



Outward from the Centre

Message from our Executive Director

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Terry Hidichuk, Executive Director

A couple of Christmases ago, a friend and I were having lunch. It is annual thing we do to catch up on our lives. There was as time our paths crossed quite regularly. But that was then. Now we see each other only during the Christmas season.

The conversation was running through the regular check list of what lunches like this usually do. What are the kids doing these days? Goodness they've grown. Where does the time go? All that sort of ordinary stuff when my friend shifted the agenda bit and said: "Terry, you're a church guy, it must bug you that we can't say Merry Christmas anymore?" My first response was a rather flippant: "well, you're not a church guy, so why do you care?"

Further conversation revealed something of what I already understood before I opened my mouth. My friend's question, I think is a reflection of deeper questions many of us who have been brought up in a dominant culture have. Old traditions, ways of being, are not only changing but they are being questioned and in some ways being judged as inappropriate and even offensive.

A generation ago, the dominance of the Christian worldview ensured numerous cultural reinforcements of the Christian story. Children learned it in school, artists from all genres drew upon it, national figures regularly invoked it and even early television programs were permeated by it. There was time in my childhood when the Bob Hope Christmas Special was a tradition. Merry Christmas was a generic greeting that was assumed to be supported and appreciated by the entire culture. It was one of the ways the Christian story was appropriated by the culture. Today, however, those supports have been all but stripped away. It's not that popular culture no longer refers to Christian symbols and language, but rather that such language, is placed alongside the language and symbols of multiple religious and other meaning making systems.

So my friend is lost. He doesn't even know how greet anyone and anymore. So he becomes frustrated and angry. He is not alone. But this is not about political correctness, it has more to do with a realty in a pluralistic world. We live in a culture where the Christian narrative is spoken concurrently with other valid interpretive systems and stories.

The truth of the matter is that I really don't know quite how to deal with my friend's question. In the pluralistic world we now find ourselves we have to expand our capacity to listen, to learn and figure out what it means to live in this world where

the dominant culture is not quite as dominant. The shifting is not something that is going to happen, it is happening. The old assumptions, the old ways of being will not be forced and we will have to continue to move towards more and more accommodation. That is good news because it moves us towards partnerships where the gifts and blessings of this world will be shared with justice not charity.

So let me close not with a greeting or a series of greeting but with a hope. My hope for you is that in this time even though you might not get all that you want; you will get all you need.

Megwitch, Salam, Shalom, Peace

Terry



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News and Notes

By Ray Temmerman, Winnipeg, MB

Having graduated in 2012 with a Masters in Sacred Theology (STM), producing a thesis entitled *Interchurch Families as Domestic Church: Familial Experiences and Ecclesial Opportunities*, I had the opportunity to join with Dr Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi of the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) in editing a book, recently published by LIT-Verlag, titled *Being One at Home: Interchurch Families as Domestic Churches*.

At the same time, while visiting Australia in 2014, I had the opportunity to meet with an acquaintance, Fr Gerard Kelly, at the Catholic Institute of Sydney (CIS). I had met him at Newcastle NSW in 2005 while attending an Interchurch Families International Conference at which he was a keynote speaker. In the course of chatting with him, I discovered that the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD), of which the Catholic Institute was a member College, offered a ThD, a pure research degree. On returning to Canada, I wrote to him to find out how I might go about getting more information and perhaps applying.

One step led to another, and eventually I submitted my application to the SCD. I proposed to develop a theological and ecclesiological basis for a significant broadening of Eucharistic Sharing (*the* neuralgic issue among interchurch families), producing a thesis entitled *Past, Present, and Possibility: Interchurch Families and the Case for Eucharistic Sharing* as the fruit of my research. Two types of evidence will be investigated: 1) the historical development of the theology, and 2) the experiential reality of interchurch families vis a vis Eucharistic Sharing. This flows out of the statement by Pope John Paul II (*Familiaris Consortio* #21) that “The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realisation of ecclesial communion...” If this is so, then we must surely look to the experience of Christian families, including that subset known as interchurch families (where spouses marry across denominational lines, participate together as much as possible in the faith life of both their churches, and raise their children with an appreciation of both), to see what their experience and wisdom has to say about the way the Churches are called to live in communion.

Having very much questioned whether my proposed area of research was even on Church radar, I was surprised and delighted to learn that my submission had been unanimously accepted by the Research Committee.

As a result, my wife Fenella and I are moving to Australia in February for a year, to commence the project. Thereafter, I expect to be able to continue my research in Winnipeg and various other cities where the relevant research sources are to be found.

Out of this, I hope that 1) interchurch families and their ecclesial communities may experience the full benefit of Eucharistic Sharing and the growth in marital unity and stability that it brings, and 2) the Eucharist can be not only a *sign* of unity, but an *effective* sign, truly a sacrament, having its own role to play on the path to full Christian unity.



News and Notes

We invite all students from the United Center for Theological Studies to submit papers for consideration for the **Paterson Prize**. The Paterson Prize was established in memory of the Rev. John “Jack” Paterson. Students may choose papers already submitted for course evaluation.

The papers should include a statement of the thesis, the development of the thesis, and a summary of the findings.

The paper should demonstrate an ability to examine and understand the resource material being studied as well as give an expression to the writer’s personal reflections on the subject of the paper.

Papers must be typed and footnoted according to an accepted style for publication, e.g. Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 8th edition.

Submissions for the prize should be sent electronically to [Sandy Peterson](#) no later than January 15/16 and the committee will make their selection by February 15/16. The winning paper will be printed in Outward from the Centre.



New students attending Introduction to Scripture (l-r) Raymond Poon, Professor Arthur Walker-Jones, Jon Bitton and Stuart Findlay. (missing) Damien Leggett.

The New Bible and Culture Concentration

This new concentration allows theology students to take courses in both biblical studies and the University’s MA in cultural studies. A small, eager group of students has already enrolled and are taking courses in the new MA (Theology) with a concentration in Bible and Culture, even though the first full intake of students will not begin until next year.

Although fewer people are going to synagogue and church, Hollywood continues to produce movies based on the Bible, writers and poets continue to refer directly and indirectly to the Bible, and political and social movements continue to appeal to the Bible.

Over the last few decades biblical scholars have begun analyzing these cultural interpretations of the Bible and, simultaneously, have been profoundly influenced by methods and perspectives from cultural studies. These methods raise questions about gender, race, colonialism, and ecological exploitation that are central to reflecting on issues of social and ecological justice and the interpretation of the Bible.

Students in the program have the advantage of learning the of methods of historical and literary study of the Bible typically taught in theological schools while also learning the methods and perspectives of cultural criticism from experts.

If you are interested in registering for this program, contact Arthur Walker-Jones or Sandy Peterson.

News and Notes

Winter Registration deadline January 5, 2016
Winter fees are due by January 18, 2016

2015/2016 Courses

The Winter Bursary Deadline has passed

Spring/Summer - June 1

Fall - August 15

Winter - November 15



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.



Science, Religion and Society: An Emerging Dialogue

Who in the modern age still has dreams that extend beyond the lifetimes of our grandchildren? Two voices speak for the future, the voice of science and the voice of religion. Science and religion are the two great human enterprises that endure through the centuries and link us with our descendants."

Freeman Dyson, Physicist, from *Imagined Worlds*.

A perennially popular course, employing Scripture, theology, "hard" science, fiction and science fiction – in print and in film – we will address the "big picture" issues in the centuries old confrontation and the more recently emerging dialogue between science and religion as disciplines and as worldviews.

Participants will become familiar with the historic and contemporary debates – especially in the West – between science and religion since the Galileo fiasco; gain confidence to engage in the societal project of transforming the debate between science and religion into a creative and generative dialogue; develop an appreciation for the interfaith dimension in this emerging dialogue; to identify pastoral issues as they emerge from the exchange – debate or dialogue – between science and religion and to consider strategies for addressing those issues.

Places remain for credit and for audit.



News and Notes

Turkish Delight and Theology:

Regular readers of the UCTS Newsletter may recall the 2010 University of Winnipeg hosted World Religious Leaders' Summit of the G8 Nations. At the invitation of Dr. Axworthy, scholars and leaders of the world's great religious traditions gathered here to reflect, debate and develop a statement on the Millennium Development Goals conveyed by the Hon. Steven Fletcher to the G8 leaders gathered in Huntsville. That Summit followed on the heels of Summit gatherings in London, Moscow, Cologne and Kyoto/Sapporo.

In 2014, at the initiation of Griffiths University in Brisbane, Australia the first G20 Interfaith Summit was convened in Gold Coast. As a former Summit Secretary General, Dr. Christie was an invited Speaker. The event was a resounding success, and in November, a second iteration was convened in Istanbul, with Dr. Christie as an International Planning Committee member. Dr. Christie, Prof. Talia Pura of the Faculty of Education and Sarah Wood and Jasmin Winter, two students in the Masters of Development Practice, increasingly a partner of the UCTS.

U/W Faculty and Students formed the majority of the Canadian delegates as the environment, development and especially the UN's Sustainable Development goals received theological and interfaith scrutiny. Jasmin and Sarah were particularly celebrated for their reflections on indigenous perspectives.

Next year, Beijing! Watch for a call for abstracts from possible presenters next spring and summer!



l-r) Sarah Wood and Jasmin Winter two students in the Masters of Development Practice program



News and Notes

G20 Interfaith Summit Reflections

By Jasmin Winter and Sarah Wood

We were somewhat shocked to receive the news that our abstract had been accepted for the G20 Summit in Istanbul. Neither of us had ever attended, let alone presented at an international conference before. Quite honestly, it was not until we stepped off of the plane and found ourselves in Istanbul that the experience began to feel real. We had four entire days to explore the city before the conference commenced. We took the tram and visited the sites, had ample amounts of Turkish food, and thought to ourselves about how lucky we were to have escaped the cold of Winnipeg. The day before our presentation we recited our script over and over again, but we entered the conference room the next day as nervous as ever. We were unsure about how our audience would react to the presentation, given our complex and contentious topic concerning multicultural ideals in Canada as rooted in our colonial history. We were co-panelists with Cyrus McGoldrick, a student from the Alliance of Civilizations Institute, whom we had met minutes before our presentation. We could not have been more fortunate to have spoken alongside Cyrus, however, as he was incredibly supportive and helped us foster a compelling dialogue with the audience. Based on the audience's engagement with our topic, we could see that we had met our goal: We had managed to inform people from around the world about the silenced realities of our country in a way that really resonated with the audience. As students of a highly specialized program of only ten people, it can be difficult sometimes to know whether the ideas that we discuss, and the ways in which we discuss them, are truly relevant within the global context. The fact that prominent members of the global community had come up and let us know that we had taught them something, or that we had left a memorable impression, was very validating.

During the rest of the summit we were able to attend other thought-provoking panels ranging from the topics of "women, faith and sustainable development" to a regional panel on interfaith in the Asian Pacific. We had the opportunity to meet fascinating scholars, leaders and students like us, and we made some very meaningful connections. Ultimately we were given the opportunity to engage in discussions of religion in a way that we would have never thought possible before. We have come out of our week in Istanbul with minds full with new perspectives and approaches to understanding another layer of tensions within the field of development. We are unbelievably grateful to have been given a platform to voice our ideas and experiences, and will absolutely carry this with us forward into our next endeavors.

News from the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Graduate Student Writing Workshop Schedule, Winter 2016:

January 8, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Citation Management Workshop
January 15, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Proposal Writing Workshop
January 22, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Reading Strategies Workshop
January 29, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Synthesis Writing Workshop
February 5, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Introduction Writing Workshop
February 12, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Conclusion Writing Workshop
February 26, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Abstract Writing Workshop

March 4, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Organization and Formatting Workshop
March 11, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Delivering a Paper Workshop
March 18, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
Adapting a Paper for Publication Workshop

*All Writing Workshops will be held in the Tutoring Centre, Room 3G11

For more information please contact:
Graduate Student Tutor, University of Winnipeg
gpaizen.uwinnipeg@gmail.com



News and Notes

The Canadian Theological Students' Conference: A Follow-up Heads Up, and a tight invitational timeline!

UCTS is a partner with the Canadian Council of Churches and the Canadian Theological Students Association in the convening of the Canadian Theological Students' Conference.

In May, 2015, UCTS hosted both the Conference and offered a conference based 3 credit accompanying course.

In May 2016, United Theological College/Seminaire Unis in Montreal will be the host. Posters have already been circulated to welcome attendance for both course and conference. Herewith some details!

The Canadian Theological Student's Association Conference brings together theological students from a variety of Christian denominations, levels of study and ministry in an annual effort to allow students to converse with one another, and through such conversations examine the influences, hybridity, missionization and other pertinent struggles that affect each unique Christian experience.

*Following a successful 2015 conference that examined theological approaches to human rights, especially the intimate relationship between rights and the Christian Gospel, the CTSA is pleased to announce that the **2016 conference**-that will take place from **May 11-15** at the Montreal School of Theology-will fall under the umbrella theme of "**theology from the margins.**"*

The rationale for this choice suggests some plural definitions, and strikes at the heart of what the conference aims to elicit. In short, a theology of the margins can be viewed in many ways. Firstly, it can refer to academic marginalization wherein certain theological streams and concepts are taught in the mainstream and others are offered as electives or are simply untaught. It can also refer to theological considerations that are only beginning to find their ground in the larger debate. What or who is on the margins of academic debate, how do we bring them in, and should we do so?

Outside of a strict academic view, a theology of the margins can also refer to the needs of a marginalized voice. Who, we may ask, are the widow and the orphan (Isaiah 1:17) that we must now plead for? Are we called to 'speak for' them, and if not, how do we facilitate theologies that allow their voices to rise?

Thirdly, with changing moralities and the squaring up of secular versus faith-based worldviews, certain 'traditional' voices in our churches feel a sense of marginal voice. How do we continue these conversations without marginalising or compromising on certain vital traditions?

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance and for your interest in our conference.

The Canadian Theological Students' Conference





The Knowles-Woodsworth Centre

FOR THEOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Affirming the connection between faith and progressive politics



Dr. Chris Hrynkow

The 6th Annual Knowles-Woodsworth Lecture took place on October 29th at the University of Winnipeg in Eckardt – Grammatte Hall. The lecture, entitled “ The Pope, the Planet, and Politics – Francis and Faith-Full Green Transformation” was given by Dr. Chris Hrynkow, Professor of Religion and Culture at St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan., who specializes in Catholic social and political teaching. Laudato Si, the most recent encyclical of Pope Francis, is best known for the teachings within it that are relevant to the climate change challenges facing humanity. While paying appropriate attention to this element of the encyclical the lecture also highlighted the comprehensive, the ecumenical and the invitational nature of the encyclical, as well as highlighting the Pope’s role as peacemaker, particularly with respect to Cuban-American relations.

Dr Hrynkow emphasized that Laudato Si was not just about the environment, but reflected an integrated approach on the part of Pope Francis that situates the solution to the climate change challenge within a larger framework of Catholic social teaching in which social justice, ecological health, substantive peace, and participatory democracy are brought together to enhance creation care and proper relationships. The interconnectedness of our own lives and our relationship with nature, according to Pope Francis, is inseparable from “fraternity, justice, and faithfulness to others.”

The invitational style of the encyclical was noted, and particularly the way in which it is intended to address all people, not just the faithful, and address them in a way that is non-ideological and open for discussion. The Pope wants a conversation, or an opportunity to persuade, rather than another opportunity to proclaim. A similar spirit informs the ecumenical flavour of the document, from a quote from Patriarch Bartholomew in the introduction, to quotes from a Sufi mystic later on. Unprecedented quoting from United Nations documents was cited as evidence of a new ecumenism with respect to secular sources of information and analysis.

Pope Francis’s invite us all in his teaching to turn what is happening to the world into our personal suffering and then to discover what we each of us can do about it. He points the way in his critique of overconsumption as a key factor in a broken relationship with nature and the poor, and in his cry for global governance, to be distinguished from world government, that can meet the challenges faced by humanity and creation.





Joyeux Noël

Feliz Navidad

Wishing all our friends a
Happy Holiday!



Merry Christmas

HAPPY HANUKKAH

Seasons Greetings

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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.