

TMTC NEWSLETTER

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Celebrating 15 Years of TMTC



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A New Vision for TMTC

Editorial

by Jeremy Bergen, Interim Director

I look forward to my assignment as TMTC interim director. The past directors, Jim Reimer and Lydia Harder, have developed an exciting vision for Mennonite theological education in Toronto and have worked tirelessly to make it happen. I am honoured to follow after them.

I want to say something about my own vision for TMTC. The core of my assignment is to work with the members of the advisory board and the institutions they represent, together with Grebel, to develop a shared long-term plan for TMTC. I don't want to pre-judge how that process might turn out. But I can say a few things about my own experience with TMTC, some specific goals, and why I think a new model of collaboration among the member agencies is so important.

Engaging with TMTC

I first interacted with TMTC in 1998 when, living in Winnipeg, I was considering my options for graduate study in theology. I contacted then-director Lydia Harder and asked about the Toronto School of Theology (TST) and TMTC. She helped me to understand the complicated TST system, the way in which I could get an ecumenical education while remaining rooted in my Mennonite identity, and how TMTC student life could support this. She graciously invited me not only to come to Toronto but to stay with her and Gary when I did so. She had set up meetings with several profs and a Mennonite doctoral student, Daryl Culp, who gave me a good picture of what Toronto could offer me. This experience of TMTC being a place of welcome, of making connections, was a significant part of my decision to start an M.A. in theology at TST.

Shortly after starting my M.A. program, I became the TMTC administrative assistant, so my experience of TMTC has not been that of a typical student. But, from a student perspective, one aspect stands out: the Mennonite Graduate Conferences that we organized first in 2002 and then again in 2004. The 2002 confer-

ence in Toronto involved about 30 Mennonite grad students from across North America. It was my first experience giving an academic presentation at a conference, and resulted in my first academic publication. Aside from this friendly initiation, I made important connections there with other students, and hopefully soon-to-be colleagues. The conversations I now have with some of them about the direction of Mennonite theology are ongoing.

Some Specific Goals

These experiences confirm for me strengths that I want to build on as interim director: developing community among Mennonite graduate students of theology or religion in Toronto; and nurturing the cohort of emerging Mennonite theological leaders throughout North America. The core of TMTC has always been its academic program: teaching doctoral courses, advising students and supervising theses. This core—an official Mennonite teaching presence at a major ecumenical school of theology—is the foundation of all other programs. I am grateful that Jim Reimer will continue his involvement with TMTC as Academic Advisor. Ways are being explored to put this teaching core on an even more secure foundation for the future.

In addition to these goals, let me note a few other specific ones which are extensions of what TMTC has already been doing:

- engage in specific ecumenical conversations, especially in light of the final report of the international Mennonite-Roman Catholic dialogue.
- serve the wider Mennonite church, especially the connection between academy and church. The sponsorship of conferences on the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and on Muslim-

Mennonite dialogue are to these ends.

- build community among Mennonite students at TST and others drawn to this tradition.
- evaluate our involvement with the Iranian exchange program, as well plan for the future.
- develop a communications strategy. Clarify which constituencies we want to connect with, what we want to say to them and hear from them, and the appropriate channels by which to do this.

A Long-Range Plan

As Jim Reimer explains in his article on the history of TMTC, a broadly-based, bi-national vision of Mennonite involvement in doctoral-level education and ecumenical engagement led to the founding of TMTC. In the past, TMTC operated on behalf of the institutional members which owned it. These members exercised ownership through governance, financial support, and general programmatic direction. Given that these institutional members no longer have the direct responsibility to govern and administer TMTC (they handed this task to Grebel in 2000), this opens up the possibility for different models of partnership. *My vision is that TMTC become a "space" in which a variety of stakeholders come together around some clear common agenda and in which a sense of collective ownership is built and re-built through concrete bilateral or multilateral projects.*

Now, this may appear to some to be "organization-speak" that doesn't make a difference in the real world. I hope it is not. I believe that a shift in perspective will free the partners to work more concretely together on developing theological leadership for the church and less time worrying about the institutional viability of TMTC. This shift recognizes

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15-Plus Years of TMTC: Historical Reflections

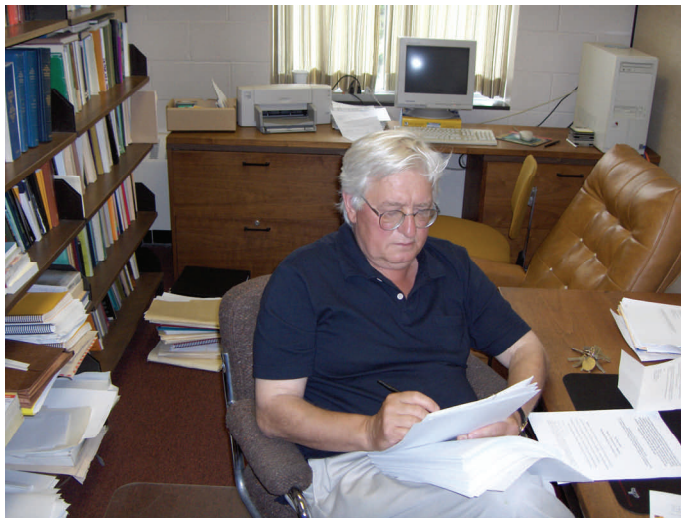
by A. James Reimer

In this issue of the *TMTC Newsletter* we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC). It was incorporated in 1990, and affiliated, through a memorandum of agreement, with the Toronto School of Theology (TST), at the University of Toronto, in 1992.

The story of the unofficial Mennonite presence at TST and the University of Toronto begins much earlier, however. As early as 1954 the late Frank C. Peters, an important teacher and leader of the Mennonite Brethren church, and for a number of years the President of Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo), graduated with a Master of Theology degree (Th.M.) from TST, writing his thesis on "The Ban in the Life and Writings of Menno Simons." (He later earned two doctorates at other schools.) In 1956 Emerson McDowell, a progressive leader of the Mennonite Church of Ontario graduated with a Master of Divinity, focusing on the theme of "Factors Common to Anabaptism and Methodism." In 1971 Helmut Harder, for many years the General Secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (now Mennonite Church Canada) graduated with his doctoral thesis on "Continuity between Method and Context in Contemporary Theology: The Achievement of Wolfart Pannenberg." Other leaders in the Mennonite community who have gained advanced degrees from TST include Darrell Fast (1977, 1986), Ralph Lebold (1980), Vernon Leis (1983), Dan Nighswander (1995), and Muriel Bechtel (1996).

In addition to these church leaders, there are the many teachers in our institutions and churches, who have graduated from TST, including Herb Swartz (1971, 1988), Titus Guenther (1977, 1988), Jacob Elias (1978), Harry Huebner (1981), John Rempel (1986), Carol Penner (1987), Martha Smith Good (1988), Henry Victor Froese (1990), Gerald Ediger (1993), Lydia Neufeld Harder (1993), Brice Balmer (1996), Arnold Neufeld-Fast (1996), Daniel Epp-Tiessen (1997), Karl Koop (1999), Eleanor Snyder (1999), Andrew Brubacher-Kaethler (2000), Eleanor Epp-Stobbe (2000), and Anna Janzen (2001). And the list does not include the significant numbers who are currently in a graduate program, or those who graduated in non-theological fields from the University of Toronto, and who had links to the Mennonite community. Also not included are the numerous individuals, from Mennonite background, who are now not directly connected with the Mennonite church but have made important contributions to other denominations and the larger scholarly world. Already in the 1950s there was a "Menno House" where Mennonite students at the University of Toronto lived together and formed a community of persons interested in how their studies related to their tradition. (For a relatively complete list of Mennonite graduates from TST, see the 2003 *TMTC Newsletter*, pp. 12-13.) Many of these gradu-

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On July 1, 2005, Jim Reimer stepped down as TMTC Director after several productive years of service. He was honoured at a Conrad Grebel luncheon (below).



Above (L-R): Arnold Snyder, Conrad Grebel Prof. of History; Lydia Harder; Henry Paetkau, Conrad Grebel President. Below (L-R): Tom Yoder Neufled, Conrad Grebel Prof. of New Testament; Margaret Loewen Reimer (Jim's wife); Jim Reimer.



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that while some of TMTC's mandate is unique to it, many of its goals are also those of its partners (and such overlap is a good thing, given that we together serve the church and its one Lord). How we work together may be different in each case.

A long-term plan will clarify the vision and the ways in which various partners participate in it. I am convinced that the *fact* of broad participation remains crucial. Different educational institutions develop different ways of connecting with the churches they serve—through alumni, training of leaders, direct resourcing of congregations, etc. Given the particularities of doctoral-level education with an ecumenical mandate, TMTC's link to its church constituency is fittingly rooted in various relationships with denominational offices, educational institutions, and service agencies, as well as the contributions of alumni and participants in TMTC events. I look forward to these challenges. I invite questions, criticism, encouragement and suggestions from the readers of this newsletter. In anticipation of my new assignment, I also invite your financial support as well.

Note: My comments above were written in June 2005. Although publication of the *TMTC Newsletter* was delayed several months, we have kept the focus on the 04-05 academic year. The one exception is the list of current students affiliating with TMTC (see page 10). We are very excited by the new energy brought by new students this fall and the sustained commitment of continuing students. Of note to readers of the *TMTC Newsletter* is the decision to cease publishing such a substantial volume each year. Given our financial and human resources, this will be the last newsletter in present form. I trust that the more modest newsletter/brochure that will replace it will continue to connect widely to churches, partner institutions, potential students, alumni and supporters.

PROFILES OF TMTC MEMBER AGENCIES

Seven institutions are represented on the TMTC Advisory Board, three of which are profiled in this issue of the *TMTC Newsletter*. We hope that these profiles highlight the significance of TMTC's member agencies and their investments in TMTC as a vital contributor to Mennonite theological education across Canada and in the U.S.

Profile: Mennonite Church Canada

by Dave Bergen

Mennonite Church Canada believes that the missional identity and ministry of the church is strengthened through educational institutions and programs that invite people to faith, develop that faith in a direction consistent with Anabaptist convictions, and equip the people of God for service and leadership in the church and beyond. It is from this perspective that the national church invests in TMTC through Conrad Grebel University College. We value the relationship between church and school, and see TMTC as a place

that supports the development of gifted leaders who articulate the theological perspectives of the church and are equipped to train church leaders in a variety of disciplines, within an Anabaptist framework. The recent addition of an education portfolio to the ministry of Christian Formation, is a clear expression of the church's strong support of, and commitment to, this vision.

Dave Bergen (below) is Executive Secretary of Christian Formation, Mennonite Church Canada.



Profile: Eastern Mennonite University

by Ervin Stutzman

Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) is located in Harrisonburg, right in the heart of the scenic and historic Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. What is now Eastern Mennonite University began as Eastern Mennonite School in 1917 and offered its first college courses in 1918. The seminary is the outgrowth of the college's Bible curriculum. The school first offered a Bachelor of Divinity in 1960.

The Master of Divinity degree was first offered in 1968-69 and the Master of Arts in Religion degree in 1972-73. A one-year program leading to a Certificate in Biblical Studies was first offered in 1974-75. The Master of Arts in Church Ministries emerged as part of a major seminary curriculum revision in 1983-84; its name was changed to the Master of Arts in Church Leadership in 1991. A

Clinical Pastoral Education program was added in 1999. EMS has been an accredited member of the Association of Theological Schools since 1986. It is approved as an institution for the training of candidates for ordination in the United Methodist Church.

Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary stays connected with the TMTC as a way of demonstrating our interest in the training of Mennonite scholars on the doctoral level. Although we have seldom had alumni take courses in the TMTC network, we now have a 2005 seminary graduate pursuing a doctorate at TST.

Ervin Stutzman is Vice President and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite Seminary (pictured below).



CALL FOR PAPERS

Mennonite Graduate Student Conference

June 10-12, 2006

Associated Mennonite
Biblical Seminary
Elkhart, Indiana

Proposals are being solicited from graduate students for individual presentations, panel discussions, or entire sessions related to the theme of "Exclusion."

The primary purpose of the Mennonite Graduate Student Conference is to provide graduate students of Mennonite identity or sympathy an opportunity to present their academic research in a collegial interdisciplinary context.

Participation of students from a wide variety of disciplines is encouraged.

Possible Topics:

- exclusion of texts
- exclusion of voices/interpreters
- exclusion of interlocutors
- exclusion and community
- exclusion and ideas
- exclusion and the human experience

(This list is by no means exhaustive, and all proposals on the general theme will be considered.)

Proposals should be kept to 350 words; should include degree and area of specialization for each presenter involved; and should be submitted by email, no later than **February 15, 2006**, to: mennonite.centre@utoronto.ca.

Travel bursaries will be available for presenters and other participants.

Further information, and any changes to this call for papers, will be posted at:

www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/tmtc/gradconf.shtml.

Profile: Canadian Mennonite University

by Dan Epp-Tiessen

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), located in Winnipeg, is invested in TMTC for a variety of reasons. One is history. Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), which merged with Concord College and Menno Simons College to form CMU, was one of the founding institutions of TMTC. One of the initial visions for TMTC that is still significant to CMU is ecumenical dialogue. By virtue of its location at TST, TMTC is a channel through which the Mennonite church can tap into the theological and spiritual treasures of other Christian traditions, and through which the Mennonite church offers some of its treasures to the broader Christian community. CMU is deeply committed to such ecumenical dialogue, and involvement in TMTC is one way to participate in such exchange.

CMU is primarily engaged in undergraduate education, but through TMTC we have at least some connection to doctoral level theological education. Since TST is the most important center in Canada for doctoral studies in the theological disciplines, it is important that Mennonites have a presence at TST. TMTC provides CMU with a connection to the significant teaching and scholarship that happens at TST. A number of the students who relate to TMTC are graduates of CMU or its founding colleges, and six of our Biblical and Theological Studies faculty are graduates of TST institutions. CMU has a vested interest in a Mennonite presence at TST that helps shape the identity and educational experience of our graduates, of future church leaders, and of some of our future faculty.

Dan Epp-Tiessen is a professor of Old Testament, Canadian Mennonite University



Students gather outside the doors of Canadian Mennonite University, one of TMTC's key member agencies.

WHY TMTC MATTERS TO TST

A Presbyterian Principal's Perspective

by J. Dorcas Gordon

I have been asked to write a short piece reflecting on the importance of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) within the context of the Toronto School of Theology (TST). When I received the request I will admit that I almost said “no” because it was simply one more thing to do. I realized, however, that the opportunity to write even briefly on this relationship was important. Why? Because the unique ways in which each part contributes to the whole are not only central to our identity as a school but also critical to the success of our mission.

The TST is an ecumenical consortium that in 2005 has seven founding denominational schools and four associate members including Conrad Grebel University College. Our mission is excellence in ecumenical theological education. The presence of TMTC at TST contributes to

making TST one of the largest and now denominationally most diverse schools in North America. While important, this is, however, simply quantitative.

Much more central is the qualitative nature of the work we do and TMTC's part in that. In February 2005 TMTC hosted a colloquium on theological education in which I was privileged to participate. It was one of those events that we all agree should happen much more often in light of the climate of ambiguity and change within which we carry out our mission. Unfortunately such opportunities are few and far between. Someone needs to take the initiative and commit the necessary resources and reflection to ensure that the encounter has depth.

The focus of the seminar was the nature of theological education and

the need not only to examine commonalities within disparate disciplines and departments, but to identify and discuss the frameworks and assumptions within which we do our work. While the size of the gathering was small, the forum itself planted ideas for thinking theologically about the work of ecumenical theological education that will remain – a vital contribution of one part to the whole for “together we are the body of Christ.” My hope is that TMTC will continue to work as a catalyst calling the rest of us together for discussion and reflection on our common calling.

J. Dorcas Gordon is Principal and Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Knox College (TST).



J. Dorcas Gordon (L) participated in TMTC's February 2005 panel event on “The Future of Theological Education.” This event, attended by TST students and faculty of various backgrounds, provided a forum to discuss how theological education may be conceived in a more integrated fashion. Does pastoral theology have anything to do with, say, church history? Questions such as this were tackled in a stimulating presentation by Alan Hayes, a historian at Wycliffe College. Hayes' respondents included Christopher Lind (TST Director), Lydia Harder (TMTC Adjunct Professor), and Dorcas Gordon. A. James Reimer moderated the panel.

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ates wrote their theses on topics related to the Mennonite heritage, but many also ventured out beyond Mennonite-defined themes, entering ecumenical waters and the broader scholarly world. This is most evident in recent graduates and current students, ushering in a new period of Mennonite scholarship, one in which Mennonite students engage and learn from other traditions as equal partners in dialogue.

I graduated with an M.A. in history from the University of Toronto in 1974 and a Ph.D. from the University of St. Michael's College (part of the TST federation of schools), in 1983, with a thesis on two German Lutheran theologians

nonite presence within the TST world. I remember sitting on the steps of St. Michael's College one day in the early 1980s, expressing my vision to a rather sceptical John Meagher, the late professor of theology at St. Michael's for whom I wrote my Greek exam. (He had earned three doctorates).

I proceeded to make a proposal to Iain Nicol, Director of TST at the time, to teach a course on Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, with the stipend hopefully to be divided between the Mennonite community and TST. Nicol, with whom I had studied Schleiermacher, was open to the idea, and suggested that I make my academic home in the history

to take note of what was happening in Toronto, and started envisioning binational institutional involvement. In a July 9, 1985 article in the *Mennonite Reporter* (MR), Dan Nighswander, then a doctoral student at TST, made the provocative proposal that Mennonites establish a seminary in cooperation with TST. It was based on a letter sent to the Mennonite Pastoral Leadership Training Board (MPLTB) of Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada (MCEC). The letter was a response to a meeting hosted by MPLTB, reported on in the June 19, 1985 issue of MR, to consider the possibility of beginning seminary education for Mennonites in Canada.

In this article Nighswander fully supports seminary education in Canada with its unique perspective, but suggests, in line with the MR editorial of that same issue, that due to financial and personnel restraints, we not establish a free-standing seminary but that we embark on seminary education in cooperation with a cluster of seminaries at the Toronto School of Theology (consisting at the time of seven federated seminaries from a variety of denominational traditions, and some affiliated denominational institutions). Nighswander offers the following reasons: 1) it would be located in Canada; 2) it would be in a major urban centre; 3) it would be in an ecumenical setting, advantageous to both Mennonites and non-Mennonites; 4) since TST is part of the University of Toronto, it would be the first Mennonite institution to be involved in *doctoral* level theological education; 5) it would be economically attractive because of the faculty, library and space resources available at TST; 6) it would be conveniently accessible to the southern Ontario church constituency, with potential access to Conrad Grebel College faculty and resources. Nighswander ventured the belief that the TST-affiliated colleges would welcome such a Mennonite presence, that there would be sufficient interest by Canadian scholars in such a project "to establish a basic teaching and administrative faculty without hesitation," and that there would be both Mennonite and non-Mennonite student interest, especially among those coming from the free church and evan-

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The history of TMTC staff (L-R): Jeff Nowers (Administrative Assistant, 2003-), Jim Reimer (Professor and Academic Advisor, 1990- ; Director, 1990-95, 2000-05), Daryl Culp (Administrative Assistant, 1992-95), Lydia Harder (Adjunct Professor, 1995-2004 (retired); Director, 1995-2000), Jeremy Bergen (Interim Director, 2005- ; Administrative Assistant, 1999-2003).

(Emanuel Hirsch and Paul Tillich). During my time of studies at TST I met very few other students of Mennonite background (one exception was Denis Janz, who later became a professor of theology at Loyola University, New Orleans). Although there had been a smattering of Mennonite students in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, there was virtually no awareness among TST students, faculty and staff of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. This changed dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s, especially with the establishment of TMTC, but I get ahead of the story. In the last years of my graduate studies I began dreaming of helping to create a more deliberate Men-

department of TST. I taught my first course in 1982-83; half of my stipend was paid by the Pastoral Leadership Training Commission of Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, and half by TST. For a time in the mid-1980s I taught two courses under the same arrangement.

The story of TMTC is not that of one or two individuals. In fact, it is remarkable how widespread the early church-based support was for the establishing of such a Centre. In the mid-1980s the Mennonite Church and its leaders, including administrators from a variety of educational institutions began

A Tribute to Lydia Harder

by Jonathan Seiling

In December 2004, TMTC hosted a party in honour of Lydia Harder, who has now retired after many years of longstanding service to TMTC. Lydia, who completed her Th.D. at TST, was Adjunct Professor of Theology and TMTC Director (1995-2000). At the party, doctoral student Jonathan Seiling delivered a humorous but heartfelt tribute to Lydia. The text of his comments appears below.



Christina Reimer (L) and Marcia Boniferro, TMTC-affiliated students, chat with Lydia Harder at her retirement celebration.

I want to begin by recalling the first time I met Lydia and my impression of her. I met her, I believe, in a different way than many TMTC-associated people met her. My first encounter was through a medium in which many of us hope to be met by others, namely, in a published text, the black and white printed page, in this case an article in the *Conrad Grebel Review*. It was required reading in a course at Grebel in 1995 with Jim Reimer, who was teaching a course devoted to Contemporary Mennonite Thought, featuring various sages such as, well, Reimer, Finger, and Yoder, of course. One week was devoted to the topic of Mennonite Feminism, featuring a certain Lydia

Harder as well as an article by Melanie May.

The notion of an explicit “Mennonite feminism” was a little hard for me to swallow at first, and I wondered if this Lydia Harder was possibly the one responsible for some of my friends shaving their heads, wearing army boots, burning their bras and swearing abstinence from all forms of domestic work. Just the name Lydia Harder itself struck me as something of a revolutionary epigraph, bringing to mind the Lydia we read of in Acts, a Gentile proselyte who hosted Paul and is considered by some to be the first European Christian, yes, and a daring seller of purple at that! I pictured a “Harder” version of

Paul’s hostess, a woman who used a bonnet for an ash-tray and an apron for a hand-rag to polish the saddle-bags of her Harley. Needless to say my parochial Swiss Mennonite imagination got carried a bit far from the reality of the person whom I would encounter in the pages of the *Conrad Grebel Review*.

What I mostly recall from the class was a student presentation on the topic of “Mennonite Feminism,” in which Lydia’s Th.D. dissertation topic was presented as—and here I’m quoting from my course notes—“looking at how Mennonites traditionally emphasised the positive Bible-people relationship but how women (or feminists let’s say), emphasise the negative and oppressive Bible-people relationship.” This was one of my earliest encounters with the hermeneutics of suspicion, for which my much liberalizing and anti-fundamentalist reactionism had well prepared me. As we examined what lie in the text of the *Conrad Grebel Review*, I was drawn into an encounter with the same person to whom we are paying tribute today. It was not the same version of the person, but Lydia *in liberate*.

The title of the article is “Biblical Interpretation: A Praxis of Discipleship?” In it Lydia introduces the

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Lydia Harder holds up a ceramic pitcher, a retirement gift to her from the TMTC community. Looking on are doctoral students (L-R) Jonathan Slater, Phil Enns, Susan Harrison, and Alison Hari-Singh.

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feminist critique of biblical exegesis by first looking at a brief history of feminist interpretation of Scripture, then examines methodology in a section in which Gadamer faces off with Swartley, and Schüssler Fiorenza goes head-to-head with Gerber Koontz. The main focus for the rest of the paper is an examination of John 12 and 13, the stories of Mary washing Jesus' feet, and Jesus washing the disciples' feet, which functions for Lydia as a text-case for how to interpret Scripture as discipleship-praxis.

Lydia seeks to "illustrate a feminist shift in orientation and note some of the questions which this brings to the interpretation of the texts," using a traditional Mennonite-community favourite text on footwashing. She highlights the parallelism between the two footwashing texts in John's Gospel, and notes that "reading these two stories together would help illuminate the deeper significance of the symbol of footwashing," and she finds some support in historical-biblical scholarship that allows for such an approach. However she qualifies that "instead of turning directly to exegetical studies, a feminist orientation encourages me to read the text first of all in the context of my experience in my own church community. This reflective reading of the text allows me to articulate the pre-understandings that already influence my reading—preunderstandings which may be challenged by a more careful reading and study of the text." She later adds that her "hermeneutical stance assumes that suspicion of our limited human perspectives must go together with obedience to the divine Word," a comment which follows her critical reconstruction of the meaning of Mary's service to Jesus as a daring act which made other disciples uncomfortable. Lydia further adds that, "I have been suspicious of the subtle way that the symbol of footwashing has been used to separate people from each other by encouraging service which continues to reinforce status differences. Just as the two stories have been separated in the preaching and teaching of the church so the service of the dominant has been valued differently than the service of the one considered inferior. The Jesus who serves has been separated from the Jesus who gratefully accepts the foot-

washing of the woman in his time of need.... Allowing our feet to be washed and washing someone else's feet belong together as one symbolic act of mutual love and respect. The interpretation challenges both the powerful and the less powerful to act in love, overcoming barriers which tend to separate us, whether these barriers are between rich and poor, master and servant, teacher and students, or men and women."

I would venture to say that all of us associated with TMTC have had such an experience of seeing Lydia as Mary, causing societal norms to be challenged by her actions. Although, to my knowledge, she is not an outspoken advocate of headshaving, army-boot wearing, or bra burning, Lydia has entered relationships with students through her work as a professor, as TMTC director, and in numerous other roles that not only model hospitality and service to others, but in an academic environment where competition and one-up-personship—yes, "oneupmanship" should be gender inclusive—Lydia has challenged us both through her biting criticism and her soft embrace to examine our power relationships and enter into what Ephesians 5 talks about as mutuality—serving and being served. Yes, I think it is right to honour you, Lydia, with the affirmation that this is what your biblical interpretation has been, namely, a mode of Christian praxis in which discipleship and reflection are hand in hand.

My hope is that your contribution will continue as we remember the encounters we've all had with you and the many other ways that you've strengthened and guided our steps here in graduate school. May each one of us at TMTC take the role of Mary in honouring you as a woman who took difficult steps and forged new paths for both the *zweebok-essing* and *Deitsch-schwetzing* Mennonites on our sojourn through the halls of academia.

Jonathan Seiling is completing a Th.D. in Church History at Emmanuel College (TST).

CURRENT TMTC-AFFILIATED STUDENTS

Rene Baergen, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *New Testament*
Jeremy Bergen, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Systematic Theology*
* Jodie Boyer, Ph.D. (Religion—U of T): *Christianity and Psychiatry*
Oscar Carvajal, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Christian Ethics*
Brian Cooper, Ph.D. (Wycliffe College): *Christian Ethics*
* Martha Crealock, M.A. (Trinity College): *Philosophical Theology*
Yousef Daneshvar, Ph.D. (Regis College): *Philosophy of Religion*
Phil Enns, Ph.D. (Emmanuel College): *Philosophical Theology*
Mohammed Farimani, Ph.D. (Regis College): *Philosophy of Religion*
Alison Hari-Singh, Th.D. (Wycliffe College): *Systematic Theology*
Susan Harrison, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Systematic Theology*
Peter Hartman, M.A. (Medieval Studies—U of T): *Philosophy*
Scott Kindred-Barnes, Th.D. (St. Michael's College): *Church History*
Matthew Klaassen, Ph.D. (Institute for Christian Studies): *Philosophy*
* Ryan Klassen, Th.D. (Wycliffe College): *Systematic Theology*
Kevin Krumrei, M.A. (Trinity College): *Philosophical Theology*
Néstor Medina, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Systematic Theology*
* Betsy Moss, Ph.D. (Fine Art—U of T): *Byzantine Art*
Jeff Nowers, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Systematic Theology*
Carrie Reimer, Ph.D. (Religion—U of T): *Religious Studies*
Christina Reimer, Ph.D. (Religion—U of T): *Psychology of Religion*
Tim Reimer, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Old Testament*
Allan Rudy-Froese, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Pastoral Theology*
* Joni Sancken, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Pastoral Theology*
Jonathan Seiling, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Church History*
* Anthony Siegrist, Th.D. (Wycliffe College): *Systematic Theology*
Jonathan Slater, Th.D. (Trinity College): *Systematic Theology*
Derek Suderman, Th.D. (Emmanuel College): *Old Testament*

* first-year student, 2005-06

Where Are They Now?

The 2003 issue of the *TMTC Newsletter* (pp. 12-13) features a detailed list of theses and dissertations written by Mennonites over the years at the Toronto School of Theology (TST). Feedback has indicated the need for a supplementary list describing what these thesis-writers and dissertation-authors are now doing. What follows does not purport to be exhaustive, but it does aim to give a relatively comprehensive sense of the whereabouts and activities of TST alumni of Mennonite identity.

- Brice Balmer** / D.Min. (Practical Theology), 1996
Chaplain, House of Friendship, Kitchener, ON
- Rosalee Bender** / M.A. (Systematic Theology), 1993
Municipal Politician, City of Toronto
- Wesley Bergen** / Ph.D. (Old Testament), 1996
Visiting Professor, Wichita State University
- Willi Braun** / M.A. (New Testament), 1985
Professor, University of Alberta
- Andy Brubacher-Kaethler** / M.A. (Missiology), 2000
Director, *!Explore* (youth ministry initiative), Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Daryl Culp** / Ph.D. (Philosophical Theology), 1998
Sessional Lecturer, St. Michael's College/University of Toronto
- Gerald Ediger** / Th.D. (Church History), 1993
Professor, Canadian Mennonite University
- Jacob Elias** / Th.D. (New Testament), 1978
Professor, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Eleanor Epp-Stobbe** / Th.D. (Systematic Theology), 2000
Pastor, Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, ON
- Dan Epp-Tiessen** / Ph.D. (Old Testament), 1997
Professor, Canadian Mennonite University
- Darrell Fast** / Th.M., D.Min. (Practical Theology), 1977, 1986
Pastor, Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington, ON
- Ilse Friesen** / M.A. (Systematic Theology), 1984
Lecturer in Fine Arts, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Henry Victor Froese** / Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), 1990
Librarian, Canadian Mennonite University
- Martha Smith Good** / D.Min. (Practical Theology), 1988
Pastor, Warden Woods Mennonite Church, Toronto
- Titus Guenther** / M.A., Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), 1977, 1988
Professor, Canadian Mennonite University
- Lydia Neufeld Harder** / Th.D. (Systematic Theology), 1993
Adjunct Professor (retired), Toronto School of Theology
- Dale Hildebrandt** / M.A. (Systematic Theology), 1987
Staff, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
- Harry Huebner** / Ph.D. (Philosophical Theology), 1981
Professor, Canadian Mennonite University
- Denis Janz** / M.A., Ph.D. (Church History), 1975, 1979
Professor, Loyola University of New Orleans
- Karl Koop** / Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), 1999
Professor, Canadian Mennonite University
- Ralph Lebold** / D.Min. (Practical Theology), 1980
Former President, Conrad Grebel University College
- Cheryl Nafziger-Leis** / M.A. (Philosophical Theology), 1992
Management Consultant, Winnipeg
- Arnold Neufeldt-Fast** / Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), 1996
Professor, Bienenberg Theological Seminary, Switzerland
- Dan Nighswander** / Th.D. (New Testament), 1995
General Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada
- Carol Penner** / M.A., Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), 1987, 1999
Pastor, First Mennonite Church, Vineland, ON
- A. James Reimer** / Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), 1983
Professor, Conrad Grebel University College
- John Rempel** / Ph.D. (Church History), 1986
Professor, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- John Siebert** / M.A. (Philosophical Theology), 1988
Executive Director, Project Ploughshares
- Eleanor Snyder** / D.Min. (Practical Theology), 1999
Director, Faith & Life Resources, Mennonite Publication Network
- Herb Swartz** / Th.M., Th.D. (New Testament), 1971, 1988
Professor (retired), Eastern Mennonite University
- Glenn Witmer** / Th.M. (Jewish Studies), 2001
Mennonite Church Canada Witness (Israel)

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gelical traditions not currently represented at TST.

Nighswander later became the General secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. His 1985 vision was prescient. While the idea of a seminary with a core teaching faculty at TST has not been realized (rather the emphasis was on advanced/doctoral studies), TMTC has in a remarkable way fulfilled part of Nighswander's dream. In its connection with Conrad Grebel University College and its Master of Theological Studies program, partial "seminary" education in cooperation with TST is being offered.

From the mid- to late-1980s a group of visionary educational and church leaders from the United States and Canada began discussing the possibility of establishing some kind of institutional presence at TST. A critical meeting took place on November 8, 1989, present at which were Ralph Lebold (representing conference based seminary education connected with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary), Dan Nighswander (Chair of Pastoral Leadership Training Commission), Rod Sawatsky (Conrad Grebel), and Richard Yordy (Church representative). At this ad hoc committee meeting, it was agreed upon to "establish the charter membership of the Mennonite Theological Centre [MTC] by 31 March 1990," with a membership fee of \$500. The group authorized the chair to proceed with the incorporation of TMTC as a non-profit corporation, with the corporate address being the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada office in Kitchener.

In a September 19, 1990, document, Richard Yordy reviews the events leading to the formation of TMTC: 1) course offerings at TST by James Reimer were begun by special arrangements in a discussion between Ralph Lebold (Director of PLTB) and James Reed, Director of TST [I had, in fact, taught continuously from 1982-83], resulting in an invitation to establish an ongoing presence at TST; 2) the possibility of establishing such a centre was brought by Ralph Lebold to the 1987 meeting of the Theological Education Committee of the Mennonite Church meeting and the Theological Education Group of the

Mennonite General Conference Church (TEC/G), a proposal which met with enough affirmation to continue conversations, with Richard Yordy appointed to represent the TEC/G in these further discussions; 3) in discussions with Reed it became clear that the Toronto schools were open to a Mennonite presence in the form of an emphasis on Believers Church theology and experience, and church music and the worship heritage of Mennonites; 4) in his report, Yordy says: "It became clear that this opportunity for teaching, research, writing and ecumenical dialogue should have broad inter-Mennonite support. All of us should, in openness . . . work to have more and more of the Mennonite Central Committee constituency directly represented in this venture;" 5) from the start, the Centre was to be closely connected with the Church as reflected in the following entry: "Graduate students in the ecumenical setting that is Toronto School of Theology also would have the value and support of a denominational fellowship of scholars. Teachers and mentors acquainted with Mennonite churches and structures could assist graduate students in their research and in relating to Mennonite conferences and structures. In the discussion around the proposed Centre, it has been affirmed that it is the norm for pastoral education to be carried out in the context of Mennonite churches and conferences and their colleges and seminaries"; 6) at a March 13-14, 1989 meeting of the TEC/G in Winnipeg, Lebold and Yordy again brought forward the proposal, which was revised, and approval was given to proceed; 7) in subsequent discussions it was concluded that a recognized scholar with administrative skills should be appointed as the director to guide the development of the Centre; 8) on the basis of the 1989 approval, steps were taken to incorporate, and the letters patent were received on July 3, 1990; 9) Yordy's review ends with the following words: "The Centre will provide an opportunity to encourage a focus by some of our scholars on teaching, research and writing in an ecumenical theological setting and will provide avenues for ecumenical dialogue which we have not had here-to-fore. While ministry in our churches and conferences will continue

to be a most important function for our scholars, I believe it is time to give more attention to scholarly pursuits and ecumenical dialogue. This narrow, but important, role will in turn make its contribution to graduate students in theology and to our churches, colleges and seminaries."

The founding and first annual meeting of the new Centre took place on September 19-20, 1990. In attendance were the following: Daryl Culp (TST doctoral student); Jake Fransen (General Conference Mennonite Church, General Board & Committee on the Ministry); Gerald Gerbrandt (Canadian Mennonite Bible College [who would become for many years Chair of the TMTC Board]); Peter Janzen (Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada); Ralph Lebold (Pastoral Leadership Training Commission); Albert Meyer (Mennonite Board of Education, USA); Marlin Miller (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, USA); Dan Nighswander (Pastoral Leadership Training Commission); Rod Sawatsky (Conrad Grebel College); Mary May Schwartzen-truber (Commission on Ministerial Leadership); Herb Swartz (Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary, USA); and Richard Yordy (Theological Education Committee and Theological Education Group).

The remarkable fact about this founding meeting is the broad representation from church agencies and educational institutions across Canada and the United States. The challenge from the Centre's beginning has been how to nurture broad binational support. Again and again the temptation has been to regionalize activities and "ownership" of the Centre and its program. This temptation has been the greatest since 2000 when Conrad Grebel University College, at the request of the Board, assumed legal and financial "ownership" responsibility for the Centre, and when the initial Board became an Advisory Board, but the challenges were there from the beginning. Members of the Board, representing church agencies and educational institutions in both

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Canada and United States were constantly asking: "How does TMTC benefit us? What is in it for us?" The minutes of the founding annual meeting signal what became a perennial problem: "There is a problem of conflicting loyalties for the Board of Directors in raising funds for this project. . . . In the long run it will be important that the program be seen to serve US interests in both students and faculty." There was always a tension in the Board between loyalty to the new TMTC venture and loyalty to one's own institution, a tension which has never been satisfactorily resolved. This was one reason why there developed a much greater emphasis on the area of advanced/doctoral level studies than on the more competitive seminary training.

The wisdom and foresight of these early educational and church leaders should not be underestimated. To a large extent the subsequent fifteen years of the Centre have been a realization of their goals, and in some areas exceeding their dreams. I was appointed first director (and scholar) of the Centre at the September 27-28 (1991) annual meeting of

the TMTC Board, and had the task of continuing the discussions between the Mennonite community and TST administrators (especially the sequence of Directors—James Reed, Jean-Marc Laporte, David Neelands, and currently Christopher Lind). Michael Steinhauser, Director of Advanced Degree Studies at TST was also important in these conversations. In the two years following 1990 we worked out an affiliation agreement with TST which was signed in 1992.

The history of TMTC has been one of attempting to remain faithful to the vision of the early movers and shakers (offering courses in fields of special importance to Mennonites and the Believers Church traditions; sitting on committees and supervising of graduate students; sponsoring ecumenical conversations through special lectures, panels and other forums; counselling Mennonite advanced degree students and providing occasions for intellectual discussion and social interaction, etc.) and taking new initiatives beyond the initial vision (inter-faith dialogue; networking among

Mennonite scholars and friends around the globe; and sponsoring graduate student conferences).

We are indebted to the original, founding visionaries who were ahead of their time in their dreams for a Centre at TST, to the many doctoral students who have supported the vision through dedicated, voluntary contributions, to the student Administrative Assistants (Daryl Culp, Jeremy Bergen, and Jeff Nowers), and to Lydia Harder, who was interim director during my 1994-95 sabbatical, and director from 1995 to 2000, and served in many teaching, supervisory, mentoring, and committee roles. Now it may be time to enter a new era of Mennonite presence at TST. I wish the Advisory Board and the new Interim Director, Jeremy Bergen, all the best as they guide TMTC into this new era.

Jim Reimer has remained with TMTC in the capacity of Professor and Academic Advisor. He continues to teach courses and supervise doctoral dissertations.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**Holding Fast to the Confession of Our Hope:
The Confession of Faith Ten Years Later**

June 8-10, 2006

**Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Elkhart, Indiana**

A conference held in conjunction with the 2006 biennial meetings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network (a project of TMTC), under the auspices of the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

Proposals should deal with aspects of the history, reception, and uses of the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. It has now been a decade since the confession was accepted at Wichita, Kansas, and this anniversary provides a good opportunity to reflect on the impact and use of the confession in both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The purpose of this conference is to describe and assess how the confession fits into the rich confessional history of the church, and how it has functioned in our lives and thoughts these ten years. The goal is to initiate and encourage wide-ranging discussion, encompassing church and mission as well as academic circles.

Proposals are desired from a wide variety of perspectives and need not be restricted to the traditional model of an academic paper. Proposals should be 1-2 pages in length and should be sent, no later than **February 1, 2006**, to:

Barbara Nelson Gingerich

Phone: 574-296-6239

Email: bngingerich@ambs.edu

For more detailed information, visit the conference website:
www.hillsdale.edu/acadassoc/soc/asaa/confession

Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy

A Report on the 2004 Mennonite Forum at the Annual Joint Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature

by Jeremy Bergen

This forum was held just two weeks after George W. Bush was re-elected. In that context, a panel of Mennonite scholars responded to an article by Ted Grimsrud of Eastern Mennonite University entitled "Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy" (*Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78 [2004]: 341-362).

In that article, Grimsrud proposed the intersection of three stories—the Anabaptist story, the Democracy story, and the Empire story. The Anabaptist story entails a church free from state control, biblical pacifism and an upside-down notion of social power. The Democracy and Empire stories refer to the two Americas—the former having to do with the ideals expressed in founding documents; and the latter, the one that has sought wealth, power and violent dominance in the world. Grimsrud's basic point is that those committed to the Anabaptist story can use the opportunities and institutions rooted in the Democracy story to show fellow citizens how the Empire story subverts democracy. As Mennonites, we thereby translate some of our faith/pacifist convictions into terms understood by the Democracy story, though remaining careful not put our faith in Democracy per se. We are called, as Grimsrud states, to participate in "public conversation boldly as citizens and as Anabaptist Christians—recognizing that we would not be faithful to either calling were we to separate them."

Five panel members responded representing a spectrum of views. On the one side, Scott Holland (Bethany Theological Seminary) argued for a robust public and pragmatic dialogue about peacemaking involving all citizens. Holland disagreed with Grimsrud's claim that Christian pacifists ought to make public arguments explicitly as Christians. Peter Blum (Hillsdale College) and Jeremy Bergen (doctoral student, Toronto

School of Theology/TMTC) agreed with Grimsrud's central arguments but explored implications in different ways. Blum showed the consonance of Grimsrud and John Howard Yoder in several respects, including some of the provisional ways in which Anabaptists ought to engage in democracy. Blum also observed the link Yoder makes between participatory political democracy and participatory decision-making in the church. Bergen maintained that the Anabaptist story must be chastened by its frequent collaboration with empires. He asked which different models of engaging with democracy or empire we can learn from contemporary global Anabaptism. And he suggested that we reframe our discussion of power in terms of the doctrines of creation and providence rather than the doctrine of sin. Matt Hamsher (doctoral student, Fuller Theological Seminary) pointed to the ways in which the Democracy story has not only been corrupted by the Empire story but shares with it a foundation in violence. Yet he also suggested ways in which Anabaptism might tentatively support positive aspects of democracy. Peter Dula (Ph.D., Duke University) was the most critical of Grimsrud, rejecting his distinction between the Empire and Democracy stories. He classified these together as Columbus's America in contrast to Emerson's America which is evoked by artistic withdrawal, imagination, and the cultivation of local participatory practices.

A lively discussion followed after Grimsrud gave brief responses to each of the panelists. As much as there was a diversity of views in the audience about Anabaptist engagement in the political, it was also recognized that insofar as this academic community is highly critical of George Bush, its debate is therefore carried on in terms that

are very different from the views of the many (majority?) of U.S. Mennonites who voted for Bush. Just what this means for further engagement about Anabaptism and American politics demands close attention in the future.

TMTC and the Institute for Mennonite Studies (AMBS) jointly oversee the annual reception and forum at the AAR/SBL and arrange for different institutions to plan the program. TMTC hosted the 2004 reception and an ad hoc group of scholars planned the following day's forum. Malinda Berry, doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, moderated the panel.

Papers from the 2002 and 2004 AAR/SBL Mennonite forums have now been published in the *Conrad Grebel Review*.

To order copies of this journal, contact Carol Lichti at Conrad Grebel University College:

Phone: 519-885-0220 ext. 223

Email: clichti@uwaterloo.ca

Heidelberg Mennonite Theologian Visits TMTC

by Jonathan Slater



Above, Professors Fernando Enns (L) and Margaret O'Gara contemplate a question from the audience during Enns' presentation on "The Future of Ecumenism in a Post-9/11 World." Below, students gather after the event to converse with Enns and O'Gara.



In March 2005, Fernando Enns of the Ecumenical Institute at the University of Heidelberg visited TMTC to give a public lecture on "The Future of Ecumenism in a Post-9/11 World." Margaret O'Gara, a Roman Catholic theologian teaching at St. Michael's College (TST), was invited to be a respondent.

Drawing on his own experience as a Mennonite, Enns suggested that far from being a threat to one's identity, the challenge of articulating one's convictions in ecumenical conversation is an opportunity for greater self-understanding which strengthens self-identity. Enns contextualized contemporary ecumenical issues by providing an account of the history of the modern ecumenical movement. He noted that Mennonites were involved from the beginning, the German Mennonites being among the founders of the World Council of Churches. Enns proceeded to discuss some of the challenges that have arisen in the ecumenical movement, and the shift from a christocentric approach which aimed at institutional unity to a trinitarian model of unity as unified diversity. He also noted the increasingly global scope of ecumenical participation, and the increasing need to expand ecumenism to engage with other religions.

In her response to Enns, Margaret O'Gara highlighted the convergence between the trinitarian model of unity of contemporary ecumenical discussion and developments in Roman Catholic ecclesiology since Vatican II. However, she pointed out that while unity need not be achieved through institutional merger, it does need to be visibly manifested. O'Gara's comments also touched on the importance of distinguishing inter-religious dialogue from ecumenical dialogue among Christians, and the similarity between recent teaching of the Roman Catholic Church with the position of the traditional peace churches. Among the issues raised in the subsequent discussion was the way in which the events of 9/11 highlight the challenge of religious fundamentalism to ecumenical efforts.

Jonathan Slater is completing a Th.D. in Theology at Trinity College (TST).

An Ecumenical Learning Experience

by Susan Kennel Harrison

During the fall 2004 semester, I completed a course on ecclesiology at St Michael's College, a Roman Catholic institution in the TST consortium. We were a class of 16, mostly Catholic, some priests and some members of orders. I was the only Mennonite among the other Protestants enrolled. Overall, the class had a rich international flavor. Our principal readings included the documents of Vatican II and a book of essays titled *The Gift of the Church*—essentially an exegesis of the *Lumen Gentium*, otherwise known as the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (dated November 21, 1964); and the *Gaudium et Spes*, otherwise known as the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” (dated December 7, 1965).

During the course, Professor Ellen Leonard took time to contextualize “rogue” movements like Anabaptism. I came to understand why the Anabaptists were considered heretics and why the Roman and Reformation Christians were hostile towards them. In a true ecumenical awakening, I experienced that “a-ha” moment when I thought to myself, “Yea, I guess from their perspective we really were a problem and heretical.” But with deeper surprise I learned that Catholics are critical of who they were and how they acted during the time that Anabaptists formed their identity. I learned how Catholics also look back in sorrow at the narrowness and corrupt aspects of their church's expression and how they sympathetically understand why Luther and Zwingli, among others, sought to reform their establishment.

I was challenged regarding my assumptions about Catholic identity and theology. *I learned that the Roman Catholic Christian expression has much more variety than I could have ever an-*

ticipated. I now better understand Protestant misunderstandings with respect to the Catholic imperative of Christian unity, such that I no longer believe that Catholics think everyone should join them for Christian unity to happen. I also came to understand how Catholicism could have such a strong ideal of what true Christian faith should look like and behave like, and yet affirm that God's revelation exists among those of non-Christian faith.

More surprising to me is the general acceptability in Catholic circles of the dichotomy between what is called “popular religion,” on the one hand, and official church teaching, on the other. This means that, even though the church has official teachings that the people don't follow, the discrepancy is not too troubling, since people are just practicing a “popular” expression of religion, which many authorities recognize has a positive devotional-spiritual place in the hearts of the people. Such a dichotomy is not seen as a threat: the “holiness” of the daily believer's life does not compromise the church's faithful witness because the latter is guarded in the teachings of the church and not ultimately by what its people do. This is not to say that the everyday believer's expression has no value for the church's witness, or that it is not of a concern to the church authorities. Rather, the church assumes that its members are fallible human beings and that the laity, by and large, cannot possibly be fully informed of the church's teachings. It affords the people the benefit of believing that they are being loyal to their faith in the best way they know how. I found that this room for being “human” resonated with me and my association

with a denomination that has an undeveloped ecclesiology often resulting in the less “holy” among us feeling unwelcome. I also came to an understanding of why ministerially-gifted Catholic women do not leave the church as readily as one might expect.

In the end, I left this course feeling that our class had become another small chapter in the communion of saints—those who have gone before, and those who are following, and are yet to follow, after them.

Susan Kennel Harrison is completing a Th.D. in Theology at Emmanuel College (TST).