

ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE SCHOLARS NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Publishing Like Emmylou and Ry Make Music

By Michael A. King

During 15 years of publishing involvements, I've worked with authors whose books on why we should live according to the teachings of Jesus and not the siren call of capitalism have become bestsellers. Some have taken seriously the paradox of success within the very system their books critique. Others (none named in this article) have seemed not to confront the tension between what they preach and what they believe their books deserve. Their view seems to go like this: "I have written a book on why Christians faithful to the teachings of Jesus should not expect success by capitalist cultural standards. And I expect my book to be a hit within that culture, or something has gone wrong."

Since such authors tend to see anything that has gone wrong as the publisher's fault, and I am writing as a publisher, I risk having an axe to grind. So let me grant this: Authors *should* to expect publishers to support their books. A publisher, by definition, provides authors with distribution and marketing channels beyond those an author can typically access through self-publishing. To package a manuscript as a book is only one facet of publishing; disseminating the book is clearly another.

But I start with the author who wants to affirm intercultural values yet reach a mass market because this highlights, I believe, a tendency to believe in having the cake and eating it too. Yet only the rare book wins the lottery, meaning that it has been written with great integrity on behalf of visions or values not intended to have mass appeal—yet also achieves mass popularity.

That belief underlies my founding of Cascadia Pub-

lishing House (originally Pandora Press U.S.). It is the meaning of the Cascadia promotional line, "valuing soul as much as sales," and underlies the Cascadia business model. In brief, the model involves breaking-even on modest sales by (1) keeping overhead lean; (2) collaborating with such institutions as universities, mission organizations, and Herald Press (valued copublisher of most Cascadia books); and (3) using marketing dollars judiciously to help a book reach its audience without promoting so far beyond the natural audience that Cascadia runs ever faster than sales can support, so that eventually—as so many publishing companies do—it falls flat on its face.

Interestingly, this model takes Cascadia in a direction contrasting with the one Mark Fretz addresses in his Fall 2003 *Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network Newsletter* article on publishing, "Taking Anabaptism to the Masses." There Fretz explores factors that may help Ana-

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baptist authors “reach beyond the enclave of a denominational audience” so that “just maybe, we will be able to take Anabaptism to the masses.”

Let me not be read as writing in opposition to Fretz, who offers a compelling vision of what it takes to reach the masses. I support his principles, which revolve around developing “excellent communication skills.” I too want Cascadia authors to reach for the widest possible audience. And I want Cascadia to give such authors ever widening circles of visibility.

Still, even as Fretz rightly highlights merits of the mass-audience track, there are limits to it. At the edge of that track, it becomes ever harder to maintain integrity. For example, Fretz notes that if along with offering good communication skills “we look good on television” and “sound smooth in interviews . . . then we just might make it” in the mass market. True. But in our good-looks-obsessed era, do such criteria also exclude deserving voices? Is there a need for publishing that supports the type of voice envisioned in Isaiah 53, which describes a servant despised, rejected, infirm, tormented, “and as one from whom others hide their faces” (v. 3)?

This is not to suggest gaining popularity instead of being despised automatically means integrity has been compromised, as I think is evident in the example of *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, by Donald Kraybill. I had the privilege of editing both the second (Herald Press, 1990) and third editions (2003) of Kraybill’s book, and I believe in it—even though over 60,000 copies of its three editions have sold! As I told Don when completing work on the 2003 edition (on behalf of Herald Press), I first studied it in the 1970s, then was struck when working with it 25 years later by the extent to which it had shaped many of my core views of the Bible.

So here is a book that manages both soul and sales. But then take *To Continue the Dialogue: Biblical Hermeneutics and Homosexuality*, edited by C. Norman Kraus (Pandora Press U.S., 2001). First a group asked Cascadia (then Pandora U.S.) to publish a book of their writings advocating full welcome into congregational life of gays and lesbians. Amid my graduate work on how we understand each other across difference, I along with consultants felt Cascadia should publish a more dialogic book representing a range of positions.

Eventually, to offer the barest skeleton of an often torturous story, some of the original writings submitted were joined with chapters separately developed by a group of writers who included Kraus. To that core we tried to add yet more chapters from particularly the more traditional perspectives. We did secure several but were turned down by three or four key writers for various reasons, including the wish not to be drawn into endless processing of the topic. The result remained less diverse

than I thought ideal—leading for instance to the paradox that the types of more traditionalist writers we wished to include in the book sometimes now criticize it for underrepresentation of such viewpoints.

Still I’m convinced the book makes a meaningful contribution and has integrity. I’m pleased Cascadia could enable its voices—which speak always from the soul, I believe—to be heard. Yet amid efforts to generate sales expected to continue for years to come, the book has so far sold more modestly than I see as its potential. Among reasons may be that (1) many in the hoped-for audience prefer not to engage in further dialogue on this difficult matter; and (2) more mainstream outlets often ready to take note of Cascadia books have tended not to publicize this one, perhaps due to controversial content.

But here’s the thing: In such a case are sales *the* measure of success? Might publishing this book simply have been the right thing to do, thereby valuing soul as much as sales? I like to think so.

Underneath rational explanations of the Cascadia publishing mission lies, however, a vision closer to my own soul: *I just want to publish like Emmylou and Ry make music*. Translation: Emmylou Harris has earned my respect by what I see as her unwavering integrity. She sings from and to the soul, not to win the masses. Sometimes throughout her career that integrity has in fact moved masses. But from what I can tell, reaching the masses has been for Emmylou a welcome bonus—much as I will cheer if someday a Cascadia book reaches the *New York Times* bestseller list—yet only a bonus, not her reason for singing.

Meanwhile guitarist Ry Cooder likewise offers music from and for the heart. But listen to how Ry saw matters in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article (Dec. 28, 2003, H1) on “It Might Have Been the Day the Music Died” and the selling of the Warner Brothers and DreamWorks record labels:

‘The quarterly earnings thing has changed everything,’ he groaned, talking about the freedom he had to make such early recordings as *Chicken Skin Music*, and how so many of his favorite works by others were a direct result of the . . . Warner idea of letting artists be artists. ‘Music is now reduced to the level of shoes, or hubcaps. The corporate system has done it in.’

Let writing from Cascadia Publishing House be more than shoes or hubcaps.

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Writing Community Boundaries

By Violet A. Dutcher

Publishing is, of course, one significant way to enter into a broader conversation, and I have been a lurker of this conversation for several years now. I subscribe to the journals, am a member of some of the organizations, and read the books published by Anabaptist scholars. But I have not sent manuscripts for potential publication to Anabaptist publishing venues. A brief look at my background may provide a partial answer to the reasons behind this.

I grew up in a conservative branch of the Mennonite denomination. The conference to which our church belonged isolated itself from the larger Mennonite church because our church leaders perceived this larger group had a tendency to “drift” into Biblical error. Older members of our church warned younger members not to attend Mennonite colleges. When pressed, these guardians dismissed our questions and darkly warned us about persons who did not believe in “the virgin birth”—a belief certainly on the periphery of our concerns. My parents, like many others of their time, believed that the state schools provided safer environments for us than their parochial counterparts, ironically enough, because state schools are clearly the world. With such a clear division in place, these state schools were perceived as less likely to swallow up their children in compromise. Indeed, state schools had the advantage of providing a ready-made audience for Christian witness.

As a result, with the exception of first grade, I attended state schools throughout high school and on to college and graduate school. Lest this last statement imply that my attendance at these schools was without break, four years passed between my high school graduation date and my first college class. After nearly two years of taking night classes, another nineteen years passed before I graduated from college and began graduate school.

During this entire time period, I heard the noisy silence of Mennonite writers in spite of these writers’ invisibility. It took entering college for me to learn of my own culture’s writings of its roots, to find the Mennonite story and my part in it. I well remember near the end of my undergraduate schooling when I entered a creative writing class and found Julia Kasdorf in our course text writing about the Mennonite life. I went to a place where I could read in private and read every poem she wrote in the anthology. I did not know other Mennonites wrote poetry. I did not know other Mennonites experienced such intense emotion about anything, let alone growing

up Mennonite. Something very deep inside me began rising to the surface. With the encouragement of the professor, I began to write. I began to let myself experience emotion about being Mennonite and about being a Mennonite woman. I began to remember. I began to see the story. More importantly, I began to see that I was a character in the story.

Many years have passed since that first awakening, and now, on my secular college campus, I often teach Mennonite students from the surrounding communities who are usually first-generation college students. Recently two students from my literature critical theory class were in my office discussing the possibilities of starting a student organization focused upon justice in the Middle East. I pulled out a *Mennonite Weekly Review* I happened to have with me to show them an article about Goshen College students’ similar activities on their campus. But my students were not nearly as interested in this article as they were in discovering that this weekly newspaper was written by and for Mennonites. They had never seen it and did not know it existed. This led to a discussion about Mennonite writers, and, as a result, both students left that day with a borrowed copy of *Peace Shall Destroy Many* by Rudy Wiebe. One student emailed me later, and I share a portion of the email message with her permission:

Wow. What an amazing read. There is just so much there, especially for us as Mennonites (and women!). I am nominating it as the Christmas book for our family this year. I just think there’s so much truth of expression about the Mennonite people in this book and that it makes me look at the ways I do not live as ‘Mennonite’ as I used to. Growing up, we lived much more like the family in the novel—being much more self-sufficient, working long days outside on the farm, spending most of our time with family and church, and being directed more by tradition than by the spirit. I connected so much with it.

This student went on to ask that I please direct her to Mennonite scholarly resources. Considering this gap, I wonder if not much has changed in the years since I grew up in a community like theirs.

Why are these publications and the writings of Mennonites invisible to members of certain Mennonite communities? Will these students come of age as thinkers and writers in a world that does not include the sphere of Mennonite publishing? What is the reason why some of us submit manuscripts to secular audiences and not to Mennonite audiences? Do we think that Mennonite audiences are not as interested in what we have to say as our

secular colleagues? I do not have the answers to these questions. While I am not advocating that scholars who identify with Anabaptists must publish in Mennonite venues, I do see the importance for these scholars, including myself, to experience a place in the Mennonite community, to be able to speak within it, and to enjoy the rich conversation that may ensue.

A portion of this alienation has to do with the ways in which some Mennonite groups separate themselves from the world, as I mentioned earlier, the historical silencing they have experienced and internalized as a group, and the way they experience strong, yet conflicting, emotions of simultaneous pride and shame concerning their own religious cultural practices. However, many of us remember all too well expressing ourselves in our home communities and having those expressions severely repressed. Writing as a Mennonite woman with ties to Amish traditions, the long-regulated Amish value of pleasing others dies hard. To write, therefore, with the possibility of communal displeasure is a fearsome task.

Another articulate Mennonite female student in my English composition class said to me during office hours, "It would be hard to write like a Mennonite. For anyone it would be hard, but especially so for us Mennonites. It's hazardous." This student, like me years ago, did not know Mennonites were writing about growing up Mennonite until she attended college. This same student has written a few poems in the past but keeps her voice muzzled for fear someone will hear it, and, as a consequence, be heard by the community. That voice, she instinctively knows, does not belong to the community as she knows it.

I, too, know what she is talking about, for, as I write, I wrestle with the consequences of remembering and writing about community secrets to "outsiders," about dynamics that may not present the community, in which I was raised, in a manner that resonates with its communal self-perception. Or perhaps the self-perception is not so far off, but these community members may find that I do not represent them as they wish to be represented. I think this is why it is important to be accountable to that community, in the sense that I represent its voices in ways that are truthful to my understandings of them.

Several years ago, the Amish and Mennonite women in my dissertation research willingly told their stories, allowed me to both observe and take part in literacy events, participated in interviews, and gave me permission to use their written texts. One woman invited me to her church to speak on a Sunday evening in order to present my work on these women's recipes. Since this was also the church in which I grew up, it was an experience I will never forget. I keenly remember the 1950s when somber black-suited men seated on the platform gazed

down at those of us in the audience who, in turn, looked up at them for direction. The altar, located below the platform and between the leaders and the audience, was rarely touched by either the leaders or the lay people except during times of communion, which was held twice yearly. But on this night, my grandmother's quilts were arranged on the platform. Her large stainless steel mixing bowl and wooden rolling pin dominated the altar along with her recipe collection. And a woman took a leadership role, standing not on the platform, but at the lectern placed on the same level as the audience. It was an evening when little distinction was made between the sacred and the profane or everyday. Our lives seemed of a piece.

When the service was over that evening, the approximately 200-member audience lingered, discussing in small groups their own family recipes firmly attached to the names of the cooks, and the ways their community named their married women by the husband's first name followed by his wife's name (e.g. Henry Katie) so that a recipe is entitled, for example, "Henry Katie's Sugar Cookies." Several men spoke with me after the service expressing amazement that one could see significant ways in which their community's values and ways of making meaning shape and have been shaped by something as "ordinary as a recipe."

And, yet, as I interpret and make meaning of what I observe, hear, stumble over, I have come to some understandings that are not so complimentary. I am presently working on a book-length manuscript which is an autoethnographic account of a local community in situ. Specifically, it is an account of Amish and Mennonite women's literacy practices, the recipe and the circle letter, within this community. Within the past few months, I have sent two articles out for potential publication: "Writing Without the 'Protection of Angels': Notes from the Middle Voice" and "Anabaptist Women's Circle Letters: Looking Over the Shoulders of an Amish and Mennonite Community." My writing may include inaccuracies in details for the sake of creating the truth, secrets cracked wide open, and flaws in Mennonite characters who may not appear like heroes but perhaps more like sinners with no sign of salvation in sight. I choose not to censor my writing for signs of weakness in Mennonite women and will not sacrifice an authentic representation of this community at the altar of treasured common beliefs.

As a Mennonite female writing about Mennonite women, will I need to leave my Mennonite community or my home completely? Will I be silenced, rendered invisible, by this community? The silencing, including the misrepresentation, of Mennonites by Mennonites is a powerful way to manage deviant voices. Not mouthing

our weaknesses erases stories, stories rich with events exposing the emotions of a people. In addition to gaining approval and recognition for “mouthing” communal beliefs, dire consequences may result, consequences that may render a perspective invisible.

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AAR/SBL Joint Meetings

Many readers of this newsletters are members of the AAR and/or SBL at whose annual meetings Mennonites and others gather for a reception and forum. However, the AAR has decided to meet separately from the SBL starting in 2008, compromising various kinds of collaboration across disciplines. An online petition requesting that the AAR Board to reconsider this decision is located at: www.PetitionOnline.com/aar30703/petition.html.

Editorial

The discussion on publishing continues in this issue with two articles. Michael A. King, founder and publisher of Cascadia House Publishing (originally Pandora Press U.S.) explains the vision underlying that venture—“valuing soul as much as sales”—and some implications of this for the kinds of writing Cascadia seeks to publish. Violet A. Dutcher probes the tensions of working within or without Mennonite institutions, including publishers. Writing and publishing often raise questions which are discomfiting for communities. How does the activity of publishing either give voice or silence these questioners?

In this issue, you will find several “Research Notes” of A-MSN members. The A-MSN Advisory Committee encouraged the inclusion of such notes in this newsletter as a way to communicate a sense of what others are doing and to foster connections among those whose interests intersect. Thus, email addresses are included with the notes. Please send me updates on your own work and especially research programs or works-in-progress. The next issue will be published in Fall 2004.

The A-MSN Advisory Committee met at the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature (AAR/SBL) annual meetings in November, 2003. Much of the discussion concerned the best way to facilitate interdisciplinary conversations in the pages of this newsletter. One suggestion was organize a series of responses and rejoinders to a particular book. I welcome a suggestion of a book on a topic that would interest a wide range of members and could be fruitfully considered from several disciplinary perspectives.

Another significant issue for discussion was responding to a proposal from the Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association (ASAA) for closer collaboration among our organizations. The first joint initiative was

the successful “Ritual in Anabaptist Communities” conference held at Hillsdale College, Michigan, in June 2003. Without committing to specific forms of ongoing collaboration, the A-MSN Advisory Committee did agree to work with the ASAA on another joint conference, possibly in 2005. A joint planning committee is in the works.

The A-MSN Advisory Committee has had a somewhat informal role and membership structure. Agenda for a future meeting includes clarifying the roles and relationships of this committee and that of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC)/Conrad Grebel University College who administer and oversee the A-MSN. Participating in the committee meeting for the first time was Adam Darlage, Myron Penner and Paul Martens, doctoral students at the University of Chicago, Purdue University and the University of Notre Dame respectively; Jon Hoover, Dar Comboni for Arabic Studies, Egypt; Chris Huebner, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU); and Daniel Liechty, Illinois State University. Other members include A. James Reimer who as director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) chairs the meetings; Mary Schertz as director on the Institute for Mennonite Studies; Lydia Harder, Conrad Grebel University College; Ted Grimsrud, EMU; Peter Blum, Hillsdale College; and Karl Koop, CMU. Ray Gingerich, EMU, completed his service to the committee at the 2003 meeting. His work has been much appreciated.

Your contributions—critical, constructive, financial—are crucial for the A-MSN. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jeremy M. Bergen, editor and coordinator
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Research notes

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“You Shall Not Kill”: The Meaning of (*rtsh*) in Exodus 20:13

An article which will form the bulk of the first chapter of my book on the topic will appear in the Winter 2004 issue of the Journal *Encounter* (65.1). An examination of every text in which the Hebrew word *rtsh* appears indicates that the ancient understanding of this term was broad, more appropriately translated by the English word “kill” than the more limited “murder.” My continuing research examines why the shift in translation occurred and what the implications are for generations raised believing that the Bible has no general prohibition against killing.

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I graduated from St. Stephen's College, Edmonton in 2003 with a Master of Theology Degree. My thesis “Making Room: The Praxis of Hospitality & Journey to Inclusion: An Inclusive Model of the Church for North American Anabaptist-Mennonites” develops a model of church using themes from liberation theologies (Latin American, North American, feminist) and Anabaptist theology. I used the praxis (stories/journeys) of two Mennonite congregations (Calgary Inter-Mennonite & Warden Woods, Toronto) as examples of congregations who are publicly inclusive.

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* *

I am currently working on the history and theology of the Protestant pacifist movement in China.

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Tom Finger presented a paper on "An Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology of Suffering" at a Conference on "The Suffering Church" held on the island of Malta, January 20-23, 2004. The Conference, sponsored by the International Charismatic Consultation, included an unusual international mixture mainly of Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals and Anglicans. The Pentecostal movement was pacifist in its origins, but has drifted into a militaristic stance. It was partly to challenge this trend that Tom was invited. This trend was challenged most eloquently in a Plenary address by Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Arab Melkite Priest well known to Mennonites.

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I am working on a history of Kansas Mennonite civic/political involvement from World War II to the present. If and when it is completed, it will be a long-delayed second volume of my “A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites” (1975).

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Daniel Liechty is producing an anthology of the writings of Ernest Becker for the University of Washington Press in Seattle. Ernest Becker was an anthropologist who understood his life work to be a companionate theory to that of Paul Tillich; whereas Tillich sought closure on social science from the perspective of religion, Becker sought closure on religion from the perspective of social science. In Becker's view, abjuring all interpretive sense of a transcendent beyond produces a deformed image of the human being, and therefore also a deficient social scientific view of human activity and human nature. Liechty's anthology is tentatively titled *The Ernest Becker Reader*.

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I am just finishing a research project for the Doctor of Ministry program at Lancaster Theological Seminary, called "How Do We Become Like Christ: American Mennonite Spiritual Formation through the Lens of One Woman's Life and One Seminary 1909-2003." The one woman's life is my grandmother, Susan Ruth, who was born in Franconia Conference, Pennsylvania in 1909, and the seminary is my alma mater, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Mennonites are in a new historical situation and need to rethink how they do spiritual formation. There used to be a coherent context for spiritual formation that was based on an agrarian life, but that is gone. Because the formative/shaping environments Mennonites used to grow up in no longer exist, some Mennonites have been drinking deeply from contemplative spiritual formation wells in the past 30 years. I describe the patterns that shaped my grandmother's life, extract some themes and practices, then describe and compare that with the spiritual formation program that developed at AMBS in the 1980s. I conclude with themes "then and now," attempting to define Mennonite spirituality for the future.

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There are two phases to my present research project on the ethics of proselytizing. (a) In the first phase, the primary thrust is to defend proselytizing against a series of objections, many of which call into question the very possibility of an ethical form of proselytizing. I then attempt to develop some criteria to distinguish between ethical and unethical proselytizing. I have completed a first draft of this manuscript which has been submitted to SUNY Press for consideration. (b) While the first phase is written for a more secular and academic readership, I am now working on another manuscript written for a more popular and evangelical readership. In this second phase, I want to argue that evangelicals have not paid enough attention to the ethical restraints that Jesus and Paul build into the challenge to evangelize. I therefore want to develop a biblical/theological treatment of the ethics of evangelism.

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New Books

Lois Y. Barrett, *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Eerdmans, 2004.

Loren L. Johns, *The Lamb Christology of the Apocalypse of John*. Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

Sandra F. Joireman, *Nationalism and Political Identity*. Continuum Press, 2003.

Lucille Marr, *The Transforming Power of a Century: The Evolution of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario*. Pandora Press, 2003.

Ben C. Ollenburger, *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future*. Eisenbrauns, 2004.

Ben C. Ollenburger and Gayle Gerber Koontz, eds. *A Mind Patient and Untamed: Assessing John Howard Yoder's Contributions to Theology, Ethics, and Peacemaking*. Cascadia, 2004.

Erick Sawatzky, ed. *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective*. Cascadia, 2004.

Mary H. Schertz and Ivan Friesen, eds. *Beautiful upon the Mountains: Biblical Essays on Mission, Peace, and the Reign of God*. Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2004.

Kevin Xiyi Yao, *The Fundamentalist Movement among Protestant Missionaries in China, 1920-1937*. University Press of America, 2003.

Journals

Mission Focus: Annual Review

Published by the Mission Studies Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Walter W. Sawatzky, ed. To subscribe, contact waltersawatzky@cs.com

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology

Vol. 4, Number 2 (Fall 2003): Catechesis

Vol. 5, Number 1 (Spring 2004): Pastoral care at the end of live

Vol. 5, Number 2 (Fall 2004): Power and leadership in the church

Published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and the Institute for Theology and the Church at Canadian Mennonite University. To subscribe contact visionsubscribe@ambs.edu or vision@cmu.ca.

Conferences

The **Anabaptist Colloquium** will convene on **April 2 - 3, 2004** at Goshen College. The Anabaptist Colloquium is a relatively informal gathering of scholars and students who share a common interest in the radical reformation. Although the primary focus in the past has been on topics related to the 16th century, we are quite flexible on the chronological and thematic "boundaries." The main goal is to gather for fraternal and constructive conversation about our on-going research. For more information, contact John D. Roth, johndr@goshen.edu.

Consultation: "**Hard Cases: Confronting the Spirit World,**" **April 15 - 17, 2004** at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, IN. Sponsored by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, AMBS. Christian educators, pastors and medical personnel encounter questions and needs that have to do with the nature of good and evil in human life and these question often come in the form of troubling, complicated "hard cases." This conference on "Hard Cases," examines premodern concepts as Satan, demonic possession, spiritual powers and cosmic battles from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective. Contact Mary H. Schertz at AMBS, mschertz@amsb.edu.

Bluffton College is planning a major peacemaking conference for scholars and educators from all disciplines. It is scheduled for **May 26 - 28, 2004** on the Bluffton campus. The planners believe that nonviolence is not a singular ethical issue, but rather a world view that impacts many issues. The theme of the event, inspired by a Bluffton book with a similar title, is "**Teaching Peace: Nonviolence and the Liberal Arts Curriculum.**" The conference is sponsored by the college's Pathways to Mission and Vocation Program, which is funded by Lilly Endowment. The book, published last fall by Rowman & Littlefield and edited by J. Denny Weaver and Gerald Biesecker-Mast, is a collection of essays by 22 Bluffton professors in numerous fields—religion, history, the humanities, the arts, sciences, social sciences and professions.

The keynote speakers for the conference are Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, president of Chicago Theological Seminary, and Robert Franklin, presidential distinguished professor of social ethics at Emory University. Seven other plenary speakers are scheduled for the conference, representing seven different academic disciplines. An additional 53 professors from Bluffton and 21 other colleges, universities and seminaries will lead concurrent sessions during the conference. More information: www.bluffton.edu/conf/teachingpeace

"**Sound in the Land,**" a Festival/Conference of Mennonite-Rooted People and their Music is being planned for **May 28 - 30, 2004** at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo to celebrate the wide array of Mennonite-rooted music making, from four-part to funk; jazz to 'Just as I Am'; song fest to folk; chamber trio to techno. 'Mennonite-rooted' music refers to music composed/ performed by individuals with Mennonite roots and/or present affiliations. This first-time, multi-genred, interdisciplinary event will bring together composers, songwriters, performing musicians of varied styles, writers, and scholars who wish to contribute musically or verbally/academically via compositions, performances, workshops, creative writings, collaborative works or scholarly papers. More information: <http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/soundinland/>

The second **TMTC Mennonite Graduate Student Conference** will be held on **June 18 - 20, 2004** at AMBS, Elkhart, IN. The conference theme is "religious texts." Doctoral and other graduate students in religion, humanities and social sciences are encouraged to attend. Travel subsidies may be available. Sponsored by the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC), co-sponsored by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). More information: http://individual.utoronto.ca/menno_theology/

The "Peace Theology Research Project", sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, announces a conference **August 1 - 4, 2004**, at Akron, Pennsylvania, on the theme "**Seeking the Welfare of the City: Questions of Public Peace, Justice and Order.**" The conference is open to Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from the United States and Canada. It aims for a wide participation across theological and occupational ranges: theologians and pastors; persons trained in the humanities and social sciences; professionals in social work, law and public administration; activists and persons involved in advocacy work. More information: www.mcc.org/peacetheology/

The fifteenth Believers Church Conference, "**God, Democracy and U.S. Power: Believers Church Perspectives,**" will be held on **September 23 - 25, 2004** at Eastern Mennonite University. This conference addresses the question how Christians in the Believers Church tradition, living in a democracy that is the world's dominant power, understand their witness to God. Hosted by Eastern Mennonite University and Bridgewater College in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia with assistance from the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office, Brethren Witness/Washington Office and the Baptist Joint Committee. More information: www.emu.edu/churchandpolitics.