

# BIBLE & RELIGION DEPARTMENT

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

## SPRING 2016

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## Greetings, Haverim!

### **Ted Grimsrud—It's time for a change...**

It's time for a change...

I got boards to bend, I got planks to nail, I got charts to make, I got seas to sail... Let the chips fall where they will, cause I've got boats to build

Guy Clark, "Boats to Build"



On Friday, April 29, I turned in my grades for the last time. I gave my last exam the previous Wednesday. It was about a year ago that I decided that this would be my final year teaching at Eastern Mennonite University and that I would take an early retirement. Or, as Kathleen and I see it, I will transition from being a full-time college professor who writes on the side to being a full-time writer.

The past year since I "gave my notice" moved quickly. It's been a good year in many ways, but not for a second have I doubted that it is time for this change—even if I am not entirely sure what to expect in these years to come. As Guy Clark sings, "Let the chips fall where they will, 'cause I've got boats to build."

During my more recent sabbatical (2010-1), Kathleen and I decided that that life, of focusing all my energies of reading and writing, was our ideal. So we figured we would try to be in a place where I could take a "permanent

sabbatical” as soon as possible.

My life to now may be broken into three more or less equal segments of 20 years each. I will be very content if I get another good 20 years for this final segment of my life. Or, it could be, maybe I will get some “stoppage time” after the 20 years are up—with the final end known only to the Clock Keeper. For now, I am bursting with ideas. I am a little anxious about making the transition. I will have no excuses now not to be productive. However, I hope to get into a rhythm—reading widely and deeply, blogging regularly, writing books, and perhaps occasionally speaking and teaching.

My very first project will be to finish pulling together some of my writings from the past 15 years or so on Mennonites and “homosexuality” into a self-published book. I’m nearly done with this and hopefully will have it available very soon. Then over the next several years I want to turn to various biblically-oriented projects I have started—a commentary on Revelation, theology for restorative justice, Jesus in the gospel of Luke, Romans, and a book on the anarchistic politics of the Bible drawn from my long running Biblical Theology of Peace and Justice class.

Even though I think of myself as a constructive theologian, not a biblical scholar, I still find the Bible indispensable for my work of writing peace theology. This is not because the Bible works as an authoritarian source of commands and absolute truths and definitive revelation of the direct will of God. Rather, the value of the Bible for my work is that it is concrete, humane, anti-imperial, and peaceable. For the biblical imagination, life is for now, “the kingdom is at hand ... Heaven’s here on earth” (Tracy Chapman).

Looking farther ahead, I have dreams of expanding beyond biblical perspectives to scrutinize the history of Christianity—partly to get a clear sense of how and why things have so often gone so wrong for the Christian religion, moving all too many times in ways counter to the healing story of biblical faith. However, I also want to identify and lift up times when Christians have gotten things right. This is, in part, to inspire contemporary Christians to resist domination and to seek to embody the way of Jesus. It has been done and it can be done now.

Should I be given the time and energy I dream of completing the circle and putting together a wide-ranging constructive theology that would be kind of an anti-theology theology that counters the abstractions, inward foci, dualism, and ethical vapidness of much doctrinal theology. But that possibility is a long way away. It seems more likely that I will find a place of rest before I can get that far—or that I will see the folly of such an attempt. For now, I am mainly looking forward to the intrinsic rewards in the pursuit of understanding.

...I am not looking for loose diamonds  
...I don't want for roses or water, I am not looking for God  
And I just want to see what's next  
Ray Wylie Hubbard, “The Messenger”

## Graduation Brunch

On Saturday, April 30, we enjoyed brunch with and gave best wishes to two grads as they move on to new endeavors. Image on left: front: Wesley Wilder, Daniel Barnhart; back: Nancy Heisey, Peter Dula, Ted Grimsrud, Linford Stutzman, Carmen Schrock-Hurst. Congratulations **Daniel** and **Wesley**!





## Students in Action



"My speech wrote itself," said Bethany Chupp, winner of the [C. Henry Smith \[Peace\] Oratorical Contest](#) at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). The winning speech, titled "Standing At the Door," came so easily because of some long-term deep thinking about two different experiences: ..." read the [full article](#) on the 2016 contest.

This annual contest is sponsored by the departments of [Bible & Religion](#), Peacebuilding & Development, and Language & Literature.

## Faculty in Action

**Peter Dula** went to the Council of Independent Colleges workshop for department and division chairs in Portland ME. And he is attending the workshop "Designing Significant Learning Experiences" at Loyola University in Chicago May 25-27, with financial assistance from Haverim.

**Ted Grimsrud** is making a transition from Professor of Theology and Peace Studies to Senior Professor of Peace Theology after completing his 20th year at EMU. He will be focusing on research and writing in the years to come. Check out [ThinkingPacifism.net](#) for his latest blog entries. We wish him our blessings!

**Nancy Heisey** will lead a three-week cross-cultural to Quebec.

**Carmen Schrock-Hurst** is enjoying having daughter Grace and her family home from Indonesia for a few months.

## New Faculty Member



We are pleased to announce the appointment of **Andrew Suderman** as Assistant Professor of Theology. Suderman is currently a Witness Worker of the Mennonite Church Canada in South Africa where he is the Director of the Anabaptist Network in South Africa and a lecturer at the Evangelical Seminary of South Africa. He also serves as Secretary of the Peace Commission of Mennonite World Conference. He is finishing a PhD dissertation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the intersection of Anabaptism and South African political theology.

<http://www.anisa.org.za/>

Suderman will teach classes in systematic theology, peace theology and missiology along with teaching Bible classes in the EMU Core. Department chair, Peter Dula, says, "We are thrilled that Andrew will be able to join us. I can't think of any other scholar at work right now in the Mennonite church with his ability to seamlessly combine the best of Anabaptist peace theology and missiology."

# Haverim Awards

The generosity of Haverim members enables students to receive writing awards, debt-reduction scholarships as well as assistance with special trainings and speakers for our students.

## 2016 Haverim Writing Awards

- 1st Place:(tie)  
**Christina Hershey**, 2018 Congregational and Youth Ministry, “The Word of God: Revelation in Christianity and Islam”  
**Rebekah York**, Dec.2015 Peacebuilding and Development, “A Christian Response in a Hypermodern World: A Theological Assessment  
Shifting the Question from ‘Where is God?’ to ‘Where are God’s people?’”
- 3rd Place: **Christian Parks**, 2016 Theater major and Bible & Religion minor, “A Way Of Integration”

## 2016 Haverim Debt-Reduction Scholarship

- **Rachel Springer**, 2016 Bible & Religion and Religious & Intercultural Studies minor, will receive funds to offset her current college debts.

# Ministry Inquiry Program

**Christina Hershey** (2018 Congregational & Youth Ministry major) will explore ministry this summer. She will be at Whitehall Mennonite Church in Whitehall PA.

# Presidential Search

Last summer EMU President Loren Swartzendruber announced his retirement for July 2016. While not a shock, we all realized that this decision would lead to many important changes for the university. I had the privilege and the challenge of serving on the presidential search committee, which included representatives of EMU’s board, the Mennonite Education Agency, faculty, staff, and students.

Our work was time-consuming and exhaustive (and exhausting). Our committee had to dig in deeply to our own commitments, and our diverse understandings of EMU’s mission as a Christian university “like no other” built in the rich soil of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition. We were delighted that strong and fitting candidates who met the criteria outlined actually showed up to talk with us. And we were happy that our candidate of choice, Dr. Susan Schultz Huxman, current president of Conrad Grebel University College, was affirmed by the EMU and MEA boards, had a successful visit to the main campus and the EMU Lancaster site, and then accepted the offer to begin serving as ninth president on January 1, 2017 (EMU’s 100th anniversary year).

I’ve never served on a committee like this in my entire career in Mennonite institutions, and I hope I never have to again, but it was truly a gift to be a part of this calling.

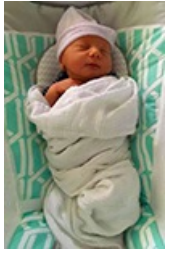
Nancy R. Heisey

# Alumni Updates

**Jonathan Lamb** (2011, CRAM major) has been accepted into the CPE Residency Program at Central Hospital in Lynchburg, VA. There he will serve as a Hospital Chaplain for the coming year, and will begin in September 2016!

**Doran Stucky** (2012, Philosophy & Theology) graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity, a Master of Arts in Christian Education focusing in Ministry with Young People, and a Graduate Certificate in Theology, Women, and Gender. He also received The Friar Club Award and The Robert K. Kelley Memorial Award in Youth Ministry. Congratulations Doran!

**John (2009, Biblical Studies major) and Amy Tyson** welcomed baby Levi Alden into their home and hearts.



What have **you** been doing since leaving EMU?

We'd enjoy hearing from you!

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