



Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre

TMTC NOW

5th Graduate Student Conference

by Sarah Freeman

In May 2011, TMTC hosted its 5th Mennonite Graduate Student Conference. This year's conference was on the theme "Life, Land, and Community." The conference included a number of students from both Mennonite and non-Mennonite backgrounds who travelled from as far as Costa Rica. Presenters grappled with topics of vegetarianism and veganism, Mennonites' and land, preaching using local stories, and feminism and Yoderian approaches to community.

The highlights of the conference were two trips to local homes. The conference visited the Little City Farm, which is an eco-bed and breakfast featuring a number of environmental initiatives. Conference participants then had dinner with a local Old Order family and toured their farm. The

conference concluded with a communion service, including locally made grape juice and vegan bread.



(left) Pie at the Old Order farm

(right) A tour of the Little City Farm



TMTC Course: God and Abuse

by Alicia Good

During the fall 2011 semester I was privileged to take part in a course offered by the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre called "God and Abuse." This course was taught by Mennonite pastor and scholar Dr. Carol Penner. Carol effectively incorporated her experience with Mennonite Central Committee working with survivors and perpetrators of violence, as a woman in a male dominated academic and professional world, and as a mother and wife into her teaching. She modelled a style of instruction which encouraged students to develop a learning environment of trust that allowed student voices to be expressed and heard.

The eight students candidly shared stories from their own backgrounds, which included a variety of cultures and ethnicities as well as five different TST colleges and at least four different denominations. One particular highlight of the course was a presentation by a woman working with survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The class was able to grapple with the uncomfortable questions surrounding sexual abuse within the context of the Christian church. I found this course to be deeply impactful upon my awareness and response to the struggle for justice and healing for survivors and perpetrators of violence, particularly as I prepare to encounter these issues within the church.

TMTC Women's Group: Continuing the Conversation

by Susie Guenther Loewen

As in previous years, the TMTC women's group, comprised of women with ties to the Mennonite church and/or the theological academy, has met regularly to exchange news, share personal and professional struggles and joys, and discuss theological and ethical issues. Graduate studies can be a lonely pursuit, particularly if one happens to belong to a tradition that people from other denominations tend to either idealize or vilify, but seldom understand, at least not entirely. This is why it is helpful to have a group of Mennonite scholars and pastors with which to discuss issues of particular concern to those of our faith tradition, from our own perspectives as Mennonite women doing theology – a category that has been acknowledged only relatively recently, after all.

One of the topics of conversation that we've returned to on numerous occasions (prompting the firm closing of the door, so we wouldn't be heard by the entire TST building!) is sexual ethics, which we've approached from personal/experiential, theological, and cultural angles. Because we still haven't run out of things to say on marriage, parenting, gender, embodiment, and sexuality, these discussions have overflowed into a conference currently being planned for June, 2012. It's an exciting prospect to think of opening that door and continuing these significant conversations with Mennonites and others beyond our group.

A. James Reimer Award Winner David Csinos by Sarah Freeman



David Csinos is the 2011-2012 winner of the A. James Reimer Award. David is a ThD student at Emmanuel College at the Toronto School of Theology, studying in the practical theology department. He is focusing on the spiritual formation of children, with a particular interest in children's spiritual formation in intercultural contexts. Before studying in Canada, David studied in the United States. Believing that too many ecclesiological resources are brought from the United States into Canada without critically assessing their appropriateness for Canadian contexts, David focuses his work on Christian education in Canada. His educational interests stem from his own work with children. In addition to his formal studies he is currently coordinating a conference entitled *Children, Youth and a New Kind of Christian*. The conference will be held in Washington this spring.

For David, the Toronto Mennonite Theology Centre has been a group of like-minded, Anabaptist peers with whom to engage in vibrant discussion and scholarly debate. Having not been raised in the Mennonite church, TMTC

also provides a space in which to think about how his own research may interact with Mennonite perspectives. The A. James Reimer award provides financial support for David and his wife, who is also studying and working as a pastor in the Mennonite church, and also acknowledges the value of David's work for the Mennonite church, even though his research is not specifically focused on Mennonite studies.

The A. James Reimer award is awarded annually to a Mennonite student completing an advanced degree program at the Toronto School of Theology. The award was established to recognize the work of A. James Reimer in establishing the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre. TMTC provides a Mennonite presence at the University of Toronto in order to engage in theological conversation at an advanced degree level as well as to support Anabaptist students pursuing advanced degrees.

Fall Welcome Back Dinner



Meet the New TMTC Coordinator John Rempel by Sarah Freeman



Over the last few years several student coordinators along with Jim Pankratz, serving as Director, have led the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre. We have also benefited from the mentorship of Lydia Harder, who graciously sat on committees and attended student colloquiums. It is with great excitement that Conrad Grebel University College and TMTC welcome John Rempel as Director of TMTC beginning summer 2012. John's arrival will provide a continuing senior academic presence for the TMTC community over the next few years. I recently had the opportunity to talk with John. It is my great pleasure to provide a brief introduction, or reintroduction, of John to the TMTC community.

John Rempel brings a great diversity of interests to the TMTC community. He has worked as a chaplain at Conrad Grebel University College and as a church minister in New York City. While he was in New York he also worked for Mennonite Central Committee in the United Nations. Although John relished the cultural diversity of New York, it was his desire to answer foundational theological questions that led him to teach at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. In talking with John it

becomes evident that he is enthusiastic about living and teaching in Toronto because it locates the Mennonite faith within a rich cultural diversity, reminiscent of his years in New York,

John is no stranger to Toronto. John earned his ThD from the Toronto School of Theology studying at St. Michael's College and living at Trinity College. Although his dissertation is from the historical department, his work on the Lord's Supper in 16th century Anabaptism often shifts between the historical and the theological. John's teaching at TST will likely focus on ecumenical approaches to the Eucharist and historical engagement with Mennonite theology.

John's own experiences at TST within Toronto's cultural diversity shapes John's vision for his role at TMTC. While at TST John often felt that the wider Christian conversation was not open to voices from a free church tradition. As he returns to Toronto, he envisions his role with TMTC as one of questioning and pondering how Mennonites can seriously engage the larger culture of TST and the University of Toronto. John wants to ask how Mennonites can engage the larger world and find common causes to be a part of, while at the same time thinking and acting as a certain kind of Christian.

When I asked John about his future vision for TMTC, his answer reflected this combination of speaking as Mennonites while engaging the broader conversation. By building on Jim Reimer's vision, John envisions, "TMTC as a centre that fully participates in the theological and intellectual vigor of life on a major university, while at the same time making its own contribution." For John, his role at TMTC is finding meaningful ways to be fully a part of the academic life of the University while working especially with TMTC students.

Alumnus Update by Ryan Schellenberg

I have been appointed Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Fresno Pacific University, effective January 1, 2012. On March 12, I successfully defended my Ph.D. dissertation, an evaluation of the evidence for Paul's formal rhetorical education in 2 Corinthians 10-13, at the University of St. Michael's College (Toronto School of Theology).

This Treasure in Clay Jars

Sexuality, Marriage, and the BODY

from Anabaptist-Mennonite Perspectives

One-Day Symposium for pastors, scholars, students, and professionals working in the field. An opportunity to gather together to hear presentations and engage in discussion.

Hosted by the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, Toronto, Ontario
June 2, 2012

For more information:
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grebel.ca/tmtc/events.shtml

Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre

"TMTC helps form theological leadership for the church by providing and supporting graduate theological education, particularly at the doctoral level, from a Mennonite perspective in an ecumenical context."

IN TORONTO:

- Graduate courses and student advising
- Ecumenical conversations (e.g., Mennonite-Catholic dialogue)
- Special lectures and panels
- Scholars' Forum (for local and visiting students and faculty to present research and receive feedback)
- A. James Reimer Award (an annual doctoral scholarship)

AND ACROSS NORTH AMERICA:

- Graduate student conferences
- Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network
- AAR/SBL academic forums
- Muslim-Christian dialogue
- Conferences and consultations
- Sabbatical residence for visiting faculty

Founded in 1990, TMTC is now administered by Conrad Grebel University College on behalf of a bi-national Mennonite constituency represented by an Advisory Council. TMTC does not admit students, nor grant degrees, but they may register as Associate Members (see website for details). Graduates may also be TMTC Associates. Students who are Associates are normally registered at one of the local graduate institutions, primarily the Toronto School of Theology, an ecumenical consortium at the University of Toronto, as well as graduate degree institutions in the region extending to Hamilton, Waterloo and the rest of the Greater Toronto Area.

To make a donation to TMTC, please make cheques payable to *Conrad Grebel University College*, specifying 'TMTC' in the memo line. Interested donors from the US may contact TMTC's Director.



TMTC Staff:

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Director



Sarah Freeman
Coordinator



Advisory Council:

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Canadian Mennonite University
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Mennonite Church Canada
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
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