



The Scroll

*Notes and News
from the
Brethren Academy for
Ministerial Leadership*

June 2016

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TRIM UPDATES



Jim Tomlonson

Reflections on the Church of the Brethren Polity Class

Instructor: Jim Tomlonson

Written by Paul E. Thomas Jr.,
student from the Northern Indiana District



Paul Thomas

Over the years I have been in many administrative policy courses, since I served as a school administrator for over twenty years. My initial thoughts when I signed up for this course were that this class will be as dry as dust. It will be a real groaner, yet I needed this course in order to get my TRIM credit and move on with my TRIM program. So I would grin and bear it.

To my surprise it was probably the best TRIM course that I have taken, and here are the reasons why. The reading materials for the class were very appropriate and applicable for pastors. I didn't know that we had the following materials in the Church of the Brethren: COB Organization and Polity, Congregational Ethics Polity, and Congregational Structure. In order to have a church administrative background these materials are vital for any pastor to have knowledge of and be able to access when needed. We also read three other books: *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Another Way of Believing* by Dale Brown, and (my all-time favorite) *How Your Church Family Works* by Peter Steinke. Every pastor should read Steinke's book. In this book Steinke "shows pastors how to recognize and deal with the emotional roots of such issues as church conflict, leadership roles, congregational change, irresponsible behavior, and the effects of family of origin on current relationships (from the back of the book jacket)."

The intensive class was held at McPherson College and taught by Jim Tomlonson. I appreciated the life experience that Jim brought to the class. He has lived polity, whether it was through being a pastor or other administrative positions in the COB. He brought the polity manuals as well as the other books, to life. Jim used a variety of methods to get his points across, such as direct instruction, discussion, simulation, and experiential. We had quite a lively group of students with many opinions, but Jim made sure that we stuck to the topics so that we had a well-rounded educational experience.

At the end of our time together as a class, Jim asked us if there were any other questions that we had concerning polity or other issues on which we needed clarification. We had several class members who brought up issues. Jim concluded our class by holding a brief communion. That was so meaningful—thank-you, Jim. As you can tell by my reflection, I would highly recommend this course, especially if Jim is teaching it.



Steven Schweitzer

The Book of Chronicles

Instructor: Steven Schweitzer

Written by Dana Hart,
student from the Western Plains District



Dana Hart

Experiencing the Chronicles!

I have recently been enrolled in a challenging online class at the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership—challenging simply because it dug deeper into a couple of Hebrew Bible books that I had never seriously studied, stretching my mind to really get to know the Kings of Judah in a much more personal way through the words of a person referred to only as The Chronicler. One of the surprising aspects of this class for me was the glimpses I gained of the complexity of community worship during the First Temple period, before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. It brought me face to face with the basics of worship, the expressions of praise, and intricate structure of temple-centered culture which emerged in Jerusalem.

Aspects of worship, large and small, were recorded in detail, demonstrating a care and reverence for worship that is rarely found in worship today. Our instructor, Steven Schweitzer, has extensively researched Chronicles. He shared enthusiastic insight into deeper levels of meaning in the text. Through the ages Chronicles has served as a primary guide for understanding the reigns of the most revered Judean kings, David and Solomon. It was refreshing to study just how these mortal kings brought honor to God, how they struggled with the pressures of leading a people (who were very resistant to guidance, especially on spiritual matters), and how they communicated the divine will of YHWH to the people.

This class opened my eyes to understanding the motivation behind the creation of the books and how they differ from other biblical narratives. The author's agenda reveals a desire to educate and uplift a broken people who were exiled from their ancestral land and scattered far and wide for nearly 400 years. The Chronicles presented a mental image of a nation of peace and prosperity the readers had never experienced. This encouraged Babylonian exiles to return and reclaim their opportunity to worship the Lord the way it had been, or could have been in a better alternate reality, to seek and praise the Holy One, YHWH.

Reading Lists –

If you were not able to take one of the TRIM courses highlighted in the newsletter but would like to explore the topics, here are the reading lists for the courses:

Church of the Brethren Polity and Practice

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*, ISBN: 978-0-06-060852-1, order from Amazon
- Brown, Dale. *Another Way of Believing: A Brethren Theology*, 2005 edition, ISBN: 0-87178-064-x, order from Brethren Press
- Steinke, Peter L. *How Your Church Family Works*, 2006 edition, ISBN13: 978-1-56699-329-6, order through the Alban Institute at Amazon

Book of Chronicles

- Schweitzer, Steven. *Reading Utopia in Chronicles*, LHBOTS 442. London: T & T Clark International, 2007, ISBN: 9780567363176 (pb).



Nancy Heishman

SeBAH-CoB NEWS

Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano de la Iglesia de Los Hermanos

SeBAH-CoB Students Gather for May Onsite Class

The study and practice of spirituality and christian discipleship was the focus of an onsite weekend class of the same name for seven Brethren and three Mennonite students who gathered at Quaker Hill Conference Center in Richmond, Indiana. Falling as it did on the same weekend as the denominational Church Planting Conference, the timing made it possible for the students to visit and tour Bethany Seminary and to interact over a luncheon hour with Brethren from the wider church.

For three days Mennonite professor Tony Brun led the students in study, reflection, and sharing of the course material. From a wealth of experience and wisdom gained from extensive study and teaching across most of the Central and South American Countries, Tony shared his deep knowledge and practice of Anabaptist spirituality with the class.

During the weekend, students were richly blessed by their study of, among other topics, the essence of spirituality, Jesus as the foundation of spirituality, characteristics of Christian spirituality, and guided exploration of spiritual practices such as prayer, reading of scripture, and various worship celebrations.

As always, in addition to the meaningful content, there was opportunity for students to learn to know one another, coming as they did from California, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Texas, and Puerto Rico and countries of origin of Mexico, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. For five of the students, this was their first class in the SeBAH-CoB program. They are now off to an enthusiastic start in their studies. Your continued prayers for them are much appreciated as they journey onward in their theological studies.



Evans House
Photo from Quaker Hill Conference Center Website

SeBAH-CoB NEWS continued

Estudiantes del programa SeBAH-CoB se reunieron para una clase presencial

El estudio, “Espiritualidad y Discipulado Cristiano” fue el tema principal de una clase de fin de semana para siete estudiantes Hermanos y tres estudiantes Menonitas quienes se reunieron en mayo en el centro ‘Quaker Hill’ en Richmond, Indiana. Por casualidad la clase se cayó en el mismo fin de semana de la conferencia denominacional de la Siembras de Iglesias. Entonces se hizo posible para la clase visitar y tomar un tour del Seminario (Bethany Seminary) y también interactuar con hermanos y hermanas de la iglesia en general.

Por tres días el profesor Tony Brun les dirigía a los y las estudiantes en estudio, reflexión, y interacción sobre el material del curso. De su experiencia y sabiduría rica ganada durante años de estudio y enseñanza en la mayoría de los países de América Central y Sur, Tony compartió un conocimiento y una práctica personal de la espiritualidad Anabautista.

Durante el fin de semana, estudiantes fueron bendecidos por el estudio de, entre otros temas del curso, la esencia de la espiritualidad, Jesús como la fundación de la espiritualidad, características de una espiritualidad Cristiana, y una exploración de practicas espirituales como la oración, la lectura y el estudio de la biblia, y varias tipas de celebraciones de adoración.

Como siempre, además del contenido muy significativo, había muchas oportunidades para los y las estudiantes conocer los unos a otros/las unas a otras. Ellos y ellas vinieron de California, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Texas, y Puerto Rico con origen de México, Guatemala, y la Republica Dominicana. Para cinco estudiantes Hermanos, la clase fue su primera y se les empezó muy bien. Sus oraciones continuas serian muy apreciadas como ellos siguen adelante en sus estudios.



Foto por Abraham Ulises Arenas incluye:

Photo by Abraham Ulises Arenas includes:

Fila 1 (de la izquierda) Row 1 (from the left): Jaime Cazares, Tony Brun, Sandra David Soto, Jessie Pineda

Fila 2 (de la izquierda Row 2 (from the left)): Suhelen Cazares, Dharma Paris Millán, Florecita Merlos, Leonor Ochoa, Julio Colon, Edgar Pineda, Abraham Ulises Arenas



Upcoming Brethren Academy Level Courses

Courses are open to TRIM and EFSM students, pastors (2 CEUs), and all interested persons.

Please note: While we continue to accept students beyond the registration deadline, on that date we determine whether we have enough students to offer a course. Many courses have required precourse readings, so students need to be sure to allow enough time to complete those. Please do not purchase texts or make travel plans until the registration deadline has passed and you receive a course confirmation.

To register, contact the Brethren Academy at academy@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1824.

Register for SVMC courses through Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center.

Forms at www.etown.edu/svmc or contact svmc@etown.edu or 717-361-1450.

[Credit descriptions: BCE – Brethren College Experience, BTS – Bethany Experience, IE-Intercultural/Interfaith/Ecumenical Experience, BT-Bible/Theology, MS –Ministry/Ministry Skills FCR-Fulfills Curricular Requirement]

Fall 2016

Neighboring Faiths: A Christian-Muslim Encounter in the United States

SVMC weekend intensive

Mechanicsburg CoB (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania)

Instructor: George Pickens

August 11-13, 2016

(credits: BT, IE)

Registration Deadline: July 11, 2016

Church of the Brethren History

Online

Instructor: Denise Kettering-Lane

September 5-October 28, 2016

(credits: BT, BTS, FCR)

Registration Deadline: August 5, 2016

Brethren Polity

SVMC, Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, PA)

Instructor: Randy Yoder

Sept. 30-Oct 1, Oct. 28-30, 2016

(credits: MS, BCE, FCR)

Registration Deadline: August 30, 2016

Introduction to Theology

Online

Instructor: Nate Inglis

October 10-December 2, 2016

(credits: BT, BTS)

Registration Deadline: September 10, 2016

Introduction to Old Testament

Online

Instructor: Matt Boersma

October 16-December 10, 2016

(credits: BT, FCR)

Registration Deadline: September 16, 2016

Finances and Faith

Weekend intensive

McPherson College (McPherson, KS)

Instructor: Beryl Jantzi

November 10-13, 2016

(credits: MS, BCE)

Registration Deadline: October 10, 2016

Winter/Spring 2017

Administration as Pastoral Care

January intensive

Bethany Theological Seminary

Instructor: Julie Hostetter

January 9-11, 2017 plus two follow up sessions via Zoom (dates TBD)

(credits: MS, BTS)

Registration Deadline: December 9, 2016

Trans/forming Faith: Introduction to Educational Ministry

Online

Instructor: Rhonda Pittman Gingrich

February 1-March 28, 2017

(credits: MS)

Registration Deadline: January 6, 2017

Baptism: A Window into Comparative Theology

Weekend intensive

McPherson College (McPherson, KS)

Instructor: Russell Haitch

April 27-30, 2017

(credits: BT, BTS, BCE)

Registration Deadline: March 27, 2017

Paul's Thought and the Pauline Tradition in the New Testament

SVMC online

Instructor: Bob Cleveland

Dates: TBD

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership is a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry and Bethany Theological Seminary. The BAML also partners with other groups such as the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center and the Mennonite Education Agency for the SeBAH-CoB (Spanish-language) ministry training program.

SVMC offers graduate-level classes with Bethany Theological Seminary and TRIM classes with the Academy. It also coordinates the Academy Certified Training Systems programs for Atlantic Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Middle Pennsylvania, Southern Pennsylvania and Western Pennsylvania Districts. At its meeting on April 14, the governing board and executive director Donna Rhodes welcomed the new program coordinator/registrar, Karen Hodges, and offered thanks and best wishes to Erika Fitz, who served in the position for the past few years.



Karen Hodges, Donna Rhodes, and Erika Fitz

CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENTS

Homiletic Peer Coaching Seminar

Are you looking to grow as a preacher? Are you open to exploring your preaching practice within a peer group? Are you willing to accompany others as they strengthen their preaching?

If so, check out this link, <https://homileticpeercoaching.org/>, and sign up for a homiletic peer coaching seminar offered this summer at Bethany Theological Seminary, August 8-11. The seminar will be led by Katie Shaw Thompson and Jeanne Davies, who have been through the peer group process and trained to facilitate. Continuing education units will be granted by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

The cost of the seminar is \$600/participant (\$60/session). For this initial 2016 peer group, accepted participants will receive a \$300 scholarship from Bethany Theological Seminary, bringing the cost per participant to \$300. Cost does not include housing or meals. A light breakfast and snacks are provided.

The deadline for registration is June 30, 2016.



Katie Shaw Thompson



Jeanne Davies

Sustaining Ministerial Excellence Advanced Seminar for Camp Directors and Program Staff



Photo: Julie Hostetter

Left to right: Karen Neff, Linetta Ballew, Wallace Cole, David Doudt, Barbara Lewczak, Jerri Wenger

The second retreat for this cohort took place March 13-16 in Richmond, Indiana. David Doudt was the coleader along with Julie Hostetter, executive director of the Brethren Academy. Throughout the retreat David made presentations on holistic health, focusing on spiritual disciplines and practices, gentle exercise, nutrition, and relaxation.

On Monday morning Steve Schweitzer, Bethany's academic dean and professor, led a session on Biblical Models for Leadership, an informative and inspirational Bible study that has been offered to previous SPE-AFCL cohorts. Tuesday afternoon the participants went to the Bethany campus to experience the technology classroom through another Schweitzer presentation on Science Fiction and Theology. In addition a tour of BTS was offered.



Russell Haitch, Professor of Christian Education and Director of the Institute for Ministry with Youth and Young Adults, offered a Monday afternoon presentation on Youth and Young Adult Ministry. On Tuesday morning his focus was on *Intergenerational Ministry*. Both sessions offered new information, ideas and insights as well as engaging dialog with practical applications for ministry among these groups.

Julie Hostetter introduced the book *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures* by McIntosh and Rima. The group will continue exploring this resource via Zoom video conference calls and one-on-one conversations.

Annual Conference Women in Leadership Series: Conflict Engagement as Risk and Grace

Clergywomen's Breakfast, Thursday, June 30, 2016, at 7:00 a.m.

"Ethical Grace in Action: A Model of Conflict Engagement for the Church"

Ethical grace, a term coined by theologians Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker, points to the grace of the goodness of life and our responsibility for sustaining it. Feminist religious ethicist Sharon Welch describes a similar idea as "joyful resistance" and South African theologian Alan Boesak, as "theological hope." Women of faith through the ages have lived out these concepts of positive peace, advocating for love and generosity in community, caring for those in need, appreciating life in the same breath as confronting injustice, and attending to those who are unjustly treated. How do these values point to healthy conflict engagement in the church?

Hosted by the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry

Insight Session, Thursday, June 30, 2016, at 9:00 p.m.

"Beyond Neutrality: The Many Roles of Conflict Facilitation"

This session will examine various levels and methodologies of conflict engagement, allowing particular conflicts and their contexts to guide us. When pastors and others attempt to facilitate conflict, our modus operandi is that our presence be a neutral one. Contrary to popular assumptions, resolution is not necessarily the best goal for every conflict; likewise neutrality is a coveted role that merits additional discernment. Using Mennonite scholar John Paul Lederach, legal scholar Bernie Mayer, and religious studies scholar Carol Dempsey among others, we will explore the roles of neutrality, objectivity, presence, uncertainty, and advocacy as we take to heart the biblical yearning for right relationships. Participants will leave with several methodologies and/or practical tools for use in personal, congregational, or other vocational conflicts. (0.1 CEU available)

Hosted by the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry

Insight Session, Friday, July 1, 2016, at 9:00 p.m.

"Being Mindful of Our Metaphors: The Question of 'Sheep' and 'Shepherds'"

Biblical texts represent stories about God and about Jesus that are constantly adapted to new settings. The memories of the Jesus written about in the Gospels were transformed by the experiences of the people doing the writing. Adapting what we hear to make sense in our own settings is important because context matters. That is what the biblical writers did, and that is what we do as well. What do the biblical metaphors of sheep and shepherds offer us today in contexts where we wrestle with issues of empowerment, equality, shared decision making, egalitarian work relationships, and teamwork? Together we will consider the possible pros and cons of these metaphors in our roles as visionaries of God's realm in our lives. (0.1 CEU available)

Hosted by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and CoB Office of Ministry

Insight Session, Saturday, July 2, 2016, at 9:00 p.m.

"A Restorative Justice Approach to the Divided Church"

As Methodist minister, theologian, and attorney Thomas Porter notes, "Justice is more important to God than worship. The worth of worship is contingent upon being just and righteous in one's relationships." Restorative justice, a comparative response to retributive justice, is a means of conflict facilitation used when harm has been done. In the church, we attempt to mend relationships and move on, often as efficiently as possible and without considering the harm done along the way. This session will discuss the differences between restorative and retributive justice and differences among conflict management, mediation, and restorative justice. Might we consider the methodology of restorative justice helpful as we continue to grapple with deep issues of distrust and harm done among our congregations, within our districts, and at the denominational level? (0.1 CEU available)

Hosted by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and Bethany Seminary

Presenter: Debbie Roberts is assistant professor of reconciliation studies at Bethany Theological Seminary and also serves as part-time pastor of Ellisforde Church of the Brethren (Pacific Northwest District). She earned a BA at Berea College (1980), an MATH at Bethany Theological Seminary (1986), and a PhD at Claremont Graduate University (2006). Debbie is a former area minister for Pacific Northwest District, former chaplain at La Verne University, and former pastor of congregations in Indiana and the Pacific Northwest. Course topics she has taught include conflict transformation, ethics, women's studies, and intercultural studies.



From the Executive Director



*God the Spirit, Guide and Guardian . . .
Give to those who lead your people fresh anointing of your grace.
Send them forth as bold apostles to your church in every place.*

*Christ our Savior, Sovereign, Shepherd . . .
In your tending may all ministers learn and live a shepherd's care,
Grant them courage and compassion shown through word and deed and prayer.*

From Hymnal: A Worship Book; Brethren Press, Elgin, IL; #632

Congratulations to the students who have completed their ministry training programs through the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership!

Training in Ministry (TRIM) graduates are recognized at their district conferences and also at the Annual Conference Bethany Seminary/Brethren Academy luncheon. The following brothers and sisters completed their TRIM programs during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Dean L. Foster, Associate Pastor, Black River Church of the Brethren, Northern Ohio

Randy Johnson, Senior Pastor, Dallas Center Church of the Brethren, Northern Plains

Donita Joy Shenk Keister, Associate Pastor for Children and Pastoral Care, Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren, Southern Pennsylvania

Randall S. Short, Part-time Pastor, Living Peace Church of the Brethren, Michigan

Dawna Welch, Youth Advisor, Pacific Southwest District and Minister to Children and Families, La Verne Church of the Brethren, Pacific Southwest

Please join us in offering prayers for and congratulations to our alumni/ae!

Julie *Carrie* *Nancy* *Fran*

A ministry-training partnership of the Church of the Brethren
and Bethany Theological Seminary
<http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/academy>



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