



TMTC Welcomes New Director: Kyle Gingerich Hiebert

By Jeremy M. Bergen



I am very pleased to announce that Kyle Gingerich Hiebert has been appointed Director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC), beginning July 4, 2017.

Kyle is well equipped to engage and lead in the diverse aspects of TMTC. He brings an enthusiasm

for the conversation between Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and the wider Christian tradition. He has good experience planning conferences, relating to students, networking among scholars, and speaking in churches. He has a vision to deepen and extend the work of TMTC in Toronto and beyond.

Kyle holds a Ph.D. in theology from the University of Manchester, and has degrees from the University of Nottingham, the University of Toronto, and Canadian Mennonite University. During his studies in the UK, he was active in the Anabaptist Network there, and has been a TMTC Postdoctoral Fellow for the past several years. Kyle is the author of several articles on political theology, peace theology, and Anabaptism, co-author of the book *God after Christendom?* and author of the forthcoming book *The Architectonics of Hope: Violence, Apocalyptic, and the Transformation of Political Theology*.

As director, Kyle will have three main priorities. First, advance Mennonite theological discourses in a variety of academic, church, and public settings. The Toronto School of Theology (TST) remains very receptive to our initiatives to hold events that critically engage issues of faith, society, and justice, from a variety of perspectives, including those of the peace church tradition. Secondly, foster and support a student-centred academic community, especially among Mennonite (and other) students at TST. Thirdly, network with Mennonite scholars and institutions throughout North America and beyond.

Teaching and advising at the doctoral level will continue to be a priority for TMTC but will now be the primary responsibility of the Theological Studies faculty at Conrad Grebel University College. For example, I will be offering a course on "Peace Church Theology" at TST, in Winter 2018. TMTC Senior Fellow John Rempel continues to serve on several student committees. Grebel Professor Carol Penner will serve on the dissertation examining committee of a TMTC-affiliated student at TST.

TMTC is connected to many great people and initiatives, to which the many elements of this newsletter attest. My thanks to Kim Penner and to Hyung (Pablo) Kim Sun for their excellent work as staff people, and for pulling together the stories you see here.

Dissertation Defenses

Susanne Guenther Loewen of Emmanuel College defended her doctoral dissertation, "Making Peace with the Cross: A Mennonite-Feminist Exploration of Dorothee Sölle and J. Denny Weaver on Nonviolence, Atonement, and Redemption," on August 11, 2016. Loewen is Co-Pastor at Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon.

Matthew Eaton of St. Michael's College defended his doctoral dissertation, "Enfleshing Cosmos and Earth: An Ecological Theology of Divine Incarnation," on October 19, 2016. Eaton is an adjunct professor at St. John's University in New York.

David Csinos of Emmanuel College defended his doctoral dissertation, "An Exploration of Children and Culture in the

United Church of Canada," on November 16, 2016. He is Assistant Professor of Ministry Studies at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

Kimberly Penner of Emmanuel College defended her doctoral dissertation, "Discipleship as Erotic Peacemaking: Toward a Feminist Mennonite Theo-ethics of Embodiment and Sexuality," on April 5, 2017.

TMTC Graduate Student Conference: Power in Perspective(s)

By Maxwell Kennel, Ph.D. student, McMaster University

The 7th biennial TMTC graduate student conference was held on June 2-4, 2016 at the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Indiana. "Power in Perspective(s)" was the overall theme that guided the presentations, which included reflections on power in theological, philosophical, social, and political contexts.

Keynote speaker Malinda Berry, Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics at AMBS, brought together the themes of many of the presentations in her address, and concluded with an interactive and meditative group exercise.

The conference theme and the discussions it engendered felt very timely in the present atmosphere of transition and crisis in both Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

TMTC Women Scholars Attend MC USA Women Doing Theology Conference: "I've Got the Power!"

By Stephanie Chandler Burns, M.T.S. student, Conrad Grebel University College

I had the pleasure of worshipping and doing theology with a diverse group of women from throughout North America at the Women Doing Theology Conference in Leesburg, Virginia in November 2016. It was an honour to learn from such accomplished and passionate women, whose theological work is represented not only in the academy but also in their everyday lives.

In this context, it became abundantly clear that theology is not an endeavour that should be saved for the academy, or even the church, but finds its way into the very way we live and interact. The conference mixed the sharing of life stories with worship, embodied physical prayer practice, and academic study, for a holistic experience of theology. A focus on stories, not just from dominant narratives but also from the margins, spoke to how God is present in struggle, and how the Spirit empowers people from the margins in finding their voice.

My own story as a bisexual Christian was embraced, alongside other stories from the margins, from those who have been oppressed under systems of supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, and rape culture. Together, we were inspired to claim our voices to speak our truths, and listen to the ways in which we all still contribute to problematic structures.

The weekend was empowering, and also contained salient and powerful reminders that work is still to be done in dismantling systems of oppression, reminding me not to be complacent but to strive for further justice in my context back at home. I hope and pray that the love expressed between participants provided us with the ability to hear one another's experiences, to grapple with the difficult truth of continued oppression among our churches, and to empower us to join in the Spirit's work of redeeming the world through love for one another.

Several of the presentations engaged with the ramifications of the 2015 MC USA assembly in Kansas City, while others dealt with conference politics and power dynamics in Mennonite higher education. The theme of power resonated even more strongly in the post-Yoderian atmosphere of contemporary Mennonite theologizing, with some papers critiquing and invoking Yoder's thought and other papers seeking out other voices.

The value of the conference theme also matched well with the conference experience. The questions and responses that I witnessed were serious and charitable, and the sense of collegiality amongst this generation of Mennonite and Mennonite-affiliated graduate students was inspiring. I look forward to future conferences.

TMTC Transitions

By Jeremy M. Bergen



On behalf of all those associated with TMTC, I want to thank Kim Penner for her excellent service over the past 3.5 years as TMTC Coordinator. Kim concluded her work at the end of December. She very ably managed the TMTC office, prepared successful grant proposals, produced newsletters, planned many events and led several of them, most notably the very successful TMTC Graduate Student Conference held in Elkhart, Indiana this past Spring. She worked with three directors (John Rempel, Jeremy Bergen, Trevor Bechtel). The coming months will be busy for Kim as she defends her doctoral dissertation in theological ethics, and cares for her newborn son.

I'm pleased to welcome Pablo Kim Sun as the TMTC Administrative Assistant beginning in January, and I look forward to working with him. Pablo is a doctoral student in theological ethics at Emmanuel College (Toronto School of Theology) and a member of the TMTC student group. He has graduate degrees from Boston College and Fuller Theological Seminary.

Learning Opportunities

CGT 3610/6610 **Peace Church Theology** will be taught by Jeremy Bergen in Toronto, Winter 2018, Mondays 11:00am-1:00pm. This class is an examination of contemporary peace theologies as they have developed within the Historic Peace Churches (Mennonite, Brethren, Quaker), through ecumenical engagements, and in response to contemporary challenges.

Mennonite Scholars and Friends at AAR/SBL

By Melanie Kampen, Ph.D. student, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology

The annual Mennonite Scholars and Friends session took place on November 18, 2016 at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Antonio, Texas. This year, the topic was the intersection of race and Mennonite theological and religious scholarly and ecclesial work. Using Willie Jennings's book, *The Christian Imagination*, to focus the session, the panel addressed the Jewish roots of Christianity and anti-semitism, the production of a white Jesus figure in theology, the problem of racism and sexual violence in Mennonite communities and thought, Mennonite and Christian relations with Indigenous Peoples and the land, and anti-racism and anti-white-supremacist training, advocacy, and practices in our classrooms and communities. Panelists included Drew G. I. Hart (Messiah College), Melanie Kampen (Toronto School of Theology), Tobin Miller Shearer (University of Montana), and Deanna Zantingh (Canadian Mennonite University). The panel was moderated by Joseph Wiebe (University of Alberta) and Willie Jennings (Yale University) responded. The session was well attended by around 100 people.

Jennings began his response by asking the group to consider how Mennonites became white and how Mennonites became disconnected from the land. He suggested that this de-linking

from identity and intimacy with particular geographic spaces is a fundamental element in the production of whiteness. Based in early Christianity, de-linking from Judaism, Christianity (and Mennonites are no exception) imagined itself as gathering others into itself (e.g., leading to settler colonialism).

By contrast, Jennings challenged the group to think of ourselves in terms of our Gentile existence—that our identity is rather in entering another people's way of life. Jennings emphasized the importance for white Christians to see that they came into something that wasn't theirs. Additionally, he challenged us to push against spatial segregations in our own communities and cities, even and especially when the market gives non-racial reasons for segregation. He encouraged us to attend property and city development meetings. This focus on the geographies of our communities and identity could work against racism and white-supremacy, and create communities of care instead.

Mennonite Scholars and Friends at AAR/SBL forum and reception are coordinated by Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, and are open to any who wish to attend.

2016 A. James Reimer Award at TMTC Winner

Maxwell Kennel is the 2016 winner of the A. James Reimer Award at the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre. He is a Ph.D. student currently in his first year of studies at McMaster University, Department of Religious Studies, and a recent graduate of Grebel's Master of Theological Studies program.

"The support for graduate work in Anabaptist Mennonite studies that the A. James Reimer Award provides is exceptional, and receiving this award has allowed me much greater freedom to engage in my first year of doctoral studies, while making it much easier to connect with people and attend events at TMTC," says Maxwell. "I'm grateful to those who continue the legacy of Dr. Reimer by granting this award to TMTC students year after year."

The award is given annually to a Mennonite student completing an advanced degree program at the Toronto School of Theology or another local university, who actively participates in TMTC programming. 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 Toronto School of Theology in order to engage in theological conversation at an advanced degree level as well as to support Anabaptist students pursuing advanced degrees.

Recent Scholars Forums

February 10, 2016: Allison Murray, "Collecting Stories: Analyzing the Implicit Theology of Faith-Based Colleges and Universities."

March 8, 2016: Douglas Kaufman, "Saving the Statement of the Others: Ignatian and Anabaptist Practices in Discernment in the Midst of Disagreement."

April 6, 2016: Melanie Kampen, "If God is White then White is God: The Allegorical and Analogical Structures of Theocolonial Desire."

October 24, 2016: Melanie Kampen, "The Specter of Truth and Reconciliation: Poplar Hill Residential School and the Construction of Mennonite Identity."

November 15, 2016: John Rempel, "Trilateral Dialogue on Baptism"

December 1, 2016: TMTC Women Scholars, "Reflections on MC USA Women Doing Theology Conference: 'I've Got the Power!'"

January 23, 2017: Maxwell Kennel, "Mennonite Metaphysics? Exploring a Contradiction."

February 9, 2017: Russ Snyder-Penner, "Making a Fool out of Barth: Finding Traces of Anthropocentrism in Karl Barth's Reading of Anselm's Prosligion."

March 7, 2017: Zac Klassen, "Salvation and Intercession: Aquinas on the Ascension of Christ."

TMTC Fellow Spotlight: Anne-Cathy Graber

Anne-Cathy Graber is the TMTC Research Fellow, 2016-17. She is a Mennonite scholar and an itinerant pastor from France, and is a member of the Chemin Neuf ecumenical community. She is presently an associate staff member of the Paris Mennonite Centre, and a Mennonite representative in the panel executive committee of the Global Christian Forum and also in the WCC's Faith and Order Commission. As a member of Faith and Order, she has been assigned to the study group that focuses on "The Church on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Engaged in Moral Discernment."

During her fellowship in Toronto, she is investigating how the Historical Peace Churches have been processing moral discernment and the role of authority throughout the process. She also revised her doctoral dissertation and recently published it as *Marie. Une lecture comparée de Redemptoris Mater et du Commentaire du Magnificat la lumière des dialogues oecuméniques* [Mary: A comparative study of Redemptoris Mater (John-Paul II) and of the Commentary of the Magnificat (Luther) in the light of ecumenical dialogues] (Paris: Cerf, 2017). We have appreciated her participation in the life of the TMTC community and wish her the best as she returns to France this Spring.



Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre

TMTC is a graduate teaching and research affiliate of the Toronto School of Theology (TST) administered by Conrad Grebel University College with oversight from an Advisory Council made up of representatives from Mennonite educational and denominational institutions in Canada and the United States.

TMTC was established in 1990. It participates in the life of TST, its ecumenical spirit, its teaching and research, and its engagement with culture. It promotes Mennonite scholarship in the academy in conversation with the broader Christian tradition as well as with other religious and secular traditions. It nurtures the development of committed and well-trained leadership for the church. It is the only Mennonite venture in doctoral level education in North America, and as such is a key resource in nurturing the next generation of scholars and professors for the Mennonite Church and its universities, colleges and seminaries

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.

To make a donation to TMTC, please make cheques payable to *Conrad Grebel University College*, specifying 'TMTC' in the memo line. Interested donors may contact Fred W. Martin at fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca or 519-885-0220 x24381.

TMTC Staff

Jeremy Bergen
Director



Pablo Kim Sun
TMTC
Administrative
Assistant



TMTC Fellows

John Rempel, Senior Fellow
Lydia Neufeld Harder, Senior Fellow
Kyle Gingerich Hiebert, Post-doctoral Fellow
Anne-Cathy Graber, Research Fellow

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Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
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(Mennonite Church USA)

TMTC Administered by Conrad Grebel
University College

Contact Info

Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre
47 Queen's Park Crescent East
Toronto, ON M5S 2C3
416-978-6078
mennonite.centre@utoronto.ca
www.grebel.ca/tmtc