Greetings, Haverim!

Lessons From a Cross-Cultural Wedding

On Jan 5th, 2013, our eldest child and only daughter Grace promised her soon to be husband, Yugo, that “wherever you go, I will go. Where you sleep, I will sleep. Your country will be my country, and your God will be my God.” Yugo repeated these same promises to Grace. These words from the book of Ruth took on a profound new meaning for me as I contemplated what it meant for Grace and Yugo to marry across language, culture, country and 12 time zones.

Grace, an EMU Bible and Religion alum from the class of 2010, went to Indonesia in January 2011 with Servants to Asia’s Urban Poor, a group committed to incarnational ministry, living and working among the very poor in the slums of Asia. In her first year in Jakarta Grace grew fluent in the language, made many dear friends and walked with her neighbors as they lost their homes, first through a devastating fire and then through a forced demolition. Grace and her teammates relocated multiple times. In the midst of the trials a constant source of support became the local Indonesian Mennonite church with help from the pastor, his wife, and the young adult group of that congregation. Soon Yugo became a regular visitor to the slums, teaching guitar and English lessons and forming friendships with the children. As Grace and Yugo like to say, “a crazy bule (white person) met an Indonesia Mennonite and fell in love.”

Their shared love for children, their shared faith, and their shared vision to live and work in the slums led to a commitment to spend their lives together living out this call. And so it is that after a honeymoon Grace and Yugo
returned to “house of hope” a simple three room bamboo house that serves as a pre-school for 60 children. This house of hope is built on and surrounded by trash as the most of the community members make their living collecting and sorting through the trash of Jakarta. “Where you go I will go, where you sleep I will sleep, your country will be my country and your God will be my God.”

There are many colorful and cross-cultural images that I carry from our trip to Jakarta. Three images from the wedding that I continue to ponder are these:

1. In Indonesian Christian weddings, there isn’t really a wedding rehearsal or a rehearsal dinner. Instead the church and immediate family are invited two nights prior to the wedding to a “biston”, which is a church service of blessing. This two hour service consisted of music, prayers for the couple, as well hearing from the bride and groom and their parents, and a sermon. I was challenged by this model that starts the official wedding celebration by rooting it in the faith community, worship and prayer. For this event emphasis was not placed on the pageantry of the wedding day but rather on the spiritual commitment of a wedding covenant.

2. An important part of an Indonesian Christian wedding is the bride and groom giving their first offering to the church. This is literally the first thing they do as husband and wife. For me this made a profound statement about stewardship and the creation of a home that is built on gratitude and sharing, rather than marriage being only about receiving gifts and accumulating new possessions.

3. At the wedding reception fifty children from the slum came on a bus to enjoy the festivities and to share two songs. Rumor has it that these children thought Grace looked like Princes Diana and the mother of the bride looked like Queen Elizabeth or Imelda Marcos. For me the image of Muslim children singing “we are a peace generation” (a song that Yugo wrote and taught them) at a Christian wedding celebration is a treasure. In a world of fear and division it is good to be reminded of the hope and joy that can come from celebrating together – across cultural, religious, language and class barriers.

When I reflect on the many challenges that lie ahead for Grace and Yugo as they build a life together in spite of their vastly different upbringings, I am reminded of the God we worship, whose love transcends culture. I am grateful to EMU for being a learning community where Grace could take courses that taught her to think critically and creatively about the intersection of culture, religion, mission, church history, theology and peace building. I am grateful for faculty mentors who cared about her journey as a student and who continue to care about her journey as an alum.

~ Carmen Schrock-Hurst, Instructor of Spiritual Formation

**Haverim Breakfast**

The 2011 Haverim breakfast was well-attended. The speaker this year was Jane Hoober Peifer, a graduate of both EMU and EMS, and current pastor at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church in Lancaster, PA. Her talk, entitled ‘Be Still and Know,’ was a moving account of her call to ministry and the congregations that made her aware of her gifts and gently drew them out of her.

**Students in Action**

Aaron Erb ’14 (Philosophy & Theology) recently received a Virginia Collegium Scholarship. As a part of the award of scholarship, he was invited to the 23rd Annual Virginia College Fund Scholars Seminar on October 9th at Bluefield College, but could not attend. When asked to give them his thoughts on receiving the scholarship, he said
"I was very glad that this scholarship could assist EMU's Honors Scholarship, because the program is so valuable for EMU to attract top-tier students who can benefit so much from an EMU education as I have in my time here." In another realm, Aaron represented EMU on the listening committee at the Virginia Conference day-long workshop on “Cultivating Healthy Sexuality,” a resource event for congregational leaders.

Emily Hodges ’15 (Religious & Intercultural Studies) currently serves as a part-time youth pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, VA.

**Faculty Update**


Christian Early has just recently finished editing the volume of keynotes from the very successful attachment conference that EMU hosted in the Spring of 2010. The suggested title of the book is Integrating the New Science of Love and a Spirituality of Peace. Wipf and Stock will be the publishers and it is due to come out in the Fall of 2013. Some of the work that Christian has done on the book has sparked interest among fellow academics in the area. He has given a lecture on neuroscience and ethics for the Virginia Association of Affective Neuroscience, and he is scheduled to lecture at James Madison University on the new science of love and altruism at the end of March.

Ted Grimsrud has just published a new book, Writing Peace: Collected Writings on Pacifism, Volume One—Short Articles. It is available in the EMU bookstore.

Nancy Heisey just published the article, “Remembering Dirk Willems: Memory and History in the Future of Ecumenical Relationships” in the Journal of Ecumenical Studies (Summer 2012). She continues to serve as Academic Dean at EMU.

Aaron Kauffman taught Mission in a Changing World fall term while Linford was on sabbatical.

Carmen Schrock-Hurst visited daughter Grace (’10, Cultural, Religion and Ministry) who serves in Indonesia with Servants to Asia’s Urban Poor. See the Spring 2011 newsletter for an article by Grace.

**Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP)**

Five students participated in MIP over the summer of 2012. Read their reflections and learn more about this program.

**2012 Justice Lectures**

Julia Spicher Kasdorf, renowned poet and Associate Professor of English at Penn State University, presented the Bible and Religion Department’s annual Justice Lectures on November 8, 2013 in Martin Chapel on the EMU campus.

Kasdorf’s two lectures, “Water: Mother of Many Names” and “Mightier than the Sword: Martyrs Mirror in the New World,” both joined autobiography with critical reflection on themes in Anabaptist/Mennonite history and thought.

The first lecture focused especially on her trip to Switzerland to visit “sacred” Anabaptist sites as a person who has strong emotional ties with the Anabaptist story while evolving away from direct involvement in Mennonite faith communities and toward affiliation with the Anglican communion. Kasdorf reflected on her own questions of the Anabaptist tradition that remained unresolved even after her pilgrimage.

The second lecture, less extensively autobiographical, looked closely at the use of the Martyrs Mirror among North American Mennonites, raising critical questions while also reflecting on the positive contribution this “big book” has had for Mennonite Christians seeking to find the path of faithfulness.
Kirsten Beachey of EMU’s Language and Literature Department and Mary Sprunger of our History Department gave thoughtful responses to Kasdorf’s lectures and helped focus lively discussions.

Alumni News

Derrick Charles ’06 (Biblical Studies) and Rebekah Good Charles (Haverim steering committee member) on Sept 1 gratefully welcomed Silas Good Charles into their family to join sister Lia! He checked in at 8 lbs, 0.8 oz, 19 in. on a blue moon night, right at the beginning of Labor day weekend.

Nicholas Detweiler-Stoddard ’08 (Biblical Studies) and spouse, Erika have moved to near Freeman, SD where he began a lead pastorate with Salem Mennonite Church in July 2012.

Michael Harnish ’10 (Biblical Studies) is nearing his third year as a half-time youth pastor at Weavers Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

Nathan Hershberger ‘12 (Philosophy & Theology) was co-winner of the Sider Institute’s prize for best Anabaptist research paper. Read more…

Addie Leaman ’09 (Congregational & Youth Ministries) and Jared Leaman ’09 welcomed Tyne Thomas, born Dec. 16, into their family to join big sister Sophia. Jared teaches middle school history there in Indiana.

Grace Nolt ‘89 served for 20 years in camping/retreat ministry at Spruce Lake Fellowship as graphic designer/staff writer/photographer/flower gardener/adventure assistant. She recently joined the deacon’s team at Presbyterian Church of the Mountain in Delaware Water Gap, PA. and she volunteers weekly at an organic community supported farm.

Benjamin Wideman ’04 (Biblical Studies) serves as associate pastor of youth and young adult ministry at Salford Mennonite Church in Harleysville, PA. after earning an MDiv from Fuller Seminary in 2011.

What have you been doing since leaving EMU? We’d enjoy hearing from you! Use our online form.

Upcoming Events of Interest

Five students are attending the 22nd Wheaton Theology Conference, April 4-6. This year the theme is ‘Christian Political Witness.’

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