

# ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE SCHOLARS NETWORK NEWSLET-

[www.AnabaptistScholars.net](http://www.AnabaptistScholars.net)

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## Scholars and the Media

When the pope died, newspaper and TV reports featured quotes from academic theologians, ethicists, and historians commenting on John Paul II's legacy and significance. When a national election is held, scholars of religion, sociology or political science are asked to assess the role that "religion" plays in voting decisions. In light of 9/11 and the so-called "war on terror," the media presses scholars of Islam about the role of "jihad" in that faith. During Easter or Christmas, New Testament scholars are invited by national newsmagazines to weigh in on what "really happened"—or at least to supply a juicy quote about how the faithful might respond to the latest bit of evidence that it might not really be just how the gospels have it. Moreover, the immense popularity of *The DaVinci Code* creates a public forum for scholars who comment on or criticize the novel's supposed revelation of a conspiracy by the church to obscure the true essence of Christianity. Here, the plot thickens for the real-life scholar who pits her carefully reasoned word against the heroics of the obscure-academic-turned-adventurer at the centre of that novel. Under such conditions, is it possible for a "talking head" say something that can be understood?

The media sets an agenda, poses the questions, frames the narratives. Or rather, the medias—plural—set several agendas and frame multiple narratives. Does the scholar

merely add authority to a narrative which has already been determined? Does she seek out the popular press, in addition to academics conferences and scholarly journals, with the results of her research? And if so, in which way, for what end?

Paul Martens, a doctoral student in theological ethics at Notre Dame, asks: "Are we responsible for getting the media to care about our research, or do we wait until they ask? Does a sound-byte qualify as representing one's scholarship? Is something better than nothing?" These questions raise further ones. "Is an Anabaptist scholar a public scholar? What do we mean by public? How many 'publics' are there?"

This issue and following ones will address the relationship of scholars and the media, or scholars *in* the media, especially as scholars function as sources and put themselves forward as experts. Is there a *particular* responsibility with respect to the media for scholars who identify as Anabaptist or Mennonite?

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**Nominations are invited for the new Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network Steering Committee.** Email nominations to [jeremy.bergen@utoronto.ca](mailto:jeremy.bergen@utoronto.ca) before *May 20, 2005*. See p. 6 for an explanation of the new structure.

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### Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network

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The Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network is a project of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, Conrad Grebel University College. The Institute of Mennonite Studies is a co-sponsor.

## On Mennonite Scholars, Organic Intellectuals, and Public Media

By Gerald Biesecker-Mast

In a provocative article which appeared in *Religious Studies News* (May 2004), Robert A. Orsi, a professor of religious history at Harvard Divinity School and former president of the American Academy of Religion, argues that the gulf between the world of proper academic inquiry and the realm of mass-mediated journalism is so vast as to preclude any safe crossing from one side to the other. Thus, Orsi refuses to speak to the press or even to take any calls from reporters, because he believes the sound-bite orientation of the popular media as well as its subjection to political and corporate power is likely to corrupt any proper representation of academic inquiry. Orsi is certainly correct in his analysis of the difference between the academic world and the media world, and his suspicion of the corruption of popular media by power and consumer culture is well-founded.

At the same time, Orsi's response to the problem—avoid the media altogether—is perhaps too tempting for Mennonite scholars who may already be inclined by their own quietist heritage to leave the compromised public world to its own devices and to stick with the purity of the academy. Those of us who are tempted by academic quietism might benefit from rereading the now classic

call by Scott Holland to “celebrate God in public through the medium of a truly public church” which appeared in the Winter 1986 *Conrad Grebel Review*. Borrowing from the work of David Tracy, Holland argues that Mennonites ought to articulate a public theology that responds to exigencies in at least three different public spheres: the academy, the church, and the society. Reflection on Holland's essay challenges the ease with which we might lump the “media” together into one corrupted and compromising mass and also raises questions about the ultimate value of sectarian purity—whether such purity is associated with an academic discipline or a churchly practice.

Just as there are multiple public spheres, so there is a growing variety of public media—from the broadcasting and cable networks to the surviving empires of print journalism to the increasingly diverse and complicated world wide web of homepages and blogs. These public media serve multiple public interests, from corporations to political parties to churches to non-profit organizations. Some of this is sound-bite media, but much of it, particularly on the web, is not. Thus, there are multiple opportunities for scholars to interact with various publics via some version of the media—whose problems and possibilities vary depending on genre, form, and ownership.

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The contributors in this issue were given fairly open-ended assignments. Both make the case for scholarly engagement in the public press and both recognize its limitations. Randolph Haluza-DeLay argues that the duty of the Christian scholar to communicate beyond the academic world is rooted in a vocation of examining the world God has made. An Anabaptist scholar who is thus engaged may also encounter suspicion from his church community. Gerald Biesecker-Mast calls on Anabaptist-Mennonite scholars to risk communicating even in a sound-bite context where the speaker may be easily misconstrued. Such may be an occasion for “a nonviolent posture of vulnerable witness.”

I invite your responses, letters, short articles (or longer ones), suggestions. I particularly invite reflections on specific experiences of communicating through public media. Why were you sought out? Or did you initiate the contact?

Does the reason a reporter cares about your research or expertise matter, or is any opening an opportunity? Have you thought of the media as a partner in your work,

an adversary, a competitor, an interruption?

Do Anabaptist-Mennonite scholars speak on behalf of all of Anabaptism, or some part of the Mennonite church? Does one speak only on one's own behalf, or on behalf of a scholarly guild? How are these relations worked out?

Part of the ongoing challenge of the Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network is to frame our discussions in ways that truly communicate but also push the boundaries of Mennonite identity, scholarly work, and their integration. Though the examples I cited at the outset fall under the “religion in the media” rubric, I recognize that readers of this *Newsletter* are also scholars of English literature, ethnomusicology, sociology, philosophy, social work, history, etc., who may frame this issue very differently. Thus, the invitation is an open one to move this conversation in new directions.

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While I agree with Orsi that the primary public addressed by academics is that found in the classroom and related symposia, I am also convinced that other public spheres—including the church and other political bodies—can benefit from the research and insight associated with patient and diligent scholarship. Addressing such non-academic spheres will often involve subjecting one's own discourse to the constraints associated with public media, including fragmentation into soundbites, editing toward simplification and access, and even mistaken representations of arguments. I suggest that there are at least three reasons for Mennonite scholars especially to risk communication of academic knowledge beyond the confines of their academic disciplines and of the classroom.

1. A dissenting tradition such as the Mennonites relies on spokespersons who can represent Mennonites through public media to the surrounding society. This was true of early Anabaptist writers who recorded the executions of their fellow Anabaptists and helped to frame these public spectacles as martyrdoms. It was true of Anabaptist leaders who were willing to participate in public debates with well-trained interlocutors under rules and assumptions which disadvantaged the Anabaptists. More recently, academics with Amish and Mennonite roots have represented these groups in ways that have powerfully shaped public perceptions of modern Anabaptist communities. One thinks of the work of John Hostetler or of Donald Kraybill as paradigmatic for Mennonite academics who speak on behalf of Amish, Mennonite, or other Anabaptist groups. The survival of Mennonite peoples has often been dependent on the skilled public representation of Mennonite practices to sometimes hostile and sometimes misguided audiences.

2. A dissenting community also relies on intellectual work that relates the convictions of the community to the disciplines and conventions of knowledge surrounding the community. Here I have in mind Antonio Gramsci's distinction between traditional intellectuals who are devotees of specialized and technical knowledge versus organic intellectuals whose learning and research is mustered on behalf of the agendas of political or social movements. A Mennonite organic intellectual, in other words, could never be content to simply contribute to an academic discipline for its own sake; instead, such an intellectual would seek to marshal his or her accumulated disciplinary wisdom on behalf of the mission of the church. Likewise, the mission of the church would shape and qualify the methodologies embraced by an academic discipline. The Teaching Peace project begun at Bluffton University, for example, is such an academic project that seeks to bring the peace convictions of the Mennonite church to bear on academic methods and research across the curriculum, while at the same time seeking to make

such peace-qualified research available to diverse publics, including students, church constituencies, and interdisciplinary academic discussions.

Mennonites who are organic intellectuals can be found both inside and outside of the academy and throughout the network of mission, peace, and social service agencies that serve both Mennonites and the broader Christian church. Some work for Mennonite institutions, some work in other denominationally affiliated institutions, and some work within public institutions. Many work as the church's pastors and conference leaders. All seek to build relationships of mutual understanding and fruitful exchange among differing publics with sometimes contrasting paradigms and languages of authority. For cultural workers such as these, Orsi's refusal to speak with the media may seem somewhat self-indulgent.

3. Speaking through media channels that are likely to distort or corrupt meaning can be an occasion to take up a nonviolent posture of vulnerable witness. Because of a long history of being misunderstood, Mennonites are hardly surprised by the difficulties attendant in speaking across cultural and media divides. They are also familiar with structures of meaning and communication that grant advantage to an opponent. Mennonite scholars should therefore seek a more creative response to unfair media representations than to withdraw into academic enclaves.

In recent years I have been inspired by the work of John Durham Peters to rethink the purpose and focus of communication. In a book entitled *Speaking into the Air*, Peters argues that the West ever since Socrates has been obsessed with the hope that communication could somehow achieve a communion of souls in which meaning is not corrupted by cultural and bodily difference. Peters notes that the Hebrew tradition out of which Jesus spoke by contrast was less concerned with the sharing of meaning and more with the doing of justice. Thus, while Socrates focused on dialogue among intellectuals, Jesus' habits of communication are best characterized as dissemination—offering the Word to whoever would accept it while refusing control over its reception or interpretation. The communication model of Jesus suggests that reconciliation and redemption may require that we give up on the project of forcing the Other to understand me and instead accept the possibility that reconciling love can trump misunderstanding or disagreement. To recall Paul's well-known wisdom, we are in danger of becoming mere resounding gongs or clanging cymbals if our speech is not qualified by love.

Perhaps what I have been arguing all along is that it is hard to imagine a worthwhile reason to study the world without loving it and that it is thus difficult to imagine

# Media-making and the Gift of the Anabaptist Scholar

By *Randolph Haluza-DeLay*

Just a few decades ago, there was quite some debate among Anabaptists about what being a peace church meant. Passive nonresistance was one option, as represented by the historical pattern of being the “quiet in the land.” Over time, there has come to be a general understanding that to be peacemakers is to be actively engaged in making peace and the just conditions of peace in this world. Mennonite Central Committee, Community Justice Ministries, and other agencies do much of their work with this active engagement in mind. Anabaptists have gotten involved in events such as peace education, political advocacy, marches and even civil disobedience.

I recall this earlier dialogue in the context of how to respond to the question of Anabaptist scholars and the media. While like in the peacemaking dialogue there are many positions, I consider that a faithful response to this question does involve engaging rather than retreat. Furthermore, I will suggest that it is a unique responsibility of scholars to do so. The gifts of the Spirit are many, but one of them is the mind, and the scholarly calling is to be used for service of God and all creation.

Just a few years ago, the church we attended had all congregants list their “spiritual gifts.” The exercise was intended to find ways to include more members of the congregation in ministries of the church. I thought long about what I could contribute. Not singing, for sure! Nor money either. I wrote something pedantic. Then I added, “my mind—I think deeply, and analyze well, and can give a reason for my hope” (1 Peter 3:13).

The pastor eventually called and said, “Thanks, but we really don’t have a use for the ‘gifts’ you wrote.” He might have added something about “faith like a child [rather than intellectualized]” but all that was in my thoughts was, “Too Bad!” There is something amiss when the church does not need thinkers.

I am an adult convert to Christianity, from secularism. “Be transformed” I was told early on, “by the renewing of your mind, which [is in the body] you offer as a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1-2). One way Christian scholars pursue our discipleship is through our disciplinary study. Our service to God, church and others is—at least partly—through our vocation as scholars, and the gifts of the mind and the rigorous, analytic and reflexive intellectual practices that we are trained to employ. Commonly, this involves making scholarship (knowledge) public. So the real question is whether to publish (make public) in mass media, rather than remain inside the venues of scholarly discourse.

To consider this question of Anabaptist scholars and the Media, we would do well to consider the variant roles of both. My perspective on the role of the scholar is the sort of deeper analysis—rigorous, often empirically based, but also imaginative, and sometimes critical—that queries the physical, social and theological nature of all the created order. But instead of the stereotype of “ivory tower” scholarship I have repeatedly used words like “engaged” and “involved.” There is a public duty for scholars, although scholars will differ in ways that they take up this responsibility. I have argued elsewhere, for example, that the trend towards “relevance” for higher education that is resulting in commercialization of research in the medical sciences and technology fields has a potential parallel in the social sciences (Haluza-DeLay, 2004). It may open up spaces for scholars to engage in localized, community-based research and shalom-creating work which supports diverse communities, contests unjust structures, challenges taken-for-granted notions and dominating social forces, and, perhaps, even leads to becoming “movement intellectuals.”

John Lofland argues that social movements are “insurgent realities.” Consider the church as he talks about social movement organizations:

In asserting realities that challenge mainstream constructions, [they] are highly intellectual affairs. They must develop rationales, defend against detractors, spell out preferred courses of action, and so on through the range of... argumentation on the true, the moral, and the reasonable (Lofland, 1996, p. 39).

Would that the church value its own movement intellectuals! I fear too often, that critical thinking is easily marginalized—especially in the church uncomfortable with the scrutiny—in favour of the taken-for-granted and “common”-sense ideas. My argument is that Anabaptist scholars have a special role in the study, articulation and communication of the intellectual activities in which we specialize in examining God’s complex creation, and that these intellectual activities have practical purposes. This implies that methods of communication outside the narrow confines of academia be part of the intellectual activity.

Pondering the societal role of the media brings up several observations. First, common-[non]sensual notions of the media as mere conveyors of information are as faulty as lunar cheese. Second, the media is a business. Therefore, the marketplace is a significant force in what gets “mediated.” That detail might be enough to keep one from getting involved. It may be that the pandering to the marketplace distorts the media. Similarly, an argument

for not speaking to the media is that the conventions of scholarly discourse are too different from the conventions of the various mass media, particularly as they are commercialized and commodified.

Nevertheless, the media is a shaper of the public discourse, as well as reflective of that discourse. If scholarship and intellectual efforts are to have a place in the public sphere, the media cannot be ignored. To not do so seems to assume the media as an invalid and unredeemable institution. Furthermore, we should be clear that there are many medias [*sic*]. Therefore, we can pick and choose which ones we shall engage and in what fashion—the advice to be “shrewd as serpents” properly applies. But when Jesus gave that advice, he WAS sending out his disciples to their society.

Trying to engage in order to impact the public discourse is a tall order. I have few illusions about just how effective I will be, and have learned of limitations. But I have written newspaper columns, done national commentary for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, been interviewed following media launches of social justice research, and even had a few items in religious periodicals. Media work is public performance, and my efforts will be translated by the media person and system, as we found out during presentation of community-based anti-racism research. Preparation is essential, like any performance. More often, it is better if I take the initiative and do the reporting myself. Regardless, like engaging in any discourse, I need to know the conventions under which the media operates. For example, the tentativeness with which academics speak (“the data seems to indicate...”) plays poorly in the media and can be dismissed by other interests (Haluza-DeLay, 2003).

Unfortunately, it won't always work, but neither will any other thing I try in life. Those in the media are gatekeepers to communicating to broader publics. As a sociologist, I study that which is often masked, or more complicated than the common-sense portrays it. I am often contesting received knowledge and structures of influence and power. Academic discourse handles complexity far better than mass media. But I have tried to argue that it is a duty for scholars to express themselves beyond the specific scholarly venues.

This duty is as a professional scholar, but also a duty required by being in the business of learning about the workings of God's creation—whether in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, or theological fields. The challenge is that when one enters from the narrow disciplinary field to public fields, one has to play by two sets of rules—the conventions of the field of media discourse, as well the practices of one's scholarly discipline.

The challenge is heightened by the fact that Anabaptist scholars operate in a third field—the Anabaptist com-

munity. The reflexivity (subjecting *everything* to analysis) by which scholars are trained is not the common practice of most of our fellow sojourners in the church. It can even put us at odds. However, I would argue that our duty to engage is enhanced by the fact that most disciples of Christ are primarily habituated in the public sphere. For the most part, churches are not separate communities removed from the rest of the world (and I do not suggest they should be). Therefore, Christian voices of intelligence and wisdom simply have to engage the burning issues and knowledge of our day or we cede the field. For example, a Mennonite sociologist needs to have a thorough understanding of the actions of power and role of conflict in social groups, without yielding the appreciation that violence is not the “godly” order of things, and not the most effective strategy available to public policy.

Christianity has a message to the world. Anabaptists have a particular and much needed perspective on the issues of this unpeaceful, individualistic, consumer-oriented age. I am arguing for more public intellectuals, especially from this faith communion. Certainly the diversity of us will respond in different ways. But the call of discipleship is active media-making, not passive retreat.

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why any academic would want to describe the world without also addressing it. We cannot expect that the publics with which we as academics are engaged will always understand us or that they will even give us a fair hearing. "For now we see through a glass darkly," wrote Paul to a somewhat hostile audience—the Corinthians. But then, *and only then*, face to face.

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## New A-MSN Steering Committee

A plan has been adopted which clarifies the collaborative nature of the relationship among those institutions and individuals associated with the Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network (A-MSN). In short, a new A-MSN Steering Committee will have the mandate and authority to set strategic direction, plan the program, shape a proposed budget (including seeking funds as needed), and advise the coordinator.

In the past, several bodies tried to communicate with each other without a defined mechanism for doing so. The intention is that this steering committee will be the one place where various groups come together in order to serve the needs of the A-MSN membership.

There's no need to burden you with the full complexity of past practice. This complexity was demonstrated in the fact that it wasn't clear just how to get "approval" to implement a new system, and just who spoke for the A-MSN. But the source of the complexity is readily apparent. The A-MSN is an arms-length program of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC). As A-MSN coordinator, I report to the TMTC director; our finances are housed within the TMTC budget (although the expectation is that we break even.) Since 2000, TMTC (and the A-MSN) has been administered by Conrad Grebel University College with the advice of a bi-national board of Mennonite denominations, agencies, and educational institutions. In addition to all of this, an A-MSN advisory committee was convened annually at the AAR/SBL meetings in order to give direction to the program.

The new steering committee is where this once diffuse conversation can come together. I believe that the initial working purpose of the A-MSN is to serve the needs of the members. Thus, real decision-making power should rest with this group. There is a balance to be struck. On

the one hand, it makes sense for Conrad Grebel University College to delegate the running of this program to those who are closest to it and most committed to it. At the same time, Grebel (via TMTC), remains legally and financially responsible for the A-MSN.

The steering committee will consist of the TMTC director, the A-MSN coordinator (neither of whom will be chair), the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS) director, a member of the TMTC advisory board, three elected A-MSN members, and two further members appointed by the steering committee to ensure diversity of representation. These last five members will represent the interests of the whole A-MSN membership, not their particular institutions. (IMS is officially represented because it is a co-sponsor of the A-MSN.)

Please consider serving as one of the three elected steering committee members. The committee will meet a minimum of two times per year: once via telephone conference call, and once in person at the November AAR/SBL meetings (at least for now although a change from this practice to a second conference call may be necessary), in addition to occasional email consultations. Deadline for nominations is **May 20, 2005**. If there are more than three names put forward, an election will be held via the web (details to follow via email or snail mail for those without). As always, your comments, suggestions, financial support and volunteer energy are what make this association viable.

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## Research Notes

Leo Driedger has just finished the eighth chapter on Mennonite Business for his 19th book, *Mennonites in Winnipeg*. Chapter nine on Mennonite musicians is next. Twenty key Winnipeg musicians have already been interviewed. History, demography, the city, churches, schools, media, professions, business, services, musicians, creative writers, artists, are the dozen topics which will be covered.

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Margot Kottelin-Longley has an opportunity as the first Anabaptist-Mennonite scholar to lecture on Anabaptism in Finland. On June 2-3, she will talk on Anabaptism and peace at a Cumenius Conference in Jyväskylä, and in August 17-19 (provisional) she will speak on how the Anabaptists experienced violence, at a conference on "Religion and Violence" in Turku. Her doctoral dissertation, in progress, is called "Anabaptist Ecclesiology 1523-1528: Its Emergence among the proto Swiss Brethren and its Divergent Nature."

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I welcome interaction with Mennonites who have experienced or have knowledge of conflict or peacebuilding prompted by world religions. I am enrolled in a D.Min. program at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. Each of the 175 D.Min. students is linked with one of twenty subgroups; mine is titled "Spirituality, Sustainability, and Interreligious Dialogue." My project focus, which attends to the interreligious and is mentored by Dr. Paul Knitter, will examine how religion causes conflict and enables peaceful coexistence.

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*Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons* is based on a Lilly-funded study of 27 congregations in the midwest (including three Anabaptist churches) which explores the diverse ways that people listen to sermons. This four year study of "Listening to Listeners of Sermons" has resulted in four texts on how sermons shape the faith of individual congregants and their congregations. This third book in the series focuses on such topics as the role and authority of Scripture in preaching, controversy and challenge in the preaching moment, how preaching shapes the community of faith, and what listeners believe to be the purposes of preaching. *Believing in Preaching* offers quotes from listeners, analysis of major themes listeners addressed in their comments and suggestions for preachers who hope to enhance their ministry of preaching. The ten homiletics who have directed this study represent various Protestant traditions. This is the first study of listeners of sermons across national and denominational lines and this text in the series offers careful analysis of the ways listeners experience sermons in worship. As an Anabaptist, my own contributions to the research team have been in the areas of the role of Scripture in preaching and preaching that is related to God's justice and peace.

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## Transitions

**Roger Epp** has been appointed Acting Dean of the University of Alberta's new Augustana Faculty and Campus, formerly Augustana University College, following its transition from church ownership into the public university system as an undergraduate, residence-based liberal arts campus.

**Myron A. Penner** has been hired by Trinity Western University, Langley, B.C., as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy (tenure-track), effective fall 2005.

# Conferences

## **Mennonite/Catholic Theological Colloquium**

"How Are We 'Called Together?'" a Mennonite/Catholic Theological Colloquium, will be held **July 20 - 21, 2005** on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA.

In 2004, theological exchange between Mennonites and Roman Catholics marked a historic milestone as delegations to the first international dialogue between representatives of Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Church Unity released a final report summarizing their five years of conversation. "Called Together to be Peacemakers" (available at <http://bridgefolk.net/theology>) offers a common narrative of watershed events in church history especially during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. It explores theological perspectives that the two traditions both share and dispute concerning the nature of the Church, sacraments and ordinances, and peacemaking. It closes with mutual confessions of repentance for past violence and recrimination, thus inviting a "healing of memories."

As it holds its fourth annual conference, Bridgefolk – a grassroots movement for dialogue and unity between Mennonites and Roman Catholics – invites theologians, historians and ecumenists from the two traditions to gather on the previous evening and day to reflect on what they have learned from this historic document and to explore next steps for promoting theological dialogue between Mennonites and Roman Catholics. Scholars from other churches who regularly find themselves in conversation with both traditions are also invited to attend.

The colloquium will begin on the evening of July 20 with a keynote address by John A. Lapp, church historian and former Executive Secretary of Mennonite Central Committee on "Ecumenical Dialogue as a Ministry of Reconciliation." On July 21, the colloquium will hear theological reflections on "Called Together to Be Peacemakers" from both Mennonite and Roman Catholic ecumenists. Participants will have ample opportunity for their own responses and discussion. The meeting will conclude by exploring ways to follow through on the document's suggestions for further study.

For more information go to <http://bridgefolk.net/mctc05> or write to Gerald W. Schlabach, University of St. Thomas, at [gwschlabach@stthomas.edu](mailto:gwschlabach@stthomas.edu). For information on the Bridgefolk conference that will be July 21 - 24, in conjunction with this colloquium, go to <http://bridgefolk.net/2005>.

## **Mennonite/s Writing**

The fourth in a series of "Mennonite/s Writing" conferences will be held at Bluffton University on **October 26 - 29, 2006**. Co-sponsored by Bluffton and Conrad Grebel University College, the event will include readings, papers, and panel discussions by writers and critics from across the United States and Canada and a keynote address by Kathleen Norris. Chief organizers include Jeff Gundy and Lamar Nisly of Bluffton and Hildi Froese Tiessen of Conrad Grebel. A call for papers will be forthcoming soon. Comments and questions may be sent to [gundyj@bluffton.edu](mailto:gundyj@bluffton.edu) or [htiessen@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:htiessen@uwaterloo.ca).

## **Joint A-MSN Conference**

The Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network (A-MSN) and the Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association (ASAA), and the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS) will hold a joint conference in **June 2006**, in Indiana. The IMS conference theme will be: "Holding Fast to the Confession of Our Hope: The *Confession of Faith* Ten Years Later." The A-MSN and the ASAA will invite their members to submit proposals on the main theme, but also invite proposals on other themes of interest to members. A full call for papers will be published shortly.

### **Vocation Conference at Goshen College – *Call for Papers Deadline Extended***

Goshen College will host a conference **October 20 - 22, 2005** titled, "Cultivating a Culture of Calling: Mennonite Perspectives on Vocation."

Goals of the conference are to:

- Share new understandings about vocation and calling
- Discuss what is unique to Mennonites about vocation and calling: points of connection and points of difference with other traditions
- Bring together a cross-section of people working at vocation from different angles to share knowledge and best practices
- Help to create synergy for the Mennonite Church USA "Culture of Call" initiative

The conference keynote speaker will be Michael G. Cartwright, who teaches theology at the University of Indianapolis. Among his research interests is the work of John Howard Yoder. Cartwright is especially interested in helpful and unhelpful metaphors that we use to describe vocation or calling in the Christian life. In the 1990's, Cartwright developed a center focused on Christian vocation that served as the inspiration for Indianapolis-based Lilly endowment's religion division when they launched an initiative called Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV) in 2000. PTEV was created to encourage more young adults at church-related colleges and universities to consider church-related vocations. Goshen College and Eastern Mennonite and Bluffton Universities have each received PTEV grants.

At the first conference session, Goshen College professor of Bible, religion and philosophy Keith Graber Miller will speak on "A Mennonite Theology of Vocation." Other plenary sessions will include Keith Harder and Diane Zaerr Brenneman, staff for the Congregational and Ministerial Leadership division of Mennonite Church USA, and a panel of participants in the Ministry Inquiry Program.

We have received proposals for concurrent session presentations from many pastors, professors, and conference and church agency administrators on topics such as the effect of study abroad on vocational decision-making; bi-vocational pastors; the nature of young adult faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; personal journeys of calling; and vocational discernment and leadership development in Mennonite congregations, high schools, colleges, camps, voluntary service programs, and conference-based programs. Although the published deadline for session proposals was March 31, *consideration may be given to strong proposals received by **April 30, 2005**.*

Anyone interested in the topic of vocation and calling in the Mennonite Church is invited to attend the "Cultivating a Culture of Calling" conference. We expect pastors, lay leaders, conference and denominational leaders, administrators of church agencies, teachers at Mennonite schools, guidance counselors and students to attend. For more information about the Call for Papers, conference schedule and registration, see [www.goshen.edu/cultureofcalling](http://www.goshen.edu/cultureofcalling).

## **Faculty Positions**

### **ANCIENT HISTORY AND CLASSICS**

Fresno Pacific University, the only fully accredited private Christian university in California's Central Valley, seeks a faculty position in Ancient History and Classics. FPU serves a diverse population of religious, ethnic and national traditions. See the FPU web site at: <http://www.fresno.edu/dept/personnel/faculty> for full descriptions, requirements, information about the university and downloadable application forms.

## Announcements

### Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies

1. The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies welcomes applications for visiting fellows. Openings for spring and fall 2006.
  2. The deadline for the 2006 Dale Brown Book Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies is November 15, 2005.
- For more information, see [www.ETOWN.EDU/youngctr](http://www.ETOWN.EDU/youngctr) or email David Eller, Director, at [ellerd@ETOWN.EDU](mailto:ellerd@ETOWN.EDU)

### Opportunity for a Graduate Student

In April of 2002, Toronto United Mennonite Church began an intensive process of study, discernment, and healing and reconciliation. The process focused on the issue of human sexuality, especially homosexuality, and was begun following the disclosure of our associate pastor of her lesbian sexual orientation. In the process, we have produced a quantity of documentary material. We are now seeking a graduate student in the social sciences who may be interested in using this material to write a thesis or dissertation on our process. Some financial assistance may be available. For more information, please contact Richard Ratzlaff, [rratzlaff@yahoo.com](mailto:rratzlaff@yahoo.com).

## Journals

### *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology*

Published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and the Institute for Theology and the Church at Canadian Mennonite University  
Vol. 6, Number 1 (Spring 2005): Scripture  
Vol. 6, Number 2 (Fall 2005): Worship  
To subscribe contact [visionsubscribe@ambs.edu](mailto:visionsubscribe@ambs.edu) or [vision@cmu.ca](mailto:vision@cmu.ca).

*The Conrad Grebel Review* is an interdisciplinary journal of Christian inquiry devoted to the thoughtful, sustained discussion of spirituality, ethics, theology and culture from a broadly-based Mennonite perspective.  
Winter 2005 (now available): "Gifts of the Red Tent: Women Creating," papers from the recent Women Doing Theology Conference  
More info? Send an e-mail to: [cgreview@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cgreview@uwaterloo.ca).

*Direction* is the academic journal of Mennonite Brethren in the U.S. and Canada. Begun in 1972 and published semiannually, *Direction* includes exegetical and topical articles on a variety of issues, perspectives on the international church, recommended reading lists, and book reviews of important new works. *Direction* seeks to equip the church for well-considered, relevant witness to Christ and his kingdom. Its writers are primarily academics among M.B. and other Mennonites, but work by pastors and other informed writers are also published. The journal's Web site includes full-text of almost all back issues and contact, subscription, and submission information: [www.directionjournal.org](http://www.directionjournal.org). The general editor, Douglas B. Miller, may be reached at [DougM@tabor.edu](mailto:DougM@tabor.edu).

## Books

Bergen, Wesley. *Reading Ritual: Leviticus in Postmodern Culture*. Continuum/JSOT Supplement, 2005 (forthcoming).

Gundy, Jeff. *Walker in the Fog: On Mennonite Writing*. C. Henry Smith Series, vol.5. Cascadia Publishing House; Herald Press, 2005.

\*Krabill, James R., David R. Shenk and \*Linford Stutzman, eds. *Anabaptists Meeting Muslims: A Calling for Presence in the Way of Christ*. Herald Press, 2005.

Miller, John. *Proverbs*. Believers Church Bible Commentary. Herald Press, 2004.

Mulligan, Mary Alice, Diane Turner-Sharazz, \*Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm and Ronald Allen (authors). *Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons*. Chalice Press, 2005.

Roth, John D. *Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice*. Herald Press, 2005.

*The Ernest Becker Reader*. Selected, edited and introduced by Daniel Liechty. University of Washington Press, 2005.

Weaver-Zercher, David L., ed. *Writing The Amish: The Worlds of John A. Hostetler*. Penn State University Press, 2005 (forthcoming).

Where there are multiple authors/editors, the A-MSN member is indicated with an asterisk.