

Volume 2

theology.concordia.ca/studia-theologica

April 2007

Dr. Lucian Turcescu, Editor

From the Chair...



It is a privilege to send greetings to our students, alumni, and colleagues on the occasion of this second issue of our newsletter.

It is startling to realize that we have been in our new location downtown at 2140 Bishop for over a year. Yet, in some ways, Hingston Hall seems far, far in our past. The smooth transition indicates the “rightness” of our move, in particular, with respect with our proximity with other Humanities departments. The growth and vitality of our department reflects the growth and vitality that we experience all around us, particularly as articulated in the 2005 document *Moving Ahead: Concordia: Canada’s University for the 21st Century*. The document highlights several challenges facing Concordia in this first decade of the 21st century, challenges that our department is taking seriously in our own effort to widen our horizon at many levels.

One dimension of this is our commitment to strengthening our graduate program. This will involve the necessary hiring of full-time faculty members in areas such as New Testament and Spirituality. In the Fall 2007, we

will welcome to our faculty a limited term appointment in New Testament and we anticipate the eventual hiring of a tenure-track in New Testament. This will enhance the strength already present in our department in the reception and interpretation of scripture.

Many of you are aware that the internationally renowned Quebec philosopher Charles Taylor is the 2007 recipient of the 1.8 million U.S. Templeton Prize. Taylor is the first Canadian to receive the prize but what is most significant in our context is it was awarded to Taylor due to his effort to bridge the gap between science and spirituality. As Taylor states in his acceptance speech, “The barriers between science and spirituality are not only ungrounded, but are also crippling.” The recognition that spirituality is a vital dimension of human beings has warranted its growth as an academic discipline and our department has moved in this direction for some time. We will continue to promote this path as part of our vision for theology in the 21st century.

One significant development in relation to strengthening our graduate program is re-establishing the Honours program in Theological Studies. This takes effect in September 2007. It will facilitate undergraduate students’ transition to graduate studies by providing a strong theological foundation. *(continued on p. 2)*

Special Feature: In this issue Faculty members of the Department of Theological Studies have agreed to allow you, the reader, a surprise glimpse into their past...

From the Chair (continued from p. 1)...

It will give students an opportunity to truly engage in theological study at an in-depth level and allow students to hone their own theological questions even prior to entering graduate studies.



The Theological Studies Department is now located in a beautiful historical building at 2140 Bishop St.

Our department continues to attract undergraduate students to Major and Minor programs in Theological Studies. Our Major program is growing both in our traditional Christian Theology and, now, in our Jewish Theology and Islamic Theology. These exciting dimensions of theological studies are providing students with deeper understanding of their faith traditions as well as being a unique venue for interreligious dialogue. Along with this dialogical thrust, our undergraduate courses provide students with the opportunity to explore questions of ultimate value and meaning in the context of 21st century challenges. A significant component of our course offerings is linking faith and tradition with contemporary questions and challenges. Our areas of concentration, history, scripture, systematics, ethics and spirituality endeavour to explore the relevance of the past to the present and the present to the future. Important Canadian theologians like Gregory Baum as well as Canadian philosophers like Charles Taylor note that human societies and human persons are intrinsically spiritual and the eclipse or privatizing of that dimension of

human living has detrimental consequences.

Theological Studies also promotes a pastoral dimension in the form of the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry. Our Certificate Program attracts those already engaged and those desiring to enter into ministry work in a variety of capacities in the Christian Church. One very important development is our joining efforts with the Ignatius Centre for Spirituality in exploring a spirituality option for our Certificate in Pastoral Ministry.

I also want to note the exceptional contribution of our faculty. Our full-time faculty are dedicated scholars with a keen interest in the progress of our department and its students. Thus, in addition to being recognized scholars in their field, publishing books and articles in important academic journals, our professors strive to facilitate students' experience of theological studies through excellent teaching and service to our department and the university, as this issue of the newsletter emphasizes. Each one brings an indispensable contribution to the flourishing of our departmental life. We are also fortunate to have a team of part-time faculty who are committed to the vision and needs of our department as well as providing excellent classroom experiences for our students.

On a final note, you are all aware that Dr. Pamela Bright has stepped down as Chair of our department after many years of service laying the foundation for which today we reap the benefit. The combination of Dr. Bright's commitment, networking ability, and long-range vision enabled this department to reverse its decline and to progress in leaps and bounds in the last five to seven years. This is an astonishing accomplishment for which our department's current and future existence will always be in debt.

I look forward to our department's continuing growth and development in the years ahead - years which will call for dedication, hard work, and a commitment.

Dr. Christine Jamieson

The Reception and Interpretation of Scripture in Late Antiquity: An International Colloquium

From 11-13 October 2006, the Department of Theological Studies hosted a 3-day international colloquium entitled “The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity.” The event, which saw an average of 60 to 80 participants in attendance at 25 individual presentations, was organized by Dr. Lucian Turcescu, President of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies, and Dr. Lorenzo DiTommaso (with help from Dr. Pamela Bright, and several graduate students in the department – Gandhar Chakravarty, Sara Terreault, Jean Daou, and Adriana Bara). To organize the colloquium, Drs. Turcescu and DiTommaso obtained one of the highly competitive Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences in Canada grants (\$23,000) and help from other sources for a total of some \$30,000. Drs. Turcescu and DiTommaso are now editing the papers from the colloquium in view of publication with E. J. Brill in the Netherlands.



The colloquium explored the reception and interpretation of the Bible in Christianity and Judaism of

the late antique period (circa the second to seventh centuries). Three panels of papers are devoted to Patristic texts, and one panel each to the early Rabbinic literature, the Gnostic texts, and the post-biblical Jewish and Christian apocrypha, enjoying the presence of major names in these fields.

The idea of the proposed colloquium grew out of the publication of the magisterial, two-volume *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Brill, 2004), by our distinguished colleague, Professor Dr.

Charles Kannengiesser, and his collaborators. Specialists worldwide have already proclaimed that the *Handbook* will stand as the new benchmark in the field for decades to come. Professor Kannengiesser was the successor to Cardinal Jean Daniélou at the Institut Catholique in Paris, Catherine Huisking Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Notre Dame, and a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. He is the author of an impressive number of other books and articles whose subject matter was highly relevant to this colloquium.

Details can still be found on the colloquium website at:
<http://theology.concordia.ca/2006colloquium>.

Honours Programme in Theology will restart in Fall 2007

On **Tuesday, April 24 at 3:00pm** in the D annex (2140 Bishop), there will be a meeting of all interested students in the **BA with Honours in Theological Studies** programme. Having received official approval from the Faculty of Arts and Science and Concordia University, the Department of Theological Studies is proud to offer a Honours programme beginning in 2007. The revival of the programme reflects a number of factors that have come together over the past few years, not the least of which are the leadership of Dr. Bright in fostering a rounded theological curriculum and the growth of the department's complement of full-time faculty members. We are now in an ideal position to offer a high quality, undergraduate theology degree, one that is unique amongst Canadian universities and seminaries at the undergraduate level. The meeting will introduce students to the concept of the Honours programme and go through some of the features of the new programme such as courses in the following fields: philosophical theology, a theology of religious pluralism, ancient biblical languages and a seminar in Christian classical texts. You will have a chance to meet some of the

professors in the department and go over practical issues such as the use of credits from your B.A. Major toward the Honours degree. For more information about this gathering, please contact Dr. Paul Allen at ext. 2492. We encourage those students who may *not* be considering the programme to attend as well – it is an excellent opportunity to meet with other students, faculty and to hear about courses that are open to all students regardless of their programme.



Research and publication news...

In this section we have decided to use older photographs of our faculty. Enjoy!



Dr. Paul Allen,
Ernan McMullin and Critical Realism in the Science-Theology Dialogue (Ashgate, 2006).

“In the recent explosion of books and articles exploring the relationships between theology and the natural sciences, one of the sorely neglected areas has been the underlying philosophical bases for meaningful communication and mutually enriching interaction between them. This is particularly the case when it comes to assessing the significance of the conclusions in one for the perspectives and conclusions of the other. Paul Allen, in this book, provides us with an expansive, penetrating and well-founded framework for overcoming this deficiency, especially in dealing with the fundamental issue of critical realism moving from the natural sciences to theology.

Stimulated by the seminal work of Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke and John Polkinghorne, Allen synthesizes, and draws upon, the critical and carefully nuanced epistemological work of Ernan McMullin to anchor his approach. This is reinforced by incorporating key insights regarding our experience of knowing from Bernard Lonergan. The result is a precisely differentiated account of critical realism as one moves from the natural sciences through cosmology and philosophy, to theology. Besides being such a notable contribution to the philosophical dimensions of the theology-science interface, I have found that this book points the way to where we need to go in deepening, expanding and, most importantly, refining the dynamic relationships between theology and natural sciences. And I am certain that other readers will enjoy the same experience.” (From the *Foreword* by William R. Stoeger, S.J., Vatican Observatory / University of Arizona)



Dr. Pamela Bright has published “The Spirit in the Sevenfold Pattern of the Spiritual Life in the Thought of St Augustine,” *Studia Patristica*, eds. Mark Edwards, Francis Young, and Paul Parvis, vol. 43

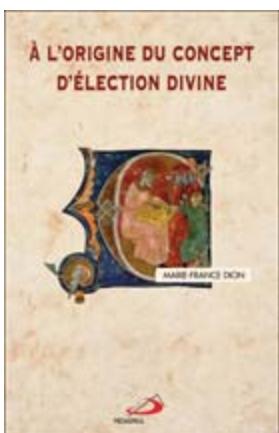
(Leuven: Peeters, 2006): 27-31; “The Axis of Augustine’s Doctrine of Scripture: the Incarnate Word” in *Christian Theologies of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction*, ed. Justin S. Solcomb (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 39-59; “The Donatist Schism until 390,” “The Donatist Controversy,” Anti-Donatist Writings,” “Ecclesiology and Sacramental Theology” in *Augustin Handbuch*, ed. Volker Drecoll (Tuebingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2007); “Tyconius” in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Westmount, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007); “Antony of Egypt and the Discernment of Spirits: The Vita of Athanasius and the

Letters of Antony" in *Origeniana* (Peters: Leuven, 2007). Dr. Bright will also deliver a paper at the International Patristic Conference (Oxford University, August 2007).



Dr. Marie-France Dion, *À l'origine du concept d'élection divine* (Mediaspaul, 2006)

L'élection divine du roi est un concept biblique qui a influencé pendant des siècles l'organisation socio-politique de l'Occident chrétien. Marie-France Dion nous présente une étude très fouillée sur l'adoption, en Israël, de ce concept proche-oriental. La période historique qu'elle étudie, soit celle de la transition de l'organisation socio-politique de l'époque dite des Juges vers le régime monarchique, demeure l'une des plus obscures et des plus controversées de la recherche portant sur l'Israël ancien. L'auteure cherche à déterminer les étapes ayant mené à l'adoption de cette notion d'élection divine. Cette évolution est d'autant plus surprenante que l'on considère généralement que cette conception du pouvoir provenait d'une idéologie politique allant à l'encontre des anciennes traditions claniques du pays.



À partir des récits bibliques des livres des Juges et de 1 Samuel, Marie-France Dion propose une reconstruction du processus par lequel cette idée d'élection divine a émergé en Israël, tout en la distinguant des conceptions similaires existant chez les autres

peuples de la région. Elle procède à une mise à jour rigoureuse des développements politiques de cette période historique peu connue. Selon

elle, c'est la controverse entourant la nature du pouvoir et le processus de désignation de l'autorité qui aurait provoqué l'important schisme qui secoue Israël à l'époque.

Dr. Dion has been invited to present a paper at Canada's largest ever gathering of Dead Sea Scroll scholars. The conference will be held on 11-13 October 2007 in Vancouver. The title of her paper is "The Identity of Epraim, Manasseh and Judah in the Pesher Nahum."

Dr. Dion has been elected Vice-President of l'Association Catholique des Etudes Bibliques au Canada (ACEBEC), at whose 2007 annual congress she will present a paper titled "L'analyse macro-syntaxique comme outils pour l'historico- critique."



Dr. Lorenzo DiTommaso (third from the right in the back row above and next to Dean of Arts and Science David Graham) was awarded a Dean's New Scholar Award in Fall 2006. This award was introduced to recognize scholarly work of outstanding quality, publication of research findings through peer-reviewed works, and success in attaining grants.



Dr. Christine Jamieson is part of a team of researchers awarded a 3-year (2007-2010) SSHRC grant to explore Mary Shelley's 1816 novel Frankenstein to develop new relationships between scholarship and art, artists and the content they wish to address, and between

scholars and the form their ideas take. The academic discourse around particular social and psychological themes from Shelley's novel will be transformed into a major work of instrumental theatre (multidisciplinary, staged music performance) entitled **Frankenstein's Ghosts**. A major part of the research will involve collaborative dialogues between the artistic team and the academics. Dr. Jamieson's background in social ethics and theology and her extensive research and papers on the challenges of genetic technology, stem cell research, research involving human subjects, and the notion of the human person will contribute an ethical and theological perspective to the dialogue. In commenting on team conducting this exciting research project the *Concordia Journal* (5 April 2007) editorialist wrote: "Their first crack at the SSHRC program was unsuccessful, but when they added ethicist Jamieson to their team, that changed. The federal granting agency responded to the moral problems presented by the image of Frankenstein as a creator... and the way it speaks to the complexity of the modern world."

Dr. Jamieson has been invited to participate in the International Association of Catholic Bioethicists (IACB) 3rd colloquium in London, UK from July 1-5, 2007 on "Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine." The aim of the colloquium is to consolidate and advance the thinking of Catholic bioethicists in this important, emerging area of medical research and potential therapies.

Dr. Jamieson will one of three panel presenter at the CONAHEC (Consortium for the North American Higher Education Collaboration) conference to be held in Quebec City April 25-27, 2007. The theme of the conference is *Rethinking North America: Higher Education, Regional Identities and Global Challenges*. Dr. Jamieson will present with Dr. Wayne Patterson from Howard University in Washington and Dr. Hilda Romero Zepeda of the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro in Mexico

on the topic "Examining Culture and Society through Ethical and Public Policy Issues in the Sciences."

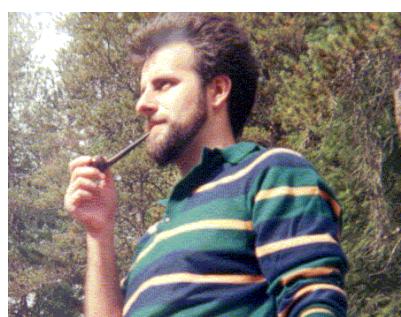
Dr. Charles Kannengiesser has been asked by the publisher to prepare a second edition, revised and updated, of the *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* for the end of 2007.



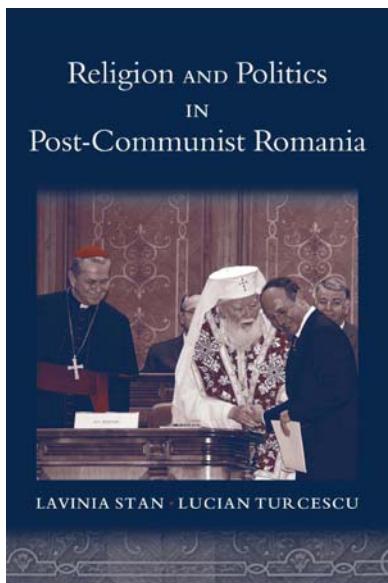
He is in charge of a volume on "Alexandria. Egypt and Cyrenaica" for the *Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne ancienne* (6 vols.), ed. by B. Pouderon in Paris (2008-2010).

He also completes the preparation for a new volume in Sources Chrétiennes on *Anthanasius of Alexandria, Orations against the Arians*, to be delivered to the publisher before the end 2008.

These urgent assignments should not disturb him too much from preparing a summer course in our Department for April 30-June 13 on: "*The Foundation of Trinitarian Faith, seen in the context of the contemporary encounter between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.*" He will also deliver a paper at the International Patristic Conference at Oxford University (August 2007).



Dr. Lucian Turcescu,
Religion and Politics in Post-communist Romania
(Oxford University Press, Fall 2007) (co-authored with L. Stan of



"This is a masterful interpretation of the role of religion in influencing the development of modern Romania which is presented to the reader with clarity and analytical rigor. As well as sparkling comparative insights, the authors relate

how religious claims and the reaction to them from the state and civil society are determining the extent to which Romania becomes a politically and socially free entity. The Orthodox Church is at the centre of the narrative and there are well-argued accounts of its relationship with nationalism, the communist past and the democratic present as Romania embraces capitalism and joins the European Union. Besides shedding light on a country whose direction is still shrouded in ambiguity, this is one of the most notable monographs to appear for quite a while on the role of religion in contemporary Europe." (Advanced praise for the book by Tom Gallagher, Professor of East European Politics, University of Bradford, UK)

Dr. Turcescu and Dr. Lavinia Stan (Political Science, Concordia) also have just signed a new contract with Oxford University Press for a book entitled *Church, State and Democracy in Expanding Europe*. The new book will consider older church-state models (e.g., the Byzantine and Latin models) and bring them into dialogue with newer models currently present in established and newer European democracies. Dr. Turcescu will also offer an undergraduate course in the Fall 2007, entitled "Patterns of Church-State Relations: Old and New."

On 8-9 February 2007, Dr. Turcescu was invited to give a presentation at an international colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa held at the University of Paris IV, Sorbonne, Paris. This year he will also deliver papers at two other international conferences held at Oxford University (International Patristic Conference, August 2007), and at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies annual meeting (New Orleans, November 2007).

At the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies (York University, Toronto, May 2006), Dr. Turcescu was re-elected as the society's President for a second two-year term.



Lecture by Dr. Guy Couturier, "The Ark of the Covenant"

On 28 February 2007, distinguished theologian, Guy Couturier was invited to speak at Concordia. His lecture entitled "The Ark of the Covenant" was both informative and fascinating. Through his work, he clearly demonstrated the significance of archeology, limited not only to ancient Israel but Mesopotamia and Egypt, to the understanding of the Hebrew Bible. In particular, he focused on the symbolism found in the physical features of the Ark of the Covenant. Although many may find the

explanations to the symbols a challenge to their faith, Dr. Guy Couturier expertly illustrated that an appreciation of the meaning of the symbols, in fact, allow for the richness and intended meaning of the text to be fully grasped. As one of the audience, I would like to thank Dr. Guy Couturier for sharing with us his knowledge and experience. I enjoyed and immensely benefited from his lecture and I look forward to his next visit. (**MA Student Janet Lamarche**)

An Unforgettable Experience...

In Winter 2007, graduate students from **Concordia University** and from **Université de Montréal** participated in a joint seminar on the Book of Habakkuk. The idea originated from the Qumran research project which professors **Marie-France Dion** (Theological Studies, Concordia), **Robert David** and **Jean Duhaime** (Université de Montréal) have been working on for the past two years. The team thought it might be interesting to do a graduate seminar on the book of Habakkuk, analyzing the Massoretic text (textual criticism, syntactical analysis and interpretation) and comparing this to the Qumran *Pesher* (the Qumran community's interpretation of the book of Habakkuk). Classes were held alternately at l'Université de Montréal (in French) and Concordia University (in English). Two students, one from Université de Montréal and the other from Concordia share with you their experience.

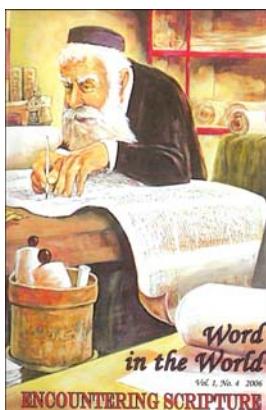


Profs. Robert David, Jean Duhaime (U de Montreal) and Marie-France Dion (Concordia)

« Je trouve intéressante cette nouvelle formule d'un séminaire conjoint Concordia et Université de Montréal, une semaine, un cours en anglais à Concordia, sur un domaine spécifique, et la semaine suivante, un cours en français à l'Université de Montréal, dans un autre domaine différent, mais interreliés. Trois professeurs qui nous font partager leurs connaissances, chacun selon son champ d'études. Je n'irais pas jusqu'à dire que je renouvellerais l'expérience à toutes les sessions, parce que mon anglais n'est pas formidable, mais peut-être que justement ça l'améliorerait! En plus, ça m'a permis de connaître de nouveaux étudiants qui s'intéressent au même domaine d'études que moi. » (Denise Lafrance, Université de Montréal)

"My experience in this course has been one of pleasure and learning. Not only have I met new people, who I otherwise would not have been in contact with, I have also been taken out of my comfort zone and required to face new challenges. Since my goal is to continue in my studies and acquire my PhD in Theology, specifically exegesis, making new contacts is invaluable. Concordia has provided me with this opportunity through the inter-University course. I hope to see more joint efforts with other Universities in the future. Keep up the good work Concordia!" (Janet Lamarche, Concordia University)

Word in the World – A Graduate Journal of Theological Studies



Word in the World:
Graduate Journal of
Theological Studies
Word in the World is a
unique, multi-
disciplinary periodical
produced by a team of
this department's
graduate students. It is
dedicated to the many
diverse aspects of

scholarship and faith that shape the sphere of theological studies. We welcome scholarly articles, poetry, reflection pieces, fiction and visual art from students and faculty within the department. We also encourage submissions from the many disciplines of study both within and beyond Concordia's community, as these shed their own crucial light on theological concerns. We hope to promote the budding academic careers of university students by providing a forum for conversation with their peers, as well as with professionals engaged within the various fields of scholarly discourse.

Our recently released issue "Encountering Scripture" follows the transmission and reception of scripture throughout the ages. It is a striking volume peppered with vivid and thought-provoking articles and artwork, and includes the winning submissions from last year's poetry contest. It is currently offered for purchase at the departmental office; back issues are also available.



Photo from a recent working meeting between the editors of *Word in the World* and departmental faculty members.

The next issue of *Word in the World* will focus on the vital questions that arise when theological perspectives take on the currently passionately debated subject of *sustainability*. We are looking to explore the role theology can, and indeed *must* play in understanding and acting on the imperatives of sustainability in its environmental, social, ethical, religious,

cultural, and economic dimensions. How can our spiritual and religious traditions contribute to understanding of the issues involved, and to the practical action called for by this understanding? What opportunities exist to incorporate theology and spirituality in the task of keeping our world sustainable now and in the future? We eagerly encourage students and faculty to submit material related to these important questions. We also remind students of the important opportunity to have their work published and shared with their peers, and we ask that faculty promote this prospect to their students, encouraging their participation in the project. *Word in the World* will establish its status as a peer-reviewed publication with this upcoming issue, and we anticipate support in this endeavour from within and beyond the Department of Theological Studies. (**Ivy Hershon and Sara Terreault**)

News from our Graduate Students...

Mona Abbondanza (MA Student in our department and Professor of Psychology at the Université du Québec à Montréal) will present a paper entitled "Acculturation Profiles and Intercultural Interactions: the Role of Spirituality" at a conference entitled "Religion on the Borders" (Stockholm, Sweden, 19-22 April 2007). Scholars of different disciplines participate in the conference which discusses theoretical, methodological and empirical progress in the field of religion. "Religion on the Borders: New Challenges in the Academic Study of Religion," is organized in collaboration with SSRF (Swedish Society for the Study of History of Religions) and IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions).

Peter Cassidy (MA Student). As part of his Theo 691 Research Paper on John Paul II's Theology of the Body, he will be attending a Conference on the same subject at the International Theological Institute (ITI) in Gaming, Austria, 18-20 May 2007. Speakers will include Dr Michael Walstein, Sister M.

Timothy Prokes, Dr. Donald P. Asci, Matthew Pinto and Christopher West. Sample topics will include Three Kinds of Personalism: Kant, Scheler and John Paul II, Theology of the Body: Antidote to Treating Persons as Products in Medicine and the Life Sciences, and The Language of the Body: Honesty and Hypocrisy. He is happy to combine this trip with a visit to one of his brother's and his family who live and work in Gaming. This brother and another one from Scotland will be attending the conference. More information at <http://www.jp2tob.com/program.html>.



Orit Shimoni (MA Student) has launched her new CD titled "Little Birdie: Cinematic Way." *Soulshine Magazine*, an on-line music magazine

reviewed the record and called it highly narrative country music and said the songs take you through a spiritual journey of faith. Another review called it "insightful and profound." There are 11 songs on it that Orit wrote over a period of a couple of years, in which she tried to find the space between the personal and the universal, human love and divine love, the archetype and the modern. The process of recording and playing music with others is in and of itself a spiritual journey, Orit added, while thinking that it is no coincidence it happened alongside the philosophical introspection that her studies led her through. The album is in stores now, or can be purchased on line on CD Baby, or can be directly from Orit <Email: oriti@canada.com>

Sara Terreault (SIP PhD Student) is the joint recipient of this year's St Patrick's Society Scholarship. She will use the funds to travel to Ireland this summer, in order to explore sites and artifacts associated with the history of

Christianity in Ireland. She plans to visit the Díseart Institute of Education and Celtic Culture, where research into the intersections of Celtic history, art, literature and spirituality is actively promoted. As instructor of the department's THEO 208 (Celtic Christianity), she is especially interested in the complex question of a specifically "Celtic" Christian tradition, the waves of historical re-appropriation of this tradition including the intense current popular interest, and the issues that emerge from reflection on these phenomena with regards to the nature of theological understanding, spiritual practice and religious imagination. These questions shed important light on her research into the emergence of spirituality as an academic discipline, and the essential links between theology and spirituality.

Sara Terreault will also be presenting a paper in July 2007 at the Spirit of Capitalism Conference at the Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, UK. The title of the paper is: "Christian Contemplative Traditions: the Contribution to a Holistic Understanding of the Worker as Person, and of Work as Person-Formation." The paper will be part of a panel titled "Critical approaches to religion and spirituality in organization."

The 2007 Canadian Theological Student Conference...

Thirty divinity students walk into a Hare Krishna temple... the beginning of an off-colour joke or a spiritual occurrence? The Canadian Theological Students' Association (CTSA) has been an ecumenical organization since the inception of in 1954, but it also promoted greater cooperation and understanding among all religions.

The topic of this year's conference was "Stewards of Creation: Theology and Sustainability," and was co-chaired by Martin Chartrand, a Ph.D. student from the host institution, l'Université de Montréal. Our city was definitely the ideal setting for this



theological multicultural multilingual exchange. Being the only executive from an officially secular school of theology, my perspective was rather unique among the majority divinity school congregation.

In the spirit of the theologically *avant garde* modes of thinking that have already been initiated by retired Chair of Theological Studies at Concordia, Dr. Pamela Bright, I had to ensure that a worthwhile interfaith experience was part of this year's schedule.

The academic mandate of the conference always includes a majority world theological voice. Our international keynote speaker this year was Jenny Plane Te Paa from New Zealand, the first lay, indigenous woman to serve as principal of an Anglican seminary. She is also a member of the Lambeth Commission, the top governing body of the Anglican Church. Dr. Plane Tee Pa delivered two keynote addresses from which one of the main themes of the entire week was echoed: sustainability starts with how we treat each other. The first address "Indigenous Peoples and God's Creation: Issues of Poignancy, Participation, Protection," was brilliantly responded to by Dr. Christine Jamieson, and the second, "Indigenous Peoples and God's Creation: Issues of Sanctity, Stewardship, Sustainability," was proceeded by a humorous reply from Jean Bellefeuille, responsible for the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation portfolio for the Canadian Religious Conference. The third keynote address was delivered by local environmentalist and theologian André Beauchamp on the "Religious Dimensions of

the Environmental Movement." Our banquet speaker, Jean-Guy Vaillancourt, one of the forefathers of the environmental movement in Quebec, raised a number of eyebrows with his extremely left political views. In addition to a more informal seminar led by Dr. Plane Te Paa, other components of the week long conference included various workshops designed to provide practical sustainable solutions in the context of ministry and theology, some small group meetings intended to encourage deeper conversation on the issues of the week, and presentations of student papers, some of which will be published in *Ecumenism, Scriptura, and Word in the World*.



Next year's conference will be held at the Vancouver School of Theology (VST). I hope Concordia will once again be represented so that I and Julia Jabre, this year's delegate, will have succeeded in passing a torch. To find out more about the conference and how to become a participant next year, please visit www.cantsa.ca and look for my lengthier theological reflection on 2007's CTSC in the upcoming issue of *Word in the World*. (MA Student **Gandhar Chakravarty**)



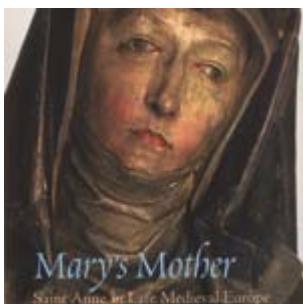
Graduate and undergraduate Theology students

News from our Undergraduate Students...

The Reluctant Virgin: Mary and the Prophecies...

On 20 March 2007, the Theology Undergraduate Students' Association prepared an evening of lecture and discussion. The speaker, Dr. Virginia Nixon, a professor of art history from the Liberal Arts College at Concordia University presented her latest work in a presentation she entitled: "The Reluctant Virgin: Mary and the Prophecies".

As an art critic for the Montreal Gazette in the 1960s and early 1970s, Virginia Nixon wrote over one thousand articles in addition to articles for Art Magazine, Canadian Forum and the Montreal Calendar Magazine. Returning to university in the 1980s she received her Master's degree and her Doctorate from Concordia. For some time she has been teaching the History of Art and the History of Music at the Liberal Arts College at Concordia.



Dr. Virginia Nixon's most recent publications in 2004 entitled *Mary's Mother: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe* analyzes the growth of devotion to Saint Anne and the art works depicting her in the late Middle Ages.

The lecture she presented on the evening of March 20th for the department of Theological Studies showed art works from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century. The works exhibited the muted way in which Mary shows her rejection of the crucifixion and her reluctance to allow her son to be crucified. Mary is presented as a suffering mother initially unwilling to accept the prophecies of her son's coming death and reluctant to give him up to the authorities who are about to crucify him.

The Theology Undergraduate Students'

Association would like to thank Dr. Nixon for presenting her work. In addition, we would also like to thank all the professors and students who attended the lecture. This was in fact our biggest turn out of the year.

Apocalypes Now? Not yet...

Dr. Pamela Bright and Dr. Lorenzo DiTommaso were the principal commentators in the hour-long presentation entitled "Apocalypse Now?" on Vision TV channel in the Enigma series in March 2007. The documentary produced in association with Arte France was the work of Montreal documentary film maker Paul.... A special student screening of the documentary was received with enthusiasm.

North American Mobility Program Ethical and Policy Issues in the Sciences: A Comparative Study in Canada, the United States, and Mexico

The North American Mobility Program (NAMP) is a five year program awarded to **Dr. Christine Jamieson** by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The program involves a consortium of three universities from Canada (Concordia University, Université de Montréal, and Saint Paul University), three from the United States (Howard University, University of Texas El Paso, and Hope College), and three from Mexico (Universidad de Queretaro, Universidad Autonoma Popular des Estado Puebla, Universidad Anahuac). It is part of the International Academic Mobility, National Office of Literacy and Learning that seeks to encourage co-operation in higher education and training among the three countries with a focus on student mobility.



Over the span of four years, approximately nine graduate or upper-

level undergraduate students from Concordia will study for one semester in one of the universities in Mexico or the United States. In addition, approximately nine students from either Mexico or the United States will study at Concordia for one semester. The program provides these students with an opportunity to take courses related to the theme of Ethical and Policy Issues in the Sciences. It also will support some shorter-term mobility among professors. Loyola International College and the Department of Theological Studies will both participate in the program. Other departments may eventually be involved. Participating students do not necessarily need to be in theology to participate. Students from philosophy, religion and political science may also be potential recipients of the mobility award. Year one is for setting logistics in place and the first students to study abroad will be in the Fall 2007. Further information on applying for this opportunity will be forwarded to the students soon through the Graduate Program Director and Undergraduate Advisor.

The Theological Studies Department website is getting a facelift!

As part of a broader mandate to improve and unify Concordia's web presence, our department website will be undergoing a transformation in the next few months. The university is implementing new standards and guidelines to encourage continuity across departmental sites, and the Theological Studies website will be amongst the first to adopt the new criteria. Sharon Austin, a first year MA student in our department, has undertaken the site redesign and is currently working with the university's web group to develop the new look and ensure standards compliance. If you have any suggestions for content or photos of department events, classes, etc. that we could incorporate into the new site, please contact Sharon at: twitchdesign@videotron.ca

Studia Theologica is the newsletter of the Theological Studies Department at Concordia University.

Contributions, new information on research and other scholarly activities in theological studies, are always welcome. Please address all correspondence to the Editor:

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