive value; whereas the heritage that emerged from the 200-year Russian Mennonite experience was initially one of precisely articulated freedoms of religion, then persecution, massive martyrdoms, inner collapse and near total destruction of Mennonite institutional structure, and later a resurrection shared alongside other Christians as diverse as Pentecostal and Orthodox. There are at least four other major long-term community formations within sizable parts of the Mennonite heritage before we come to the many more contextually shaped forms of living globally as Mennonites in recent decades.

Not only is our major curricular emphasis at American Mennonite seminaries seeking to build too much on phenomena emerging within a specific context in several regions of early 16th-century western Europe, we also tend to speak of the different ecclesiologies arising in that era as needing to be critiqued. Yet we fail to convey how diverse were the ways those ecclesial bodies lived out their heritage as times changed and as they became more global through migration and mission. Once we get involved in ecumenical conversations (with other Reformation traditions), it becomes more obvious that we need remedial work in the history of the other traditions and indeed in that of our own. Must we continue treating the Reformation period as the primary moment of truth since the time of Christ?²³

Very noticeable to me, upon returning from a sabbatical in 2009,

²³ For many ways that question was articulated by various representatives of the Protestant traditions, see Walter Sawatsky, ed., *Prophetic and Renewal Movements: The Prague Consultations*. Vol. 47, Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2009).

was the heightened talk among colleagues about cultural analysis, cultural hermeneutics, or other labels for paying attention to social change. Neither the core values statement nor the educational goals referred to above substantively addressed the importance of cultural change (or what makes for cultural change). Would courses labeled “cultural hermeneutics” or “congregation and cultural change” or “church and society” tell us much about cultural change? Since the call to be in, but not of, the culture can be traced back to Jesus, it still begs the question as to how counter-cultural living (an American Mennonite mantra) must be expressed in the coming years within our changing cultures. Revisiting past experience with new formulations of the “how” and “what for” questions remains a vital methodology.

Christian History in Global Perspective

My final observations concern a one-semester course, “Christian History in Global Perspective,” that has been unusually stretching and stimulating to me and to some students. I was already seeking to address most of the issues in a course I first taught in the mid-1980s, “Eastern and Oriental Christianity,” which many saw as only a quirky elective to learn about the esoteric “other” and did not immediately grasp the agenda of seeing things comparatively from within and outside a western Christian perspective. The one-semester Christian history course was initially intended for majors (doing an MA) as an integration exercise, but then I added about five initial lectures – a conventional survey of Christian history – to make it accessible to college graduates. Thereafter, each session was organized around a theme, and the chronological sweep in each session was 2000 years, whether mission, church and state, personal and public piety, or the human body. This produced a way of seeing major patterns of continuity and change.

On the mission theme, for example, we would note areas of Christian expansion during the initial three or four centuries, when in some places entire peoples (Armenia, Georgia) became Christian while in others mission followed overland trade routes. In the next phase, in addition to the geographical spread and impact of Islam, there were major new mission thrusts northeast and northwest of the Mediterranean world. In the one case, given that Islamic expansion was decimating Christianity in the southern and eastern sides of that world, eastern Christianity through

active mission essentially became Slavic, with a mission methodology of translating the message and fostering “autocephaly” (lit. “self-headed”, with hierarchs equal in status with other leaders). Ironically, it is what the Protestant missionary movement much later in the 19th century “invented” as the three-self strategy: “self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating.” In the northwest direction, Roman Christianity became culturally Germanic over several centuries, given the collapse of the western Roman Empire by 450, yet everywhere there was a uniform liturgy in Latin, and clergy could not be ordained until they had learned doctrine in that language.

That is probably enough to indicate how helpful comparing patterns can be for assessing strengths and weaknesses of approaches to mission, without ignoring how the inner coherence of the faith had been transformed by the thought worlds of the Slavs and Germans. Adding that the primary agents of mission were monks (organized differently east and west) raises the question of how cross-cultural mission was to be pursued when the western Reformation did away with monasticism. Perhaps that helps account for the reality that Roman Catholic missions between 1550 and 1750 (largely by new monastic orders) were the golden age of Roman mission to the Americas, Africa, and Asia (very different in each continent for a long time) before Protestants figured out how to send individuals, families, some trained, some ordained, to achieve the global spread of Protestant Christianity, particularly its free church expressions between 1750 and 1950.

In such a course, since reform and renewal are always a feature somewhere, the western Reformation gets rated differently when necessarily compared with many other reform efforts. Thus, all those reformation traditions, even though many have taken on a permanency of difference and their own distinctives, cannot theologically claim legitimacy for a separate existence till the end of time. The historical perspective has kept driving me back to a greater grasp of the humility and penitence that necessarily accompanies all Christian history; the *imago dei* or even *missio dei* visible among the people of God has been glimpsed, mostly “through a glass darkly.”

The critical reader will have noted that the operative mode in such history is a “socio-historical” one. I became accustomed to being viewed as less of a church historian by colleagues who, trained in divinity schools, still thought that the church history that mattered is historical theology or the

history of ideas. I have learned much about worship and liturgy before and during my years of teaching, since that is what Christians do everywhere, always, but it is a dynamic history of change. The respected Jesuit Robert Taft, a specialist in Byzantine liturgy, once introduced a lecture series by stating that his approach was “unapologetically socio-historical.”²⁴ He, too, sensed the conventional bias in favor of studies of liturgical texts, but insisted that to interpret them (and the changes) within their embedded contexts mattered more.

Virtually from the beginning, themes such as *missio dei*, a multicultural peoplehood, conflict with the state, social and political ethics, and a host of challenges to cultural norms have been the subject matter of Christian history. How to think of the story, and what type of Christianity should emerge are only some of the issues that remain contested. What historians today seek to convey is the dynamic qualities of the story rather than a static adherence to philosophical principles or laws. Nevertheless, even if to be a historian of Christianity is virtually impossible, still it is in seeking to make sense of the whole story that one comes to appreciate how much the historian’s craft depends on others. Taking Christian history seriously as a believing Christian also presupposes granting the ongoing influence of the Holy Spirit, with an awareness of qualities that the Spirit would manifest according to Jesus, so that criteria for assessment and critique require discerning the Spirit’s role while identifying human factors (the influence of context, weather, money, wars, language – to name only the obvious ones).

Things went wrong pretty early after Pentecost, as with Ananias and Sapphira over property (Acts 5), and attempts at discipline and maintaining accountability within the church have been a constant issue. Tensions over leadership, and over compromises about what to impose on mission converts outside Jewish settings, occurred without always getting fully resolved. What seems to have happened for interpreters of history who declare the Church to have become apostate, or who pronounce anathemas on parts of it, is perhaps a failure in imagining how often the Holy Spirit’s leading into truth involved a process of acknowledging sin, of falling short, and of turning again to the grace of God.

²⁴ Robert F. Taft, S.J., *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2006), 4.

With that perspective, is it not necessary to approach Christian history – even to approach that perfectionist-tending Mennonite branch of it – with a theology of “nevertheless”? That is, a “nevertheless” that in spite of so many failures, even at the level of thinking (theology), knows it is through group penitence or “conversion of the churches” that we keep affirming the apostle Paul’s insight that “when I am weak, then I am strong.” For me, it has become a way of thinking that makes more room for being taught by “the least,” those whose names do not head history book chapters but whose living and dying were part of the cross bearing, and an inclusion in the *missio dei*, where Christ draws them to himself (John 12).

Walter Sawatsky is Professor of Church History and Mission (retired) at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

Apologia for an Informed Mennonite Citizenry: A Personal Journey

Mary S. Sprunger

As a scholar of Early Modern Europe with a specialty in Dutch Anabaptist and Mennonite history, I always look forward to teaching Anabaptist Mennonite History and Thought at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). In the same way that schools require national history courses to encourage an informed, active citizenry, or that I teach a world history survey so that students can become better informed global citizens, so too Mennonites need knowledge of their own history to be informed and active members. History is closely linked to identity. Teaching Anabaptist and Mennonite history should be an essential part of congregational programs and denominational high school, college, and university curricula. However, a commitment to Mennonite history does not seem to be fully embraced among US churches and institutions. The situation may be different in Canada; here I am commenting only from my own US experience.

Steeped in Mennonite History

It is in teaching Mennonite history at EMU that I have come to realize what a gift it was to grow up in a family and congregation that valued denominational heritage. I have often been surprised that so many students who grew up Mennonite know very little about their denominational history. Bethel College Mennonite Church (North Newton, Kansas) in the 1970s, at least, was intentional about teaching its youth Anabaptist and Mennonite history. This was the college church with many active and retired faculty and administrators, missionaries, pastors, and conference leaders, including historians like the late Cornelius Krahn (director of the Historical Library at the College and co-editor of *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*), and professors of history at the College, James Juhnke and Keith Sprunger (my father). As a sixth grader, I remember distinctly the celebrations around the centennial of the 1874 migration from Russia to Kansas, during which I learned much about that particular heritage.

The Conrad Grebel Review 30, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 286-298.

A couple of years later, it was time for catechism as preparation for baptism. Our church devoted one full year of Sunday school, the ighth grade, to Anabaptist and Mennonite history. The second year, ninth grade, was more theological. Under the leadership of Juhnke, the youth made a pilgrimage to Camp Funston, a military training camp near Junction City, Kansas, where some young Mennonite men ended up after being drafted in World War One and had to figure out how to be conscientious objectors in a hostile climate. We joked and complained about the outing (there was not much to see, as I recall), yet when registration for the draft was reintroduced in 1980, high school youth were equipped with some historical context to understand what this action could mean. One young church member refused to register and had to stand trial. Another youth group activity took us to Oklahoma to learn about the indigenous peace tradition of the Cheyenne, something that became part of the Mennonite story when General Conference Mennonites started missions among the Southern Cheyenne in the 1880s. I cannot say how other youth experienced these extensive history lessons, but they profoundly affected my sense of who the Mennonites were and why denomination mattered.

Beyond church, there were other opportunities to learn about Mennonite heritage. Under my father's guidance, our family entered a history contest sponsored by *Christian Living*. We tied for second place with our project on Bernard Warkentin, a leader of the Russian migration who became an influential entrepreneur in our county. Our prize was a copy of the *Martyrs' Mirror* and, like countless Mennonite children before, we were fascinated by the gory illustrations of martyrdom. In 1975, Bethel College produced *The Blowing and the Bending*, a musical written by Jim Juhnke and Harold Moyer about Mennonites grappling with war bond drives and military conscription during World War One. I listened to the catchy tunes on our record over and over. Later, as a first-year college student, I had the privilege of taking Mennonite History with Juhnke. Eventually, engaging in various research projects on Mennonite history and then pursuing a Ph.D. on 17th-century Dutch Mennonites both deepened my appreciation for denominational heritage and cemented my ties to the Mennonite church, even as I moved in wider social and professional circles.

Teaching Mennonite History

Largely because of my own experiences and the way that an appreciation for history and tradition has kept me tied to the Mennonite church, I place a high value on teaching Mennonite history to younger generations. At EMU, our one Anabaptist and Mennonite history course is upper-level, required only for Bible and Religion majors. Some students take it as an elective, and it can also count toward a History major. Often, however, our Mennonite students have graduated from a denominational high school where they took Mennonite history and therefore have little interest in what they perceive to be a repeat course. The course runs only every other year, with enrollment ranging from between 15 and 20 students out of an undergraduate student body of 850, 50 percent of whom are Mennonite. Although faculty may introduce Anabaptist theology and history as parts of other courses (as I do briefly in my World, European, and Women's history classes), clearly not many EMU students are exposed to the fundamentals of the Anabaptist and Mennonite traditions. The lack of a Mennonite history requirement may be related to EMU's international and cross-cultural emphasis in its undergraduate curriculum: "global" tends to mean "non-European and American" and thus does not easily include Anabaptism before 1900. In addition, as in all American Mennonite colleges, our undergraduates come increasingly from non-Mennonite backgrounds, so requiring denominational history may not make sense from the perspective of institutional viability.

These issues aside, I prize the opportunity to teach Anabaptist and Mennonite History and Thought every other year. Three challenges stand out each time I prepare for and teach the course. First, there is the problem of vastly different levels of background knowledge and starting points that students bring to the subject. While trying to reach those with various levels of engagement and ability is a common concern in a denominational, tuition-driven institution, in this course it is an issue not just of academic ability but of prior experience and knowledge. Mennonite students -- especially "ethnic" ones (those with European Mennonite ancestry or at least several generations of being Mennonite in the US or Canada) -- start off with a distinct advantage. They are more likely than their classmates to have some understanding of Anabaptist theology and practice, and to grasp intuitively certain unspoken aspects of Mennonite culture and thought that I may take

for granted (although many non-Mennonite students have excelled in the class). In an upper-level course, I would like to engage in a sophisticated discussion of Anabaptism, and I do introduce some historiography; however, most time is spent establishing the basic narrative and ideas.

Texts present a second challenge. I have tried C.J. Dyck's classic *Introduction to Mennonite History* (1993), supplemented with articles and another book or two, which still provides a good narrative overview. The other overview, *Through Fire and Water* (Harry Loewen et al., 1996) is geared toward high-school students. I have myself enjoyed working through Arnold Snyder's *Anabaptist History and Theology* (revised student edition, 1997), but it is too much for beginning undergraduates to absorb in less than half a semester if they are coming to the topic with very little background knowledge. Other books I have used with success have gone out of print – Dietrich Neufeld's *A Russian Dance of Death* (1977) and Al Reimer's *My Harp is Turned to Mourning* (1986) – and I have had to make special efforts to find copies for my students. For important developments in early 20th-century US Mennonite history, I use James Juhnke's *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America 1890-1930* (1989). Supplemented by lectures tying Juhnke's themes to material from the 18th and 19th centuries and the later 20th century, this is a useful entry into key topics such as Mennonite missions, cultural boundary markers (plain dress, German language), roles of women, Fundamentalism, institution building, and conscientious objection to war.

Third is the problem of how to fit everything into one semester. Of course, this is not unique to Mennonite history; every history teacher faces the difficult question of what to include and what to leave out, especially as things keep on happening that increase the pool of what to learn. In 15 weeks, I attempt to cover the early Anabaptists, European Mennonites, Russian Mennonites, North American Mennonites (primarily US), and the Mennonite Church outside North America and Europe. Important themes include the variety of Anabaptist movements and contexts; persecution and martyrdom; different ways of living in the world; pacifism and differing responses to violence, war, and government; and the Old Order groups and Hutterites (conservative or radical in their rejection of the dominant culture?). I also like to introduce students to fascinating sociological studies

that measure adherence to various Anabaptist ideas and practices and put Mennonites on a scale regarding social and theological issues: Leland Harder and Howard Kauffman, *Anabaptism Four Centuries Later* (1975); Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger, *The Mennonite Mosaic* (1990); and Conrad Kanagy, *Road Signs for the Journey* (2007).

Most recently, my student outcome goals for the course are as follows (from the 2009 syllabus):

1. To be able to answer the question, What did Anabaptists believe?
2. To gain an overview of Anabaptist/Mennonite history, thought, and issues from the 16th century to the present.
3. To examine the origins of Anabaptism and explore its value as a model for Christians today.
4. To understand how Mennonites have been affected by their social, economic, political and cultural contexts.
5. To examine historical issues in light of the contemporary church and our own beliefs.
6. To consider what makes a church “Mennonite.”

Specifically, I hope to broaden students’ overall grasp of the range of ways of being Mennonite. If my students have had any introduction to the 16th-century Anabaptists, it is usually only to the Swiss Brethren and Menno Simons, so I want them to know about other radical reformation movements. Equally important is acquainting them with Mennonites who lived in situations of relative tolerance after 1600 and were therefore more engaged in the world (17th-century urban Dutch Mennonites) or more involved in power structures as they shaped their own worlds apart (Russian and Paraguayan Mennonites). At the end of the semester, we spend a few sessions on the global Mennonite church, looking at how churches were established and issues that have arisen in a particular region, such as Africa. This last part is increasingly crucial as the demographics of the global Mennonite church change, but, coming at the end of the semester, it has also

been the most rushed, least well-developed section of the course.

Attempting all of this in one semester is, perhaps, folly. However, no matter how unfashionable it is, I still cling stubbornly to the value of a survey (after all, I teach all of world history in two semesters, and an entire course on global women's history in one). Specialized study of very particular subjects is a necessary part of college education, but sometimes a big framework on which to situate that in-depth knowledge is still very useful. So too with Mennonite history: it is valuable to have an overview of the entire sweep of that history to get a sense of the whole story, incomplete and sometimes superficial though it may be.

Mennonite History as Community Learning

To fit all this into a 15-week semester with only 150 minutes of instructional time per week is already very challenging. Twice, I made the task even more difficult by making the course fit the requirements of a Community Learning course. This was a component of EMU's general education curriculum, introduced in 2004, that required students during their four years to take several classes incorporating significant off-campus learning. My goals for the specific Community Learning aspects of the course were these:

1. To become familiar with the history and contemporary landscape of the local Mennonite communities in Harrisonburg and surrounding counties.
2. To move thinking about Mennonite distinctives and mission from the abstract and general to the concrete and particular.
3. To assess core Anabaptist beliefs and practices for their current relevance.
4. To think analytically about one's own congregation and denomination with regard to issues of heritage and faithfulness.

The first time that I offered the course with a Community Learning component, students compared and contrasted local Mennonite churches. Small groups of students chose three varied types of congregations in consultation with me (large, small, house church, rural, non-English speaking), visiting the worship services of each, and meeting with a pastor

and some members to discuss several issues that each group wanted to look into (such as worship styles, average age of baptism, or commitment to nonviolence). The groups reported on their experiences and conclusions to the class, with the leadership of the churches invited to the presentations.

The next time I taught the course, in 2009, I added much more structure and, instead of having groups of students going out to different churches, I planned group visits. A Community Learning course by then also required 14 hours of community learning and 4 hours of service. The main activities for this component of the course included the following:

1. A visit to a small rural church near the Virginia-West Virginia border. This church had grown out of late 19th- and early 20th-century mission efforts to reach “mountain folk.” Some students participated in a church service by singing and reading Scripture. The class was also in charge of the adult Sunday School hour. Here, a student shared what the class had learned about Anabaptism and led a discussion about the relevance of these ideas today. We then stayed for a potluck meal to interact informally with the members.
2. A visit to a large, suburban Mennonite church worship time and Sunday School class discussion in Harrisonburg, as a contrast to the smaller, more rural church experience.
3. A tour of sites associated with Mennonites and Church of the Brethren during the Civil War, organized through the local Crossroads Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center. The Civil War is the defining event of Mennonite history in Virginia. We heard stories of draft dodgers escaping into West Virginia through a Mennonite-Brethren network (a kind of “underground railroad”). Perched on a hill, students could survey the extent of the devastation that Mennonites and others endured when in 1864 Union General Sheridan burned the Shenandoah Valley in a scorched earth strategy to destroy the heart of Confederate grain production. Some pacifist Mennonites met these soldiers, intent on burning their barns and crops, with ingenuity, kindness, and humility. These stories added to other examples

of conscientious objection explored in class, allowing students to reflect on choices made during adversity and conflict.

4. A visit with the founder and pastor of a local organization and Mennonite church that ministers to the homeless and otherwise down-and-out or marginalized members of society, providing activities, work programs, food, and emotional support. The congregation worshipping at this center seeks to be a place where those who would not feel comfortable in a traditional church might fit in, including those struggling with substance abuse and poverty.

5. A visit to an Old Order Mennonite church building for an informational session with one of the ministers and amateur historian. That minister and his wife met us there in a horse and buggy. He told us about the history of his people and how the church operates today, with plenty of time for questions. This was the most memorable thing that we did as a class, as all the students wrote about it in their final papers. (I have been taking students on this field trip since I started teaching Mennonite history at EMU). In particular, students were impressed by the kind of quiet evangelism the church advocated. Rather than active evangelism or mission work (besides disaster relief work), the minister explained how one's very life and lifestyle could be a witness to others. The members' plain dress and buggies were a visible, daily reminder of their way of following Christ. Students commented on how tears filled the minister's eyes when he told how poor mountain people, recently evangelized by Mennonite preachers, brought food aid to the Mennonites in the valley after the Civil War "burning." This showed students the power of history: an event that happened over 140 years ago could still evoke such emotion. Another powerful story was of his own call and ordination (chosen by lot). Students also learned how he fulfilled his 1-W alternative service by working in an urban mental hospital, yet he could not wait to get back to his Old Order church community. Here was someone who had seen the

world but chose to return to his simpler way of life.

6. A local premier screening of the just-released PAX documentary *Pax Service: An Alternative to War* at a downtown art theater, with reminiscences by some of the “PAX boys” afterward.
7. Guest lectures by the President of Mennonite World Conference and the moderator of the Virginia Conference.
8. An optional meal of Russian Mennonite food at my home (Russian Mennonite culture, while not part of my own ancestry, is my adopted heritage from growing up in Kansas).
9. A minimum of 4 service hours through a local Mennonite agency (about half the class joined me for a landscaping work session at the heritage center to fulfill their hours).

As a framework for these experiences, we worked at the question of what it means to be Anabaptist or Mennonite today. In the first third of the course, students wrote a paper defining the essentials of 16th-century Anabaptism, with Harold Bender’s 1944 “The Anabaptist Vision” as a starting point plus other readings providing additional or alternative perspectives. At the end of the course, they were to revisit these ideas to reflect on how the church today embodies Anabaptist principles, using the Virginia Mennonites as their examples.

This was a meaningful course and the learning was significant, both for the students and for me. For example, I learned that my preconceived notions of what we would find at each church colored my perceptions of our interactions, while students noticed fewer differences between them. While the papers did not all come together in the way I had hoped, reflecting the kind of analysis I was looking for, students did leave the course with tools of interpretation for their continued interaction with Mennonite and other churches.

The model could be adopted for any area with many Mennonite churches, which is usually the case where Mennonite colleges are located. However, it was time-consuming for students and professor alike, and it can be difficult to impose on the goodwill of the same churches and agencies over

and over again, particularly in an area with thousands of college students needing to complete service-learning hours. An additional problem was that, due to various conflicts, individual students could not always attend the scheduled visits, thus requiring alternate arrangements to be made. For these reasons, teaching the course in this way will likely be an occasional rather than a standard approach for me.

In Defense of Mennonite History

If institutional resources were no issue, I would design an interdisciplinary course on (American) Mennonite culture, studying literature, music, art, food, dress, and material culture as a way to explore issues of history, theology, and identity. For example, simply by examining the defining cookbooks through the decades -- *The Mennonite Community Cookbook* (1950s), *More-With-Less Cookbook* (1970s), *Extending the Table* (1990s), and *Simply in Season* (2000s) -- students could identify and analyze sociological and even theological shifts in the church. A study of hymnals could serve the same purpose. Ideally, a course like this would be co-taught by faculty from the music, history, theology, literature, and art departments. There could be hands-on aspects -- learning to bake *zwieback*, to quilt, and to sing from shaped-note musical notation -- that would appeal to current trends in higher education about embodied learning.

The point of such a course would be a better grasp of the cultures that have shaped generations of American Mennonites. Knowing the origins and cultural significance of practices that still define many Mennonites (such as four-part singing) or that are increasingly being abandoned (such as four-part singing) could help to shape the church in the future. An interdisciplinary course with lots of faculty members is too expensive, however. In addition, it is not particularly fashionable to emphasize the European cultural aspects of Mennonites, at least not at EMU. In fact, some might regard such a course as off-putting, exclusionist, and counter to the missional purpose of the university and church.

However, de-emphasizing Eurocentric Mennonite culture (or, more correctly, cultures) will not lessen its formational grip on our church members and institutions. If we take denominational identity seriously, then knowledge of Mennonite culture and history is essential to the survival of

a vibrant church. Members with a basic background in their culture and history have the context to make better informed decisions about moving the church into the future, whether that involves holding onto certain traditions and beliefs or leaving some behind as new realities suggest changes are appropriate. For example, it is useful to understand the origins of Mennonite practices to see the interplay between society, theology, and practice, as with abstinence from alcohol (influenced by American temperance movements in the late 19th century) or plain dress. Students are surprised to learn that some Mennonites did not adopt strict dress requirements until the early 20th century due to internal and external pressures, and that some groups never did. Similarly, it is useful to ascertain when Mennonites have been reactive or proactive on social and justice issues (slavery, racism, gender). Students have asked me what the Anabaptists thought about homosexuality and are surprised to learn that it was not discussed openly until the late 1970s, as the issue was becoming more visible in mainstream North American society.

Students would benefit from examining under what circumstances Anabaptists and Mennonites have sometimes participated in military violence (Münster in the 1530s; Germany during World War One; the US during World War Two), or taken up arms in self-defense (the *Selbstschutz* units during the breakdown of secular authority in post-revolutionary Russia). And, even more important, they could be inspired by looking at examples of courageous resistance to military service, such as American COs in World War One who suffered brutal treatment by commanding officers or Dutch Mennonite young people who hid in attics rather than work for the Nazis. Students should learn how some Mennonites have moved from a “quiet in the land” witness to a social activist approach, and consider the pros and cons of each. As North American Mennonites today who have lost all visible markers of nonconformity, they would find it instructive to learn about those prosperous Dutch and North German Mennonites living in relatively tolerant milieux, and how they interacted with culture and authority.

In addition, knowing about the different streams of Mennonite migrations to the United States and Canada and their impact on Mennonite communities can help make sense of cultural differences among regions. This is closely related to realizing why there were “old” Mennonites (MCs),

Mennonite Brethren (MBs), General Conference Mennonites (GCs), and myriad other groups, and why these distinctions used to matter so much and in some cases still do. Maybe it is even useful to learn that until very recently Mennonites did not observe Lent, and to think about what the move toward ecumenical practices means. Understanding the changes that Mennonites have gone through in various contexts, for better or worse, can help Mennonites better analyze the changes that they face now and in the future.

Some might rightly question teaching Anabaptist-Mennonite history from a European-North American interpretation, given George Orwell's oft-quoted insight that "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*). Why dwell on European roots and North American experiences, when over half of the world's Mennonites are in Africa, Latin America, and Asia? Certainly, Mennonite history is not immune from abuses of power. The issue of cultural hegemony with regard to Mennonite history needs further exploration -- but in another venue.

I am not suggesting that we study our European and North American past as idols with which to calcify the church; as the church expands around the globe, the scope of Mennonite history expands. The Global Mennonite History series is providing resources that make it easier to incorporate the histories of the church in all its reaches. As history moves on, it will be easier to let go of certain topics from the more distant past to make room for new developments, controversies, and cultural realities as they unfold, thereby forging a new interpretive narrative that includes more fully the Mennonite story outside the West, or Latino Mennonites in the US or Canada. In the same way that popular food booths at the Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale now include not only the old favorites of freshly-made potato chips and donuts but Indian and Laotian food, so too the basic narrative of Mennonite history and what we mean by "Mennonite culture" will expand and change to incorporate our diverse church.

I welcome responses from pastors, church leaders, teachers, and professors about the issues I raise here. Does historical emphasis stifle or invigorate the church? Has an interest in our past waned in recent years? As I write this article, I realize my shortcomings in advocating for Mennonite

history, for example in my own congregation. While history is not a panacea to the current stresses of Mennonite identity in a secular, postmodern age, historical and cultural knowledge is an essential foundation for an ongoing distinct witness.

Mary S. Sprunger is Chair of the Department of History at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Anabaptist Identity, Pedagogy, Faith, Ethics, and Research in the Teaching of History*

Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares

Introduction

In this article I recount my pilgrimage as an Anabaptist and my experiences in pedagogy, ethics, and historical research. Hans Denck said that the only way to know Jesus Christ is to follow after him in life. Together with many sisters, brothers, girls, boys, and old and young people, I have sought to follow Jesus in life. I would like to share some facets of my biographical itinerary which have shaped both my Anabaptist identity and my understanding of pedagogy, faith, ethics, and the teaching of history.

When I look back, I realize that much time has passed since I began to move in the direction of a teaching career. I was born in the lovely valley of Cachí, Cartago, Costa Rica in 1958, into a large and poor family that included nine siblings. My father, Luis Salvador Prieto, worked on a large coffee plantation that belonged to the Murray family. My mother, María Esther, died unexpectedly when I was three years old, and my little sister María Eugenia and I were sent to live at an orphanage called “the Biblical Home” in San José de la Montaña, Costa Rica. This orphanage was founded by the Latin American Mission, an interdenominational organization financed by North American Protestant churches. It was established in Costa Rica in 1921.¹ In this orphanage I encountered Bible stories daily, with color illustrations, sermons, and talks, and theatrical presentations put on by the boys and girls growing up with us. I was moved by the stories of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Sarah, Jacob, the children Samuel and David, Esther, Ruth, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Daniel, Isaiah, the Apostle Paul, the beloved disciple John, Lazarus, Stephen the martyr, and above all, Jesus

* The CGR editors express their sincere thanks to C. Arnold Snyder for translation services and other assistance.

¹ “An Attempt to Meet the Need,” in *Latin American Evangelist* (San José, Costa Rica), 1, no. 1 (1921), 4.

of Nazareth. Margarita and Plinio Sánchez were my first parents in the orphanage, and their kindness and tenderness are still inscribed in my heart.

At the end of 1960s, my family's difficult economic situation still had not improved. After finishing primary school I had to leave the orphanage to begin a new phase of my life. In 1971 I began living with a family that had only recently come to know the Gospel. They attended the Mennonite church in Heredia. The pastors of this church were the Mennonite missionaries Eileen and Elmer Lehman,² and they provided the opportunity to develop my talents by teaching Sunday School, directing worship and, later, leading the youth and in evangelization and preaching the Word of God. From 1971 until the present I have been a faithful and active member of the Conference of Mennonite Churches in Costa Rica, and this is my point of departure for these reflections.

Pedagogical Challenges in the Teaching of History

Perhaps it was being uprooted from my family as a child that led me to see history as an enormous challenge in my own life. Today I still have my first bookshelf, which I built from wood from old window frames I found behind the house where I lived when a youngster. I still have the teacher's books that I used to teach Sunday School classes in the 1970s. And I still have the manual used to instruct baptismal candidates in biblical and Anabaptist doctrines and in church practices, as well as the first minutes that testify to the people and circumstances that shaped the Conference of Mennonite churches of Costa Rica (1974).³ I sometimes think that my collecting and fondly preserving documents passed out by the Mennonite Church was a way to try to give shape to my own life, which had been torn apart by being an orphan. In one phase of my adolescence, my keeping those documents

² The Lehman couple came from the Lowville Conservative Mennonite Church in New York State and, along with Raymond and Susan Schlabach, were the first missionaries of the Conservative Mennonite Conference of Costa Rica, beginning in August 1961. See "Lowville Couple To Establish New Mission In Costa Rica," [Lowville, New York] *Journal & Republican*, August 1961, clipping in Eileen and Elmer Lehman family album, "Memoirs Costa Rica 1961-1965." Photocopy provided to the author by the Lehman family.

³ Víctor Vargas, secretary, "Actas de la primera Asamblea de las Iglesias Evangélicas Menonitas de Costa Rica, 29 de Marzo de 1974." Archivo Convención Iglesias Evangélicas Menonitas de Costa Rica.

was an attempt to develop my religious identity and to take my place in society.

If my childhood was marked by the orphanage, my adolescence and early youth were marked by the Mennonite Church of Heredia. Without a doubt, the lives of Elmer and Eileen Lehman, Mennonite missionaries who adopted five orphan children, truly shaped my life. I played with the twins Melvin and Marvin, and with Erland, Elnora, and Emily; we participated together in a thousand worship services, Bible studies, summer Bible schools, youth meetings, serenades for mothers, and Christmas pageants; we played soccer and even picked coffee beans together on the enormous plantations of Heredia. That was where my interest in serving God grew, as did preparations in Christian education. I became one of the first students in the Biblical Institute led by Elmer Lehman and Henry Helmuth,⁴ and came to the attention of the missionary Nelson Litwiller⁵ in 1976, when he offered courses on “the pastor and his congregation” and on the book of Revelation.⁶

A pedagogical challenge and a great opportunity that arises when we study history is the chance to find ourselves and undergo a process of reflection that can help us understand the development of our own biography. I have written several biographies of theologians, pastors, and Christian leaders, and I always find it challenging to understand the first years of their lives.⁷ Those years set an important direction for later years,

⁴ Henry and Esther Helmuth were the second North American couple to work as missionaries among the Spanish-speaking people of Costa Rica. They arrived in 1965. As well as serving as volunteers in the rural zone of Sarapiquí, they were also pastors of the Casa de Oración church, established in the Pilar de Guadalupe barrio of San José. Vernon Jantzi, “Field Worker’s Meeting,” San José, February 23, 1965, 1. Archivo Misión Menonita de Costa Rica.

⁵ Nelson Litwiller (1898-1986) was a Canadian missionary and bishop of the Mennonite church in Argentina for many years. Strongly influenced by the charismatic stream, he arrived in Costa Rica in 1976. See John M. Bender, “Litwiller, Nelson,” *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, 527.

⁶ A document signed by Henry Helmuth and Elmer Lehman certifies that the author completed these courses in February 1976. Author’s archive.

⁷ For example, Jaime A. Prieto Valladares, “Vocación y misión de Irene Foulkes en América Latina,” in *Vida y Pensamiento* [UBL review] 21, no. 1 (2001): 9-30; “Plutarco Bonilla Acosta (1935-). Construyendo puentes de la oikumene desde la identidad evangélica,” in Edesio Sánchez Cetina, ed., “*Enseñaba por Parábolas.*” *Estudio del género “parábola” en la Biblia* (Miami, FL: Sociedades Bíblicas Unidas, 2004), 189-322; “Vida cotidiana, movimiento estudiantil cristiano y alfabetización. El testimonio del pastor metodista boliviano Aníbal

when the person taking early opportunities begins to acquire the maturity brought about by experience.

In one's youth the seed of novelty and rebellion – and the desire to explore beyond what one's mentors approve – also grows. This was my experience when I wished to study at a university and learn other things. I began by studying economics. But God's calling would not stop assailing my heart, so I decided to study theology and directed my efforts to that end. The study of systematic theology excited me, as did Old and New Testament and pastoral studies, but the thesis I wrote for my Bachelor of Theology degree was titled "The Radical Reformation of the Sixteenth Century."⁸ This first historical sketch required not only an effort to understand the economic and social-religious context in which the Radical Reformation was incubated, but also an exploration of the polygenetic character of the movement and the theological principles regarding church/state relations, liberty, justification by faith, nonresistance, and peace and justice. Historical work helps us recognize, deepen, and understand the very origins of our tradition.

In those years my theological and academic education took place at the Latin American Biblical Seminary (Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano: SBL) in San Jose and at the National University of Heredia,⁹ where I was employed in the General Services department from 1976 to 1983. The SBL had become one of the most important theological centers on the continent,

Guzmán (1951-1969)," in Pablo Moreno, ed., *Protestantismo y vida cotidiana en América Latina. Un estudio desde la cotidianidad de los sujetos* (Cali, Colombia: Fundación Universitaria Seminario Teológico Bautista Internacional-CEHILA, 2007), 91-112; "Victorio Araya-Guillén (1945-). Desde la vorágine de la revolución hasta la teología de la luz," in Jonathan Pimentel Chacón, ed., *En el camino de la Luz. Homenaje a Victorio Araya-Guillén* (Heredia [San José], Costa Rica: Universidad Nacional/UBL, 2008), 405-53.

⁸ Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, "La Reforma Radical Siglo XVI, Trabajo de investigación en cumplimiento parcial de los requisitos para optar al título de Bachiller en Teología" (San José, Costa Rica: Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, 1983).

⁹ The National University (UNA) was founded in February 1973 during the administration of Costa Rican president José Figueres Ferrer. The UNA was described at the time as a "Necessary University" because "it takes up the production of knowledge necessary for a society that is developing by means of scientific investigation and the free expression of ideas; ... desires to arm that society with the necessary and proper technical knowledge in order to free her from dependency; ... wishes to give to its people the professionals, technicians, thinkers and artists who will allow it to attain its integral well-being." Rev. Benjamín Núñez, "Hacia la Universidad Necesaria" (Costa Rica: np, 1974), 61.

and was where a Latin American theology was being developed.¹⁰ The National University, on the other hand, was influenced by the theology and philosophy of Bible scholar Dr. Pablo Richard, sociology professor Elio Gallarde, and economist and philosopher Franz Hinkelammert, all of whom took refuge in Costa Rica after the coup against Salvador Allende in Chile. Enrique Mejía Godoy, the great Nicaraguan singer, was a strong leader in the university's department of Cultural Activities. He spread the ideals of the neighboring Nicaraguan quest for freedom through his enormous creativity in words and music. Many years of struggle by this peasant people – from the assassination of General Sandino in 1934 until the death of Carlos Fonseca Amador in 1976 – were crowned with the success of revolutionary forces over the dictatorship of the Somoza family when the Sandinistas triumphantly entered Managua in July 1979.

One of the great pedagogical benefits of writing history is the increased capacity to perceive what is happening in one's present context. That context should lead us to reflect on the historical reconstructions we undertake, even though our historical writing refers to other times now past. My study of 16th-century radical reform began with an illustration of Menno Simons, who seems to be writing his "Fundament" book; at the end of the appendix appears a depiction of Thomas Müntzer,¹¹ a leader in the peasant uprisings in Germany, with a book in his hands. Between both figures I placed the declaration of the Ninth Central American and Panamanian Anabaptist Consultation of 1982¹² which, inspired by the revolutionary situation then being lived in Central America, proclaimed the desire to be a prophetic voice in the face of injustice and at the same time to give a testimony of peace.

The Anabaptist message is Christocentric and invites us to get to know

¹⁰ For details on theologians and topics permeating the UBL in the 1970s and '80s, see Jaime A. Prieto Valladares, "Desarrollo histórico de la producción teológica del Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano (1923-1993)," in Roy H. May, ed., *Vida y Pensamiento* 13, no. 2 (November 1993): 7-53.

¹¹ This is the engraving by Christoph von Sichem from 1608. See Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer, Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär* (München: C.H. Beck, 1989), 16.

¹² Convenciones de Iglesias Anabautistas y Menonitas de Centro América y Panamá, Declaración de la IX Consulta Anabautista Menonita de Centroamérica y Panamá (Nicaragua: Monte de los Olivos, July 1982).

Jesus Christ in order to imitate him. One of the most important things in my classes in church history is not to lose sight of the fact that Jesus Christ, the center of the Anabaptist movement, invites us not only to know him but also to imitate him, following in his footsteps as we make our way in the world. The students in the institution where I teach come from diverse religious traditions. But no matter their tradition, it moves me to see how the history of our (Mennonite) origins in the 16th century stimulates them to commit themselves to announcing the Kingdom of God and to be witnesses to the transforming power of Jesus Christ, participating in the construction of more just societies in the struggle for peace and justice in our region. Indeed, several of my students got completely involved in the struggle for the rights of indigenous people in Ecuador, for human rights in Honduras, and for peace movements in the troubled country of Colombia.

Faith and Ethics in the Teaching of History

In 1983 I began studying church history with the Presbyterian professor Dr. Arturo Piedra in the SBL, where I had started my theological studies. Following doctoral work in West Germany (1985-1992) I returned full time to the SBL as a teacher. That institution, known today as the Latin American Biblical University (UBL), is international and interdenominational, with students and professors from many different countries and ecclesial traditions, including Roman Catholic. I teach courses on the universal history of the church; the history of the Latin American church; the history, religion, and culture of indigenous peoples and African-descended people in Latin America; and ecclesiology and theology. The particular confessions of faith of professors and students are fundamental in our institution, and its great richness stems from this, since the intent is for all members of the university to nurture one another with their diverse perspectives of faith, liturgical practices, and pastoral models. In this sense, teaching is mediated by the element of faith. Explicitly or implicitly, my Anabaptist orientation is always present in my courses. In the Reformation course, for example, although we do study the magisterial reforms of Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, and Erasmus of Rotterdam, I give particular attention to the great range of groups that emerged in the Radical Reformation.

For me, teaching is a vocation, not simply a profession by which to

earn a salary. From my first steps as a Sunday School teacher in a Mennonite church to teaching today in a university and giving intensive courses in history and theology in many countries, I have seen teaching as a ministry. It would not be acceptable if, as a teacher, I lost this vocation of service to my students, to the church, and to the Latin American people. I wish to be prepared the best way possible, to be up-to-date with new bibliography in the themes I deal with, and to give daily testimony to the unity of what I preach and what I practice. I believe that our solidarity with those who suffer most should always be present in our teaching agenda, and that our reflection and the construction of our thought should always have contexts of injustice in sight, so that we can see how to contribute concretely to peace. A fundamental part of my teaching agenda is to live simply, remain close to the students, and encourage them to serve the church and the communities in which they live.

I am an Anabaptist not because my parents were, or from convenience, but rather from conviction. The Spirit of God led me to live with Mennonite families, and the testimony of the Lehmans was fundamental during my growing-up years. Afterwards, my faith conviction was affirmed by an opportunity to learn German and to have direct access to the historical, theological, biblical, and pastoral sources of the Radical Reformers by way of the Anabaptists. Although all courses have their specific aims, in my view I should not leave my Anabaptist convictions of faith and ethics to one side when I teach other history courses, since these convictions are a basic part of my identity.

We live in a complex world, but it seems to me that the great spiritual wealth of the different Radical Reforming groups allows us to reinterpret our theology and gives us enough space that we can enter into ecumenical dialogue with many religious traditions and participate creatively in constructing the kingdom of God.

Anabaptist Identity and the Teaching of History

Perhaps it was the reality of revolutionary upheaval in Central America during the 1970s and '80s that led me to re-read Radical Reformation traditions in order to find theological, biblical, and pastoral paradigms with which to confront the challenges presented by my society. I remember that

as the 1970s came to a close, one of the Nicaraguan students in our Biblical Institute was deeply affected by the situation in his country and joined the Sandinista guerilla forces in fighting the Somoza tyranny. This caused great consternation, especially among the North American missionaries, who felt it was important to emphasize the teaching of nonviolence. But the situation was actually much more complicated than this. Nicaragua really was a military state in which many young people were being killed and the most basic human rights of citizens were being violated. The people had no other option than to oppose the forces of the dictatorship just in order to survive. From this reality came great questions: How can we give testimony to our faithfulness to Jesus Christ without ignoring the injustice, hunger, and death being lived by the people of Nicaragua? How can we give a testimony of nonviolence without implying an attitude of indifference to, or distance from, the pain of the people? In other words, How can we incarnate our faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of a peasant people who are suffering violence, destruction, and death at the hands of a military dictatorship lacking all morality, ethics, or scruples?

One of the hermeneutical keys in Latin American theology is reflection that takes into account reality, the Word, and pastoral action. LaVerne Rutschman, a Mennonite pastor and professor of Bible, was a pioneer in building bridges between Latin American theology and the Radical Reformation.¹³ He did this by means of the “hermeneutic circle” (a new way of understanding Scripture and experiencing reality), taking into consideration the ideas of the now-deceased Juan Luis Segundo, namely ideological suspicion, theology, exegesis, and hermeneutics.¹⁴ Daniel García, the Argentine Mennonite historian, later offered a general framework for understanding the historiographical debate concerning the Anabaptists.¹⁵ In order to build a bridge between the Radical Reformation of the 16th century and Christian witness in the revolutionary context of Central America, then, it was crucial for us to value the hermeneutic circle in both contexts, to

¹³ LaVerne Rutschman, *Anabautismo Radical y Teología Latinoamericana de la liberación* (San José, Costa Rica: Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, 1982).

¹⁴ Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberación de la teología* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Lohlé, 1975), 11-45.

¹⁵ Daniel García, “El debate historiográfico en torno al movimiento Anabautista,” in Beatriz Melano, general editor, *Cuadernos de Teología. Historia de la Iglesia. Enfoques desde el Río de la Plata* 12, no. 2 (Buenos Aires, Argentina: ISEDET [University Institute], 1992), 73-97.

compare them, and to allow this mirror to illuminate the reflection and the pastoral and prophetic action of the church at that time.

It seems to me that various persons in the Radical Reformation showed the way of solidarity with the “common man” – the peasants, weavers, and poor families of their time.¹⁶ We may question Thomas Müntzer’s actions in his war against the princes, but we cannot help but admire the argumentative force of his “Bitter Christ,” which led him to identify completely with the impoverished peasants and weavers of his day. Menno Simons’s message, impacted by events in the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster, developed and emphasized following Jesus with the church at the center. Nevertheless, it should not go unmentioned that the authorities put a price on his head. In their constant flights and pilgrimages, Simons, his wife Gertrude, and their children carried the marks of humility, pacifism, and poverty in their superhuman efforts to pastor dispersed Anabaptist flocks.¹⁷ Balthasar Hubmaier is another example of Radical Reform traditions of the 16th century. He showed how to read the Scriptures from the traditions of Jesus and the Apostle Paul, desiring an end to the enslavement of the peasantry.¹⁸ These are some examples of the relevance of the identity born among Radical Reforming and Anabaptist groups.

Another inheritance of great value from the Radical Reformers is their mystical theology. In a world threatened by ecological destruction, Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount can be taken as a powerful spiritual source for preserving the planet. He said:

Don’t walk about worried about your lives, thinking about what you will eat or drink, or concerned about your bodies, wondering what you will wear. Isn’t life worth more than food, the body more than dress? Look at the birds: they don’t plant or

¹⁶ Ferdinand Seibt, “Johannes Hergot. Die Reformation des ‘Armen Mannes,’” in Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Hg.), *Radikale Reformatoren. 21 biographische Skizzen von Thomas Müntzer bis Paracelsus* (München: C.H. Beck, 1978), 84-92.

¹⁷ Marjan Blok, “Discipleship in Menno Simons’ Dat Fundament: An Exercise in Anabaptist Theology,” in *Menno Simons: A Reappraisal. Essays in Honor of Irvin B. Horst on the 450th Anniversary of the Fundamentboek*, ed. Gerald R. Brunk (Harrisonburg, VA: Eastern Mennonite College, 1992), 105-29.

¹⁸ Christof Windhorst, *Täuferisches Taufverständnis. Baltasar Hubmaiens Lehre zwischen traditioneller und reformatorischer Theologie* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976).

harvest or keep storehouses. Nevertheless their heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they? And, who of you, by simply worrying about it, can add even one hour to time? And, why are you preoccupied with dress? Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don't work or weave. And I tell you that not even Solomon, in all his luxury, was dressed as well as they are. If God dresses even the grasses in this way, which are in the field today and tomorrow are burned in the furnace, will He not do even more for you, you people of little faith? For this reason, don't be disturbed, wondering about what you are going to eat or drink or how you will dress. It is the pagans who are concerned about these things. Your Father in Heaven already knows that you need all these things. Seek first that His justice reigns, and everything else will be given to you in addition. (Matthew 6:25-33)¹⁹

Jesus' wisdom from the mountain teaches us to care for creation in the same way God cares for the birds and for us.²⁰ The profound simplicity of this text moved the spirit and hearts of Jesus' followers in the 16th century. If it was the recovery of the Gospel that led Margareta and Michael Sattler to seal their love for the teacher of Nazareth with their martyrs' blood,²¹ we find in Müntzer a critique of the princes who considered themselves owners of the land – on which peasants worked as slaves – who appropriated the fish in the rivers, the birds of the sky, and the wood from the trees. We can see in Müntzer, as in his disciple Hans Hut, who was the main Anabaptist missionary in South Germany and Austria, the influence of the *Theologia Naturalis seu Liber creaturararum* of Raimund von Sabunde, which states clearly that God has delivered two books to humankind: the book of creation and the Sacred Scriptures.²² For Hut's Austrian Franciscan disciples such as

¹⁹ Translation into English from *Nueva Biblia Española*, Latin American Edition, Luis Alonso Schökel and Juan Mateos, eds. (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1976).

²⁰ Concerning the universe as a place of enchantment and the preservation of the planet, see Jaime A. Prieto Valladares, "Diálogos para re-encantar el universo," in *Vida y Pensamiento* [UBL review] 28, no. 1 (2008): 111-45.

²¹ John H. Yoder, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973).

²² Gordon Rupp, "Thomas Müntzer, Hans Hut und das "Evangelium aller Kreatur," in *Thomas Müntzer*, ed. Abraham Friesen and Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche

Leonard Schiemer, Hans Schlaffer, and Ambrosius Spittelmaier, grace has three dimensions. In the first, it is a light that shines in all human beings, be they Jews, Christians, Turks, or pagans. The second dimension has to do with the internal light that comes from the reading of the Old and New Testaments; the third is the light born in the crucible of *Gelassenheit*, which is a complete abandonment in God, in spite of trials and suffering, in order to follow Jesus Christ.²³

These principles, inherited from the Radical Reformation, are profound in the areas of preaching the gospel to all creatures, human rights, ecumenical/intercultural or inter-religious dialogue, the perception of the sacredness of God in the universe, and the experience of suffering in the following of Jesus. Consciously or unconsciously they become relevant points of departure not only when teaching the history of the church but also when teaching the history of Latin America and the history of indigenous and African-descended peoples.

Institutional Objectives, Strategies, and Successful Teaching

The SBL was founded by the Latin American Mission in 1923 with the aim of educating leaders of the various Protestant churches of the entire continent in Bible, theology, and pastoral practice. In April 1997 the National Council of Superior Private Education of Costa Rica (CONESUP) approved the institution's application to function as the Latin American Biblical University (Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana [UBL]).²⁴ The UBL has its headquarters in San José, but has agreements with Protestant and ecumenical theological institutions in 13 countries of Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. Its key purpose is "to contribute to the integral education of leaders and community members in general, in theological, spiritual, moral, technological, cultural and educational aspects, by means of different service programs and activities both self-defined

Buchgesellschaft, 1978), 178-210.

²³ George H. Williams, *La Reforma Radical*, trans. Antonio Alatorre (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983), 194-210.

²⁴ Document 322-97 of the Sesión Ordinaria del Consejo Nacional de Enseñanza Superior Universitaria Privada (CONESUP), April 21, 1997. San José, Costa Rica: Ministerio de Educación Pública. Archivo de CONESUP.

and as defined by its statutes and rules.”²⁵ Although the UBL, in agreement with other institutions, does teach English, German, and Portuguese, its principal activity is tied to its Bachelors, Licentiate, and Masters programs in Theological and Pastoral Sciences and Biblical Sciences (Old and New Testament).

The relationship which the institution established in 1923 with Latin American Protestant churches was publicized by means of a journal called the “Latin American Evangelist,” in Spanish “El Mensajero Bíblico” (the Biblical Messenger). Also well known were the evangelistic campaigns carried out in many countries by Harry and Susan Strachan. Currently the university publicizes its activities through the previously-noted institutional agreements and by means of the internet. Theological education can take many different modes of distance and residential study, and includes study modules in theology, Bible, church history, and pastoral education. Another program is the Pastoral Biblical Institute, which offers theological, pastoral, and biblical courses for church leaders who have not yet concluded their secondary studies.

There is great respect shown for the confessional orientation of all professors and their academic freedom. But there is also teamwork in assemblies of professors and students where curricular issues are discussed and revised. There is also a public sharing of findings in colloquia which are open to everyone in the university. The orientation of seminars and courses is centered on the central axes of the pedagogy, gender, culture, and society.

The courses in church history help students understand the development of Christianity from the time of its origins to the present. They can get to know the courageous and sure testimony of women leaders and prophets such as Katharina Kreutter, Margret Hottinger of Zollikon, Sabine Bader of Augsburg, Katharina Purst Hutter and Anna Jansz of Rotterdam from the Anabaptist tradition²⁶ and small groups who gave their testimony of

²⁵ Jaime A. Prieto Vallasdares (Secretary) and Adolfo Ruíz Contreras (President), “Acta Número cuarenta de la Asamblea General Extraordinaria de la Asociación Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano,” June 9, 1995, San José, Costa Rica. Actas de Asambleas Generales, Archivo de la UBL.

²⁶ Marion Kobelt-Groch, *Aufsässige Töchter Gottes. Frauen im Bauern-krieg und in den Täuferbewegungen* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus Verlag, 1993); C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht, eds., *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming*

faith from the “margins of history.”²⁷ It is important to recognize ambivalences in the history of the church, for when it entered into conspiracy with the state, temporal and power interests prevailed over an imitation of Christ. In the history of Latin America, after we come to understand its multi-cultural origin, we see that conquest and colonization mark its subsequent development. Colonial domination of the economy, culture, and society is a reality which overwhelms us even today. Discrimination against indigenous and African-descended peoples defined our colonial past and continues, sometimes in the plain light of day and other times surreptitiously.

I believe I am attaining my pedagogical objectives when, along with studying history with my students, we analyze the whole context, and when we write monographs and theses that both reveal and describe the past and shine a ray of hope towards building better inter-personal relationships in our homes, in the church, and in society, and creating better living situations for society’s most marginal and vulnerable people. I feel I have achieved my objectives in teaching history when students are challenged to follow Jesus Christ in spite of the great difficulties they may experience on returning to their countries and communities of origin. At a first level, I see success when students sharpen their methodological, technical, and writing skills. At a second level, when they are able to write articles and books, and influence their churches, communities, educational institutions, social organizations, and politics or society in general. The third level has taken more time to become visible, but I have seen it in visits over the last 20 years when I have happily met many of my students again. Along with continuing to write relevant contemporary commentaries, they also hold important posts in their churches, communities, educational institutions, human rights organizations, NGOs, and even government offices.

Research and Pedagogical Recommendations

My research has been dedicated primarily to describing the history of Anabaptist-related groups in Latin America. I believe it is necessary to strengthen teaching with research, for a mutual enrichment takes place. In the first two books I wrote about the Mennonites, the accent of my work

Pioneers (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Univ.Press, 1996).

²⁷ Juan Driver, *La fe en la periferia de la historia* (Guatemala: Ediciones Clara-Semilla, 1997).

fell on the role played by the Mennonite missionaries who came to Costa Rica; this research was based primarily on written documents.²⁸ By contrast, my last two books have made a great effort to incorporate oral traditions. Personal interviews have allowed me to write history that more closely reflects the faith experience of church members. One of the attractions of these latter books is that at least some members of the church can see part of the history of their own lives re-drawn in the historical outlines.²⁹

In these new investigations I have tried to balance the actors, so that women, children, and young people are present in the narrative, and to make visible the multi-cultural nature of the Anabaptist people of the Latin American continent. These new methodological and theoretical approaches to writing history have helped me to develop other abilities – and to encourage and direct original research by students at the UBL. Some examples of the latter are a dissertation by Margarita de la Torre, a member of the Quichua tribe of Ecuador;³⁰ a thesis by Reynaldo Figueroa, an indigenous African-descendant from the Miskito coast of Nicaragua;³¹ a thesis by David Eduardo Soto Gallegos of Peru;³² and a dissertation of Pamela Idjabe Mambo of Ecuatorial Guinea.³³ What was new in these investigations is the use of oral

²⁸ Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, *Die mennonitische Mission in Costa Rica 1960-1978* (Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1992); Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, *Indianermission im Tal von Talamanca, Costa Rica 1891-1987* (Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1995).

²⁹ Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, *Mennonites in Latin America. Historical Sketches* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College/Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2008); *Mission and Migration. Global Mennonite History Series: Latin America*, trans. and ed. by C. Arnold Snyder (Intercourse, PA: Good Books/Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2010).

³⁰ María Margarita de la Torre Saransig, “Una interpretación teológica y pastoral del levantamiento indígena ecuatoriano (29 de enero-7 de febrero 2001).” [A theological and pastoral interpretation of the uprising of Ecuadorian Indigenous (January 29 - February 7, 2001)]. Bachelor of Theology thesis, UBL, 2004.

³¹ Reynaldo Figueroa Urbina, “La celebración de la muerte: Un estudio de la herencia cultural en la Iglesia Morava Central Miskita en Bilwi, Nicaragua, desde una perspectiva pastoral.” [The celebration of death: a study of the cultural inheritance in the Central Miskita Moravian Church, Bilwi, Nicaragua, from a pastoral perspective.] Licenciante in Theology thesis, UBL, 2004.

³² David Eduardo Soto Gallegos, “Inicios históricos de las Asambleas de Dios del Perú (1919-1928).” [Historical beginnings of the Assemblies of God of Peru (1919-1928).] Licenciante in Theology thesis, UBL, 2007.

³³ Pamela Idjabe Mambo, “La construcción de un discurso sobre Dios en medio de una lucha

history recovered by means of interviews as well as the recovery of cultural elements with origins in the Andean and African cultures of these countries.

To conclude this reflection, I would like to offer some practical pedagogical orientations for colleagues teaching students how to conduct research on the history of the church:

- Carry out the work of historical interpretation taking interdisciplinary approaches into account. That is, be open to dialogue with the social sciences, social history, economics, art, anthropology, literature, gender studies, and other sciences.
- Encourage students to write short monographs on themes that interest them.
- Show them how to do field work with tape recorders and, if possible, with digital cameras.
- Share with students a model for doing interviews, which includes a brief history of the person being interviewed and questions regarding the church, its evangelistic task, and its testimony in society.
- Insist on including in these testimonies the voices of young people, women, old people, children, and, ideally, the entire community.
- Encourage the reading of key, intelligible theoretical studies that make possible the interpretation of a particular person or historical event.
- Encourage the understanding of theoretical parameters that allow tying together the cultural traditions of a people with their experience of the Christian faith.

de poder y resistencia en la historia de 'El huevo y la gallina' de José Vieira Mateus da Graca." [The construction of a discourse about God in the midst of a struggle of power and resistance in the history of 'The egg and the chicken' of José Vieira Mateus da Graca.] Bachelor of Science in Theology thesis, UBL, 2009.

- Accompany students closely during the research process, and encourage the beginning, continuation, and conclusion of their investigations.
- Allow testimonies and histories of the faith of other people to motivate us to continue following Jesus Christ.

Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares is Professor of Church History at Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana (UBL), the Latin American Biblical University in San José, Costa Rica, and was Rector of the University from 2001 to 2005.

Anne Krabill Hershberger, ed. *Sexuality: God's Gift*. Second edition. Scottdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 2010.

Given that contemporary theology has seen a renewed interest in the significance of embodiment, the second edition of *Sexuality: God's Gift* is a timely addition to Anabaptist-Mennonite pastoral theology. According to editor Anne Krabill Hershberger, the book aims "to put in accessible form some topics on sexuality which have special meaning for Christians and to interpret them from a Christian, Anabaptist, biblical perspective" (13). With its 16 chapters tracing issues related to sexuality from childhood through old age, this volume is an updated, more comprehensive version of the first edition, and is sure to be useful in congregational, small-group, and individual settings.

Sexuality: God's Gift draws from the wisdom and experience of a number of authors without attempting to harmonize their views, giving the book an interdisciplinary and intergenerational flavor. Hershberger and Willard S. Krabill begin the collection by framing sexuality in terms of a divine gift, in contrast to the negativity about sexuality and indeed about embodiment itself in the history of the Christian tradition (19). Sexuality is further understood as broader than genital sex, encompassing gender as well; thus the authors state that "[a]lways, from birth to death, we are all sexual beings" (18). This is followed by a thorough and realistic look at biblical depictions of sexuality by Keith Graber Miller that concludes, not with a simplistic appeal to so-called 'biblical marriage' or 'family values' but with an appeal to emulate sexuality at its "biblical best" (50). After Krabill places sexuality within the broader category of human intimacy, the discussion turns to sexuality at different life stages.

While the first edition addressed youth and children in a single chapter, the second edition distinguishes between the two age groups, resulting in James H. Ritchie Jr.'s chapter on "The Gift and Its Youngest Recipients" and Barbara J. Meyer's "The Gift and Nurturing Adolescents." In "The Gift and Singleness," Julie Nash writes candidly of her experience of singleness, followed by Krabill's chapters on marriage, same-sex orientation, and "Cross-Gender Friendships." Miller and Hershberger discuss sexuality and aging, and Rachel Nafziger Hartzler discusses sexuality "After Losing a

Spouse.” The final essays explore sensuality (Hershberger), the arts (Lauren Friesen), celibacy (Sue L. Conrad), the “misuse” of sexuality (Krabill and Hershberger), its “restoration” (Delores Histan Friesen), and offer resources for further reading compiled by Histan Friesen and Hershberger.

Many chapters are compelling and well-researched, drawing from well-known scholars in Christian sexual ethics such as James B. Nelson and Lisa Sowle Cahill. Still, several chapters stand out. Meyer provides a sensitive account of sexuality and the complexities of adolescence that encourages and challenges youth pastors and parents to discuss sexual ethics openly with youth. Krabill’s take on same-sex orientation is likewise nuanced and hospitable, an appropriate tone given the still-charged nature of the subject in many congregations. Both Friesen’s discussion of sexuality in the arts and Conrad’s artful and quite theological portrayal of celibacy deepen the definition of sexuality beyond sex or marriage to include broader aspects of church and community life.

I was less drawn to Krabill’s discussion of marriage, which focuses more on the downfalls of pre-marital sex than on the positive values of healthy marriage relationships. Since same-sex marriage is not a possibility in many contexts, there are hints here of a possible double standard regarding acceptance and hospitality: those who identify as gay or lesbian are welcomed without judgment, while heterosexuals remain accountable to a cut-and-dried sexual ethic. This distance is troubling and requires further reflection. The emphasis on the legal aspect of marriage was also somewhat puzzling, as Anabaptist-Mennonite marriages have historically relied primarily on the church community, not the state, for legitimation. Krabill’s look at “cross-gender friendships,” among other chapters, made several generalizations about gender that reveal an area the authors could have researched further. Consultation with feminist and womanist theologies, and with theologies of gender and embodiment could have strengthened the discussion significantly.

This edition of *Sexuality: God’s Gift* delves deeper into the controversies of sexual ethics than its predecessor, tackling singleness and celibacy, widowhood, and divorce, in addition to same-sex orientation and various kinds of abuse. Though readers seeking a more sustained Anabaptist-Mennonite theology of embodiment and sexuality will have to look

elsewhere, this volume book provides a fitting introduction for Mennonite and other congregations who have yet to begin the conversation on sexuality.

Susanne Guenther Loewen, doctoral student, Toronto School of Theology, Toronto, Ontario

Peter J. Leithart. *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.

What does an emperor do when he becomes a Christian? What should he do? Does the life of Constantine have something to teach us? These are the questions that Peter Leithart tries to answer in this book. *Defending Constantine* is mainly a careful yet engaging biography of the first overtly Christian Roman emperor. Leithart tries to summarize the results of the extensive recent scholarship on Constantine at a fairly popular level. The reader is warned in the preface that the author has an ax to grind. Indeed, “as the book progresses biography recedes as polemic comes to the forefront” (10). Leithart’s aim is to take sides on the many things that are disputed about Constantine and to rebut the many caricatures that have arisen. As the title suggests, his aim is to defend Constantine.

Is the story only a positive one? By no means. Yes, any number of very unchristian attitudes and actions can be held against Constantine; yet complicating circumstances can partly explain these negatives. Yes, he was in some ways like any other Roman emperor, but he initiated significant changes to Rome’s political landscape because he was a Christian (Leithart judges that Constantine’s conversion was genuine). After an apparently careful tallying of the balance sheet, the author finds more positives than negatives in Constantine. I am not an historian and thus not able to assess the fairness of his evaluation, except to say that historical evaluations of political figures are unavoidably subjective. Leithart relies heavily on the writings of Eusebius, a fourth-century bishop, whom he admits exaggerated Constantine’s virtues and ignored his vices (28). Other writers of the time were much more critical of the emperor. In any case, according to Leithart, Constantine left an enduring legacy, and provides in many respects a model

for Christian political practice.

There is, of course, the charge of “Constantinianism” leveled by John Howard Yoder and others. Another purpose of this book is to counter that charge. Here again, Leithart provides a nuanced argument because he agrees with much of Yoder’s critique. However, he faults Yoder for not paying enough attention to the intellectual, legal, and constitutional context in which Constantine lived (182). Yoder also fails to do justice to the many positive political changes initiated by Constantine (e.g., ending the persecution of Christians and the Roman practice of sacrifice). Important too is the fact of a brand-new challenge facing Constantine: “no emperor had ever had to deal with the church” (182). Nor did he have models to follow. Besides, is there anything inherently wrong with a Christian emperor seeking to bring about an end to cruel practices and to creating an environment where positive Christian values can flourish? I am not sure that either Yoder or contemporary Anabaptists have an entirely satisfactory answer to this question.

However, I do have some problems with Leithart’s final chapters, where he continues to challenge Yoder and to provide an alternative approach to Christian political practice. Leithart maintains that Yoder gets his early church history wrong, and “if he got Christian history wrong, that sets a question mark over his theology” (254). Surely in some sense theology should come first and be used to critique history. Leithart challenges the claim that the early church was pacifist. In fact, the story of the church and war is an ambiguous one before and after Constantine (ch. 12). The author provides a rather ingenious interpretation of the biblical story, arguing that “the Bible is from beginning to end a story of war” (333). Indeed, it is a story of Yahweh giving to humans increasing responsibility to wage war. Yoder would give a very different interpretation. Leithart’s own interpretation fails to take into account the difference between spiritual and worldly weapons.

Interestingly, Leithart agrees with Yoder that Jesus must be the center of a political theology. But Leithart’s “politics of Jesus” is very different from Yoder’s (337-39). Unfortunately for Leithart, Jesus’ example and teaching include an explicit rejection of violence and war, and it won’t do to interpret certain passages of Scripture metaphorically. And a question remains: Isn’t the project of seeking to reshape political and cultural institutions, values,

and practices in accordance with the gospel an implication of the gospel's proclamation that Jesus is Lord?

Leithart's defense of Constantine deserves a careful reading by all Anabaptist sympathizers and critics, and a careful critical response by Anabaptist scholars.

Elmer J. Thiessen, Research Professor of Education, Tyndale University College, Toronto, Ontario

William T. Cavanaugh. *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

The animating thesis of William Cavanaugh's book is succinctly encapsulated in its title, *Migrations of the Holy*. The argument goes that the categories of "religious" and "secular" are recent constructs that hide the fact that "the holy" – far from having been removed from the public, political sphere and interiorized in the hearts of individual believers of various religions – is rather still fully public, having migrated from ecclesiastical orders to the halls of the modern nation-state. Cavanaugh makes use of Michael Novak's helpful analogy of the "empty shrine," the nation-state's claim that disestablishment of religion has swept the shrine clean, allowing any religious tradition to provide the content for what constitutes "holy." One hallmark of Cavanaugh's work is to show that this is a lie and, at least for the United States, at the heart of the nation-state's holiest of holies lies its *shekinah*: consumer capitalism.

In some ways this book can be seen as a natural continuation of Cavanaugh's *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford, 2009) and *Being Consumed* (Eerdmans, 2008). The former provides a detailed genealogy of how the terms "religious" and "secular" have come to function in modernity and serve to mask the nation-state's monopoly on legitimate violence, while the latter describes consumerism and globalization, holding the Eucharist up as a rebuke to both. These themes are picked up in the book at hand, a collection of essays written between 2004 and 2007, just prior to the global economic collapse which the author references in the more recently written

introduction. There Cavanaugh states his purpose for the book as to help Christians “unthink the inevitability of the nation-state” and to “be realistic about what we can expect from the ‘powers and principalities’ of our own age, and to urge them not to invest the entirety of their political presence in these powers” (3). As it relates to managing expectations of the powers that be, this book is a good companion to James Davison Hunter’s *To Change the World* (Oxford, 2010), though the two authors’ constructive theological suggestions do diverge at points.

For his part, Cavanaugh hopes to “argue for a more radical pluralism, one that does not oscillate between individuals and the state but allows for a plurality of societies, a plurality of common goods that do not simply feed into a unitary whole” (4). Such a vision may resemble what philosopher Charles Taylor has described as “Secularism B” rather than the “Secularism A” of, for instance, French *laïcité*. At multiple points throughout the book, Cavanaugh makes use of the concept of “complex space,” borrowed from John Milbank’s *The Word Made Strange* (Blackwell, 1997). Rather than political space conceived in the Hobbesian sense – individuals relating to the state as “spokes to the hub of a wheel” (20) – complex political space “would privilege local forms of community, but it would also connect them in translocal networks of connectivity” (4). For a political theologian writing within a magisterial tradition, it is perhaps surprising to see such an aim as his articulation of “a kind of Christian micropolitics that comes first and foremost from grass-roots groups of Christians” (5).

As a collection of essays around a small cluster of topics, the book suffers from a degree of repetition. For instance, Cavanaugh engages in a lengthy critique of the work of Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray in the first chapter and repeats most of the same critique in chapter seven. But this is a small issue in a volume that otherwise packs a lot of powerful political theology into a relatively small space. While this book is less academic than *The Myth of Religious Violence*, the intellectual bar still remains somewhat high, and it would probably not work in a Sunday school class unless the class is unusually well-educated. Seminary-trained pastors with some patience will be rewarded with perhaps new ways to “read” the principalities and powers that be, offering tools for a more prophetic edge to their teaching and preaching. Christians in North America of all political persuasions,

particularly in the US, have indeed been deeply seduced by Western consumerism and politics, and ask entirely too much of the political system. This book offers a strong theopolitical corrective toward the edification of the public body of Christ, the church.

Brian R. Gumm, M.Div. student, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Elmer John Thiessen. *The Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defense of Proselytizing and Persuasion*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.

A significant contribution to the study of evangelism, *The Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defense of Proselytizing and Persuasion* is ambitious in appealing to two divergent audiences. On the one hand, author Elmer Thiessen constructs a careful apologetic that rationalizes the moral benefit of proselytization for sceptics. On the other hand, he provides a thorough ethical guide for active Christian evangelists of non-believers. Throughout, he strikes a good balance between the scholarly and the practical.

Thiessen is refreshingly candid and resists evading questions typically dividing so-called liberals and conservatives. He also presents opposing voices fairly, engaging the work of esteemed thinkers such as David Novak and Jay Newman, who disagree with his perspective.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is more philosophical and corrects what Thiessen sees as the erroneous reasoning that, because some proselytizers use coercive methods and have questionable intentions, all attempts to evangelize are unethical. He exposes contradictions within the logic of those opposing faith propagation. For example, he argues that it is human nature to try to convince others of one's point of view; even those who are against conversion efforts employ similar strategies. Marketing, parenting, and teaching are listed as instances of people using means of persuasion. Here, I think a clearer distinction must be made between persuasion and proselytization. The former can be as simple as trying to get a child to try a new food, while the latter is concerned with matters of

ultimacy, such as one's salvation and one's deepest spiritual commitments.

The second part presents fifteen criteria for ethical proselytization. Thiessen is critical of those more concerned with the goal of saving souls at any cost than with the means by which it is achieved. He stresses the ethical obligation to respect the dignity, freedom, and cultural identities of potential converts, and he urges proselytizers to resist deception, arrogance, and physical, psychological, emotional, and social forms of coercion. Finally, he maintains that Christians must allow room for other religions to disseminate their faiths as well.

The author writes that "there are no legitimate moral objections that can be raised against proselytizing as a whole" (140-41). While his ethical criteria are commendable, I have ideological reservations about the narcissism at the heart of any form of proselytization. Ultimately, one evangelizes because one wants to change the other, which in essence constitutes a desire to negate the otherness of the other. I question the morality of such a goal. Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas argues that an ethical relationship between subjects protects their freedom, including the freedom to be different. In this way, ethics prioritizes precisely what is other about the other (see Levinas's *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*).

Thiessen cites Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance as illuminating an unconscious motivation behind ethically problematic proselytization, because proselytizers seek to minimize difference in order to minimize their insecurity about their own beliefs (119). I would argue that the quest to minimize difference is present in the motivation of evangelism as a whole, since by definition it seeks to bring others' beliefs in line with one's own. I do not think this makes me what Thiessen calls a liberal "closet totalitarian," since I have no problem with people holding exclusivist beliefs (I myself am exclusively Christian), as long as they do not strive to coax others into holding the same beliefs. I also object to the notion that faith must be viewed in capitalistic terms, as something in competition with other faiths in order to be "healthy" (128).

Ultimately, Thiessen "dare[s] to take an exclusivist and universalist approach" to evangelism which is founded on the assumption that there is a moral compass found in all human beings that points to the same objective Truth (37). One could argue that Christianity is by its nature an evangelical

religion in its quest to overcome “cultural barriers” separating people through the adoption of a trans-cultural message of peace and inclusion. However, I was somewhat disappointed with Thiessen’s discarding of alternative attempts to “reinterpret and even challenge the centrality of the missionary impulse of the Christian church” (30) as irrelevant to his project. I think a germane question for just such a book would be: Is one obliged to proselytize in order to be considered a true Christian?

Christina Reimer, Instructor, Sexuality, Marriage and Family Program, St. Jerome’s University, Waterloo, Ontario

Angela H. Reed. *Quest for Spiritual Community: Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.

Contemporary culture has an appetite for spirituality, but it is not the church that seekers are inevitably turning to. The church, however, has historically been an essential resource for spiritual formation. In response to this disparity, practical theologian Angela Reed urges congregations to reclaim spiritual guidance as a means to grow into God’s image and to live out that reality in love with all humankind.

Influenced by a Mennonite heritage and sensitive to the Mennonite suspicion of spirituality as a withdrawal from the active life, Reed moves the spiritual formation quest beyond merely the person into community and mission. Experience as a pastor, spiritual directee, and director inform her practical and analytical, biblical, and theological proposal. Begun as a dissertation, part of this project is made up of an empirical study of three Mennonite and three Presbyterian churches that have intentionally integrated some form of spiritual direction. (Reed generally prefers the less directive term “spiritual guidance.”)

The book begins with an analysis of spirituality in culture by integrating insights from sociology. The style utilized here and throughout is easy to read, with frequent case studies employed to bring the relevant

issues to life. To further complement this user-friendly approach, questions at the end of each chapter highlight, and provide a means to think about, key ideas. Chapter two examines the experiences of those churches in the study that have intentionally engaged and utilized spiritual direction in some way. Subsequent chapters provide insight into spiritual guidance through diverse biblical and historical examples such as the apostle Paul, Julian of Norwich, Suzanna Wesley, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer; discuss the theology of Jürgen Moltmann; and conclude with a pragmatic model of spiritual guidance for congregations.

The author specifically articulates what she calls a “Protestant theology of spiritual guidance” (114) informed by the theology of Moltmann. I found this to be a rich and enlightening section; however, it left me wondering how Moltmann’s theology, and ultimately Reed’s thesis, fits with an Anabaptist-Mennonite theology. Certainly the strong emphasis on the congregation, as well as a spirituality that is lived out in the world is an indication of the author’s theological background, but those looking for an integrated Anabaptist-Mennonite spiritual theology will be disappointed. For this reason it is doubtful that Mennonites apprehensive of spirituality are likely to change their minds, though they could learn from reading this work.

While Reed comments in a footnote about the tendency of Protestant spiritual direction to be individualistic (61), and although she frequently critiques an inner-focused spirituality, this important issue could use more reflection. In fact, the frequent caution about pietistic or quietistic spirituality may give the false impression that the Christian tradition has historically been focused on the inner life at the expense of the outer life. This is where the spiritual tradition of the Anabaptists or earlier Catholic traditions, such as those of the Benedictines, could be discussed as a historical guide to offer a more balanced approach to the modern individualistic tendency of Protestantism.

In what way Reed’s Mennonite theology fits with a Protestant theology is an obvious question that leaves this reader wishing for greater theological clarity about spirituality in these two streams. To this end, some insight into the unique strengths and challenges of offering spiritual guidance in the Mennonite and Presbyterian congregations in the author’s study could aid in achieving this greater clarity.

Quest for Spiritual Communities: Reclaiming Spiritual Guidance for Contemporary Congregations is an important contribution to the study of spiritual formation and its relation to the church. It is written with clarity and profundity for a wide group of readers, including pastors, spiritual directors, seminarians, and lay persons. With built-in study questions, this volume is a ready-to-use resource for Sunday school classes or small group discussions, and it should aid in moving the conversation forward and lead to greater spiritual nurturing in congregations.

Receiving and providing spiritual guidance is essential for Christian growth and maturity. Though Reed reminds us that practices are “only tools” to be used in the nurturing of faith (155), she provides insightful ideas about practical guidance to deepen the spiritual journey – and to help individuals who make up the church to grow into the likeness and action of Christ.

Andrew C. Martin, Th.D. student, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology.

J. Alexander Sider. *To See History Doxologically: History and Holiness in John Howard Yoder's Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

J. Alexander Sider's *To See History Doxologically: History and Holiness in John Howard Yoder's Ecclesiology* compares Yoder's conceptions of history and holiness with those of various theological figures. In doing so, it suggests how the church can “see history doxologically” – a saying of Yoder's (3). Following Yoder, Sider suggests that holiness and difficulty are not antithetical realities; the church can be holy despite its difficult brokenness (3, 12). Nonetheless, this doxological vision requires the church to live in the world as “a sign of the divine presence” (3-4). Such a practice is marked by a view of history centred on the lamb that was slain, requiring repentance and forgiveness while appropriating history as an exercise in praise (3, 5, 15).

Readers should not skip the “Acknowledgments” in this book, where Sider shares a biographical anecdote about his grandparents. Describing them with high esteem, he suggests their lives embody “history as praise” and provided him with a model for his faith (xiii-xiv). This link not only reveals the personal nature of Sider's work but illustrates the realism that

accompanies a doxological vision of history. This background accentuates the pastoral concern evident in the author's work and, given the highly academic nature of this book (much of the content is taken from Sider's doctoral dissertation), it is clear that Sider uniquely balances practical application with rigorous scholarship.

The author begins with exegetical work in Hebrews, where he suggests the church must believe the promises of Jesus while retaining a measure of frailty. Accordingly, while juxtaposing Yoder with Oliver O'Donovan, he suggests the church must embody the gospel with openness to society's "outsiders" (55). Sider also notes Ernst Troeltsch's influence on Yoder, particularly on Yoder's view of "history as presenting a set of methodological aporiae" (59). Nonetheless, Yoder differs from Troeltsch by refusing to use history to secure Christianity's cultural dominance.

Given this distinction in Yoder's historicism, Sider asserts that an adequate view of salvation must be non-Constantinian. That is, it must be nonviolent and avoid political infidelity. The non-Constantinian nature of the gospel cultivates the church's "habitus" in history (100). Such a habitus is characterized by praise to the lamb that was slain, a vision in Revelation 5 that illustrates Christ's control over history and its eschatological end. With recourse to Miroslav Volf, Sider shows that a doxological vision of history does not exclude acts of penitence or lament. In fact, it insists upon "forgiveness as conversation" (159). Finally, Sider places Yoder's thought alongside that of Alasdair MacIntyre to investigate Yoder's voluntarism and the church's dialogical nature.

One of the strengths of Sider's book is its critical engagement with various scholars and ideas. Sider places Yoder alongside people as diverse as Troeltsch and Volf while generously summarizing and appraising their work. The author also critically engages with his own tradition, suggesting that those with a "Radical Reformation" heritage should engage the history of Constantine and the 4th-century church with greater honesty (99). Ultimately, his ability to critically assess a plethora of information produces unique insights on Yoder's thought, particularly with reference to the church.

One area that may prove striking to readers is Sider's argument that holiness is difficult. While this position rightly draws attention to the difficulties endured by a holy, crucified Christ, it risks under-emphasizing

the comfort and peace found in a holy life in Christ. Although I do not think Sider wishes to say a holy life is *only* difficult, his definition of holiness does not fully express other adequate conceptions of holiness. In opposition to Sider (and Yoder), it could be said that the unholy life is difficult while the holy life is, in a sense, easier. Such a conception is common in Proverbs, where it says, “The one whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but the one whose ways are perverse will fall into the pit” (Prov. 28:18). While Sider admits that his conception of holiness is debatable, a wider engagement with other perspectives might have strengthened his argument.

Sider’s work offers an important comparative study of Yoder’s ecclesiology that issues an important challenge. While the content of the book is accessible to the general educated reader, the in-depth study it provides would best commend itself to those who are passionate about Yoder’s theology or the theologies covered in this book.

Ben White, Master of Christian Studies student, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia

Shelly Rambo. *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.

In *Spirit and Trauma*, Shelly Rambo describes trauma as a place where “death haunts life and life bears death within it” (155). Trauma disrupts our sense of time, body, and word. Yet God’s Spirit is present as witness to both the pull of death and the movement of life in the space of suffering, and love remains with us in body, time, and word even in the unspeakable places of trauma and violence.

For Rambo, salvation is not a linear victorious jump over the abyss of death into life. She sees such a view as problematic from a trauma perspective because it bypasses, or “elides,” suffering, oppression, and violence. Instead, salvation as seen from the middle is found in the presence of love in the Spirit, who remains with us: “The middle story is not a story of rising out of

the depths, but a transformation of the depths themselves" (172).

In the first chapter, Rambo sets the stage in post-Katrina New Orleans. She highlights the term *witness* as resonating in both trauma and theological terms. After giving a brief introduction to trauma theory, she frames the concept of trauma as an experience of "uncontainable suffering" (35) beyond expression. She then outlines the language of death and life in theology. In the next two chapters, she enters into theological analysis. She first explores Hans Urs von Balthasar's concept of Holy Saturday and restates his poetic description of a disciple at the foot of the cross, watching a "weary trickle of love making its way out of death" (60). She returns to this image frequently to talk about the movement of the Spirit in the space of trauma. The author then carefully examines the witness of Mary Magdalene and of the Beloved Disciple according to the Gospel of John. She questions the emphasis on the content of witnessing and focuses on the act of witnessing itself in a time of suffering.

Based on these two explorations, Rambo frames the Spirit of God as a "middle Spirit" that witnesses even in the abyss of death and hell. Echoing the temporal disruptions of trauma survivors, this middle Spirit moves in a nonlinear fashion through time and aligns with concepts of breath and love. Finally, Rambo ties her theological explorations to trauma and returns to stories from New Orleans. She contrasts prevalent narratives of redemption as victory with redemption as seen from the middle, which relates to "the capacity to witness to what exceeds death but cannot be clearly identified as life" (144).

The author's interdisciplinary approach weaves together not only the language of trauma and theology but also threads in literature, sciences, political studies, sociology, and music. By integrating multiple narratives and disciplines, she adds to the complexity of theological discussions in light of trauma rather than seeking an overriding truth. She also resists dominant cultural patterns of Euro-American theology such as an emphasis on linearism and victory narratives, challenges the dichotomies that often appear in Euro-American thought patterns, and hints at more holistic ways of thinking.

Although her wide-ranging sources embrace views that are not part of mainstream discourse, Rambo draws mainly from the body of North

American and European literature. She uses examples of trauma in different cultural groups in New Orleans, but these descriptions are periphery; exploring more culturally diverse literature on theology and trauma would have strengthened the development of her theology.

Rambo's writing style tightly links her thoughts, and a beautiful unfolding of ideas flows through her analysis without surprises. She relies heavily, though, on several expressions whose meaning becomes clearer by the end but are not adequately defined with her nuances at the outset. The depth of content, combined with her academic style, make the book challenging to grasp fully on the first reading.

Nevertheless, *Spirit and Trauma* is a significant text for anyone working with trauma survivors, especially from a Christian perspective in a Euro-American context. Rambo articulately links Christian theology and trauma studies, providing a useful theological lens for responding to trauma. Her emphasis on remaining and witness in places of suffering is an encouragement for pastors, teachers, care-givers, peacebuilding practitioners, counselors, and others engaged in the "work of making love visible at the point where it is most invisible" (171).

Rambo's work also provides a nuanced theology for everyone seeking meaning in times of suffering who are uncomfortable with a redemptive narrative that "smoothes over" the inexpressible experiences between death and life.

Cheryl Woelk, Short Term Ministry Coordinator, Mennonite Church Canada, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

A N N O U N C E M E N T

Historical Commission of the U.S. and Canadian Mennonite Brethren Churches

OPEN RESEARCH GRANT

A grant of \$1,500 is available to promote research and publication on the history and contributions of Mennonite Brethren women around the world. Projects may include, but are not limited to, books, articles, lecture series, symposia, and multi-media presentations.

Application deadline: April 1, 2013.

SUMMER 2013 ARCHIVAL INTERNSHIP

Spanning five weeks from mid-July to mid-August, this Internship (stipend \$2,000) will give a college student practical archival experience at each of the four Mennonite Brethren archival institutions in North America:

Winnipeg, Hillsboro, Fresno, and Abbotsford.

Application deadline: March 1, 2013.

*These awards are made possible by the
Katie Funk Wiebe Fund.*

Contact: Jon Isaak (jisaak@mbconf.ca), Executive Secretary, Historical
Commission of the U.S. and Canadian Mennonite
Brethren Churches, 1310 Taylor Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3M 3Z6