



In Touch ... (for now)

See the back cover for more information.

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Message from our Executive Director

After two and half weeks visiting Israel, the West Bank and Jordan, the wheels of the Air Canada jet touched down on the tarmac at Richardson International Airport bringing me to my final destination: home. It was time to unpack.

The suitcase part was easy. The two shirts and one pair of jeans I didn't wear went into drawers, everything else, into the laundry.

What has been harder to unpack are the experiences. As every preacher knows, things only come in threes. So let me briefly describe three experiences that keep swirling around in my head and heart.

In visiting the Holy Sepulchre Church one cannot help but be struck a certain beauty and majesty that two thousand years of history and tradition has tried to house and keep. One also is struck by the conflict that marks almost everything one sees in Jerusalem. The Holy Sepulchre Church is chopped and divided into denominational territories that maintain certain traditions. Finding agreement to make changes and repairs is virtually impossible. But that was not the experience that tugs at me. Our group led down a long and steep staircase into a dark and dank area near the foundation of the church. We gathered around the remains of what was a third century cistern surrounded by an ancient limestone outcrop. In the first century CE, the Romans executed criminals in the shadows of these limestone outcrops. Archeological evidence and ancient history leads to the conclusion that there is a very strong possibility that in this particular moment we were standing in the shadows of the crucifixion. In that moment the old, old story that we have turned into metaphor and symbol and that we have spiritualized became concrete. That was one experience.



Terry Hidichuk, Executive Director

Early in the second week, we spent time at Yad Vashem, the world center of Holocaust Research and Education. In the spirit of the Jewish tradition of "*Vehigadeta Lebincha*" ("And you will tell your children"), Yad Vashem places a heavy emphasis on educating the younger generations about the Holocaust. When one enters the Children's Memorial, one enters darkness except for small twinkling lights that radiate from the ceiling. In the darkness, there is silence except for the shuffling of feet and the odd cough. The silence is interrupted periodically by voices naming children who were victims of the Holocaust. What I had read about became concrete and punctuated by the questions of why and how could this have happened. The silence deafens. That was another experience.

Later that week the group I was travelling with, visited the Muslim village of At - Tuwani in the Hebron hills in the West Bank. The people of At-Tuwani described their experiences of trying to live a life of non-violent resistance in face of change and uncertainty that surrounds their life. Another experience.

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We're on the web
theology.uwinnipeg.ca



Introduction to Theology class Winter 2014: l-r Theresa Gibson, Doug Koop, Chris Wells, Belle Jarniewski and Corinne Cameron with Mark Laird (computer monitor) skyping in to make his class presentation.

Online Blended Options

Theology classes are always more stimulating when a wide variety of points of view are voiced and heard. Accessibility to classes in a variety of times and places is also conducive to wide theological engagement. In order to provide convenient access for students wherever they live, and also to widen theological discourse, some of the courses at the United Centre for Theological Studies are available both locally and at a distance. The Introduction to Theology course pictured here is a blended online course that includes local, distant, live, and recorded access; those who can, meet locally for class at a regular time and place each week, while others access the course through a course web-site where recordings of the class, readings, and discussion threads are available. Distance students can also give presentations and participate 'live' through communication sites like Skype, as shown here. Want to widen your theological engagement? Consider taking a blended course at the UCTS.

Spring Summer Course

GTHEO 7259 003 Pop Culture: Faith in Film - the Asian Traditions

[See timetable for dates and times](#)

Fair enough: **all** world religions are Asian in origin!

Now hold that thought and check the United Centre for Theological Studies website for the upcoming 3 credit spring course in Dialogue Theology.

Film is the literature – increasingly the world literature - of the 20th and now the 21st centuries. And, “*story is to religion as math is to science: foundational.*” Our faiths come alive in our literature, whether sacred or profane.

How does *The Big Lebowski* define Daoism – or does it? Let’s have another cup of coffee and another *Life of Pi*. Registration is now open.

Upcoming Certificate in Theology courses

Certificate in Theology students are you looking for some course credits for your Certificate?

To complete a Certificate in Theology a student needs to complete 10 course credits (in at least four areas of study), and a Practicum. This Spring/Summer Term the United Centre for Theological Studies is offering two Certificate courses taught by experienced Certificate instructors.

Michael Anderson will be teaching a course on the Christian New Testament’s Epistle to the Romans. The class will meet for eight weeks, 3 hours a night (5:45-8:45), on Tuesdays from May 6-June 24.

Rev. Dr. Greg Glatz, director of the Bell Tower Community Café and community minister at Westminster Church, will be teaching a course called “The Great Co-Mission: How Community is Transforming Churches, Mission, and Discipleship.”

Missional church writers and theologians are announcing the dawn of the new parish, in which churches once again become a vibrant part of the community. It works the other way too: in the new parish, the community can become a vibrant part of the church, shaping its understanding and experience of mission ... if churches are open to the possibilities.

Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30PM, May 7 to June 25, 2014, plus two Fridays, 5:30-8:30PM



CLIMATE CHANGE COURSE IN COOPERATION WITH THE



This winter was Winnipeg's coldest since 1898. At the same time, on the other side of the globe, Australia had sizzling temperatures and raging wildfires. While Australia's heat waves and wildfires are clearly related to global warming, Winnipeg's unusually cold winter is also part of the unstable, extreme weather caused by climate change. For decades, indigenous peoples of the South Pacific and the Inuit of Canada's north have been calling for action on climate change. Manitoba's polar bears have become international symbols of species extinction, and larger numbers of people of European origin are now becoming aware that climate change will cause untold human suffering. Public concern and desire to act is mounting in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Should Christians and other spiritual people be taking action and, if so, how? Next winter, the United Centre for Theological Studies will bring together people from Canada and the South Pacific to explore climate change and what religious people can do. Elaine Wainwright, from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and Arthur Walker-Jones, from the University of Winnipeg will teach a course on climate change for religious leaders and lay people. Participants from the two schools will be able to sit in class together using University of Winnipeg's Cisco Telepresence (videoconferencing) room and WebEx meeting software. Elaine is an internationally known feminist scholar and author of several books including

Women Healing/Healing Women: The Genderization of Healing in Early Christianity and Shall We Look for Another: A Feminist Re-Reading of the Matthean Jesus. Arthur is an expert in ecological hermeneutics of the Hebrew Bible and the author of *The Green Psalter* and *Hebrew for Biblical Interpretation*. Also contributing to the course will be indigenous peoples impacted by climate change, scientists, business people, religious leaders and activists. The course will include the science of climate change, insights from Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the South Pacific, biblical and ethical analysis, and strategies for action. Register early, because seats in the Telepresence room are limited.

Field Course with Global College in Israel and the West Bank

The United Centre for Theological Studies and the Global College are planning to offer a course in the Winter Term 2015. The course is entitled "Theological Reflections in Context: Religion, Rights and Relationships in Israel and the West Bank". This is a 6 credit hour course that explores the issues in Israel-Palestinian relations with particular attention to the perspectives and contributions of the three Abrahamic faith traditions, along with secular narratives. The course will meet once a week on campus and include two weeks in Israel and the West Bank. This field portion will include guest lectures from various individuals and groups, visits to sites of historical, religious and political significance. More information to follow.



Ridd Institute News



Boston Pizza executives, senior Winnipeg Police services officers and Chief Devon Clunis present the opportunity fund cheque to Dr. Lloyd Axworthy at the For the Sake of the City Multifaith Leadership Breakfast on February 27, 2014.

For the Sake of the City

It was a vision of the city – any city – as it ought to be . . .

On February 27th, inspired by the United Nations Week for Religious Harmony, designated every February by the General Assembly, The United Centre for Theological Studies and the Ridd Institute of the Global College partnered with the Manitoba Multi faith Council to host the inaugural ***Multifaith Leadership Breakfast: For the Sake of the City.***

One hundred thirty leaders from Winnipeg’s business, arts, political, civil and faith communities gathered in historic Convocation Hall for a simple continental breakfast supplied by the University of Winnipeg Club.

The leaders ate, mingled, made and renewed acquaintance and listened to Winnipeg Police Services Chief Devon Clunis assess, acclaim and advance a vision of Winnipeg as a model city for a vision of unity in diversity.

The audience was captivated, from the opening reflection by Elder and former United Church Moderator, the Very Rev. Dr. Stan MacKay, to the presentation by the Police Association of a very large cheque for a very large sum to President Axworthy to swell the Opportunity Fund.

Echoing Gandhi, the Chief challenged the assembly to recognize the community’s need to eradicate the worst of poverty and to recognize the extraordinary nature of this multifaceted and multifaith jewel of a city in the heart of the continent.

Next iteration: February 26th, 2015. **Be sure to mark your calendars!**



Knowles-Woodsworth Centre News



" Bill Blaikie at Emmanuel College, Victoria University, Toronto, with one of the banners on campus celebrating distinguished alumni in the background. Bill was in Toronto on October 16th to introduce prominent Canadian and United Church theologian Douglas John Hall, Professor Emeritus at McGill, on the occasion of what Hall, now 85 years old, said was his last public lecture. The title of the lecture was "The Future of the Church."

On November 1st, 2013, Bill Blaikie was the keynote speaker at Faith in the City, a two day conference at Augustine United Church on faith and politics in cities, and Winnipeg in particular.

On November 19th, 2013, Bill was interviewed on Context With Lorna Dueck, a national Christian current affairs show produced in Toronto. It was broadcast nationally, and locally on Global TV, on Sunday December 1st. The show featured Bill in conversation with Lorna and Michael Ignatieff about political scandals and the controversy surrounding Mayor Rob Ford of Toronto.

On January 17th, 2014, Bill gave the first talk in a six week Friday afternoon series at the University sponsored by the Political Science Department. His topic was the role the NDP played in the defeat of the Clark government in Dec.1979, and how so much of the next 30 years was shaped by one vote.

On March 24th, at McNally Robinson bookstore, Bill interviewed former UofW Religious Studies Prof. John Badertscher at the launch of John's book, Fragments of Freedom.

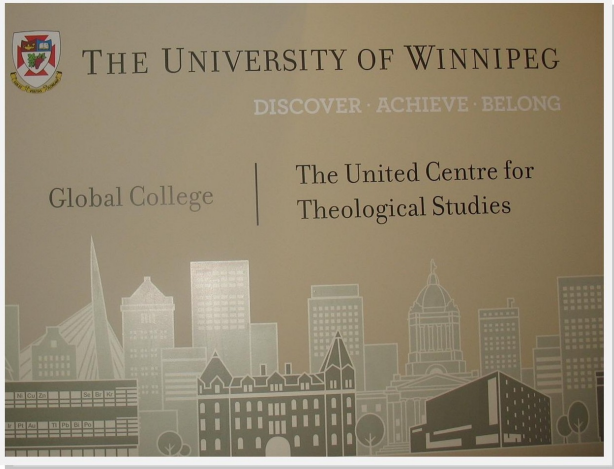
On April 5th, Bill, as a former Minister of Conservation in Manitoba, served as moderator of a panel discussion at an event at John Black Memorial United Church on the future of Lake Winnipeg.

On May12th, Bill will give a lecture entitled Secularization and the Social Gospel at the Spring Institute on Secularism in Canada put on by the Religious Studies Department, in which context the Knowles-Woodsworth Centre is one of the co-sponsors of bringing prominent Canadian journalist Chantal Hebert to Winnipeg as keynote speaker on May 14th.



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The United Centre for Theological Studies is committed to excellence in theological education within a liberal arts University. We welcome all those who wish to study theology and we seek to empower leaders for religious and social service by providing a safe and respectful environment for critical reflection that is contextual and global in scope and values social and ecological justice. We are shaped by the historic contributions of the United Church of Canada and its commitment to the social gospel movement, liberation theology, and whole world ecumenism.



**New name, new look, new newsletter title.....
What do you think our newsletter should be called?
Last chance to send your suggestions to Sandy Peterson
s.peterson@uwinnipeg.ca ASAP!**

Beat the RUSH, Register for Spring Summer term NOW! **Bursary Deadline June 1, 2014**

[Timetable](#) Remember you must be registered to qualify for a bursary!

Continued from front page

As I do unpack from the trip; two words stay with me: concrete and complexity.

The stories of faith, the ones I learned in Sunday School and have preached on for a lifetime now became attached to geography in ways I could not have imagined. It wasn't so much having seen proof that Jesus walked here or had a meal there or that David slew Goliath over near that tree. No, it was more profound that that. The stories became attached to place and time. It wasn't so much about facts, it was about a truth that became concrete.

The second word is complexity. Early one morning at Wadi Qelt in the Judean Wilderness, we had an opportunity to take time in silence and to sit and to meditate, think and nap if you wanted I guess. I used the time to look at the wilderness. At first it was brown and grey and bleak and dead. The landscape was rock and sand that went forever. As I continued looking, the colours changed. Hues of purple and blue started to appear. Shortly after that green appeared under the brown and the grey and the bleak. Under the surface what appears dead were signs of life. What you see at first is not what you end up with. From my all too brief time there, that transforming landscape symbolized the complexity of what is old yet new. It is a place given its birth in conflict and continues to evolve in conflict yet there are signs of hope and life and possibility.

For me to say that this trip was life changing would be far too melodramatic. All I know is that there is a lot more unpacking to do.

