

WINTER
2010

BIBLE & RELIGION DEPARTMENT

The Newsletter of the Bible & Religion Department at Eastern Mennonite University

Did you know . . .

- ⇒ **Peter Dula** attended the American Academy of Religion conference in November in Montreal.
- ⇒ **Christian Early** went to the annual Genetic Alliance Conference. He was invited to be at the Oregon Extension. Roman Miller and Christian received a grant (\$42,000) from Metanexus to investigate Anabaptism and Attachment.
- ⇒ **Ted Grimsrud** had his latest book, *Theology As If Jesus Matters* recently published by Cascadia Publishing House.
- ⇒ **Nancy Heisey** attended the Society of Biblical Literature conference in New Orleans in November.
- ⇒ **Linford Stutzman** is currently leading 30 students on a cross-cultural in the Middle East.
- ⇒ **Heidi Miller Yoder** spoke at the Haverim breakfast at Homecoming in October.
- ⇒ **Kent Davis Sensenig** is teaching two courses each semester this year.

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Greetings, Haverim,

Christmas season and the turning of the year are times to think about children. From the old familiar “Away in the manger,” to the spiritual newly introduced in *Sing the Story*, “Jesus, O what a wonderful child,” to cartoon sketches of a baby in diapers bidding farewell to old 2009, we are immersed at this time into the child as image and metaphor. For me, deepening and complexifying such reflections are a new responsibility to assist my congregation in thinking about how children are integrated into worship, and the reading of a blog from the far corners of the world of some young friends caught up in the joyous but exhausting process of adopting infant twins.

Why write about children in a newsletter designed to update readers on the work of helping young adults prepare for and transition into adult roles? Perhaps it is because so much passion and desire are woven into our experiences with children—passion and desire still evident when those children come to EMU. We all know in some form or other the intensity of desire for children, even when (as I have done for the past three years co-teaching with a scientist), we recognize the animal-

biological foundation of that desire. When children enter our lives, in whatever way, we pass into the world of passionate care about their survival, well-being, and happiness. In the context of our work at EMU, together with a central reason why many parents encourage their children to come here, we as faculty live with the desire that our developing “children” may “keep,” “grow,” or “find” faith in Jesus Christ. Much of the challenge of teaching in the Bible and religion department comes from our struggle to meet emerging young adults in ways that are intellectually honest, life-giving, and keeping the trust which families and churches put in us.

Perhaps, as well, we recognize the calls to all of us from scripture, drawing on the metaphor of the child. Jesus said to his disciples: “Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18:3). While debate has continued over exactly what the image of the child is to mean here—innocence?—other gospel texts underline the foundational issue as lack of status (Luke 22:26). During this fall’s senior capstone class

with Bible and religion and Justice, peace and conflict studies majors, more than once I heard students about to graduate reflecting on the status that comes with their education, and how to best employ that status in diverse ministry settings. In a similar way, as teachers we frequently bump into questions about our status. It would be incorrect to claim that, in the face of a culture which at least on the surface disregards adult authority, we never wish we could carry a more robust status. Our task is to grow as mentors to students, with warmth and humility, while also offering the insights of more years, and God willing, at least a few more victories in the struggles of faith.

Then there are the words of Paul, who reminisces, “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways” (1 Cor 13:11). If this is our child-metaphor for 2010, let’s keep it in context. Fractious Christians, Paul says, need to learn how love goes beyond or around all our other claims.

Blessings, Nancy Heisey

Homecoming 2009

Haverim Breakfast

Heidi Miller Yoder spoke on “A sustaining practice of the Lord’s Supper for Anabaptists.” She used the early Anabaptist Pilgram Marpeck’s understanding of action in the Lord’s Supper to provide a theological framework for a way forward in this practice. Heidi is working on her dissertation entitled, “The Spiritual practice of ritually enacted narrative: Pilgram Marpeck’s understanding of action in the Lord’s Supper.” Last summer Heidi gave a keynote address at a Believers Church Conference at Bluffton University entitled “Anabaptist convictions after Marpeck.”



Heidi Miller Yoder speaks to about 70 attendees at the Haverim breakfast at Homecoming. (Photo by Lindsey Kolb)



Wilson Roth contemplates 2003 CYM grad Melinda Steffy’s painting at the Homecoming Alumni Art Show. (Photo by Lindsey Grosh)



Ray Gingerich is among those at the alumni book signing event at Homecoming. (Photo by Lingsey Kolb)

Upcoming Speakers... come join us:

January 28: Earl Zimmerman, current MCC rep in India, Nepal and Afghanistan, 12-1p.m. in East dining room

February 2: Jeffrey Kovac, *Saying No to the “Good War:” World War II Conscientious Objectors*, 3:45-5:15 p.m. in CC105

February 18: Cynthia Hess, *Nonviolence in an Age of Trauma*, 4:00-5:30 p.m. in SEM123

Visit us on the web!
www.emu.edu/bible
 Email us at :
bible@emu.edu

Newsletter is going Green ...

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In an effort to go green, the Haverim Committee encourages members to receive this newsletter electronically. To subscribe, visit <http://www.emu.edu/bible/newsletters/>.

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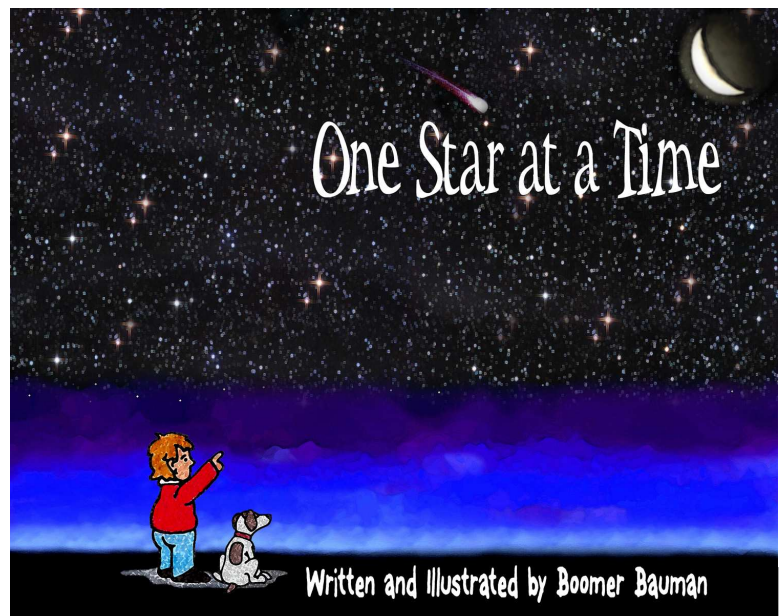
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Other information/comments/updates: (We'd love to hear from you...bible@emu.edu)

Alumni Happenings ...

Carl (Boomer) Bauman, 2007 Biblical Studies grad, published a children's book, *One Star at a Time*. It describes a child struggling with a task that seems too big. (Available from Amazon)

Emily Sims Wingert, 2009 Congregational and Youth Ministries grad, has been part of several mission trips to Haiti. In the January 21, 2010 issue of *The Weather Vane*, after the Haiti earthquake, she shares "there is something about the people of Haiti that makes one evaluate their own life."



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Occasional Forums . . .

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Annual Justice Lecture

On November 10, Emmanuel Katongole delivered the second annual EMU Justice lectures. Katongole is a Roman Catholic priest from Uganda. He is currently Associate Professor of Theology at Duke Divinity School and co-director of the Duke Center for Reconciliation. Katongole's lectures were entitled, "Sacrificing Justice: Violence, Radical Forgiveness and the Future of Nation-State Politics in Africa." Nancy Heisey, chair of the Bible and Religion department, responded to the first lecture and Howard Zehr, Professor of Restorative Justice, responded to the second. Katongole's visit was sponsored by the Bible and Religion department, Haverim and the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding.

The Future of Anabaptism? Perspectives from Urban California

What does Anabaptism (and the Mennonite Church) look like from California? Do urban Californian perspectives help Eastern Mennonites respond to the challenges we will face in the future?

At a recent forum co-sponsored by the Bible and Religion Department and the John Coffman Center at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, a group of four EMU alumni (Matthew Krabill, Joel Shenk, Matt Hamsher and David Stutzman) who have been studying for the past several years at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, presented their views on the future of Anabaptism. Each of the four Fuller students made a five-minute presentation focusing on an experience, idea, or concept that emerged out of their experience in California and then addressed what they believe the church should be thinking or

doing. Words like "marginal," "exile," and "engagement" and "Christ-centered" peppered their input. Four faculty, two from the Seminary (Mark Thiesen Nation and Ervin Stutzman), and two from the Bible and Religion Department (Ted Grimsrud and Nancy Heisey), each gave a short response of 3-4 minutes to one of the four Fuller students' presentations. The conversation then shifted to include the 75 participants in the forum. Undergraduate students, seminary students, professors - including Ervin Stutzman, then seminary dean and now executive director of MCUSA, pastors and others from off campus, all joined in discussion around tables, feedback and further interaction. The forum ended with an unusually high level of optimism, for when Christ is the center of our faith, West and East are not that far apart, and confidence for the future is realistic.

The forum was moderated by Aaron Kaufman (seminary student) and Linford Stutzman (Associate Professor of Culture and Mission.)