

ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE SCHOLARS NETWORK NEWSLETTER

www.AnabaptistScholars.net

Volume 9, Number 1
Spring 2006

The Necessity of Literary Knowing:

Jeff Gundy's *Walker in the Fog* and the Flourishing of Mennonite/s Writing¹

By David Wright

In 1990, Conrad Grebel College hosted an academic conference focused on "Mennonite/s Writing in Canada." Seven years later, Goshen College was the site of the first "Mennonite/s Writing in the U. S." conference. And in 2002 Goshen again was the locale for a third such meeting of academics and writers, this time extending the title to "Mennonite/s Writing: An International Conference." In October 2006, Bluffton University will take up the responsibility of hosting yet another conference on Mennonite/s Writing. These gatherings have produced a wide range of scholarship on Mennonite writers and their work.² However, their equally important legacy has been to serve as both indicators of and catalysts for a renaissance among imaginative writers with Mennonite connections, a flourishing that is finally becoming evident to networks of Anabaptist scholars in other disciplines and to congregations across North America.

Since his first poetry collection appeared in 1992, Jeff Gundy has become a central voice among this growing membership of Mennonite writers, a position that Gundy may or may not relish given his predilection for identifying himself as a "lurker" on the margins. His new collection of essays, *Walker in the Fog: On Mennonite Writing*,³ will nudge Gundy even closer to the middle of the vibrant conversation that has become poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction by Mennonites in the United States and Canada. Along with poet Julia Kasdorf (among others), Gundy's own writings (four collections of poetry and two books of creative non-fiction) have been crucial in helping to shape a sane and fertile space for writing by Mennonites.⁴ And with his newest volume he demonstrates his continued commitment to the cultivation of such creative work, a commitment grounded in Gundy's conviction that "imaginative writing, as much as any other human activity, is a gift from God."⁵ While he rec-

ognizes that "like all gifts it may be abused or squandered," Gundy contends that the recent flourishing of writing by Mennonites "has been done with care, integrity, and joy, and that we can all be enriched by the gifts that have been given."⁶

While most of the fourteen essays that comprise *Walker in the Fog* have already appeared in various publications, including *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, *The Georgia Review*, and *Mennonite Life*, Gundy has revamped and revised each of these pieces to present a comprehensive and often surprising guide to the varied landscape of Mennonite writing. Gundy's writing, while informed by literary, critical discourse and historical, theological scholarship, is clever and accessible for audiences already familiar with recent Mennonite writing and those (both within and outside of Mennonite circles) surprised to hear such works even exist. A careful reading of this landmark study can provide a compelling glimpse of the value of literary knowledge for contemporary Anabaptist scholars, educators, and members of local congregations.

Beginning with his helpful introduction, Gundy offers both an overview of Mennonite encounters with literary creativity and close readings of specific U. S. and Canadian writers. The more comprehensive chapters—"Myths of Origin and Arrival," "Humility in Mennonite Literature," "Beyond Johnson's Dog," and "Story, Mastery, Gelassenheit, Imagination, Eros"—describe the historical range and development of Mennonite writing and offer a sense of how problematic this process has been for various writers. Gundy understands that recent Mennonite writers exist, in part, because Rudy Wiebe, Dallas Wiebe, Julia Kasdorf and others wrote literary works that had genuine consequence for their relationships with their Mennonite communities and personal histories. Gundy identifies the "Ur-myth of the modern Mennonite writer"

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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.

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From the Editor . . .

The article from Reta Halteman Finger (p. 5) completes our three-issue series on scholars and the media. Finger discusses the dynamics of addressing the church, and of doing so amidst the challenges of communicating to undergraduate students. In the next issue, we will begin a series on scholars and congregations.

David Wright's review essay (p. 1) of Mennonite writing takes Jeff Gundy's *Walker in the Fog* as a point of departure. This article leads into the "Mennonite/s Writing" conference to be held October 26-29, 2006 at Bluffton University. As always, I welcome letters or other responses to any of the essays published.

Two other upcoming conferences must be singled out: the Mennonite Graduate Student Conference (sponsored by the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre), and the "Confession of Faith" conference, both in Elkhart (see p.10). The latter is co-sponsored by the A-MSN.

During one of the lunch breaks during this conference, we will host an open discussion on the mandate and purpose of the A-MSN. Until now, our working mandate has been something like "to serve the networking needs of members" but we want to consider more carefully just what we should be doing and why. In addition, we will welcome your feedback about the kinds of conferences we should become involved with or initiate. Our first conference venture was in 2003, when we organized the "Ritual in Anabaptist Communities Conference" together with the Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association. If you are unable to attend, please send me your comments and suggestions.—*Jeremy M. Bergen*

Transitions

James Brenneman has been appointed President of Goshen College.

Jennifer Graber has been appointed Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the College of Wooster (Ohio).

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower directs the Fresno Pacific University graduate program in Peacemaking and Conflict Studies in the School of Humanities, Religion and Social Science and also directs the graduate program in Leadership and Organizational Studies in the School of Business. The peacemaking program has a cooperative arrangement with San Joaquin College of Law which allows a student to simultaneously earn the J.D. and M.A. in peacemaking degrees.

Derek Suderman has been appointed Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Conrad Grebel University College.

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as the “kiss-it-goodbye” story of an individual breaking form a closed and repressive community, a “variation of the Mennonite martyr myth” in which the artist is the daring hero persecuted for his or her convictions.⁷ But Gundy recognizes this as, in part, an over-simplifying myth, one that explains only a portion of the work that has emerged from those connected to the Mennonite tradition. The story of the writer who must necessarily separate from her community in order to speak the truth does not, for instance, account for Gundy’s own growing up in central Illinois’ Waldo Mennonite Church. The church he describes as “plain but vigorous” did not fill Gundy or his writing with an anxiety that he might “be punished for drawing too much attention to myself . . . or for telling the communal story in the wrong way.”⁸

As Gundy articulates his communal and individual story of Mennonite writing, readers can see him developing critical categories for understanding this literary output. He synthesizes his own Mennonite experience with an expansive theology and eclectic borrowing from various school of literary theory. One of the most useful chapters in this regard is “Humility in Mennonite Literature.” Gundy not only traces the various nuances of the “humility tradition” in Mennonite life, but he examines in depth the ways that the term has caused problems for Mennonite writers. He is unhappy with a simplistic and restrictive definition of humility, but is equally uncomfortable in rejecting such a basic idea altogether. Here, as in several other essays, Gundy turns to the pioneering Mennonite writer and critic John Ruth to frame his discussion. Ruth provides Gundy with an early version of taking Mennonite writing seriously and, at the same time, challenging writers to not simplistically accept or reject their own community or the larger world. In applying Ruth’s notions to various writers (including himself), Gundy emerges with his own, refined understanding of humility, a version of the term that has value beyond the Mennonite world. He writes that humility:

defined as a stance toward the world that recognizes our interwoven responsibilities and needs for each other, our limits and poverty and defenselessness, is far more than an obsolete notion of a few fanatics. It is responsible, healthy, sustaining, fertile, and worth all the distribution we can manage.⁹

And such a humility can be expanded and deepened, suggests Gundy, by encountering the work of Mennonite writers who have “begun to unfold for us some of the syllables, words and phrases that make up our rich and equivocal tradition of humility and to imagine the directions that tradition may be guiding us.” This is an extraordinary challenge to both Mennonite writers and readers.

The chapters focused more exclusively on individual

authors provide ideal examples of how to engage in generous, critical and contextualized reading. Those unfamiliar with important Canadian writers will be drawn toward the work of poets Di Brandt and Patrick Friesen and novelist Rudy Wiebe. American Mennonite poets Kasdorf, Jean Janzen, Keith Ratzlaff and others, also receive Gundy’s useful critical attentions. The difficult part in all of these cases is that Gundy knows these writers. They have been his mentors, teachers, and friends. Yet what keeps his readings of their poems and prose clear and useful is Gundy’s honesty. He is not afraid to be critical about what he reads, and he is clear about his own relationships with the writers and their work. Perhaps what this book demonstrates as much as any critical method is a how to self-consciously cultivate a living literary tradition.

To develop a Mennonite literary tradition, as Gundy understands it, Mennonite writers and readers must get over our fear of and/or fascination with the world. In several of the pieces here, he argues forcefully for the value of critical categories, literary models, and generous friendships that engage a whole range of “other” traditions. Whether it’s his fondness for the work of poet William Stafford or a rigorous borrowing from the theoretical work of Edward Said, Gundy has no fear of the larger world. And neither does he fetishize its allure. “If the Earth is the Lord’s, Do We Have to Hate the World?” is a brilliant mediation on the value of tradition and memory in light of the inevitable richness and attractions of the world. “I would not surrender the community of memory that has sustained my own life,” writes Gundy, “nor relinquish the dream and the charge of remaking the world in the image of God, which is surely our most important work. But I would insist that our current state of transformation is not necessarily cause for despair.”¹⁰ Gundy understands, and embodies in these essays, the complex calling to be narratively, imaginatively and faithfully present in the “only world we have, the world where we have been told that God is everywhere.”¹¹

One of the many pleasures of this work of literary criticism is in the way that Gundy includes himself and his own literary writing as part of his critical prose. Elements of his personal narrative (seen in more detail in his earlier prose works *Community of Memory* and *Scattering Point*) enliven and deepen his critical insights. Discussions of his own poems place him alongside the writers he examines, often sharpening the focus on how such works come into being and what life they take on after they’ve been made public. And the glorious rant that is the book’s final essay “Heresy and the Individual Talent” shows what a writer can do when, seized by his own quirky life, informed by a cranky sense of justice, and

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inspired by a thorough and troubled knowledge of his own community, he dances toward prophecy.

Back in 1995, Stephen Dintaman, writing about Harold Bender's famous "Anabaptist Vision," suggested that "perishing communities (and ideas) produce historians and sociologists and academic conferences. Flourishing communities produce preachers missionaries and prayer meetings. Right now the Anabaptist Vision is producing lots of the former, few of the latter."¹² Dintaman's provocative claim suggests that only one of these two alternatives is possible. But what sort of tradition, then, produces poets, novelists, storytellers, and playwrights?

Gundy, Kasdorf and countless others would counter that they are indeed rejecting the notion that to write in literary ways is to deny the vibrancy of their communal and faith tradition. As Hostetler puts it in the afterword to her groundbreaking anthology of Mennonite poetry, this "new openness" to literary forms "among literate Mennonites" is a sign of maturation, not abdication of the faith tradition, "the Mennonite community's acknowledgment and valuing of the kinds of challenges and questions that artistic exploration and representation pose."¹³

Like Hostetler and Kasdorf (and Rudy Wiebe, John Ruth, Jean Janzen, Hildi and Paul Tiessen, and many others before him) Gundy's primary prophetic task is, among many other possibilities, the call for readers, scholars, and worshippers to pay attention to the imaginative work of writers in our midst, to understand that the evidence of God's gracious and difficult presence in the world might be missed if we neglect these challenging voices. Literary knowing is a different way of knowing than other means of encountering the world. Gundy describes it as a kind of embodied gnosis, "knowledge that is not simply intellectual nor spiritual nor sensual but all of these (and more) at once."¹⁴ His study of Mennonite writing offers evidence off the riches and gifts to be found. Along with Hostetler's *A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry*, Julia Kasdorf's *The Body and the Book: Writing a Mennonite Life*, Jeff Gundy's *Walker in the Fog* is central to understanding, preserving and valuing these necessary ways of knowing that will not, and should not, disappear anytime soon.

David Wright teaches writing and literature at Wheaton College, IL. He is the author of A Liturgy for Stones (Cascadia, 2003) and maintains a web presence at: www.dwpoet.com.

¹An earlier version of this essay appeared as a review in *Illinois Mennonite Heritage Quarterly* 32.3 (Fall 2005): 1, 39-40.

²Several scholarly journals devoted entire issues to the proceeding of these conferences, including: Hildi Froese Tiessen, ed., "Mennonite/s Writing in Canada." *The New Quarterly* 10 (Spring-Summer 1990); Ervin Beck and John D. Roth, eds. "Mennonite/s Writing in the U.S.," *MQR* 72 (Oct. 1998); and Ervin Beck and John D. Roth, eds. "Mennonite/s Writing: An International Conference." *MQR* 76 (Oct. 2003). Beck and Tiessen, primary organizers of these events, have played key roles in documenting the work of Mennonite writers and encouraging critical inquiry into their work. Beck's extensive bibliographies on Mennonite writing can be found at: www.goshen.edu/english/ervinb/links.html

³Jeff Gundy, *Walker in the Fog: On Mennonite Writing* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2005).

⁴Gundy's two collections of creative non-fiction are: *A Community of Memory: My Days with George and Clara* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1995), and *Scattering Point: The World in a Mennonite Eye* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003). His poetry collections are: *Inquiries*. (Huron, OH: Bottom Dog P, 1992); *Flatlands* (Cleveland: Cleveland State UP, 1995); *Rhapsody with Dark Matter* (Huron, OH: Bottom Dog P, 2000); and *Deerflies* (Cincinnati: Word-Tech, 2004).

⁵Gundy, *Walker*, 21.

⁶Ibid., 21.

⁷Ibid., 26.

⁸Ibid., 28.

⁹Ibid., 61.

¹⁰Ibid., 236.

¹¹Ibid., 240.

¹²Dintaman makes this claim in *Refocusing a Vision*, ed. John Roth (Goshen, IN: Mennonite Historical Society, 1995), 50.

¹³Ann Hostetler, ed., *A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry* (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2003), 189. Besides this anthology, it should be noted that Good Books and Cascadia Publishing, two presses connected to the Anabaptist tradition, have published numerous volumes of poetry in recent years. Many other writers from within the tradition continue to produce work through the literary and mainstream press, including Canadian novelist Miriam Toews' prize-winning and controversial *A Complicated Kindness* (Vintage Canada, 2004).

¹⁴Gundy, *Walker*, 257.

Am I Making Myself Clear?

A Reflection on Scholars and the Media

by Reta Halteman Finger

Jesus compared the reign of God to a mustard seed that grows into a bush so that the birds make nests in it. John Dominic Crossan comments that this is very odd. If Jesus had compared the reign of God to the great cedars of Lebanon, people would have understood what he was talking about. But mustard was a weed. How is the reign of God like a weed?

Jesus compared the reign of God to a woman taking (unclean) yeast and mixing it with three measures—a huge amount—of flour. An extravagant woman! Why is the reign of God represented in such idiosyncratic terms—even using female roles in a male-oriented culture?

If we as Anabaptist scholars are concerned about whether or how we should approach the media of our day, we might consider the peculiar methods of Jesus, casting seeds helter-skelter and fully expecting that some would fall on hard-packed, rocky, or thorn-infested ground. Would he do it differently if he were here today? Or are we scholars of a different breed entirely? Is it only prophets (and not learned scribes) who inflict weird, wild, and wacky object lessons on a resistant public?

Previous writers in this newsletter have written eloquently of the difficulty of explaining complicated concepts to a public raised on sound-bytes; yet calling for the need to do so. I echo their concerns, but I agree even more strongly with their arguments for engaging the media.

I cannot speak from great experience with the secular media. I have written letters to editors and an occasional opinion piece, but my experience and calling seems to have focused on addressing the church at large. This in itself is no easy task and is fraught with potential misunderstanding. For eighteen years I worked on the Christian feminist magazine *Daughters of Sarah*, fifteen of them as editor with the support of an editorial board within our collective. Our audience was ecumenical, mostly women and supportive men—from liberal-leaners who complained that we were way too tame to those who warned us that the flames of hell licked at the very edges of our heretical pages.

I came into this business with absolutely no journalistic experience, only a gut-level urge to share with others the exciting things I was learning. Few of us had any more experience. But from the beginning we decided that no topic was off-limits. The controlling factors were that any subject was seen through Christian and feminist

lenses. (My own agendas were that the “Christian” aspect be biblical and, wherever possible, include an Anabaptist perspective.)

One issue that set some readers’ teeth on edge was our 1983 issue on “the Goddess,” since at that time She was attracting many religious feminists who were rejecting their church traditions. We certainly tried to deal with this from a Christian perspective, but simply raising the issue was too confusing for some readers. Another focus, in 1987, was on lesbians, which caused another temporary defection from our subscription list. One constant challenge was helping our readers understand the difference between communicating what we understood as truth, and allowing writers to share personal stories—or their own ideas which were not necessarily the perspective of our magazine as a whole. But no doubt the success of *Daughters of Sarah* for many years lay also in the fact that we insisted on clear writing and careful editing. Sloppy or incoherent copy and thoughtless, off-the-cuff statements were not tolerated.

Today I teach Bible at Messiah College, where many students are from evangelical or fundamentalist backgrounds. When it comes to peacemaking, the majority seem closer to a God-and-country position than to any Anabaptist theology. Alas, as the only woman teaching Bible, I am sometimes labeled as the “radical feminist who teaches that God is a woman” even though I never volunteer the now-pejorative word “feminist” unless asked, and even though I only call attention to Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 6-9. But I try not to call God “he” too often, and I do deal with gender issues in class. Beyond that, sometimes raising themes of nonviolence and reconciliation can elicit strong resistance, especially over current issues such as the Iraq war.

When it comes to proclaiming our message as Anabaptist scholars, my hands are quite full with up to 140 students each semester. They misunderstand me, and at times I misunderstand them. The gospel becomes quite complex as we move from ancient Mediterranean cultures to the materialistic, high-tech lives of today’s youth. At the moment my challenge is to help my sophomore students to understand that the Synoptic Gospels do not really teach substitutionary atonement; and my first-year students to distinguish between the two creation stories in Genesis, neither of which was written to counteract evolution.

Perhaps Mennonite scholars ought to consider Jesus’ parabolic approach when it comes to the media. What

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might the parable of the Great Banquet say about political fund-raising dinners? Does the story of the rich man and Lazarus address the American health care crisis or the staggering wealth of corporations like Wal-Mart, Halliburton, or Exxon-Mobil? Do our justice systems today resemble the unjust judge who did not fear God or respect nagging widows? On the other hand, we all know where such inflammatory language led.....

Reta Halteman Finger is assistant professor of New Testament at Messiah College, Grantham, PA. She occasionally writes Sunday School columns in the Mennonite Weekly Review. Ifinger@messiah.edu

Research notes

I recently completed an article of about 3,000 words on "Anabaptist Theology" for InterVarsity's *Global Dictionary of Theology*. This required correspondence with 30-40 people around the globe. I kept at it because I realized that Anabaptists have no such comprehensive treatment, and it could help many of us aid, encourage and learn from each other. I have enough information to expand the article to at least double, and probably would if I knew of a way it might be published and circulated. I can send the copy I submitted to IVP to anyone interested, as long as they don't quote it publicly, orally or in writing.

Tom Finger, Evanston, IL
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I am beginning my work on intimate same-sex relationships by concentrating on how congregations think theologically and biblically about marriage and family. I would be interested in any research on changing patterns of marriage in Mennonite congregations as well as any work on the theology of marriage and family. I am particularly interested in knowing what covenantal relationships (as in our Confession of Faith) means for Mennonites and how this has or has not been connected to biblical understandings of covenant. Contact me if you are interested in dialogue on this subject.

Lydia Harder, Toronto, ON
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I will be on sabbatical in Germany from June to December of 2006 in order to complete the translating and editing of the Marpeck Circle's *Kunstbuch*, a collection of fifty pastoral letters to dispersed congregations. The translation, from the critical modern German edition, is aimed at a non-specialist readership. I will co-ordinate and edit the transla-

tions of others and write an introduction to the volume and to each chapter incorporating the original research of Heino Fast and Martin Rothkegel. The project is sponsored by the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

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It may be of interest that the first volume of the *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* (vol. 8) published by Tyndale House Publishers of Wheaton (2005) has been released. It is a volume of 593 pages with contributions by Larry Walker on Isaiah and me on Jeremiah & Lamentations (pp. 295-593). The commentary based on the *New Living Translation*, includes the Biblical text, Notes and Commentary for each pericope, and the usual Introduction and Bibliography. The series focuses "first on the words of Scripture, then on the theological truths of Scripture."

Elmer Martens
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Many think that the possibility of a better world would obligate a being like God, perfect in power and goodness, to actualize that world. But what if there's no 'best' world, and for every possible world there exists one better? William Rowe has offered a cluster of arguments to the conclusion that in such a 'no best world' scenario, God couldn't create at all because in so doing God's perfect goodness would be compromised. In "Divine Creation and Perfect Goodness in a 'No Best World' Scenario" (*International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 59 [2006]: 25-47) I show that, (a) contrary to Rowe, there's no way make his argument succeed from premises a theist is required to accept, and (b) any attempt to do so will face an intractable dilemma.

In "The Pacifist's Burden of Proof," (*Philosophia Christi* 7 [2005]:107-123) I argue that holding a prophetic and comprehensive Christian pacifism generates a particular sort of intellectual obligation for the pacifist. This obligation arises in part because comprehensive pacifism is extremely counter-intuitive, and thus any who wish to call others to forego violence are obligated to at least attempt to answer the question: "Why?"

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Ph.D. Dissertation Abstract

Barn Razing: Change and Continuity in Identity During Conflict

This dissertation seeks to understand how the identity of a particular people, Mennonites, changes and remains constant during periods of conflict, over time. Identity is approached from a symbolic interactionist and sociological (social) constructivist stance. Using an adapted historical, grounded theory methodology, it explores how a group defines itself during three, decade-long periods of conflict in the twentieth century. The three temporally and geographically bounded periods of conflict in focus are: 1914-1924 Russia/Ukraine, 1934-1944 western Canada, 1977-1987 western Canada (Saskatchewan). The sites of conflict raise competing affiliation demands around identification with the state, religious beliefs, land and belonging. The grounded theory constant comparative method is used to uncover the structure of the concepts and categories comprising Mennonite identity that are utilized by Mennonite leaders during the three periods of conflict. Each conflict site is described in detail followed by an analysis of the categories of identification; the categories and properties that emerge provide a substantive theory of Mennonite identity over time. The dissertation also investigates the dynamics of continuity and change in the content of the categories. Three levels of change are evident: 1) subtle shifts and minor adaptations to context; 2) major fluctuations and temporary suspensions in the use of properties or categories; 3) properties and categories that are discontinued from use. The first two levels of change promote and enable continuity in Mennonite identification. The third level, discontinuity, is then explored in greater depth focusing on detachment from place (the Russian Steppe) and language (German). Taken together these examples highlight the interplay between external factors that promote change and the internal factors that are necessary for change but which also contribute to continuity over time. The dissertation utilizes and contributes to Rogers Smith's notion of "political peoplehood," demonstrating that an entire political people may seek to inspire a sense of "worth" and "trust," and may further integrate these concepts into their group identification. Finally, the research contributes a methodology that identifies a relatively stable core set of categories of identification, as well as probing the dynamics of change over time.

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I'm currently conducting research on links between Anabaptists and black history in the United States and Canada, focusing on involvement in the underground railroad and thereafter. I'm also looking for other scholars to partner with in an international study on this topic.

Timothy D. Epp, Assistant Professor of Sociology
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Faculty Calling Project seeks names for database

Six years ago the Mennonite Board of Education (predecessor of the MCUSA Mennonite Education Agency) called together a committee of six persons (five from the U.S. and one from Canada plus two Higher Education staff persons from the General Conference Mennonite and Mennonite Church) to discuss the creation of a database of potential faculty for Mennonite Colleges/Universities in the U.S. and Canada. This committee (Faculty Calling Project [FCP] Committee) worked on the creation of a database of such individuals across all disciplines. This database presents an additional resource that Academic Deans at the various Mennonite colleges/universities can consult as they search for new faculty.

The FCP Committee invites persons who want to be considered for faculty positions at the Mennonite Colleges/Universities in the United States and/or Canada to submit their vita information for inclusion in the FCP database. If you submit your vita information electronically send it as an attachment (Word document) to:

jenniek@MennoniteEducation.org

Or by postal mail to:

Jennie Kauffman

Mennonite Education Agency

63846 County Road 35, Suite One

Goshen, IN 46528 USA

If you know individuals who you believe should be included in the FCP database please send their names and contact information to the address above. The FCP Committee is particularly interested in persons who readers of this newsletter may know from disciplines outside the area of religious studies. The Academic Deans of our Mennonite colleges/universities and the FCP committee appreciate any assistance that you may give to the effort of expanding the potential pool of candidates in Mennonite Higher Education institutions.

We believe the Mennonite churches of the United States and Canada have a vital stake in helping our colleges and universities locate and recruit highly qualified faculty with a strong committee to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith tradition. —*Marion Schrock, FCP chair*

Faculty Openings

Eastern Mennonite University announces faculty openings beginning Fall 2006.

Biology: Full-time, continuing faculty position in biomedical sciences. Responsibilities include teaching human anatomy and physiology and additional courses which may include microbiology, introductory biology courses, and a course in the candidate's specialty.

Chemistry: Full-time, continuing faculty position in chemistry. Courses include introductory, general, physical or analytical chemistry and/or courses in the General Education program.

Education: Two full-time, continuing faculty positions in Education. Teaching areas include Elementary Education, Special Education, Teaching English as a Second Language.

Nursing: Full-time, continuing faculty position in nursing. Responsibilities include teaching classes in fundamentals and adult health nursing, or adult health and obstetrics, and supervising clinical experiences.

Photography/Digital Media: Full-time, continuing faculty position in digital media and photography.

Theater: Full-time, one-year faculty position in theater. Primary responsibilities are teaching performance related theater courses and directing departmental production.

Responsibilities for each position also include student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship. Further job descriptions available at:
www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email to ugdean@emu.edu. Visit www.emu.edu online. Application review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

J. Denny Weaver. *Becoming Anabaptist: The History and Significance of Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*. Second edition. Herald Press, 2005.

Books

Gerald Biesecker-Mast. *Separation and the Sword in Anabaptist Persuasion: Radical Confessional Rhetoric from Schleithelm to Dordrecht*. The C. Henry Smith Series, vol. 6. Cascadia; Herald Press, 2006. This book examines the emergence of two primary approaches to defending defenselessness among European Mennonites and Hutterites who inherited Anabaptist convictions. The first approach stresses the incompatibility of the peace church with sword-bearing institutions of governance while the second approach emphasizes the complementarity of church and government. These two approaches are often combined in the practical arguments made by Anabaptists, leading to confusion both then and now about the actual social and ethical postures articulated in Anabaptist speech and writing. Mennonite argumentation increasingly supported a dualistic stance—sometimes called two-kingdom theology—that sought protection rather than autonomy from government. Hutterite apologetics by contrast encouraged an antagonistic attitude toward government, preferring to build comprehensive alternative communities that tolerated rather than praised the worldly authority of the magistrate.

Jacob W. Elias. *Remember the Future: The Pastoral Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Herald Press, 2006. This book combines research of the Greco-Roman world with the text of Paul's letters to highlight the ways in which Paul tells his own story of faith and the stories of the congregations he planted.

Karl Koop, ed. *Confessions of Faith in the Anabaptist Tradition, 1527-1660*. Pandora Press, forthcoming.

James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen, eds. *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation: Essays in honor of Wilbert E. Shenk*. Orbis Books, 2006. Twenty-six missiologists from key Christian denominational groups reflect on convergences and challenges in mission theology.

C. Norman Kraus. *Using Scripture in a Global Age: Framing Biblical Issues*. Cascadia, 2006.

Donald B. Kraybill and James Hurd. *Horse and Buggy Mennonites: Hoofbeats of Humility in a Postmodern World*. Pennsylvania German Society Series. Penn State University Press, forthcoming in 2006. This is a first time study and analysis of this rapidly growing group.

Marlene Kropf, **Rebecca Slough**, June Alliman Yoder. *Preparing Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching*. Herald Press, 2006. Using the metaphor of a meal, this book explores how preachers and worship leaders can collaborate on a "Sunday dinner" of praise that feeds individual Christians and their congregations. The authors address steps of planning, preparing and hosting worship.

Calls for Papers/Proposals

The Amish in America: New Identities & Diversities

An International Conference, June 7-9, 2007

The Young Center of Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA

The conference will focus on the changing nature of Amish identity and the growing diversity of Amish life in North America. Conference planners welcome proposals for papers or poster sessions on topics related to any facet of the Amish experience in America. Proposals are invited from all academic disciplines as well as from practitioners who provide services to the Amish. Presentations may cover historical as well as contemporary themes.

Proposal Format: For each paper or poster session provide a title, a one page abstract of 150 to 200 words, and a one page resume with full contact information and institutional affiliation.

Proposal deadline: **November 1, 2006**

Submit proposals by e-mail to kraybilld@etown.edu. The program committee will screen proposals and inform presenters of the committee's decision by January 10, 2007. For more information, consult the Young Center's website at www.etown.edu/youngctr or e-mail Donald B. Kraybill at kraybilld@etown.edu

Mennonite Catholic Theological Colloquium (MCTC)

The MCTC has opened a new round of conversation on the topic of Sacramentality, at:

www.bridgefolk.net/theology/colloquia.php.

Since Bridgefolk assumed responsibility for the colloquium our intention has been not only to begin holding face-to-face meetings, as we did last July, but to continue inviting responses to selected papers. We have modified the format of our earlier colloquia in a couple of important ways, however:

* While previous exchanges occurred quietly behind the scenes, we will now be using an "open source" approach.

Papers will appear on our website even as the conversation unfolds.

* While Mennonite and Catholic scholars are especially invited to participate, others are welcome to contribute as well -- including interested scholars from other traditions and all participants in the Bridgefolk movement.

Our new colloquium opens with a paper by Mennonite theologian Thomas Finger on "Sacramentality" and Roman Catholic responses by Dennis Martin and Margaret R. Pfeil. We invite others to continue the conversation, by responding either to Finger or to others or to both. Specific guidelines appear along with papers at www.bridgefolk.net/theology/colloquia.php. Responses should be sent to mctc@bridgefolk.net.

Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies

Established at Elizabethtown College in 1986, the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies is the only research institute in the nation devoted exclusively to the scholarly study of the groups that have emerged from the Anabaptist and Pietist (A&P) traditions. The Center reaches national and international audiences through its research, publications, visiting scholars, and public programs. The Young Center is now soliciting proposals for a new series with the Johns Hopkins University Press that seeks to:

1. Stimulate and encourage original/creative scholarship in the field
2. Provide interpretive scholarship in A&P topics for general readers
3. Provide an avenue of publication for scholars in A&P studies
4. Solicit historical and contemporary studies of A&P topics and/or communities
5. Give primary attention to North American studies with occasional European historical projects
6. Identify high quality scholarly manuscripts that are accessible to general readers, including books with crossover potential as trade books and supplemental texts in academic courses
7. Solicit manuscripts which advance original scholarship in A&P studies as well as those that synthesize key findings in A&P scholarship
8. Acquire manuscripts of national scope and significance, with occasional regional studies in regions with large A&P populations

The series typically does not publish fiction, poetry, festschriften, memoirs, conference proceedings, reprints, or doctoral dissertations unless they have been substantially revised and organized into a suitable format for a book.

For more information, or to submit a proposal, contact the series editors: Donald B. Kraybill (kraybilld@etown.edu), distinguished professor at Elizabethtown College and senior fellow in the Young Center, for proposals on Anabaptist topics. David B. Eller (ellerdb@etown.edu), director of the Young Center and professor of history and religion at Elizabethtown College, for proposals on Pietist topics.

Conferences

Joint Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network Conference

Holding Fast to the Confession of our Hope: The *Confession of Faith* 10 Years Later

June 8-10, 2006, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

The purpose of this study conference is to describe how the confession fits in our church's confessional history and to assess how it has functioned in the life of an increasingly diverse community of faith. The conference is planned to be characterized by critical analysis and debate, in order to foster constructive proposals for the unity of the church. In the view of the planners this conference will be a success if it can create a mutually respectful conversation between scholars and ministers, conservatives and liberals, Canadians and Americans, the majority and increasingly significant minority groups.

The consultation includes specific A-MSN "breakout sessions."

NEW: The registration fee for those who register after May 15 has been reduced to \$119.

Co-sponsors: AMBS Church Leadership Center; Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS; Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association.

Registration and schedule information:

www.ambbs.edu/php/ims/ims_confession_consultation.php
www.hillsdale.edu/AcademicAssociations/Sociology/ASAA/Confession

Mennonite Graduate Student Conference

The third in the recent series of Mennonite Graduate Student Conferences, sponsored by Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, will be held **June 10-12, 2006**, at AMBS, Elkhart, IN, immediately following the "Confession of Faith" conference. The conference theme is "Exclusion." The primary purpose of the Mennonite Graduate Student Conference is to provide Mennonite graduate students, particularly doctoral students, an opportunity to present their academic research in a collegial interdisciplinary context. These conference have involved students in Philosophy, English, Sociology, Peace Studies, Religion, Theology, Biblical Studies, Ethics, History.

Travel bursaries are available thanks to a grant from the Mennonite Education Agency. Register by June 1 to qualify for a travel bursary. Schedule and registration information is at: www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/tmtc/gradconf.shtml

Mennonite/s Writing

Registration information for Mennonite/s Writing: Beyond Borders, to be held **October 26-29, 2006** at Bluffton University, will be available soon. A lively and full program of creative and critical readings, panels, and discussion sessions is in the works, beginning with Kathleen Norris's keynote address on Thursday evening and culminating Sunday morning in a worship celebration and final panel discussion reflecting on the event and future directions for Mennonite/s writing.

A partial list of featured writers and critics: Rudy Wiebe, Jean Janzen, John Ruth, Di Brandt, Julia Kasdorf, Hildi Froese Tiessen, Ann Hostetler, Jeff Gundy, G. C. Waldrep, Keith Ratzlaff, Todd Davis, David Elias, Rhoda Janzen, Janet Kauffman, David Kline, Leonard Neufeldt, Barbara Nickel, Shari Wagner, Linda Wendling, David Wright, Yorifumi Yaguchi.

Those who submitted proposals will be notified by May 15, 2006.

For more information, visit <http://staging.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/> or contact co-chairs Jeff Gundy at gundyj@bluffton.edu or Hildi Froese Tiessen at htiessen@uwaterloo.ca.