



# Outward from the Centre

## Message from our Executive Director

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On February 13<sup>th</sup> a group of 10 students and instructors from Global College and The United Centre for Theological Studies boarded an airplane and landed in Tel Aviv, Israel to begin a fourteen-day study tour. During that period of time we listened to fifteen presenters, visited Hebrew University and the Minerva Centre for Human Justice, Birzeit University in Ramallah, and Al Quds University in the West Bank. We had Shabbat dinner with Israeli families in Jerusalem and had homestays with Palestinian Christian families near Bethlehem. We visited Yad Vashem, the World Centre for Holocaust Research and refugee camps Beth Jela. We met with a retired Colonel from the Israeli Army (IDF) and a financial officer from the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA). The list could continue. Our agenda was full including some time to relax at the Dead Sea. We returned home on February 28<sup>th</sup> exhausted but with minds filled with truths, half-truths, contextual truths



Terry Hidichuk, Executive Director

that didn't so much as clarify positions but perhaps clarified our questions. That is not a bad thing. Others may disagree but I have come to conclusion is that the political reality of Israel and West is not clear. It shrouded in grey cloth and that is not about to change in the near future.

Later in this newsletter you will read the reflections of Michael Thibert. Michael was one of the students on the trip. What I want to do is to offer some reflections on the experience from the point of view of an instructor.

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First of all, this was the first opportunity for Global College and the UCTS to deliver educational programming as a joint venture. Because the Centre offers graduate education and the College offers undergraduate education, some accommodation had to be made. The syllabi for both programs were similar but additional assignments were added to the to the UCTS portion to accommodate graduate requirements.

The engagement between graduate Theology students and those students in Human Rights provided an interesting and exciting opportunity. The program was structured with an awareness of differing interests and sensitivities. As group dynamics developed, first in class in Winnipeg, and later during the trip itself, there was dialogue and conversation that was respectful of difference yet challenging to each other's opinions and point of view. We grew not only in the understanding of this particular conflict but also in the nature of living with difference and diversity.

This was also the first time I participated in Field Education so I was very thankful for Dr. Dean Peachey, his experience, his expertise and his generous collegiality. Learning takes on different dimensions "in the field" than it does in the classroom. We didn't "see" everything and there are people that we didn't talk to that may have made the experience richer but the goal wasn't perfection; it was participation. Most evenings we gathered together to debrief from the day. These became important conversations. We talked at length about the vantage point of white privilege. Our position, as observers, we concluded was not benign. We came out of privilege and opportunity that many of the people we met did not have. We can observe and reflect and even comment but we will go home to relative peace and continued privilege. We went home with many questions but one more glaring than the others: what do we do with this experience?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who supported us in prayer, in thought and with resources. Thank you.

Shalom, Salam, Peace Terry Hidichuk

### **The Creative Campus: Living Sustainability**

In honour of Earth Month (April), The University of Winnipeg is pleased to premiere *The Creative Campus: Living Sustainability*, created by Dr. Ian Mauro, renowned academic, filmmaker and UWinnipeg faculty member (Geography).

The 15-minute documentary highlights UWinnipeg's efforts to promote and program environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability across the campus and community. It tells the remarkable stories of how UWinnipeg faculty, students and staff contribute to a living laboratory for community engagement and action on sustainability. This has resulted in achievements in building retrofit and design, greenhouse gas reductions, social enterprise, local food procurement, and cultural sharing that demonstrate UWinnipeg is a truly *Creative Campus*.

[Click here to watch!](#)



News and notes:



On April 10, 2015 two Theology students participated in The University of Winnipeg's Second Annual Graduate Students Three-Minute Thesis Competition.

Adel Compton - What Winnipeg Needs Right Now: An Emerging Aboriginal Young Adult Co-Creative Leadership Model. Who gathers their community every week to create safety and non-violence? Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO). Where do they gather? Every Friday evening a megaphone and bell ringing announce the weekly Meet Meat the Bell Tower (MMBT) event at the corner of Selkirk and Powers. What difference does it make? In a city MacLean's tags as the most racist in Canada, young Aboriginal leaders are creating safe space for Winnipeg's North End. They see new possibilities for Aboriginal children and youth. They partner with others to make positive outcomes happen. And, it's working. Crime rates have been dropped. North End spirit is rising. What can MMBT teach Winnipeg? Aboriginal youth leaders demonstrate the power of love to encourage non-violence. They model the strength of compassion and respect for all our neighbours as the way of hospitality, the way forward for Winnipeg.

Tanis Kolisnyk - Indigenous Anglicans in Canada: A New Agape and the Path to Self-Determination. The encounter between Indigenous peoples and settlers in North America is rife with challenges, missed opportunities, and marred by colonial domination. The Anglican Church of Canada is part of this history and is working to find ways forward in healing and reconciliation for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Anglicans. The journey toward self-determination of Indigenous Anglicans within the present structure of the Anglican Church of Canada has not been without struggles and decades of work to reach new goals. What are the internal and external barriers that are impeding self-determination of Indigenous Anglicans in the Anglican Church of Canada? The path to self-determination is reviewed in chronological order, with reference to a variety of church documents including A New Agape, outcomes from Sacred Circle gatherings, interviews with ACIP members, and exploration of new pathways in Anglican Indigenous leadership



Back row: Michael Champagne, Terry Hidichuk  
Front row: Jane Barter Moulaison, Adel Compton, Tanis Kolisnyk and Chris

Congratulations to all who participated in the event.

For the full 2015 Colloquium Program - <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/graduate-studies/docs/research/Colloquium%20Program%202015.pdf>



## Where am I?



Figure 1 Northern Part of King Herod's Palace - Masada

When I received the word that I had been accepted into the Human Rights/Theology course on Religion, Rights, and Relationship between Israel and the West Bank – I was immediately overcome by three very distinct sensations at once. Excitement – ‘Are you kidding me!!!!?’ I’m actually going to be going to Israel and actually be able to touch the ground of the Bible. Scared – I was actually going to be standing and praying in front of the Western Wall, touch it, embrace the Holy One in His Divine Presence, ‘OMG!!!!’ Finally, after a few moments, I was extremely humbled. For years I had prayed to God for such an opportunity and here it was. God answered my prayers in His own way, in a way that helped me to be open to something more than my own interpretation. ‘Here I am Lord, if you will help make it happen, I will go’

In Bruce Feiler’s book – Abraham – he describes for us the importance of the City of Jerusalem, it being a ‘touchstone of faith.’ It was for me. It has always been a place that has inspired my imagination. For it was here, this piece of land that religious world that I knew came to life. Adam was buried here. Solomon built here. Jesus prayed here. Muhammad ascended here. Abraham came here to sacrifice his son. I came here to do all of the same things to understand better these two peoples who made up Abraham’s family. I came to bury my old beliefs, build a wider foundation for understanding, and pray for the Wisdom to ascend to a point of openness to the narratives of these people. Finally to sacrifice, if need be, that what I held so dear.

So where Am I?

In Bethlehem: It is here, that the Word became Flesh.

Figure 2 and 3 Church of the Nativity, shrine over cave where Jesus was born and the Chapel of the Innocence



Also it is here where Palestinian refugees are surrounded by 'The Wall' for Security Purposes.

Figure 4 and 5 Aida Refugee Camp looking towards Jerusalem, inside Aida



In the City of Jerusalem: Oldest City in the World and central to the struggle between Israel and Palestine

Figure 5 and 6 Jerusalem from Gehenna Valley – Dung Gate – lowest point of city



It is here where Jesus was crucified, suffered death, was buried and rose.



Figure 7 and 8 Shrine in Church of Holy Sepulcher



It is here that the Holy Spirit was sent to the Apostles whose mission was to let the world know that God loves us and where the Divine Presence of God remains present to all three monotheist religions.

Figure 9 and 10 Western Wall and Gate to Temple Mount – Closet I got to walking around



It is also here that I continue to be challenged in seeking for the truth on what the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians.



Figure 11 and 12 Yah Vashem memorial and Al Quds University



So much took place during these 2 weeks and it is going to take a lifetime to process it all into who I am; thus allowing for my sharing of the Palestinian's story and understand Israel from a different perspective. History of my imagination and spirit came to life for me on this journey and in seeking the answer to my question of 'Where am I?' My answer is 'I am Here.'

Michael Thibert (Rev. Mr.)

### ***Megillat Hashoah: An Interfaith Observance in Winnipeg***

In 1953, then Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion inaugurated and signed into law Yom Hashoah, marking the 27<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar as a day to observe as a memorial for the six million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered between 1933 and 1945 by the Nazis and their collaborators. While these ceremonies, which take place in so many countries around the world almost always end with the *Mourners' Kaddish* prayer, they are mostly otherwise secular in content, composed of speeches, poetry readings, musical performances and of course candle lighting by Holocaust survivors. However, many in the Jewish community felt that a central liturgical text was needed to mark this date; to create a meaningful and unifying ritual, just as the Ninth of Av, which marks, the destruction of the First and Second Temples and the subsequent Exiles, is similarly observed through the reading of the Book of Lamentations.

In 2003, Alex Eisen, a survivor and philanthropist living in Toronto, engaged the Solomon Schechter Institute in Jerusalem to take on the task on behalf of the Conservative Rabbinical



Assembly. The idea was to compile a short piece in six chapters, built around first-person testimony that would convey an outline of the story of the Shoah. The story would be transcribed onto parchment to form a Shoah Scroll (*Megillat Hashoah*) for synagogue use by a Torah scribe. Professor Avigdor Shinan, a specialist in Biblical Interpretation from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, composed the entire work in a matter of six hours. Shinan says that it was as if someone were moving his hand as he wrote; thus he felt it had been written through him and not by him. The Hebrew verses are chanted according to the same cantillation used for the text of Lamentations.

After an opening chapter that gives a searing overview of the victims' suffering, *Megillat Hashoah* offers composite sketches of a Christian journalist observing life in the Warsaw Ghetto, a Jewish woman in a work camp and a Jewish youth who was forced to pull out the teeth from his brother's corpse and shove other dead bodies into ovens. A fifth chapter consists of a eulogy for those who died in the Holocaust; the final chapter recounts the efforts to rebuild Jewish life after the war ended. Finally, there is an attempt made to ask questions which deal with the theological dimension of the Shoah, even though answers are difficult if not impossible.

While Conservative synagogues in North America and Israel have adopted the reading of *Megillat Hashoah* as an important part of the Jewish community's observance of Yom Hashoah, Shaarey Zedek Synagogue in Winnipeg marks eight years in 2015 with an interfaith sharing of this Jewish liturgical experience. Each year, readers that reflect the diverse faith backgrounds of our city are chosen to read the English sections of the scroll. Among the many readers who have honoured us over the years, were politicians and clergy from many faith backgrounds; however in recent years, Bill Weissmann and I (the organization which I chair, the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada co-sponsors this event) have attempted to favour the selection of readers who have contributed to education in our community in one form or another. We have welcomed, among others, a university president, professors, leaders of faith communities, school principals, student leaders, human rights advocates, and this year, we are proud to have our chief of police, Devon Clunis reading for us. We count among the faiths of our readers Judaism, Bah'ai, many denominations of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. Sharing this important memorial event with our friends from other faiths reinforces the important message that the Shoah is not just a Jewish story, but one that belongs to all of humanity: The world itself was irrevocably changed after the events of the Shoah: a remnant of innocence, a belief in the inherent good of humanity, perhaps, seemingly lost. Its effects continue to haunt future generations. The difficult theological questions about how something like this





could happen are not limited to Judaism; it is a universal yet impossible question. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, “The question about Auschwitz to be asked is not “Where was God?” but rather, “Where was man? The God of Abraham has never promised always to hold back Cain’s hand from killing his brothers. To equate God and history is idolatry. God is present when man’s heart is alive. When the heart turns to stone, when man is absent, God is banished, and history, disengaged, is distress.” When all of us join together to remember, our hearts are indeed alive. We are engaged with each other and take upon us the responsibility to carry the story both within us and to future generations when the first-hand witnesses will no longer be among us.

Belle Jarniewski

**Spring /Summer Registration Starts March 2, 2015**

CHECK OUT THE [NEW TIMETABLE](#)

**Next Bursary Deadline is June 1, 2015**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT NEW POLICY FOR BURSARY DISBURSMENT:**

**We are changing our practice for disbursing bursaries. We will be disbursing bursaries by term, this means that applications received by June 1 will only be accepted for the Spring/Summer term. To qualify for a bursary you MUST be registered for courses in the term you are applying in.**

**Retro-active bursaries will no longer be awarded.**

**Please be sure that your registration is submitted early enough to be processed before the bursary deadline.**

**Spring/Summer - June 1**

**Fall - August 15**

**Winter - November 15**





### Spring Conference and Course on Human Rights and Global Ethics

Want to theologize with theological students from across Canada right here at the University of Winnipeg this Spring?

Want to attend a student conference as a portion of the credit for a Graduate intensive course in theology?

Want to check out the Canadian Museum for Human Rights?

The Canadian Theological Students' Association presents "Mine, Yours, Ours: Exploring Christian Perspectives on Human Rights," **April 30-May 3, 2015.**

Register for the conference only, or the conference and the course, "GTHEO 7242 052 Topics in Dialogue Theology: Global Ethics"

(<http://uwinnipeg.ca/theology/2015-courses.html>)

For more info on the course please contact Professor: Dr. James Christie at [j.christie@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:j.christie@uwinnipeg.ca)

Deadline to register for the conference is April 26 For more info, check out their website:

<http://ctsa.councilofchurches.ca/>

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#### THE DR. ANDREW MOORE TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIP FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDY

The fellowship was established in 1981 at the University of Winnipeg, by the late Dr. Annie Moore, in memory of her husband Dr. Andrew Moore to be used outside of Canada, for an academic year or otherwise defined term of study.

Any member of the order of ministry or, candidate for the United Church of Canada, is eligible to apply. Candidates for the fellowship, must indicate in writing their willingness, following their return from the period of study, or following completion of their education, to serve in the United Church of Canada.

Deadline for application(s): June 1, 2015

Application forms and further information may be obtained from:

Sandy Peterson

The United Centre for Theological Studies

University of Winnipeg

515 Portage Avenue

Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9

Phone: (204)786-9320

Fax: (204)772-2584

Email: [s.peterson@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:s.peterson@uwinnipeg.ca)

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**The United Centre for Theological Studies**  
office: 520 Portage Avenue

Phone: 204-786-9320

Fax: 204-772-2584

*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.*