



Outward from the Centre

Message from our Executive Director

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Terry Hidichuk, Executive Director

As many of you are aware, I will be retiring from the University of Winnipeg effective July 31. My involvement at the U of W and the Faculty of Theology began in the 1980s when I took a unit of Supervised Pastoral Education and subsequently courses in Marriage and Family Therapy then offered by the Interfaith Pastoral Institute. I began a rather intense involvement with the University when I was named by the United Church to be a member of the Board of Regents. It was my honour and pleasure to serve as Chair of the Board from 2007-2009. In July of 2010 my life turned around as I left Pastoral Ministry in the United Church to become the (Acting) Dean of Theology and later Executive Director of the

United Centre for Theological Studies. These six years at the University have been challenging, as we moved through change and transition. I think it is safe to say the transition continues but my role here has come to an end. I am filled with mixed feelings as I leave the University but ready to embrace retirement and the challenges and opportunities this new chapter in my life offers. People have been asking what are you going to do. Well, first of all, I am going home and rest for awhile.

In the next newsletter I will offer a more extensive list of thank yous but now I want specifically thank Chris Wells, the Director of Studies. Chris will be leaving the University at the end of May. During my time here, Chris has been a vital part of our program, a valuable administrator, a wise teacher and a colleague. I will miss him and I know I echo the sentiments of all of us. All the best, Chris.

Regards to all,
 Terry Hidichuk, D.Min.
 Executive Director
 The United Centre for Theological Studies





News and Notes



To Gwen McAllister (MA SDMP June 2014) on her Ordination to Priesthood Sunday, April 24, 2016 and her appointment as Parish Priest at St. Matthew's Anglican Church effective May 1, 2016.

To Colin Peterson (STM June 1993) on his upcoming ordination to the Roman Catholic Priesthood, Friday, June 10, 2016 at St. Mary's Cathedral. Colin will be the first married priest ordained in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

Spring/Summer Registration 2016

2015/2016 Courses

The Spring/Summer Bursary Deadline is June 1, 2016

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.



Do you have a special accomplishment or celebration you would like to share with us?
Please email to [Sandy Peterson](#).
All submissions are subject to editing and space.





MA (THEOLOGY) BIBLE AND CULTURE

Society is becoming more secular, but the Bible continues to play a significant role in culture and politics. This graduate program allows students to study the Bible with leading biblical scholars and cultural critics.

To enrol contact: Arthur Walker-Jones | a.walker-jones@uwinnipeg.ca or Sandy Peterson | s.peterson@uwinnipeg.ca

UWINNIPEG.CA/THEOLOGY

News and Notes

Queer Memories Meets Cuban Realities

By Ralph Carl Wushke, Th. M. (2015 Dr. Andrew Moore Fellowship Recipient)

As a special student at the Seminario Evangélico de Teología (SET) (Evangelical Theological Seminary) in Matanzas, Cuba for the fall 2015 semester, my goals were to work on a memoir project on gay subjectivity and faith, to observe and reflect on the Cuban church in a time of change, and to learn Spanish. I am deeply grateful to the United Centre for Theological Studies at the University of Winnipeg for awarding me the Dr. Andrew Moore Travelling Fellowship that made this sabbatical possible. I met the goals, having completed 15 chapters in the memoir, achieved reasonably fluency in Spanish, and written more than 200 pages of notes and observations about Cuba that have provided raw material for many sermons and presentations since my return to Canada. I also made a commitment to strengthen and expand the relationships I established in Cuba in coming years. If all goes as planned my next Cuban exposure will be to speak about “Sexuality and Spirituality” at the annual seminar against homophobia and transphobia organized by the Cuban National Centre for Sexuality Education (CENESEX) in May, 2016 in Havana.

Residential student life at the SET – which will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its founding on October 1, 1946 – is a type of seminary community that is rare among mainline Protestants in Canada today. The student body is young in age compared to Canadian seminaries, and virtually all two-dozen full-time students – single or married – live in residence. The student body swells regularly when the distance education students, diaconal students and masters students arrive for a residential component. There are daily chapel services led by Baptist, Episcopal and Presbyterian faculty and students. Three meals a day are taken in the seminary dining room Monday to Friday. On the weekends most students are in the countryside serving congregations. Most students speak very little if any English, so this community was a real Spanish language immersion for me.

The experience of living in a seminary community again, for the first time since 1974-75 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) residence in Saskatoon was something of an experience of déjà vu and offered a surprising synchronicity to my memoir writing. The idyllic natural setting and the welcoming community of students, staff and faculty took me back to the days at LTS. At the same time, SET, like most Canadian seminaries in the 1970s – and many to this day! – has an unofficial “don’t ask; don’t tell” policy with respect to sexual orientation.

A significant portion of my memoir writing was spent uncovering and re-living my own days as a closeted university student, and seminarian at LTS from 1974-1978 and parish pastor in rural Saskatchewan. Singing, praying and listening to sermons in the elegant SET chapel everyday, it was easy to transport myself back to the time when I sat in the LTS chapel, wondering to myself if the gospel of unconditional love was really true for me. Sitting in a Cuban seminary chapel, I re-lived a moment of conversion at the opening service in September 1974, when LTS President, Dr. William Hordern preached on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. “No matter how unacceptable you may think you are, no matter what fears you may have, God’s love is there for you. God accepts you as you are.” A great wave of relief washed over me as I took his confident proclamation to heart and travelled a few more steps on the road to healthy self-acceptance.

As I got to know some gay and lesbian students and recent graduates of the SET I found more resonance with parts of my story. A new congregation of the Metropolitan Community Church – the church with a special ministry in and with LGBTQ communities – was founded in Matanzas while I was there. While the history that brought this group SOMOS ICM (WE ARE MCC) of Matanzas, Cuba into existence is long and complicated, the vibrancy of its new manifestation reminded me so much of the daring and exuberance of the lesbian and gay caucuses (bi, trans and Queer came into consciousness much later) in Christian denominations in North America – like *Affirm United/ S’affirmer ensemble* in The United Church of Canada – in the 70s and 80s of which I was a part. The pastoral leader of SOMOS ICM, Elaine Saralegui is a graduate student of the SET and a number of LGBTQ members of the seminary community and other Christian congregations in Matanzas are active in SOMOS.

Elaine and other courageous voices in Cuban church and society are saying the status quo is not good enough. “Don’t ask. Don’t tell.” is not a policy that works for us. We want our relationships to be recognized and celebrated. We want to welcome our trans sisters and brothers – among the most marginalized in Cuban church and society – into our church community. The founding of SOMOS ICM had a ripple effect in Matanzas and spawned many conversations about what LGBTQ inclusion means for Cuban



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churches. As in Canada in the 1990s and early 2000s, Cuban government policies with respect to LGBTQ rights, have advanced more rapidly than even the most progressive Cuban churches. This is only one of the many ways Cuban churches are challenged by this “time of change” as relationships with the USA become “normalized.”

For my memoir project these Cuban developments and parallels to Canadian experience took me back to my own early Gay Liberation involvements: my first participation in a Lutheran Concerned gathering in San Francisco in 1980, fighting for change in the Canadian Lutheran church for a quarter century, and my parallel involvement LGBTQ human rights organizations in civil society.

Living with HIV/AIDS and my involvement in the Canadian HIV/AIDS movement in the 1990s is another chapter about the interweaving of faith and life. I formed friendships with a number of HIV+ Christians in Cuba and took part in an Ecumenical World AIDS Day service in Ebenezer Baptist Church, Havana. The Cuban stories of struggle, self-forgiveness, supportive community and resurrection, thanks to anti-retroviral medications – free in Cuba – offered yet another foil for my writing. These Cuban encounters in which sexual orientations, gender identities and Christian faith over-lapped in seminary, church and society attest to the profound longing for authentic and holistic spirituality that brings unity to mind, body, spirit and emotions. This longing is at the heart of my memoir project, so the sabbatical lived in the context of seminary and church life, and emerging LGBTQ communities of faith in Cuba was an extraordinarily rich juxtaposition with memory of the times and places infused with similar frustrations and passions in church and society in Canada. I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity, generously supported as it was by The United Centre for Theological Studies at the U of W.

Ralph Carl Wushke returned to Toronto at the end of December 2015 and resumed his half-time positions as Ecumenical Chaplain at the University of Toronto and minister at Bathurst United Church.



Photos above l-r: 1) Ralph Carl Wushke in the seminary library; 2) group photo with Ralph Carl in the white T-shirt in the centre surrounded by the exuberant members of SOMOS ICM/WE ARE MCC congregation of Matanzas on December 11, 2015. 3) Ralph Carl am on the right with two participants of the World AIDS Day service.

By Joanna Hiebert Bergen

Having spent the last 3 years, from July 2012 until Nov. 2015 living in East Jerusalem and working in Palestine and Israel with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), numerous stories of creativity and imagination in working for peace come to mind. I had the privilege of getting to know Palestinians and Israelis working within their neighborhoods and beyond building bridges to peace.

With the continued deterioration of political relationships between the Palestinian Authority and the government of Israel, the people on both sides of the separation wall suffer the consequences of rhetoric and an unsustainable occupation of West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Amidst the violence engendered by loud political voices and military might, courageous

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Israelis and Palestinians continue to work for human rights and a lasting sustainable peace.

Shatha Al Azzeh, a Palestinian refugee living in Aida Refugee Camp in Bethlehem, West Bank is a young woman whose courage shines brightly amidst regular incursions into the refugee camp by Israeli Defense Forces. Shatha works with an organization I was able to visit weekly called Lajee Center, an after school program and playground for the children of not only from Aida camp but numerous other refugee camps within the Bethlehem vicinity. Lajee Center offers the only green play space for the children living in overcrowded conditions in a refugee camp supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Aida camp came into existence when Palestinian refugees were placed there in tents following the war of 1948. Still in existence, the number of refugee residents has grown from 400 to 5,000 people.

Shatha runs the Environmental Unit, conducting water consumption and safety trainings and carrying out bacteria and other contaminant testing in Aida camp's water sources. Shatha notes, "Water is not just a local problem, it is a political issue." During the hot Palestinian summers, access to clean water is severely limited. The government of Israel controls access to Palestinian aquifers redirecting almost 90% to Israeli West Bank settlements and towns inside Israel. Israeli water companies sell the remaining 10% back to Palestinian residents.

Shatha is determined to live positively into the future. In the ecosystem of Aida refugee camp, she sees the necessity of seeking a holistic vision of peace. "Without peace you cannot live," she states. "And not just peace between Israelis and Palestinians, [but] within the camp, between husband and wife." Currently she has plans to grow vegetables and plants on the rooftop garden of Lajee Center, as farmland is inaccessible to the crowded community. Shatha demonstrates the rootedness of the Palestinian refugees, the enduring power of hope and the joy that comes from doing what you love!

Ruth is an amazing Jewish Israeli woman living in a kibbutz near Haifa, Israel that I was privileged to learn to know. She arrived in Israel in the 1970's and never left. Her love of the land and its people is visible. Ruth and a group of feminist women began a study group together during the military occupation of Lebanon. Their concerns around the use of war and violence to maintain security moved these women to study feminism, feminist readings of the Torah, and militarism and its effects on Israeli society. This study group formed the organization New Profile, a feminist movement for the demilitarization of Israeli society. It supports draft refusers, and educates Israeli society about the effects of a militarized culture.

Ruth and Shatha believe that internal movements within Palestine and Israel along with international pressure will eventually turn the tide toward peace and justice for all. My time in Palestine and Israel was largely impacted by people like Ruth and Shatha who believe there is the possibility of a shared life together for all who inhabit their beautiful lands. They live with hope at a time when increasingly the loud voices calling for violence as the way to peace, are what we in Canada hear most often. But these alternative voices for peace are in the thousands on both sides of this great divide we call Palestine and Israel.



Photos above l-r: 1) Shatha 2) Lajee Centre soccer field 3) Ruth

MAY / Mai 11-15, 2016 THEOLOGY FROM THE MARGINS:

Definitions, Dynamics and Intersections

Théologie des marginalités définitions, dynamiques et intersections

a theological conference that explores marginalized voices

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REV. DR. LORAINÉ

MACKENZIE SHEPHERD

has served rural urban United Church congregations in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario for over 20 years. She teaches regularly at the United Centre for Theological Studies (University of Winnipeg) and writes in the area of feminist and postcolonial theology and missiology. She has served on various committees with the World Council of Churches. She currently serves in Winnipeg where she has also been very active in interfaith networks and refugee sponsorship.

MAY 2016

Canadian Theologies from the Margins

in conjunction with the 2016 conference of the Canadian
Theological Students Association, Montreal, QC

This course will consider theologies from a variety of marginalized perspectives within Canada including feminist, Québécois, indigenous, sexual minorities, disabilities, poverty, the land and new immigrants. The themes will include church and mission, land and covenant, and identity politics.

Dates:

- ◆ *Intensive May 12, 2016 9 am - 9 pm,*
- ◆ *Obligatory attendance at all sessions of the CTSA conference, May 13-16, 2016*
- ◆ *Three follow-up Webinars, in May and June, 2016.*

** The language of presentation is English. Bilingual discussion is encouraged.*

REGISTRATION INFO:

Register online at mst-etm.ca

Tuition fees: \$700

Registration deadline:

April 4th 2016

**Registration numbers are limited.*

Info: Jeannette Vink

info@mst-etm.ca | 514-849-8511

THE MONTREAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

We aim to make theological education accessible to a wide range of students. This is a rich opportunity for those seeking deeper understanding of Christian faith and spiritual enrichment and/or wanting to pursue graduate theological education without earning a degree; and/or thinking about ordained ministry, but wanting to discern a call by trying some courses first.

This course is given 3 academic credits at the Masters (M.Div.) level.

Credits may later be applied to the programs of any of the partner Colleges of MST and would normally be considered for transfer to other academic institutions.

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Graduate Student Research Presentations 8th Annual Graduate Students Research Colloquium

Friday, April 22, 2016
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Room: 1L06

For more information, please contact: Deanna England at d.England@uwinnipeg.ca

Colloquium Presentations:

- ❖ Julia Lawler, *BioScience, Technology and Public Policy* - "Evaluating Timber Allocations for Community Control and Benefits"
- ❖ Gagandeep Singh, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "Label Constraint reachability queries in graph databases"
- ❖ Stephen Penner, *Master's in Development Practice in Indigenous Development* - "Gathering Circles Farm to Table Co-op - A case study in small scale Indigenous economic development"
- ❖ Yujia Wu, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "An Efficient Algorithm for Mapping Massive Biological Data from Next-Generation Sequencing"
- ❖ Rachel Epp, *Cultural Studies* - "Felt and Foucault: Rape, Bodies, and Power"
- ❖ Waarengye V. Vikram, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "GPU implementation of Image Inpainting through Rough PDEs"
- ❖ Majing Oloko, *Indigenous Governance* - "Indigenous Food: A Viable Alternative to Food Security: A Case Study of the Irigwe Indigenous People of Kwall, in Bassa Plateau State, Nigeria"
- ❖ Jiajie Yu, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "Descriptive Topological Spaces for Performing Visual Search"
- ❖ Aditya Bharadwaj, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "A fuzzy-rough set approach to labeling categorical instances"
- ❖ Kate Burns, *Environmental, Resource and Development Economics* - "Estimating the Cost of Obesity in Canada"
- ❖ Parth Brahmabhatt, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "Computing lessons learned from Epidemiology"
- ❖ Jenny Rathinagopal, *BioScience, Technology & Public Policy* - "Role of N - MYRISTOYLTRANSFERASE in T Cell Function"
- ❖ Orlando Simpson, *Applied Computer Science & Society* - "Agent Based Modeling of Cardiovascular Diseases"
- ❖ Nicholas Palaschuk, *BioScience, Technology & Public Policy* - "Achievements in Aboriginal Forestry Research"

Students participating in this event have the opportunity to win prizes for best presentations.





The Knowles-Woodsworth Centre

FOR THEOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Affirming the connection between faith and progressive politics

Knowles-Woodsworth Director Bill Blaikie was the keynote speaker at an evening event on February 3rd held in Saskatoon at St. Thomas More College, devoted to reflecting on the life and legacy of Father Bob Ogle. A Roman Catholic priest and NDP MP who represented Saskatoon East in the House of Commons from 1979 to 1984, Ogle was forbidden to seek re-election in 1984 by the Vatican. Other participants in the event included Rev. Lorne Calvert, former NDP Premier of Saskatchewan and currently President of St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon. It is hoped that the proceedings will be published in booklet form sometime in the near future.

Professor Blaikie contributed a chapter to a book just recently published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, entitled *God and the Financial Crisis – Essays on Faith, Economics, and Politics in the Wake of the Great Recession*. He is the author of Chapter Six – *The Twilight of Neo-Liberalism: Opportunity for a New Christian Left?* Also on the publishing front this last year, he co-authored a contribution to the June issue of the *Journal of Parliamentary and Political Law* entitled *Reform of the Commons- Thirty Years After McGrath*.

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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.