

The BLAZER

CONNECTING ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF CMU
SPRING 2014

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I thoroughly enjoy working at CMU. It's a privilege to see amazing faculty facilitate awareness and commitments, while simultaneously observing students' excitement for new realizations and discoveries. Through a number of different contexts—the biweekly chapels, musical performances, or simply interacting in the dining hall—I hear stories of learning through thinking and doing.

CMU's recent graduation ceremony for the class of 2014 saw 80 students complete their CMU journey. Some will continue on in their studies, while others enter the workplace in a variety of interesting and meaningful occupations.

The theme for this issue is “learning through thinking and doing,” and is one of the commitments that characterize CMU's programs and activities.

“Although theoretical analysis remains central, comparative prominence is given to experiential learning (e.g. practica, Outtatown, co-op, internships) in a manner which shapes both thinking and ethics/living.”

This Blazer speaks to the importance of learning through thinking and doing as an institutional *modus operandi* and a by-product of *the CMU experience*.

Evidence abounds that CMU's stated emphasis on thinking and doing for enhanced learning is effective and essential—be it from the perspective of Earl Davey, our outgoing Vice President, Academic, on the importance of engagement; the perspective of an alumna drawing upon her lessons at CMU to carry out peacebuilding work in the Philippines; or faculty emeriti “Doc” Schroeder and his wife who have dedicated their working lives and resources to ensuring that CMU's mission continues.

It is fitting to end with a quote from our outgoing and always colourful Coordinator of Student Advising, Adelia Neufeld Wiens, who points out the CMU difference:

“CMU's... approach—in which students learn through theological inquiry, integrative thinking, and practical application—creates versatile, highly employable graduates equipped to make a difference in their community and the world.”

Kevin Kilbrei
Director, Communications & Marketing

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Cover Photo: “Exit” by Craig Terlson

“STOP and THINK!”

The well-worn saying provides an oft-heeded reminder: consider the consequences, options, and odds before acting on impulse and blundering ahead.

But does this common wisdom serve us well enough? Probably not if it means coming to a screeching halt when we're merging onto the freeway in heavy traffic, skating to where the puck most likely will go next, or taking the next (backwards) step with our eyes on the grizzly up ahead. Acute attention to consequences, options, and odds is vital in times such as these—it's a deep sort of thinking that happens not by withdrawing from action or commitment, but in trusting the muscles, reflexes and impulses of limbs, eyes, ears, and hearts on the move.

In the conviction that “times such as these” are common to everyday life, some theologians, like Stanley Hauerwas, speak of “performing the faith” as a way of calling out Christian faithfulness. I'm drawn to his use of the word performance, albeit cautiously. Sometimes I wonder, why didn't they just say *practising the faith*? That would cover the notion of practice as preparatory work for another occasion and also as daily activity—praxis—be that a vocation like law and medicine, or a way of being a good neighbour. *Practising* also would include both the forms of thinking that take place in the midst of doing, and the forms of doing that ride on waves

« ...*practising* would express the CMU commitment to “learning through thinking and doing,” something we most often describe as embodied faith, interpersonal relationship and experiential learning. »

of thinking—sometimes for split-seconds, at others through processes that take decades. Thirdly, *practising* would express the CMU commitment to “learning through thinking and doing,” something we most often describe as embodied faith, interpersonal relationship, and experiential learning. (An example would be CMU's practicum requirement, whereby all undergraduate and Outtatown students participate in off-campus work, not only those in “applied” areas of study.) And fourthly, *practising* would mean I could continue to avoid the

word “performance,” as I've done for years because of how it's viewed in the church. Here's my concern in positive terms: I've often been touched when affirmed for “not performing, but rather worshipping alongside a congregation.” I share the



conviction that music in worship should prompt and enable a congregational body to enter into communion with God and not glorify performers or music itself. I'll admit, though, I've been disheartened that “performance” (anywhere—worship, arts, athletics...) is assumed to mean putting on a show as a thing in itself. Narrow, self-serving interests should be called poor performance, not practising performance well. And performance extends to a whole lot more of life than what happens on a stage or arena.

So let's look to performance as vital to Christian faithfulness and within all areas of learning and life. To perform well we've got to put in our time practising (Malcolm Gladwell suggests 10,000 hours) to build muscles that are competent to move with commitment, grace, insight, trustworthiness, attunement, and resilience amidst the strains and ever-changing conditions of any moment. And, to practice life well we've got put in our time performing. For performance is not an end in itself but a practice session for everyday life; it's an offering at its best.

Peace and joy,
Cheryl



Thinking & Doing

The Lesson of Blue and Green

Gordon Matties, Professor, Biblical and Theological Studies

I grew up hearing that blue and green should never be seen except in the washing machine. I now rather like wearing those colours together. A similar transformation ought to happen to the dichotomy of thinking and doing.

Matthew B. Crawford, in his memoir *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work*, argues that “the degradation of work” in our time is “rooted in the separation of thinking from do-

ing.” Crawford argues persuasively for the value of learning a trade without denigrating university education (he is a motorcycle mechanic with a Ph.D. in Political Philosophy). The essence of his argument is simple: “If thinking is bound up with action, then the task of getting an adequate *grasp* on the world, intellectually, depends on our doing stuff in it.”

I’ve “done stuff.” I’ve had occasion to do some plumbing and a little wiring. I earned my way through university by manufacturing trampolines in my parents’ yard and selling them to families who wanted to get in on the craze. I’ve worked for a master tile-setter. I can’t think of one job in which my labour was not integrally related to critical and constructive thinking.

They say that writing is intellectual

work. It’s not. It’s manual labour; it’s the work of one’s hands. It involves exactly the kind of hands-on expertise as fixing a motorcycle: the discipline of staying fixed in one place for long enough to sink oneself deeply into the task at hand. Like a mechanic, a writer must pay attention to detail, frame the right kind of questions, test hypotheses, diagnose problems, and come up with solutions. The problem, writes Crawford, is that the “partition of thinking from doing has bequeathed us the dichotomy of white collar versus blue collar, corresponding to mental versus manual.”

Thinking and doing, mental and manual, are no longer helpful categories for understanding what happens in the workplace, or, for that matter, in the university. All work (“doing stuff”) is

Thinking & Doing

embodied learning that shapes us best through disciplined attention to mentors, love, and community. Such work will bear fruit as wisdom.

Mentors. I once asked a friend, who was an apprentice to a master potter, how long it would take to become a potter. He said 10 years. He went on to win prizes at international exhibitions. We learn best in relationship with *mentors*, and we learn well by putting in the time. Anything worth doing well demands know-how, or practical wisdom, which can only be gained in relationship over time through experience. Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, has made famous the idea that it takes 10,000 hours to become excellent at anything.

In other words, any education that isn't grounded in "example and imitation," through the relationship of "master and apprentice" will leave one floundering and without direction. It's not only that the master "does the same work as the apprentice, only better." The master is able to offer a rationale for a certain course of thinking and action that has been gained through long experience of discerning the patterns, diagnosing the symptoms, and imagining possible outcomes. A chess master is an "expert not because he has a better memory in general, but because the patterns of chess are the patterns of his experience." How, then, does such experience impart a sense of direction?

Love. By "love" I don't mean the sentimental adoration of a professor whose lectures are scintillating or humorous. I mean humility, trust, critical engagement, being wrong sometimes, vulnerability, and truthfulness. Or to para-

phrase Crawford, love is the immersion in authentic friendship that trains one in learning to see what's really there, to interpret through experience, and to become oriented "by concrete images of excellence." Learning to love is to situate oneself "where souls are formed and a particular ideal of what it means to be a good person is urged upon us." The good mechanic is not a spectator, but a practitioner who understands "patterns and



« If thinking is bound up with action, then the task of getting an adequate grasp on the world, intellectually, depends on our doing stuff in it. »

root causes." But more, "He looks for clues and causes only if he *cares* about the motor, in a personal way."

In *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, James K. A. Smith offers a similar sug-

gestion when he says that education isn't "first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love." He puts it well: "An education... is a constellation of practices, rituals, and routines that inculcates a particular vision of the good life by inscribing or infusing that vision into the heart (the gut) by means of material, embodied practices."

Community. Hence, the need for apprenticeship within a discerning community. It is only "in association with others" that we discover the meaning of "a life well lived" or "some understanding of the good life." That kind of schooling protects us from the seductive power of personality and the idolatrous lure of ideology. Immersion in a particular community of practitioners of various kinds, grounded in friendship and committed to love of the task, bears fruit in humility, and in hospitable service to friend and stranger.

The wise have learned that knowing is doing and that love is learned in community through an apprenticeship in trust and vulnerability. They have discovered that neither expertise nor credentials are adequate for the good life that flourishes best in partnership with others. They have learned that there is no real "knowing that" without some form of "know-how." Some of us will teach Greek, others will plant gardens; some will become surgeons, still others will become motorcycle mechanics.

And that's how it should be.

Our Marked Differences

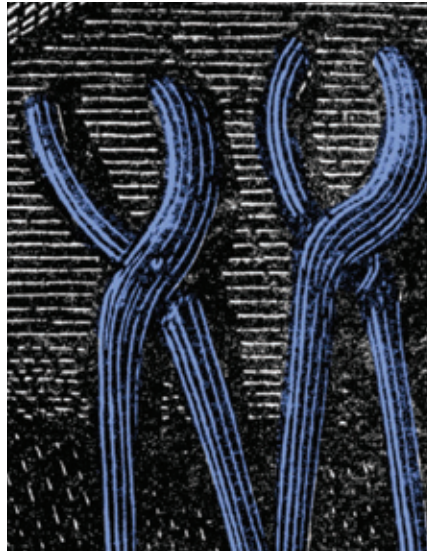
by Adelia Neufeld Wiens,
Coordinator of Student Advising

The liberal arts have received sharp media scrutiny lately, and the value of such an education in today's world is clearly at issue. In recent years, universities and colleges have developed specialized programs specific to different career paths, all theoretically designed to prepare one with the requisite skills to seamlessly merge into the workforce upon graduation.

So, why should students study history, literature, philosophy, theology, or music at CMU? Why study a subject that does not train for a specific job? Why study biology when they will never be a scientist? Why study logic when they want to go into business? Is there really any point to a Bachelor of Arts?

A 2013 survey of 320 business leaders by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 74 per cent recommend a modern liberal arts education for a more dynamic worker. Many employers report ranking skills honed through a liberal arts education at the top of their list for hiring. What are these skills? They are sharp critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective oral and written communication, research, and the ability to create content.

While these skills are taught in a liberal arts at almost any university, CMU students receive even more. CMU offers a value-added education steeped in academic rigour and intellectual cross-



« So, why should students study history, literature, philosophy, theology, or music at CMU? »

training.

There are three major aspects that make a CMU degree markedly different from other university degrees.

First, CMU requires a minor (18 credit hours) in Biblical and Theological Studies (BTS). Students of all faith backgrounds, including those who claim none, are encouraged to dialogue peacefully together and build mutual understanding. BTS courses help students to become more aware of the depth and complexity of the Christian faith, enabling those who attend to engage in their churches on a much deeper level, and offering students outside the church a fuller understanding of what Christianity is really about. In our

publicity, we use the phrases “be challenged” and “learn to see differently” because they exemplify our mission.

The second difference is the “integrative” studies requirement. Before students conclude their studies at CMU, they will take two courses that explore the mosaic of knowledge around a theological centre in service of the highest of human loves—the love of God and the love of neighbour. Examples from this past academic year include New Testament Economics, Chaos Theory (a Math class), and Film, Faith and Popular Culture.

CMU's Practicum program is a third defining difference. All BA and BBA students are required to complete six credit hours of practicum—a hands-on, experience-based work experience. Practica vary—from the Winnipeg Art Gallery where a student was directly involved in 2013's highly successful 100 Masters exhibit, to a placement with the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities that led to employment for a Psychology student. In the practicum, students benefit from learning through real-life situations. Other practica that reach beyond local organizations have taken students to locations like Cuba, Uganda, and Guatemala. These experiences translate to a wider world view and understanding.

Learning through thinking and doing—our alumni are the proof. CMU's liberal arts approach—in which students learn through theological inquiry, integrative thinking and practical application—creates versatile, highly employable graduates equipped to make a difference in their community and the world.

Working in Relationship

Cam Priebe, Director of Outtatown

A guest instructor for Outtatown recently mentioned that one of the things he loves best about our program is its emphasis on really applying the theology taught: “When you get to the end of class, and say Amen, the students are instantly given every opportunity to live out what they have just learned”.

Whether by scrubbing pots at a soup kitchen in Winnipeg’s north-end, or helping to plant a sustainable garden for a rural community overseas, Outtatown seeks to help students engage two specific struggles through their service placements: first, how to practically and effectively extend value to undervalued people, and second to continually remind ourselves that helping is not about the helper.

One placement from 2014 that addressed these questions particularly well, was the township of Kaya-mandi, where our students served in South Africa.

Students were given some supplies and resources (e.g. money and tools) to support a local business—often an orphanage, daycare, or primary school.



« Jesus always paid close attention to the people he was with »

But first, they were asked to spend two days with a young adult from the community, and to meet with the local entrepreneur. This is why:

First, the students would be required to listen, engage, familiarize themselves with the operation and operators; they would have to find out exactly what the

owner wanted done and how. This way they would be doing what needed to be done, not what they wanted to do.

Second, by spending deliberate quality time with the local partners instead of rushing in, banging some nails, and rushing out, the students would have the opportunity to build relationships that would contextualize the work to be done.

Our local partner reminded the group that Jesus always paid close attention to the people he was with: whatever big plans his disciples or admirers had for His work, Jesus’ first priority was always to build, reorient, and restore relationships.

Students often remark on how transformative these relationships are. Personal interaction helps our volunteers to extend their vision, put themselves in broader perspective, and purify their motivations. But even more importantly, it makes the experience so much more memorable: these students will scrub pots, plant gardens and paint walls many times in their lives, but they will only do it with these people, in this context, once.

Belief is Not Enough

Earl Davey, Vice President, Academic

Christian excellence is spiritual maturation effected by both a rehabilitation of mind and practiced behaviors that renew the self in the likeness of God
Ellen Charry (Ephesians 4:17, 23-4)

In a volume entitled, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (Oxford University Press, 1997) Ellen Charry speaks of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of faith, making the case that knowing



« ...commitments of faith are practiced in community where “critical thinking” is followed by “critical action.” »

and loving God involves all of our being, and both our thinking and our doing. Jesus makes it clear in his reference to the greatest of the commandments that love of God is to be coupled with the love of one’s neighbor. Such love is intimately connected not only with affect and disposition, but with action. This vital connection between the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of life and faith constitutes part of the logic that ungirds CMU’s commitment to learning through thinking and doing.

If a Christian university is to approach its promise it needs not merely to provide for the growth and maturation of the mind. It needs to be a place that exemplifies in the lives and rela-

tionships of those in the community the witness of discipleship. In such a place the commitments of faith are practiced in community where “critical thinking” is followed by “critical action.” This action is rooted in justice, it is rooted in mercy and love, it is rooted in sacrifice. Such a learning community invites all to live as persons in relationship with God and with others, where a commitment to fraternity, interdependence, and joint discovery of the self and the other are understood as high values. Such commitments, rooted in Christian discipleship, call forth acts of love and friendship that strike at the root

of selfhood. Northrop Frye, one of the great literary critics of the 20th century, reminds us of William Blake’s reference to “this little death,” the death of self through acts of self-giving and self-sacrifice. As we practice faithfulness we learn and choose to be “enchristed” as Charry puts it. We learn to be followers of Christ in community as we practice our faith, as we worship together, as we pray together, and as we choose obedience. And so is godly character formed. It is first the transformative work of Spirit of God in our lives; it is the work of the mind, the work of the heart and will.

The purposes of the Christian university are many, but central among these are the cultivation of a refined quality of mind, the cultivation of insights and understandings informed by the biblical text, the cultivation of spiritual practices that encourage the formation of Christian identity, and a learned practice of Christian service. All of this is learned through doing—through engagement with God in prayer and praise, through engagement with texts, sacred and other, through engagement with Christian community, and engagement with the world we are called to serve.

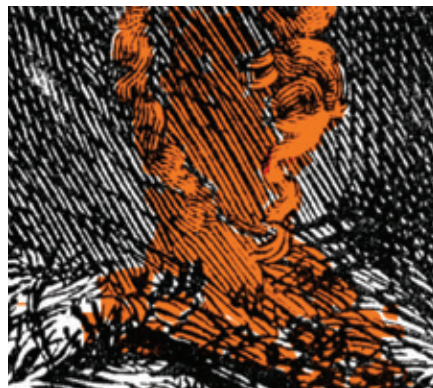
Equipped for Critical Conversations

Maraleigh Short, CMU Alumna
(Peace & Conflict Transformation Studies, 2013)

Sitting in a restaurant on the island of Lipe, Thailand, I was challenged (rather intensely) by an American expat regarding my upcoming volunteer position in the Philippines. Fervently against any kind of development work funded or carried out by a foreign body, he told me that I was naïve to think my peacebuilding attempts were anything other than a continuation of colonization. Although I had told many fellow backpackers during my two months traveling through Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, he was the first person to elicit a negative response; I found it refreshing and motivational.

Canadian Mennonite University had well prepared me for a conversation like this one, where I could meet hostility and skepticism with honest uncertainty and concrete responses. None of the questions he asked were ones I had not been urged by a professor to reflect on

or been pushed by a peer to explain. Yet although I left our conversation exhilarated, I felt all of the familiar apprehension of working abroad return. Stranger to language, culture, and most importantly the context of conflict in the area, what was I really hoping to bring to the



« Canadian Mennonite University had well prepared me for a conversation like this one »

table?

The job I have been given at the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute in Davao City is assistant to the Annual Training Program Officer. In May, there will be

a three-week training where I will work as part of a team responsible for organizing classes, planning weekly cultural events, and leading weekend outings for the participants. There will be participants from more than 25 different countries, representing 10 different faith beliefs, and many more cultural traditions.

In reflecting on the dynamic of bringing together such a diverse group of peacebuilders, I wonder if they will experience some of the same feelings of being “stranger.” During the training, participants will listen to peers tell stories of conflict from their country and then be required to engage with that story. This practice, of becoming familiar with each other’s stories, will be a powerful component during the training as individuals deepen their knowledge of peacebuilding.

I am grateful to CMU for connecting me with this volunteer opportunity in Davao, but more importantly I am thankful for an education that has given me the words to engage with histories of violence, particularly when I find myself a stranger. I believe the same skills that opened up an otherwise confrontational and stifled conversation during my travels will also be my strength as I work alongside fellow peacebuilders in the Philippines.



PIT Conference Inspires Youth to Pursue Peace and Seek Justice

By Aaron Epp

How do we practice peace and justice in our daily lives? That was the question acclaimed activist Shane Claiborne explored at Peace It Together (PIT) 2013, CMU's conference for youth focusing on Biblical and Anabaptist themes of peace.

Over the course of three worship sessions, Claiborne challenged the more than 100 youth, youth sponsors, and pastors from across Canada who gathered at PIT to see that being a Christian isn't about what happens to us in the afterlife, but rather, it's about the way we spend our time on earth.

"Jesus didn't come just to prepare us to die, but to show us how to live," Claiborne said.

Claiborne, author of a number of books, including *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*, told stories from his various ministry experiences, including working with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India; a trip with one of the Christian Peacemaker Teams to Iraq in 2003; and living with The Simple Way, a community he helped start in Philadelphia's Kensington neighbourhood.

He told listeners that there are a variety of ways to pursue peace and seek justice in their daily lives, and that everyone is invited to do something with their gifts that contributes to



« The great adventure we get to be on is following Jesus. »

the redemptive work God is doing in the world.

He added that ultimately, more important than what you do or accomplish in this life, is who you are becoming as a child of God.

"In the end, the great adventure we get to be on is following Jesus," Claiborne said. On Saturday afternoon, youth participated in a variety of different workshops to put into action the things they learned from Claiborne.

Youth had the option to visit a L'Arche community; visit Cedar Lane Farm, an organic farm located in a house-barn in rural Manitoba; spend the afternoon at Neechi Commons,

a supermarket, bakery, and fish market in Winnipeg's North End that fosters neighbourhood revitalization; visit House Blend Ministries, an intentional community in downtown Winnipeg; build instruments; or create and distribute a broadsheet newspaper with recent news stories rewritten from the perspective of peace.

Robbie Friesen, a Grade 12 student from Vineland, ON, said the conference gave him a new understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

"When Jesus said, 'Give up everything and follow me,' there are different ways you can look at that," said Friesen, 17, who travelled to Winnipeg with his youth group from Vineland United Mennonite Church. "I'll definitely remember Shane's stories of active peace and following Jesus."

Lois Nickel, Director of Enrolment at CMU and one of PIT's organizers, said that was the goal of the conference.

"We wanted to show youth that you can live out peace wherever you are," Nickel said. "We hope youth pastors and leaders will be taking ideas and inspiration from this weekend to go and try new things with their youth groups."

CMU will host the next Peace It Together youth conference in October 2015.

CSOP Inspires Student to Change Career Directions

By Aaron Epp

For Marissa Rykiss, attending the Canadian School of Peacebuilding was nothing short of life changing.

The 22-year-old Winnipegger enrolled in the course “Women and Peacebuilding” at the 2012 CSOP as part of a BA program in Conflict Resolution Studies at Menno Simons College.

Inspired by her mother, who practices collaborative law, Rykiss wanted to pursue a career as an immigration lawyer in order to make a difference in the world by helping vulnerable people.

After finishing the course, Rykiss realized she wanted to help people in a different way. Now, she plans to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Family Therapy.

First though, Rykiss is becoming a certified yoga instructor. She wants to teach yoga and potentially open her own studio.

Rykiss says her interest in teaching yoga stems from her desire to help people develop their self care so that they can be better people and lead more compassionate, empathetic lives.

“After taking [the CSOP] course, I realized there’s so many other ways I can help people, and I don’t necessarily need to have a title like lawyer to do that,” she says. “My happiness, and the happiness of others, is more important to me than having a title like that.”



Ouyporn Khuankaew, a Buddhist feminist peace trainer from Thailand, and Anna Snyder, associate professor of conflict resolution studies at Menno Simons College, taught the course.

Rykiss says it was the way the course was taught that impacted her so greatly.

“Ouyporn had a non-traditional way of teaching where she offered guided meditation at the beginning of each day, and it just allowed us to become a bit more mindful while we were present in the class,” Rykiss says. “She is one of the most inspiring and engaging women I’ve ever met.”

When the course ended, it was emotional for Rykiss.

“I cried on the last day and was so

Rykiss’s experience in the course led her to pursue a practicum placement in Thailand with International Women’s Partnership for Peace and Justice (IWP), an organization Khuankaew co-founded.



Rykiss’s work included helping with a weeklong workshop for women that IWP organized. Each day began with yoga. While Rykiss had practiced yoga before, it was during this week that she came to fully appreciate the healing nature of yoga therapy.

“I realized... how important it is for people to learn how to be better to themselves, to treat themselves better and come back to themselves through yoga and meditation,” she says.

The practicum and change in career direction would not have happened without Rykiss’s transformative experience at the CSOP.

“It was a very inspiring time in my life.”

To learn more about Canadian School of Peacebuilding, visit csop.cmu.ca.



happy that I had decided to participate in that particular course,” she says. “It felt like it was meant to be. It made me ask myself why I need to be pursuing something (a career in law) that isn’t consistent with who I am, and helped me understand that where I need to be is in a more transformative pathway—helping people who can’t help themselves get to a place of awareness and mindfulness.”

Don't Just Sing the Notes... Sing Ideas!

by Janet Brenneman, Dean, School of Music; Associate Professor of Music
Conductor CMU Chamber Choir and CMU Women's Chorus



Janet Brenneman

I once heard this instruction given many years ago to a children's choir as they prepared for their performance. Indeed, the tenets of good choral performance include strong breath support, resonant tone production, and clear diction for expressive singing;

however, exceptional choral singing demands a move beyond technical skill. In CMU choral rehearsals, the students and I explore various ways of expressing the music, interpreting the text, striving to offer something more meaningful and bring the music "off the page" for the audiences and congregations with whom we worship.

A true understanding of choral work within the context of CMU's mission requires locating our faith and theological understandings within poetic and musical elements. We spend significant time in rehearsal exploring, discussing, and interpreting the texts and musical ideas that integrate our understanding of the Christian faith and what it means to work with and express our faith musically.

I believe this practice results in a marked difference in the quality of performance. I have witnessed students singing their faith with integrity and unquestionable conviction to create a powerful experience for performer and audience alike. To sing "hallelujah" having truly experienced what hallelujah means in one's faith journey is ultimately a strong expression of our faith, a way of nurturing our growing spirituality in practice, and it reflects an important component of academic freedom.

Truly, singing our faith finds the soul of the sound—for me, this is teaching and learning that matters.

Reflections on Finding the Soul of Our Sound

By Anna Bigland Pritchard, fourth-year student, Performance and Music Ministry



Anna Bigland Pritchard

Singing with Chamber Choir, CMU Singers, and Women's Chorus has developed my musicianship and imagination. Along with pursuing high levels of excellence and artistry, we build valuable relationships as a choir, and explore a variety of music with excellence and artistry. We are able to apply our Biblical and theological studies as we approach sacred music, and discuss the meanings of texts and music.

Opportunities such as singing with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra at the Winnipeg New Music Festival, as well as the Mennonite Community Orchestra, at Christmas at CMU, and with high school choirs have been powerful experiences in communal music making.

Singing in choir as a younger student was foundational for me, as I got to learn from the older students. Going on tour to other provinces provides meaningful bonding time for the choir and director, and it is always a treat to visit some of the churches that support CMU.

Singing in choir has helped me to become a better singer, improved my sight singing abilities, and expanded my vocal range. Our conductor, Janet Brenneman, is a fabulous, talented, efficient, and supportive conductor. CMU has been a wonderful experience for me, teaching me about music, artistry, technical skills, the intersection of faith and music, and the value of relationships.

Reflections on Finding the Soul of Our Sound

By Rachel MacEwan, fourth-year student, Music Therapy



Rachel MacEwan

Singing in the choirs at CMU has been influential in my development, challenging me to reorient my self-centered perspective; to learn how to focus on others and how I relate to the larger whole of the choir.

This is counter to individualistic (particularly Western) culture. An other-oriented perspective change is not only true within the music of choir; I find myself stretched to see how this applies to life as a whole. Jesus calls us to give up our self-seeking ways, to think and act more lovingly. There is beauty in this, in how singing in choir creates something which would be impossible if we weren't willing to slip out of ourselves into a space of shared vulnerability.

The role CMU choirs play in the larger community is one of mutual blessing—giving and receiving. It is a blessing to use the voices and minds which God has given us, to their fullest extent, to bring Him glory and pleasure. He delights in the richness and complexity of His creation. Through hearing and receiving our earnest offerings of voice, mind and heart, the audience gives a blessing to us.

The Past is Always With Us

by Dietrich Bartel, Associate Professor of Music

Course: MUSC-4210 Studies in Baroque Music

History by definition is a discipline which focuses on the past. We study the past in order to better understand the present. Whether acknowledged or not, somehow the past is always with us, always present. Allowing the past to somehow come alive in the classroom is not just an interesting way of presenting course material; it is acknowledging a fundamental truth. I teach a Baroque Music History course which focuses on the cantatas of J.S. Bach in which, besides exploring the background of the cantatas, the role they played in the Lutheran worship of the time, the music traditions and sources on which the cantatas drew, etc., we also choose one or two cantatas and present them for the CMU community. There is no better way to become familiar with the music being studied than to also perform it. We don't pretend to re-present the past, which is a futile venture in any case. Authentic performance practice means taking the cantata out of the museum, off the concert

stage, and making it real for present-day listeners and performers alike. This includes thinking about what it means to preach through music and not just words, as Bach was intent on doing not just with his cantatas, but with all of his instrumental music as well. This means using instruments at our disposal, like saxophones instead of oboes if that is what is available, just like Bach frequently reworked his pieces according to the resources on hand. This means giving careful consideration to the words, what they mean and the message they convey. This means presenting the music in a worship setting, thereby reclaiming the cantata as worship music rather than concert rep-



Dietrich Bartel

ertoire. And this also means thinking about the implications of this music-making for our own music and worship practices: about instrumental music as proclamation; about text and words in music; about what performance means; about authenticity; about worship. As Bach so often wrote on his scores: *Soli Deo Gloria*: Alone to God be the glory.

A Life Permanently Devoted

By Beth Downey Sawatzky

Introducing the David & Mildred Schroeder Faculty Research Fund

Among the longest still-unfolding legacies at CMU is that of Dr. David Schroeder ('Doc'), emeritus professor, and his wife Mildred Schroeder. Dr. Schroeder (age 90), devoted his entire working life to CMBC, teaching Bible and Philosophy from 1959 to 1994. He was loved by hundreds of students and appreciated for his insights and wisdom at conference gatherings.

In his life, Dr. Schroeder has been a visiting professor/lecturer at over five different universities, served on the boards of numerous Christian service and academic organizations, and published three books and dozens of articles and reviews.

Dr. Schroeder says that this could not have been possible without his wife's support. As a trained nurse, Mildred stayed home to raise their three chil-

dren, so that he could devote more of his time to the university.

The Schroeders realized that as a single-income couple, their capacity to make a lasting donation to CMU would be limited. The remarkable poetic solution they came to is through a life insurance policy, the proceeds of which will generate at least \$60,000 to establish the David and Mildred Schroeder Faculty Research Fund.

"I am very much concerned that CMU's Biblical and Theological Studies retain its strength and integration with-in other academic disciplines. This endowment is set up so that scholars from any department can apply for it, as long as their project is cross-disciplinary and within a theological focus," Dr. Schroeder says.

David and Mildred will celebrate their 65th anniversary 25 June, 2014. CMU challenges all alumni and friends



Mildred and David Schroeder

to honour them by doubling the \$60,000 already committed, and to send their well wishes for the couple before June 25, when the amount raised will be announced, and some of the congratulations shared.

Please send donations payable to CMU and well wishes to Abram Bergen, and join Dr. and Mrs. Schroeder in empowering CMU to impact its community and students for generations to come.

Email Abram Bergen, abergen@cmu.ca or call 204-594-0510.

Looking Over the Harbour

By Beth Downey Sawatzky

Every Thursday, the professors emeriti of CMU meet for fellowship, professional discussion, and mutual support; they mull over current events, theology, their own projects or recent publications, and often, developments at CMU. Sometimes current staff and faculty join the meetings to give updates, or seek opinions from the emeriti on plans for the future

of CMU. Their wives also gather, every fourth Thursday.

True to form, the men and women naturally seek their own company. The tone of the group, however, could not be more unified or harmonious. Everyone falls naturally into intimate conversation, sipping coffee, laughing, and catching up on life since last meeting.

From where I sit, tapping away at my laptop on the sidelines, they seem serene—like boats settled in some peaceful harbour, far away from the bustling world of undergrad, midterms, and career anxiety. Even their friendships seem arrestingly stable, worn-in, enduring. It is clear that these men and women have known each other for decades.

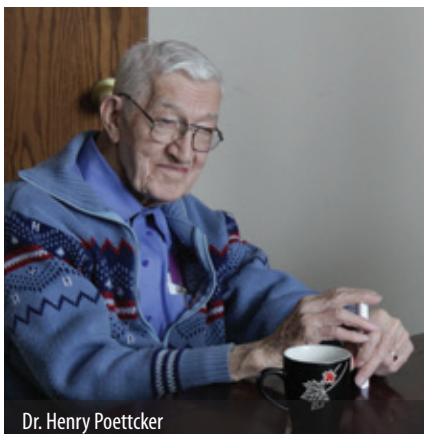
On this particular Thursday, February 27, both groups have congregated for a very special purpose: to hold a remembrance for Agnes Poettcker, who died ear-

lier this month, and support her husband Henry in his loss.

Dr. Henry Poettcker is the former President of CMBC; his legacy is already long and illustrious. But all the emeriti that speak in her memory today affirm that Agnes was a critical part of that legacy. Everyone remembers her as a friend, some as a mentor.

As Dr. Waldemar Janzen says, "you cannot speak about Henry without Agnes, or Agnes without Henry." He describes their fierce though quiet devotion to one another through over 60 years of marriage, and their unflagging mutual support.

There seems to be an understanding amidst the gathering that even now, Henry will not be living without Agnes. She is a part of him and will continue to be; because like all the other emeriti in the room, Dr. Poettcker's legacy—and Agnes' through him—is still unfolding.



Dr. Henry Poettcker

Retired Pastor Assists with Data Collection

By Aaron Epp



Don Friesen speaks at the 2014 CMU Grad

A number of people at CMU work to collect information about the university's alumni. Don Friesen is one of those people.

Friesen, a retired pastor from Ottawa, ON who relocated to Winnipeg last year, volunteers in the Development Department. CMU staff tasked Friesen with obtaining up-to-date alumni information, beginning with the Class of 2003 and Class of 2013.

Friesen is asking alumni about the

details of their life as well as reflective questions about their CMU experience: What is one thing you have appreciated most about your CMU experience? What CMU events have you attended since graduation? Do you have any questions, concerns, recommendations, or counsel you would like to offer CMU?

Friesen, who has two daughters who graduated from CMU, says he finds people's reflections about their CMU experience interesting.

"There's just generally a lot of affirmation and appreciation for their time here," Friesen says.

Bob Wiebe, Assistant Director of Development, says he is "only a little surprised" at how high members of the Class of 2003 have rated their CMU experience.

"It was affirming to hear that their education and spiritual growth resonates with them still," Wiebe says, adding that graduates from the Class of 2003 have gone on to a wide range of careers, including teacher, farmer, doctor, lawyer, professor, and nurse.

CMU's Development Department keeps records that include the contact information of each alumnus. These records also include personal information about further education alumni have pursued, where they work, their marital status, and whether or not they have kids.

"We want to know what stage of life they're at, what's new in their life, and we want to be able to address them by name—not 'To whom it may concern,'" Wiebe says. "We're trying to be in a relationship with alumni, and for that we need to know who we're talking to."

Be a Bridge Builder

By Aaron Epp

As construction of CMU's new Library, Learning Commons, and Bridge gets closer to completion, the university continues to invite people to give to the campaign funding the project.

CMU supporters have an opportunity to contribute the last \$1.9 million needed for the CONNECT Campaign to reach its \$14.4 million goal.

"CMU looks for connecting points with its constituent base in a variety of different places," said Abe G. Bergen, outgoing Director of Development at CMU. Giving financially to the university "is another touch point."

One way for alumni to contribute is by purchasing a floor tile through the Come Together: Be a Bridge Builder campaign.

The customized floor tile will be placed inside the new bridge. Purchasing a tile for \$500 will help CMU meet its fundraising goal, as well as serve future students, its constituency, and the wider community.

"Sometimes, when the target is \$14.4 million, \$500 doesn't seem like a lot, but the closer we get to our goal, the bigger the impact \$500 has," Bergen said.

Bergen left his role at CMU at the end of April. He said that working with the CONNECT Campaign Executive Members has been a meaningful way to end his eight years at CMU.

"Far and away, that's

been a highlight for me," Bergen said. "It's their work and their commitment that have made this possible."

For more information on how to contribute, visit www.cmu.ca/connect or see the back page of this issue of The Blazer.



Customized floor tile

The Call of Community

Three Graduates Reflect on Their CMU Experience



Danielle Bailey

I am not my own...

By Danielle Bailey

Before coming to CMU, I spent three years living and working at a small Bible school in Sweden where, for the first time, I truly felt God's call. This call would throw a wrench into my life plans of a Master's degree by the age of 25 and the launch of a prestigious career. That experience helped me learn that my life and my plans are called by God to something greater than me.

I came to CMU unprepared for this word 'community'. CMU's wonderful, Birkenstock-wearing, open-door policy, cycling, carrot-eating community has changed me in profound ways. Within all of it, the voices of my professors, mentors and peers kept encouraging me to think about pastoral ministry.

I scoffed, but slowly this Anabaptist theology began seeping into my bones, and gradually I decided to listen to the voice of the Spirit, speaking through the people around me.

That call of this community led me to be the Pastoral Associate at Springstein Mennonite Church, where I have been welcomed and encouraged to use

my leadership gifts. It's hard, never-ending work and whenever I wonder whether this is what I am to do, a word of encouragement and affirmation inevitably comes my way.

CMU has taught me that I am not my own. I am not just responsible to listen to my personal call for my life, but I am also responsible to listen to the communal call on my life. My CMU experience

« I scoffed, but slowly this Anabaptist theology began seeping into my bones... »

has tuned me to listen to a call that is bigger than my own, for I am one part of a radically interdependent world, a world that is groaning and in pain from years of human-induced abuse and destruction.

I am not my own because of God's call to love both my neighbor and all of creation. I am not my own because of a call to journey towards a simpler way of living—a journey that has me learning how to grow my own food.

I am not my own because of a call to desire justice for my Aboriginal neighbors.

My journey will continue, but because of this university's gift to me, I know more deeply that I am not my own.

Danielle Bailey graduated with a four-year Bachelor of Arts with majors in Social Science (Counselling Studies concentration) and Biblical and Theological Studies. She is from Stonewall, MB.

I am leaving with...

By Blayne Stobbe

I entered both Outtatown and then CMU undergraduate studies not really knowing what I wanted in either of these experiences, but I knew that these opportunities would stretch me. I knew I would be given a chance to play soccer. I knew residence life would be welcoming. I knew the advantages of attending a smaller institution—but I had no idea what I would be walking away with.

I did not know that my soccer involvement would become the greatest team experience of my life. I did not know I would become a gear in the machine that helps build this community. I did not know I would enjoy my classes, or write essays, or come to love my professors to the extent that I did.

Most of all, I did not know that CMU would shake my faith to its core.

If I entered CMU uncertain about what I was really looking for, I am leaving CMU with the opposite. I am leaving with an empowered thirst for reconciliation, and with a clearer sense of true justice. I am leaving with a thirst for, and feeling empowered to be, a foretaste of God's Kingdom.

I am leaving with answers to some of my questions, but with many more poignant and tough questions to work through and a drive to discover more



Blayne Stobbe

answers. I am leaving with a stronger ability to critically analyze and understand situations and issues more holistically.

I am also leaving with a better sense of the lives and events that swirl around me every day, and with a yearning to listen to more stories and to expand my worldview. I am leaving with a passion to learn that burns more brightly than when I began. I am leaving with a hopeful heart for education and for knowledge.

« If I entered CMU uncertain about what I was really looking for, I am leaving CMU with the opposite. »

I entered what I thought was just another university. I am leaving a very special university, a faith-filled community, a mentorship, a team, a set of friendships, a family, and my home of three years.

CMU is not perfect, but I leave knowing there is such beauty in its vulnerability.

Blayne Stobbe graduated with a three-year Bachelor of Arts with majors in English and History. He is from Steinbach, MB.

I discovered diverse communities...

By Karen Jantzen

I found CMU on Google six years ago. Coming from a dairy farm in the middle of nowhere in Nebraska, and knowing nothing about Canada or anyone who lived there, I went on Outta-town to South Africa my first year out of high school. I was challenged and rewarded so much by the diversity of experience that I encountered and the community that embraced me.

That same reward has been mine in my CMU undergraduate studies, which stretched my understanding of who I am, how I can best serve God, and how I can examine and synthesize so many varied worldviews into who I am.

I have been blessed by this diverse university community, which has connected me with the broader community and some amazing opportunities.

Because of Outtatown friendships, my summer home became Edmonton where I met wonderful people, worked outdoors, supported local farmer's markets, and used this work to serve God. Because a friend told me about a potluck, I started attending a church and became involved in an MDS trip and teaching Sunday School. Soon I discovered another community embracing me.

Because of a friend's suggestion, I began volunteering as an English conversation partner at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba—an organization that is now helping me immigrate to Canada.

My classes opened opportunities for me to discover my passions. My capacity to think critically has been honed. Some of my professors have been such gems. I have discovered much about seeing God in relationships with others, and allowing God to work through me in those relationships. I have learned much about working for justice and how to use my strengths and passions to that end.

Along the way, I have even developed my Mennonite baking skills with many lovely neighbours with large Mennonite appetites! While the details of my future remain uncertain, my CMU ex-

« My classes opened opportunities for me to discover my passions. My capacity to think critically has been honed. »

perience and the friendships formed in this place have led me to feel confident in following God's call and in claiming my identity as part of God's kingdom.

I have been well-equipped to learn and I know this community will continue to walk with me.

Karen Jantzen graduated with a four-year Bachelor of Arts with a major in Social Science (Intercultural Studies concentration) and a minor in Biblical and Theological Studies. She is from Plymouth, NE.



Karen Jantzen

Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution: Tools to Support Democratization Process in Myanmar

By Ellen Paulley

Leaders of Myanmar's political parties, non-government organizations, and civil society organizations came together last December in Yangon for the first time to discuss how peacebuilding and conflict resolution can support the country's ongoing democratization process.

Over 80 participants attended the "Seminar and Workshop on Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding," facilitated by Drs. Anna Snyder and Steph-



Art DeFehr, speaking at the closing ceremony.

anie Stobbe, professors of Conflict Resolutions Studies at Menno Simons College. The event was organized by Zaceu Lian, a University of Winnipeg Alumnus and Director of the Council for Democracy in Burma and sponsored by the DeFehr Foundation.

The seminar was designed to provide a forum for inter-ethnic and religious dialogue, promote mutual trust, equip participants with conflict resolution and negotiation skills, and nurture democratic values, norms, and practices. Participants included members from 23 political parties, all religions in the country, over 15 civil society organizations, and represented eight ethnic groups.

"A challenge for the peace process is a

lack of trust and absence of cooperation among the ethnically diverse population," say Drs. Snyder and Stobbe. Myanmar is in transition from an authoritarian military government to a democratic society and the government is negotiating a nationwide ceasefire with 16 different armed groups. "Our seminar and workshop came at an important time."

"We believe that building mutual trust requires interaction," say Drs. Snyder and Stobbe. "The workshop provided opportunities to find common ground on the causes of the Myanmar conflict across ethnic and political lines and develop common visions for the future."

Participants worked together to analyze the conflict issues in Myanmar and also shared ways they have been involved in nation-building projects and processes at different levels of society.

A one-day seminar designed specifically for political party members featured presentations that shared success stories of countries that transitioned from dictatorships to democracy or peaceful co-existence, such as South Africa, East Timor, and Laos, among others.

The seminar was facilitated by resource persons including Dr. Lian H. Sakhong, Burma Centre for Ethnic Studies Director, Dr. Kjell-Åke Nordquist, in-charge of Research Program on Human Rights and Peace-Building in



Group Presentation from Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Workshop.

Stockholm, Sweden, Dr. Brian Rice, Associate Professor of Education at the University of Winnipeg, and Drs. Snyder and Stobbe.

Certificates of acknowledgment were presented to participants who completed three days of workshops on conflict resolution.

Strong, thriving civil society organizations that promote democratic principles such as transparency, accountability, freedom, and human rights are needed in order for Myanmar to complete its transition to democracy, say Drs. Snyder and Stobbe.

"Our hope is that this experience will be a foundation for increased collaboration that results in constructive change as the peace process continues."

Ellen Paulley is the Writer & Social Media Coordinator for Menno Simons College



Graduates with professors Anna Snyder and Stephanie Stobbe, with Canadian Ambassador, Mr. Mark McDowell (right).

Investigation, Writing, and Activity

A Focus on CMU Faculty Research



Kirit Patel

CMU/MSC Research Helps Farmers Reap Financial and Nutritional Benefits

Aaron Epp

Dr. Kirit Patel is passionate about food security.

“Farmers should be able to produce food in a sustainable manner, and they should have control on the production,” says Patel, who teaches International Development Studies at CMU’s Menno Simons College.

Patel is one of the principal investigators in a research project aimed at restoring millets to farm fields and kitchens in South Asia. More nutritious than rice, millets have fed people for hundreds of years, particularly in dry parts of Asia and Africa. The staple cereal crop has fallen out of favour, though, which could have dire consequences for consumers’ health and farmers’ livelihoods.

Patel and his research partners began their project, titled “Revalorising Small Millets in Rainfed Regions of South Asia,” in spring 2011. In October of that year, the International Development

Research Centre (IDRC)—a Canadian aid program that supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development—awarded the project \$3.5 million. It’s the largest research grant that CMU currently holds.

Patel is working with researchers from other Canadian universities like the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg and the University of Guelph, as well as international university and NGO partners from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The group aims to increase production and consumption of minor millets, pulses and oil seeds in those parts of the world.

Minor millets can tolerate difficult growing conditions and are easy to store. They are also nutritious, Patel says. They are a dietary staple for many indigenous people in South Asia, but that’s changing because millets take a lot of muscle power to harvest and thrash. It’s often women, who start work at 4 AM each day, who are doing this work, and people are reluctant to keep up the labour intensive practice.

Also, as the Indian middle class grows, millet is increasingly considered a lower-class food. Indian officials also subsidize rice, and it costs consumers much less than millet. Milled rice, however, is less nutritious, and it could be one of the factors in India’s rising diabetes rates.

Scientists currently lack solid nutritional information about millet, including data to support or disprove percep-

tions about its benefits. Learning that information is one of the project’s goals.

The project grows out of research Patel began as a PhD student at the University of Guelph. He is passionate about the work he and his team are doing, and he was excited to receive funding from the IDRC.

“We were selected out of 275 projects—it was tough competition,” he says. “It is a good feeling that the idea we have has merit.”

Patel adds that the work is multidisciplinary and cross-cultural. Some 20 students from around the world are working on the project, all of whom Pa-



Governor General David Johnston visits with Patel’s research team in India

tel says are top students from their respective universities.

The project is getting attention from top policy makers, and earlier this year, Governor General David Johnston visited Patel and his team in India.

Still, Patel insists his life is fairly normal.

“My life is quiet,” he says. “I continue to teach. I work around the clock, but it’s excellent.”

A Focus on CMU Faculty Research



Brian Froese

Book Addresses Gap on Western American Religious History

David Thiessen, CMU Alumnus
(Biblical and Theological Studies, 2013)

California is known for surfing and Disneyland, fine wineries, and electing a Hollywood star as governor. Mennonites are known for their peace witness and yerba mate, radical reform, and their sixteenth century founder Menno Simons. So what might it mean to be a Mennonite in California?

In his forthcoming book *California Mennonites*, CMU Assistant Professor of History Brian Froese explores this very question. The idea for the work began when Froese worked on his PhD at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. He noticed a gap in American Mennonite historiography in California, and a general lack of scholarship addressing America's religious history in the Western states.

Froese focuses on the years 1850-1975. Throughout the work he discusses what attracted Mennonites to California, such as agricultural ventures and even gold mining. California was seen as a land of new beginnings, often glazed with a paradisiacal veneer—yet also as a land of temptation, excess, and political frenzy.

In many ways, the book is the story

of how Californian Mennonites found their sense of self amidst a religiously and politically diverse society. While many originally came for socio-economic reasons, the Mennonites found ways to express a counter cultural, sometimes evangelical self-identity (hence the previous working title of the book, *From Digging Gold to Saving Souls*). This is a story of how Mennonites learned to determine and create evidence for their distinctiveness in a new context.

Yet Froese encourages his readers that “you don’t have to be from California or a Mennonite to appreciate the work.” The work not only contributes to Mennonite identity and understanding, but also to broader questions of selfhood and community, politics and faith.

Froese is excited to have worked with the noteworthy publisher Johns Hopkins University Press. The official publication date is set for November of 2014.



Paul Doerksen

Patience: It Will Work Out Fine

David Thiessen, CMU Alumnus
(Biblical and Theological Studies, 2013)

How might Christians live faithfully in the world without killing those who disagree, without withdrawing from those who disagree, without alienating oth-

ers, and without having to start new churches all the time? Paul Doerksen, Assistant Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies, suggests that to work out questions like these, we may need to be patient.

In fact, Doerksen has been thinking and writing about the theological shape of patience for quite some time. Doerksen suggests that as Christians engage their world, they will inevitably find themselves in initiatives that seem wrong and often are wrong. In these scenarios, patience may provide an alternative to immediate withdrawal, and to unfaithfulness.

Doerksen certainly does not want to endorse patience to keep people in unhealthy or damaging situations. Yet by acting too quickly we can mistakenly assume that we already know the best course of action. For Doerksen, patience is a posture that recognizes that “real change, real faithfulness, takes time,” and that “God gives us time and space to become what he intended for us.”

The 2013 MB Study Conference on human sexuality gave Doerksen an occasion to work out the topic in greater detail. In a paper written for the conference, Doerksen considered how a community can meaningfully engage a potentially divisive topic such as sexuality. The temptation may be to quickly choose a standpoint and passionately enforce it. Yet there is an alternative: to patiently live amidst disagreement long enough to understand it, without alienating others or withdrawing to form a homogenous community.

Since the study conference, Doerksen has expanded his thoughts on the

topic to an 8,000 word essay appearing in the academic journal *Political Theology* (forthcoming). He has also lectured on the importance of patience in pedagogy, and has explored patience in relation to bioethics and interfaith dialogue. Doerksen is now considering developing the topic into a full length book.



Janet Brenneman

Inviting the Sound

Maureen Epp

When people think of CMU's music program, what likely comes to mind are the outstanding choral performances offered throughout the year. Opportunities to hear CMU's choirs (and other music ensembles) start with the opening program in fall and continue with events like "Christmas at CMU" and the annual fundraiser banquet. Performances are not limited to university campus, either: deputation groups visit local churches during the academic term, while choir tours venture further afield every May.

Yet for Janet Brenneman, Dean of CMU's School of Music and a specialist in choral conducting and music education, making beautiful choral music is about more than being part of the university's public face, more than "just"

performing. "We [in the music program] sometimes struggle with the idea of being 'the entertainment,'" she says, emphasizing that for music students and professors alike, preparing for performance is on par with the demands of other academic work like writing a term paper or carrying out research.

Clearly, working with choirs lies close to Brenneman's heart: she currently conducts two at CMU (the Chamber Choir and the Women's Chorus) and three in the community (Pembina Trails Voices-Men, Renaissance Voices, and the Mennonite Festival Chorus). In talking about her work, she repeatedly returns to words like invitational, collaborative, and community-forming—words that echo CMU's core values. But what about the background knowledge and practice that goes into producing high-calibre choral sound?

Being an effective choir conductor requires an integrated mastery of educational philosophy, practical skill, and close analytical understanding of the music repertory. While the layperson might imagine that conducting a clear beat is the quintessential choir director's skill, Brenneman downplays this: "You get nowhere if you just wave your hands about!" The conducting pattern is only one of many non-verbal gestures used to direct singers and convey the meaning of the music. Brenneman feels it is particularly important for university students and young singers to see their conductor expressing the music physically, because this gives them confidence to do the same. In turn, the facial expressions and "body presence" of the choir add a significant visual dimension to how its audiences

experience the music. Even when performing in a church setting, she points out, the choir leads in worship through "body posture and attitude" as well as through sound.

How does a conductor decide on an interpretation—what a piece of music should communicate? For Brenneman, it all starts with the words being sung. "You have to understand the text, whether as poetry, theology, philosophy, social justice..." A good composer always pays close attention to the text while writing music for it. It follows that a good conductor also begins with the words and works outward from there, analysing how the musical setting conveys the meaning and emotional tone of the text. Conductors refer to this as "score study": examining the notes on the page for their melodic shape, chord patterns, structure, and historical style, and on that basis deciding what to focus on.

Developing an interpretation for a particular piece of music also involves listening to performances and recordings by other musicians. From hearing various approaches to the same music, Brenneman builds up an image of the sound colour and interpretation she wants her own choir to work toward. Ideally, this becomes a collaborative process in which the conductor "invites a sound" and various interpretive ideas from choir members rather than demanding a certain result. Singers should feel that they are an integral part of developing an interpretation and working towards performance and "not just a vehicle for [the conductor's] art."

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*David Schroeder. “The Legacy of Bishop David Schulz.” *Preservings* 33 (2013).

* denotes emeritus faculty



Graduates Challenged to Imagine

Eighty degrees, two certificates awarded during university's fourteenth annual commencement exercises

By Aaron Epp

Make the future a figment of your imagination. That was the message delivered to 80 graduates at Canadian Mennonite University's graduation service this past April.

"Faith in God compels us to imagine what the kingdom of God in our wildest dreams could be," Rev. Don Friesen said during his address at the event, held on Sunday afternoon, April 27, at Immanuel Pentecostal Church. "Imagination looks at the world as it is, and seeks to reshape that reality."

Friesen, who was the lead pastor at

Ottawa Mennonite Church for more than 30 years before retiring in 2012, encouraged graduates to envision human community as a place to find hope and healing—a place where fears and prejudices diminish.

"Imaginative visions will help us to become, as a hymn expresses it, a welcome 'promise of the new humanity,'" Friesen said.

It was an inspiring message delivered toward the end of a weekend filled with reflection, laughter, and tears as graduates and families enjoyed stories, songs, presentations, and meals along with

CMU faculty, staff, and current students.

During his valedictory address, Scott Sawatzky (BA, Four-Year, English Major) said that studying literature at CMU had taught him the difference between "easy meaning and difficult, nuanced, complicated meaning." Easy meaning is what children are so often given, he explained, while good literature, like life, rarely offers such clear direction.

"All of this is to say that, as we move from the academics and relationships that have marked our studies here at CMU, let us never forget to revisit and



rethink what we've learned, to see old things with new eyes and new things with old eyes," Sawatzky said. "Let us enact what we have learned here in a way that is never static but always grounded, never satisfied but always loving."

Presiding over graduation ceremonies for her second time as President, Dr. Cheryl Pauls conferred 78 undergraduate degrees, two Master of Arts degrees, and two certificates in Biblical and Theological Studies—one at the undergraduate level, and the other at the graduate level.

"This is a time of celebration," Pauls said.

Pauls also awarded President's Medals to Sawatzky the Valedictorian as

well as Justin Rempel (BA, Four-Year, English Major) in recognition of their qualities of scholarship, leadership, and service.

Winning a President's Medal came as a surprise and an honour to Sawatzky, who grew up in Niverville, MB.

"This whole past year has really encouraged me as far as what I'm capable of and the person I'm trying to be," the 24 year-old said after the graduation service, adding that CMU has been a place where he was encouraged to grow both academically and spiritually.

During his time at the university, he was able to make good friends he could discuss his faith with. Because CMU is a Christian university, faith also came

up often during his classes.

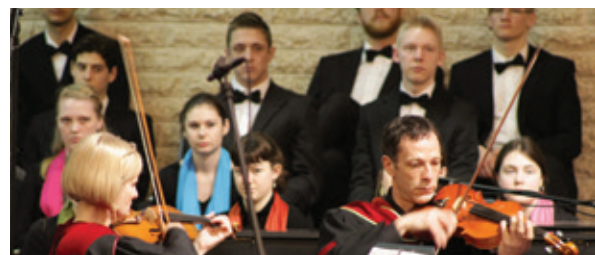
"Being able to really engage in it academically and intellectually, without sacrificing conviction or passion for scripture and seeking God and allowing mystery, was important to me," he said.

Like Sawatzky, Rempel was honoured to receive a President's Medal. It was the culmination of an impressive undergraduate career that began in Grade 12 when Rempel won a CMU Leadership Scholarship, worth \$14,000 over four years.

During his time at CMU, Rempel served on the CMU Student Council, as co-editor of the student publication *The Doxa*; played on the men's soccer team; worked as an academic assistant; led a



President Cheryl Pauls with Scott Sawatzky (left) and Justin Rempel



fellowship group for two years; served on the International Student Committee for one year; and worked part-time as an editor at CMU Press, the academic publisher of scholarly, reference, and general interest books at the university.

“I really appreciated being so involved in the community because it gave me very direct contact with a lot of different areas of the university,” said Rempel, 21, who grew up near Gretna, MB. “You get a good understanding of how the university works, you get good experiences... It’s valuable on every level I can think of.”

Both President’s Medal recipients will study Education at the University of Winnipeg in the fall. Sawatzky said

his interest in being a teacher was partially sparked by his time as a youth group leader at Niverville Community Fellowship Church.

“It’s quite challenging, but it has also been a really cool experience,” he said.

Rempel got a taste of what being a teacher will be like during his practicum at Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM), a non-profit that operates a transitional housing complex in downtown Winnipeg and offers supports and services. Rempel was a tutor with IRCOM’s after-school program for children and youth.

“It worked out wonderfully, to my delight,” he said. “I made a lot of

friends, learned a lot about myself, and learned about other cultures.”

The Graduation Service was the last of a number of events that occurred during graduation weekend, including a gala dinner on Friday, April 25, CMU’s annual With Gratitude presentation and Spring Concert on Saturday, April 26, and the Baccalaureate Service the morning of April 27.

Outtatown Graduates Say Goodbye and Hello

By Beth Downey Sawatzky

Sunday, April 15, 64 returning Outtatown students filled CMU's Loewen Athletic Center with the warmth, colour and music of their travels, to the delight of gathered family and friends.

The students of Site 1 Guatemala held a procession down the aisles, according to Guatemalan Easter tradition, laying "alfombras" as they went. The South Africa graduates marched in singing African songs they had learned along the way.

Students and site leaders shared stories of adventure, discovery, love and new growth. Those gathered joined the graduates in worship, and each site shared pictures from their journey.

The overall tone was hopeful and de-

termined, but laced with sadness over the end of an adventure and a painful parting to come.

In his challenge to the graduates, Vice President Academic Earl Davey exhorted the students not to be discouraged, and not to lose their way in the transition ahead: "Abide in Christ," he said. "Remember who you are!"

"Knowing God involves loving God, and loving God involves the practice of faith and obedience."

Davey concluded that the students' ongoing trust in the Divine love they



had experienced, and faithfulness to their deepened convictions, would be central to their future discipleship as friends and beloved children of God.

MSC Student Profile

MSC's Practicum Boosts Confidence

By Ellen Paulley



Lacie Munholland

Lacie Munholland, a third-year Conflict Resolution Studies student at Menno Simons College (MSC), had the opportunity to lead mediations in a school setting through MSC's practicum program.

Munholland conducted mediations between students at one of four Winnipeg schools that participate in MSC's school-based practicum program.

Physical violence, gang-related conflict, and inner-city challenges of living typify the situations encountered by Munholland. The school's guidance counselor shared challenges that would be appropriate and benefit from mediation or conflict resolution.

"We'd ask what each party can do to make the situation better and if they could come up with ideas together," says Munholland.

"Hands-on skills training is extremely important in the workforce and this kind of experience looks

great on a student's resume," says Ruth Taronno, MSC's Director of Practicum and Alumni Relations. "Practicum experience is tremendously valuable in allowing students to put their theories into practice and to extend their knowledge of conflict resolution."

"Conflict is a natural, everyday thing, but not many people sit down and critically think about it," Munholland says. "After my practicum experience, I find myself doing that—I'm more confident in my ability to deal with conflict in my life."

Munholland's learning experience is one of over 80 students who have participated in the MSC's practicum program as part of their graduation requirement.

On June 12, 52 Conflict Resolution Studies and 32 International Development Studies students will participate in MSC's 2014 graduation program.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

CMU RETIREMENTS

Earl Davey, after six years as Vice-President Academic. Prior to joining CMU in July 2008, Earl was Provost and Vice President, Academic at Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto. He was also Vice President, Academic at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Man. Prior to that, he was at Brandon University for 21 years, where he taught music, conducted the Brandon University Chorale, was Chair of the Music Education Department, and Chair of Graduate Studies in Music.

CMU TRANSITIONS

After eight years as Director of Development at CMU, **Abe G. Bergen** has resigned, effective April 30, 2014. Prior to coming to CMU, Abe was President of Steinbach Bible College for five years. Before that, he worked as both a pastor and small business owner.

In December, **Gordon Zerbe** was appointed Vice President, Academic effective June 2014. Gordon served a term as Vice President and Academic Dean for CMU's Shaftesbury campus from 2004-2007. A professor at CMU since 1990, he has taught a wide range of subjects including Biblical Studies, Early Christianity, Greco-Roman History, World Religions, and Peace Studies.



Gordon Zerbe

Jessica Erb (CMU '10) has resigned from her position as Residence Director effective June 2014. Prior to becoming Residence Director in 2011, Jessica was the Senior Residence Assistant for two years. She and her husband, Landon (CMU '10) are moving to Scotland where Jessica will pursue graduate work at the University of Edinburgh.

Charlie Peronto has accepted the Residence Director position starting June 2, 2014.

After eight years at CMU, **Adelia Neufeld Wiens** has resigned from her position as Coordinator of Student Advising effective June 30, 2014. Adelia

and her husband, Werner, plan to travel. Connor Trueman has accepted the Coordinator of Student Advising position starting June 16, 2014.



Adelia Neufeld Wiens speaking at the 2014 Graduation

EVENTS

CMBC's Class of 1963 gathers for 50th reunion

All 10 surviving members of CMBC's Class of 1963 gathered for their 50th reunion at CMU's Fall Festival this past September 27-28.

Those attendees were Neil Matthies, Dolores Harder, Hugo Neufeld, Shirley Derksen, Marg Heinrichs, Helen Adrian, Marie Zacharias, Arthur Driedger, Bernie Thiessen, and Hugo Peters.

As part of their reunion, the class paid tribute to three '63 grads who have passed away: Bill Voth, Eleanor Loewen, and Jim Reimer.

The group also donated a gift of \$2,085 to CMU.



Class of 1963

Class of 1953 gathers for 60th reunion

Times of sharing, remembering, fellowship, and prayer marked September 27-28, 2013 as graduates from the 1953 classes of CMU's predecessor colleges gathered at the university's Fall Festival for their 60th class reunion.

Fifteen Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) and Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) alumni and spouses reunited.

"A good number of us are still alive and with it—we can't take that for granted," said John B. Epp, one of six men from the Class of 1953 who organized the reunion.

The organizing committee put together a "ministry map" indicating the places in the world where 1953 graduates have worked and served.

Of the seven CMBC graduates and 20 MBBC graduates from that year, seven went into pastoral ministries and four went into church conference ministries. Twelve went into education, with seven acquiring PhDs in fields including mathematics, sociology, and history, and teaching throughout North America.

At least five went into missions, with their work taking them to countries that include Ecuador, Uruguay, Paraguay, Israel, China, and Japan.

Almost all are or were affiliated with a church congregation where they served as well.

"We're amazed at what God can do with 27 people if they really are the salt of the earth and the light of the world," said John Unger, another reunion organizer. "God only knows how much impact they have had on society."



Class of 1953

Tuition Freedom Day 2013

CMU gathered on Nov. 25, 2013 to celebrate Tuition Freedom Day.

Established in 2007, this recurring date in November marks the end of the fiscal year paid for by student tuition, and the beginning of the year covered by grants and donations from government, church groups, and individual donors.

"Tuition Freedom Day has become a wonderful way

for CMU students to celebrate and express their appreciation,” said Marilyn Peters Kliever, Dean of Student Life at CMU. “Students realize this financial support helps make their post-secondary education a possibility.”

“A lot of students don’t really know that their tuition only covers a portion of the costs, and this event is a great opportunity to acknowledge our generous donors and put a face to who is donating to CMU,” said Amber Neufeld, Vice President Activities for CMU Student Council.

Curtis Nordman (Advanced Education’s Chair of Council on Post-Secondary Education), Mary Anne Isaak (Pastor at River East Mennonite Brethren Church), and Terrell and Jenna Wiebe (CMU alumni) presented on behalf of donors.



Tuition Freedom Day

ALUMNI NEWS

Brad (CMBC ‘99) and Natalie Gerbrandt announce the birth of Daphne Noelle, born on July 22, 2013. Grandparents include Gordon and Julianna Enns and Gerald (CMBC ‘67) and Esther Gerbrandt.



Daphne Noelle Gerbrandt

Aaron (CMU ‘04) and Diedre (Reimer, CMU ‘05) Sportack announce the birth of a daughter, River Sabine Ronja, born on April 6, 2013. Aaron currently works as a freelance graphic designer and Diedre takes care of River and her older sister, Susannah, full-time. The family lives in Vancouver and attends Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C.



River Sabine Ronja Sportack

Mark (CMU ‘04) and Vanessa (Claassen, CMU ‘04) Wiehler announce the birth of a daughter, Emma Jane, born October 30, 2013. Grandparents include Hartwick and Betty Wiehler and Linda (CMBC ‘75-‘77) and Eckhart Claassen (CMBC ‘74-‘76).



Emma Jane Wiehler

Eric Peters (CMU ‘05) and Jill Reddekopp (CMU ‘02) were married on August 10, 2013 in Calgary, AB. Both currently work as teachers.



Jill and Eric Peters

Del Barber (CMU ‘06-‘09) released his fourth album, *Prarieography*, on Toronto’s True North Records this past February. Awarding the album 3.5 out of 5 stars, the Winnipeg Free Press wrote that, “the music evokes rich images of big skies, stark landscapes and warm, well-meaning hearts.” Meanwhile, Exclaim! magazine called the album, “a very solid effort.” In 2011, Del was nominated for a Juno Award, and won two Western Canadian Music Awards, for his second album, *Love Songs for the Last Twenty*.



Del Barber

Kevin (CMU ‘06-‘10) and Erika Kampen (CMU ‘13) were married on June 30, 2012. Kevin has a BA in Kinesiology and recently graduated with a BEd from the University of Winnipeg. Erika is currently working several jobs, including at a Montessori school, teaching private piano lessons, and playing piano for two choirs. She has applied to the University of Winnipeg’s Education program for September 2014.



Kevin and Erika Kampen

Matthew Janzen (CMU '06) and **Karla Reddekopp-Janzen** (CMU '05) announce the birth of a son, Samuel Isaac, born December 30, 2013.



Samuel Isaac Reddekopp-Janzen

Luke Enns (CMU '07) graduated this spring from Red River College and University of Winnipeg's joint Bachelor of Education diploma/degree program and is currently pursuing work as an industrial arts/technology teacher. In June 2007, Luke married Ang Penner (OT '00). They have three children: Airo John Martin (5.5 years old), Rocky Henry (4.5 years old), and Rose Hope (2 years old). In his free time, Luke plays guitar in the Winnipeg band Say Uncle, which also features Myron Martens (CMBC '98) on drums. Additionally, Luke contributed background vocals to singer-songwriter Del Barber's new album, *Prairieography* (True North Records, 2014).



Luke and Ang Enns and family.

Chino (CMU '09) and **Rachel Bergen Argueta** announce the birth of a daughter, Coco Maria, born on September 4, 2013. Chino was recently appointed the director of Youth Agencies Alliance, a network of 18 youth-serving agencies that work and collaborate on issues affecting children and youth across Winnipeg. Previously, he worked as the sports co-ordinator for the Spence Neighbourhood Association.

Tatiana Friesen (CMU '10) graduated in spring 2013 from the University of Manitoba with a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Performance. She teaches viola and violin at the Manitoba Conservatory

of Music and the Arts, CMU's Community School of Music and the Arts, and Sistema Winnipeg, an afterschool orchestra program that promotes social change through music. "[This] has brought me as many joys as it has challenges," says Tatiana, who also performs as a freelance violist in addition to leading church music at Grain of Wheat Church-Community and at St. Benedict's table.

Alana Jansen (CMU '10) graduated with a diploma in Collections Conservation & Management at Fleming College in Peterborough, ON. Prior to graduating in June 2013, Alana completed a semester-long internship at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, OH, working with the institution's collection of Gibson Les Paul guitars. She is currently working a term position as collections manager at the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum in Wetaskiwin, AB.

Scott Litwiller (CMU '10) works as the program director at Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center in his home state of Illinois. Previously, he served with Mennonite Mission Network for two years in Barranquilla, Colombia.

Sam (CMU '10) and **Annemarie (Plenert) Sawatzky** (CMU '05) announce the birth of a daughter, Clara Beatrice, born December 22, 2013.

Krista Loewen (CMU '13) started working as the youth pastor at Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Sask. this past January. Prior to moving to Saskatoon, Krista worked in Winnipeg as an outreach worker for the Touchstone FASD program and as an office assistant at McDermot Avenue Baptist Church.

Wes Bergen, Library Technician at CMU, and his wife, **Kellie**, announce the birth of their sixth child: Jack Henry was born on November 21, 2013.

Submit a Nomination for the Blazer Awards!

Over the past 60 years, thousands of people have studied at, and graduated from, CMU, MBBC/Concord College, and CMBC. They have gone on to serve their churches, communities and the world in a variety of important and significant ways. CMU wants to celebrate and honour them through the CMU Alumni Blazer Award.

The goal of the award is to celebrate alumni who, through their lives, embody CMU's values and mission of "service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society." It is presented annually.

Do you know of someone we should consider? Submit a nomination!

Nominations should include (1) Information to substantiate the nomination; (2) The nominee's current address, phone number, and e-mail; and (3) Your name, address, and when you attended or worked at MBBC/Concord, CMBC, or CMU.

You can send nominations to: Alumni Blazer Award, c/o CMU, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2 or email them to alumni@cmu.ca.

You can also use the online nomination form at: www.tinyurl.com/BlazerAwards.



Royal Canoe Guitarist Talks About How CMU Shaped His Life

By Aaron Epp

With its forward-thinking blend of pop, rock, hip-hop, dance, soul, and electronic music, as well as its energetic live shows, Royal Canoe has made a name for itself as one of Winnipeg's most exciting bands.

Two of the band's singles have reached the Top 5 on CBC Radio 3, they have toured throughout North America and Europe, and they've earned praise from venerable publications like *The New York Times* to blogs like *This Music Doesn't Suck*, which described the band's sound as "a clever blend of aesthetics and genres executed with a confidence and expertise usually reserved for more established groups."

Earning a 2014 Juno nomination for best alternative album further boosted the band's profile.

Bucky Driedger, Royal Canoe's guitarist, backing vocalist and co-songwriter, sees a clear connection between the work he does in the band and the time he spent on Outtatown in 2002-2003 and then studying at CMU.

"Both were experiences that shaped my worldview and gave me a desire to experience new places and try new things," says Driedger, who graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, with a concentration in Communications.

He adds that he studied and lived in residence with many creative people who were interested in making music



Bucky Driedger (bottom left) pictured with his band, Royal Canoe.

and visual art.

"Being in a culture where my peers valued thinking outside the box really helped me develop my sense of taste and what I value in art," he says. "Good art should help people... imagine a new way of thinking about the world."

Studying communications gave Driedger an appreciation for the way media and pop culture interact, and the subtleties involved in phrasing a message so that it has a particular impact on its intended audience.

"You always have a message or feel you're trying to convey with your art," he explains. "When we're writing a song, we ask ourselves things like: Is this drum tone contributing to the feeling we're trying to convey in the song?"

While at CMU, Driedger sang in choir. Growing up in the Mennonite Church, he saw what an important part music plays in Mennonite culture.

"From a young age, I learned to value thoughtful music-making," he says.

The intricate composition and harmony Driedger and his bandmates witnessed in church has made its way into Royal Canoe's sound. Some of the group's songs have a classical music feel, and at any given moment, four of the band's six members could be singing at the same time, weaving different harmonies together behind the melody.

Royal Canoe spent three-and-a-half months touring throughout North America and Europe in support of its second full-length album, *Today We're Believers*.

"We put a lot of thought into every tone and lyric," he says. "They're not just throwaway [songs]. They all represent really important moments in our lives."

CMU CALENDAR

June 10: President's Golf Classic

June 11: MSC Graduation

September 4: First day of class

Sept 26, 27: Fall Festival: Blazer Awards, Opening Program, class reunions, and more—
www.cmu.ca/fallfest

Oct 8: Take and Read Book Conversation
w/ Paul Doerksen: *When I Was a Child I Read Books*
by Marilynne Robinson

Oct 14, 15: JJ Thiessen Lectures. Lecturer: Dr. John Swinton, Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Oct 24: Campus Visit Day

Nov 21: Campus Visit Day

Nov 29: Christmas@CMU

Dec 3: Take and Read Book Conversation w/ Paul Doerksen: *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants* by Malcolm Gladwell

For an updated and ongoing list of events happening at CMU, please visit www.cmu.ca/events

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