

# *Studia Theologica*

Department of Theological Studies Newsletter

Volume 3, 2010



<http://theology.concordia.ca>

Welcome to the latest volume of *Studia Theologica*, Concordia University's Department of Theological Studies newsletter! In this edition you will find lots of information that reflects the vibrant community and life of the Department.



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# Department Highlights

## Note from the Editor

Greetings and welcome to the Department of Theological Studies! A lot has happened since the last edition of *Studia Theologica*, so whether you are new to Concordia or have been around a while, I hope you enjoy reading up on our collective endeavors and achievements, as well as the exciting events and initiatives planned for the 2010-2011 academic year.

Our department has flourished in recent years due to the quality of scholarship and active involvement of both faculty and students. Each year we continue to build a strong sense of community aimed at fostering a high standard of academic excellence, as well as improving the university experience of students who sojourn in our department. With the foundations set, this year promises to be one of the best yet!

## Welcome New Professors!

Dr. Jean-Michel Roessli is the newest addition to our faculty. He brings with him a wealth of scholarship that will greatly benefit the students he teaches as well as the department as a whole. Though he will be busy over the next year teaching three undergraduate classes and one graduate class, do not hesitate to say hello to him and make him feel welcomed in the department.



This is Dr. Jason Zuidema's second year with the department and we are happy to welcome him back! Having just received a 2010-2013 SSHRC Standard Research Grant as well as being slated to teach seven classes, which include both undergraduate and graduate level courses, it is certain that Dr. Zuidema's second year at Concordia will be extremely eventful!



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## HONORABLE MENTIONS

Jennifer Chalut  
SSHRC Masters Competition, 2008

Didier Chelin  
SSHRC Masters Competition, 2010

Dr. Marie-France Dion,  
SSHRC Standard Research Grant, 2008-2011  
Fond Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture  
(FQRSC), 2007-2010

Dr. André Gagné  
Dean's New Scholar Award, 2010  
Concordia Council on Student Life Outstanding Contribution  
Award, 2010  
Fond Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture  
(FQRSC), 2009-12

Sabrina Jafralie  
André Gervais Theological Scholarship, 2009

Dr. Christine Jamieson  
SSHRC Standard Research Grant, 2007-2010  
Resources and Skills Development Canada, International Academic  
Mobility Program, 2006-2010

Lily-Catherine Johnston  
Faculty of Arts and Science Graduate Scholarship, 2010

Calogero Miceli  
Faculty of Arts and Science Graduate Scholarship, 2009

Hélène Poisson  
Saxena Bursary, 2009

Jonathan Raddatz,  
Faculty of Arts and Science Graduate Scholarship, 2010

Lindsey Sandul  
SSHRC Masters Competition, 2009

Kathryn Sawyer,  
Saint Patrick's Society Scholarship in Irish Studies, 2009

Robert Smith,  
Saxena Bursary, 2009

Andrew Staples  
Canadian Theological Society Essay Contest Winner, 2010

Dr. Lucian Turcescu  
Dean's Award for Distinguished Scholarship, 2010  
SSHRC Standard Research Grant, 2008-11

Dr. Jason Zuidema  
SSHRC Standard Research Grant, 2010-2013



## Getting to Know Jean-Michel Roessli

Jean-Michel Roessli is the newest faculty member to our department, and comes to us with an expertise in Historical Theology both Ancient and Medieval, with a special emphasis on the history and reception of biblical and apocryphal texts from Late Antiquity (5th century CE) to the end of the Reformation (17th century CE). Originally from Switzerland, Jean-Michel began his studies at the University of Geneva, and later at the University of Fribourg and the École pratique des hautes études in Paris conjointly. Drawing from an interdisciplinary combination of Theology, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy and English Philology, his master's thesis examined the reception of the myth of Orpheus in the Jewish community of the Greco-Roman Period (from 300 BCE to the 5th century CE), and his doctoral dissertation focused on the pagan announcement of Christianity in parts of the Sibylline Oracles.



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*"For me teaching is a calling. Students and colleagues have described my teaching style as very engaging. I truly believe that boredom is the worst enemy of learning. This is why I try to make religious and theological studies interesting and relevant."*

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Jean-Michel has taught at the University of Fribourg and Neuchâtel in Switzerland, as well as Laurentian University in Sudbury, including courses in Greek and Latin. He has also published extensively, and is notably a member of the Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne (AELAC), and also sits on the editorial board of several journals, including the *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, a world-renowned periodical, and *Apocrypha: International Journal of Apocryphal*

*Literature*. He is also actively involved with the publication of a scholarly paperback series focusing on apocryphal texts. Although Jean-Michel's interests are specialized, he is concerned with making knowledge accessible to all levels of readers, as well as encouraging dialogue between North American and European scholarship.

When asked about his teaching style he replied, "For me teaching is a calling. Students and colleagues have described my teaching style as very engaging. I truly believe that boredom is the worst enemy of learning. This is why I try to make religious and theological studies interesting and relevant. I don't see myself as a hard marker, but I am demanding in the sense that I expect students to be curious, open-minded and eager for learning." He also encourages active engagement between students as part of the pedagogy, and makes a point to give ample feedback as a way to help students develop themselves as fully as possible. Overall, students who take his classes can expect to find a very approachable and amiable professor, who cares deeply about his work and his students!



For the 2010-2011 year, Jean-Michel will be teaching THEO 320/2 (History of Christianity—The Medieval Period); THEO 604/2 (Theological Hermeneutics); THEO 322/4 (History of Christianity—Reformation and Modernity); and THEO 333/4 (Jesus Christ in History and Faith). For more information, please contact Dr. Roessli at [jroessli@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:jroessli@alcor.concordia.ca).

**For more on Jean-Michel Roessli and other faculty member profiles, including CV's, research interests and contact information, please visit the department website at:**  
**<http://theology.concordia.ca>**

## Gnostic Studies at Concordia

With the arrival of Dr. André Gagné to our department two years ago, we have seen a growth of students interested in studying Gnosticism at Concordia. Dr. Gagné conducted our first introductory course on Gnosticism in 2009, and also presented two very successful lectures to the university community on the *Gospel of Judas* and the *Gospel of Thomas*.



### Joint Gnostic Colloquium Participants

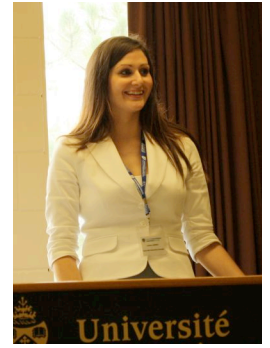
**Sitting, left to right:** Jennifer Chalut (Concordia), Lindsey Sandul (Concordia), Jonathan Raddatz (Concordia), Prof. Anne Pasquier (ULaval), Robert Smith (Concordia). **Standing, left to right:** Mary Harvan (Concordia), Éric Crêgheur (ULaval), David Joubert-Leclerc (ULaval), Costa Babalis (Concordia), Prof. Louis Painchaud (ULaval), Calogero Miceli (Concordia), Steve Johnston (ULaval), Prof. André Gagné (Concordia), Marie Chantal (ULaval), Moa Dritsas-Bizier (ULaval). **Absent from picture:** Julio Cesar Dias Chaves (ULaval), Dr. Tuomas Rasimus (ULaval / Helsinki), Prof. Michel Roberge (ULaval)

Students from our department also participated in a joint seminar on Gnostic Literature with world-renown scholars from Université Laval in Québec City, which promises to become an annual endeavor in the years to come. Many students are also learning Coptic with Dr. Gagné, and will be participating in a weekly non-credited seminar this year that focuses on texts from the Nag Hammadi corpus. Several graduate students are also currently working on their master's theses with a focus on ancient Gnosticism and the New Testament. Most notably are Jennifer Chalut and Lindsey Sandul, who are both SSHRC recipients for their work on the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Gospel of Judas*.

With all this said, our department is poised to become a leading Anglophone counterpart to Université Laval. As such, we offer a unique opportunity in all of North America where English-speaking students interested in Gnostic Studies have direct access to both English and French scholarship!

## Department Conferences and Events

Montréal was the venue for many exciting events recently. The annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences was hosted here at Concordia, and many of the faculty and students of our presented with the Canadian Theological Society, the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, and the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies. Their work is representative of the research being done in our department, so have a look at some of their topics:



Pamela Bright and Charles Kannengeiser, "Preparing the Second Edition of *The Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: Exegesis* and a critical edition of Athanasius' *Contra Arianos* (Sources Chrétiennes)."

André Gagne, "Polemizing Against Other Gnostics: Gnosis and Salvation in the *Gospel of Judas*."

Christine Jamieson, "The *Ecumenist* and Critical Theology in Canada."

Charles Kannengiesser, "Clothed with Spiritual Fire: John Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Letter to the Hebrews*."

Melanie Perialis, "The Catacombs of Rome: Typological Representations of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Art."

Robert Smith, "Eco-theology and the State of Christian Environmentalism in Québec."

Andrew Staples, "Deification Language in Dionysius's Sacramental Expositions within the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*."

Andrew Staples, "Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Ururarios* and Related Sermons."

Lucian Turcescu, "A Report and Demonstration of a Web-based Approach to Teaching 'The Origins of Christianity'."

Melissa Wiebe, "The Early Struggle: Understanding the Relationships and Events Surrounding the Persecution of the Early Christians."

Students and faculty have also been actively participating in the ongoing Montréal Biblical Studies Colloquium with the University of Montréal and McGill. Students also presented outside of Concordia including a joint panel of three students, Calogero

Miceli, Lindsey Sandul, and Robert Smith, entitled "Navigating the Language and Terrain of Biblical Texts." Their topics included:

"Hebrew Texts as a Response to Pluralism in the Ancient Mediterranean;"

"The Emergence of Christian Texts: Written by Jews in a Hellenized World Occupied by the Roman Empire."

"The Phenomenon of Gnosticism: Languages, Cultures, and Religions in Ancient Alexandria."

Other recent presentation topics included:

Matthew Anderson, "The Beatles and the Gospels."

Marie-France Dion, "Enough with the Charades: A Diachronic and Synchronic Approach to the Story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38)."

Martha Elias Downey, "Off the Page: Psalm 127:1-2 Explored Through Exegetical Study and Expressed through Slam Poetry."

André Gagné, "Identities in Crisis: Interpreting the Bible as a Means for Self-Definition."

Calogero A. Miceli, "The Forgotten Biblical Character: a Literary Approach to Understanding the Role of the Young Man in Mark's Gospel."

Lindsey Sandul, "How Jewish were the Gnostics?"

Mark Scott & Jason Zuidema, "Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol* at the Intersection of the Return of Religion and the Culture of Consumption."

Robert Smith, "Challenging Tradition: Second Century Christianity and Biblical Texts."

Jennifer Tacci, "Scripture and Apocalypticism: Breaking the Bounds of Definitions and Taxonomies."

The Department is also home to the Lonergan Centre for Ethical Reflection, which hosted a successful Lonergan symposium in 2008, with guest speakers and topics including:

Darlene O'Leary "Healing and Creating in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Lonergan's Tools for Change"

Philip McShane, "Meeting the Challenge of an Affective Global Ethic"

Russell Baker, "Method in Theology: pages 249-50"

Concordia was also host to the Canadian Bible Society symposium in 2010. Guest speakers included (from left to right): **Peter Gentry** (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA), exegete, editor of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs for the Göttingen Septuagint Series; **Henri Blocher** (Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique in Vaux-sur-Seine, France), theologian, member of the Editorial Committee of the Nouvelle Bible Segond; **Emanuel Tov** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) exegete in charge of the publication of the Qumran manuscripts and co-director of the Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Studies; **Christophe Rico** (École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem) linguist and koine Greek specialist, member of the La Bible en ses traditions team; and **Lynell Zogbo** (Ivory Coast), linguist, UBS consultant for biblical translation programs for French Africa. She is also in charge of the preparation of French manuals for translators.



The 2010 symposium focused on the exegetical contributions to the translation of the Bible organized by the Centre for Training and Research in Bible Translation (CTRBT).



Academic committee of the CTRBT from left to right back row: Amar Djaballah (Acadia University), Manuel Jinbanchian (Director of the CTRBT), George Legault (Director of the CBS of Montreal), Robert David (Université de Montréal), Marie-France Dion (Concordia University), Ian Henderson (McGill University).

Presentations topics included:

Linda Buchanan and Marie-France Dion, "Traduction et interprétation de I Samuel 13."

André Gagné, "Le Fils Bien-aimé ou le Fils engendré (Luc 3,22)? Critique textuelle, traduction et théologie."



Janet Lamarche, "Toward a Better Understanding of Genesis 14: 17-21."

The Department also hosted the 66th Annual Congress of l'ACÉBAC (L'association catholique pour les études bibliques au Canada). Approximately 20 scholars in Biblical Studies from Quebec and Ontario participated in the event which was held on May 21-23 at Concordia. Drs. Marie-France Dion and André Gagné were the local organizers of the event, which included a workshop by Dr. Gagné entitled: "Les figures de Jésus, de la mère et du Père vivant (EvTh 15; 50; 79; 101): Trinité et modalisme dans l'Évangile selon Thomas?"

## Full Professor and Bookfest in Bucharest

Lucian Turcescu became Full Professor as of 1 June 2010 and won the Dean's Award for Distinguished Scholarship for 2009-10. The award is meant to "recognize not only the extremely high caliber of research produced over an extended period of time, but also the sheer volume of productivity which has earned the author innumerable awards and grants, and has brought both national and international recognition to the Faculty of Arts and Science of Concordia University." He continues to be the co-investigator in \$100,000 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada grant for a project on religion and politics in ten former communist countries that are now part of the European Union. Titled "From Repression to Co-operation: Church, State, and Democratization in Expanding Europe," the project will be published as a book by Oxford University Press in 2011.

Lucian's earlier co-authored book on *Religion and Politics in Post-communist Romania* (Oxford University Press, 2007) was published in a Romanian translation in 2010. On 12 June 2010, the book was launched at Romania's largest annual book fair, Bookfest, in Bucharest. Besides the two authors, Lucian and his research partner and wife, political scientist Dr. Lavinia Stan, and a crowd of some 50

people, present at the launch were Ms. Debra Price, political counsellor at the Canadian Embassy in Romania, Prof. Vladimir Tismaneanu (political scientist at the University of Maryland and president of a Romanian Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes), and Lucian's cousin, Robert Turcescu, one of Romania's leading journalists. His Excellency the Canadian ambassador, Mr. Philippe Beaulne, who returned to Bucharest the same afternoon from a trip to Bulgaria, had also organized a nice dinner afterwards to mark the event. The research for the book was funded by a major \$110,000 SSHRC grant (2002-2006) in which Lucian was the principal investigator. Ms. Price spoke about the importance of Canadian funding of research around the world and emphasized the Canadian-Romanian collaboration, especially in view of Canada's attempts to establish better relations with the European Union (whose member Romania has been since 2007). In 2010, Lucian also published in Romanian a book of interviews with specialists in Eastern Europe to mark 20 years since the collapse of communism in the region: Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, eds., *The Incredible Adventure of Democracy after Communism*, Editura Institutul European, 2010.



Lucian has had an amazing teaching experience over the past two years. Currently the only Theology online course in the department, The Origins of Christianity (Theo 206 EC) has attracted extremely large numbers of students from across all departments at Concordia and other universities. With an attractive design done by eConcordia, the course includes electronic notes and

readings, online quizzes, a final in-class exam, beautiful slides and links to relevant materials, as well as video and audio clips Lucian recorded, attempting to bring to this virtual environment some of the real classroom experience. Theology alumnae, Melanie Perialis and Melissa Wiebe, have provided major assistance with the design and running of the course. You can learn more about it by visiting:

www.econcordia.com. In 2009-10, Lucian started teaching a course on Religion and Politics (Theo 343, cross-listed to Political Science as Psci 389). This course has also been a major success with record enrollment and is being offered again in 2010-11.

Lucian will continue to serve as the department's Graduate Program Director in 2010-11. The M.A. in Theology has had a steady annual enrolment of some 60 students, despite the 10-12 students who graduate each year. An increasing number of students in the program hold prestigious external research funding or receive the Faculty of Arts and Science Fellowships or other smaller bursaries. Besides the M.A. students he currently supervises, Lucian is also involved in doctoral co-supervision in the Special Individualized Program (SIP) and the Ph.D. in Humanities at Concordia, as well as with the Universite de Montreal and McGill. The recent Canadian Society of Patristic Studies annual conference (part of the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences hosted by Concordia in 2010) saw four presentations by M.A. and Ph.D. students Lucian has supervised. Encouraging students to present at conferences, to publish, and apply for research funding is part of Lucian's mentoring strategy in regard to his students.

## **Report on Sabbatical**

By Christine Jamieson

During my one-year sabbatical (August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010) I was a Senior Fellow in the Shared Academic Fellowship with the Centre for Clinical Ethics and the Joint Centre for Bioethics at the University of Toronto. During this time I spent one day per week at Providence Health Care in Scarborough, Ontario where I worked in an Adult Day Program for people in various stages of dementia. My goal in spending this time among people with cognitive impairment was to experience at a concrete level what I was researching at a theoretical level. I am writing on a book with the tentative title, *The Meaning of Being Human in Relation to Cognitive Impairment*. I also spent one day per week at St. Michael's Hospital in downtown Toronto. There I worked with the hospital bioethicist and learned a tremendous amount about the clinical ethics dimension of hospitals. I spent another day per week at the Joint Centre for Bioethics

(JCB) at the University of Toronto. This day was spent in meetings and discussions with bioethicists in hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area. While the days in the hospitals were the practical, concrete level of the fellowship, the day at the JCB was theoretical. The remaining days of the week were spent in research and writing.

Throughout the year, I presented several papers in both clinical contexts and at conferences. Some of these were:

The Solidarity Catholicism of Gregory Baum at the American Academy of Religion 2009 in Montreal on November 7, 2009. This paper was published in *The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture and Society*.

"Lonergan, Personhood and Cognitive Impairment" at the Lonergan Research Institute Graduate Seminar, Regis College, University of Toronto on February 26, 2010.

"The Ethical Challenges of Medicine today: Drawing on the Wisdom of Vatican II" at the University of Victoria on March 26, 2010.

"Caring for Patients with Complex Symptoms and Their Families: An Interprofessional Conversation: Clinical Ethics Perspective," panel discussion at St. Michael's Hospital, May 5, 2010.

"The Ecumenist and Critical Theology in Canada" at Congress 2010, Concordia University on May 31, 2010.

"The Religious Significance in End of Life Care: A Roman Catholic Perspective in Conversation with Judaism and Islam" at Culture, Spirituality and Ethics in Critical Care, Chronic Care and Mental Health Care, St. Paul University, Ottawa, June 18, 2010.

I continue to do research with the Centre for Clinical Ethics on a values integration project that has three phases, the first of which is just completed with a 150-page report on values assessment at St. Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto. Phase two will be the assembling of an education package to address the key values challenges that emerged in Phase one and Phase three will be publication of the project.



## Call for Essays: The Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art (ASCHA)

ASCHA is calling for scholarly essays for publication in an anthology that critically examines specific historical examples of the relationship between Christianity and the visual arts. These essays reveal specific canonical works of art, in their creation, use, and interpretation, as the materialization of a three-part exchange between sacred content, visual and concrete form, and religious/historical context. Toward a Sacramental Methodology of Art History is a project offering an examination of the rich and diverse history of Christianity and the visual arts. Several of this collection's essays were initially presented as papers at the ASCHA-organized symposium History, Continuity, and Rupture, held in Paris in May 2010. Submissions should be sent electronically by December 1, 2010 to BOTH James Romaine (drjamesromaine@gmail.com) and Linda Stratford (lstratford@asbury.edu). For further information visit <http://christianityhistoryart.org>.

## Agreement with the University of Nottingham

We are pleased to announce that Concordia signed a bilateral agreement with the **University of Nottingham, United Kingdom**. The University of Nottingham is one of the leading universities in the United Kingdom for teaching quality and is a world-class centre of research excellence. It has developed a strong reputation in a number of fields including Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies.

The new agreement will permit Concordia and the University of Nottingham to exchange **4 undergraduate/graduate students per semester (8 per year)**, which includes 4 student places per year at the Nottingham UK campus, 2 places per year at the Ningbo (China) campus and 2 places per year at the Semenyieh (Malaysia) campus. The agreement is valid for 3 years and will expire in June 2013.

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at The University of Nottingham is currently ranked as

one of the finest in the country. Established over 50 years ago, the Department has research expertise across a wide range of areas. The Department provides undergraduate students the opportunity to study the subject in its broadest sense by combining textual, literary and historical approaches to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and philosophical, sociological and comparative approaches to religious traditions and Christian Theology.

The Department also houses the Centre of Theology and Philosophy, which is a research-led institution organised at the interstices of theology and philosophy. It is founded on the conviction that these two disciplines cannot be adequately understood or further developed, save with reference to each other. This is true in historical terms, since we cannot comprehend our Western cultural legacy, unless we acknowledge the interaction of the Hebraic and Hellenic traditions. It is also true conceptually, since reasoning is not fully separable from faith and hope, or conceptual reflection from revelatory disclosure. The reverse also holds, in either case.

The Centre is concerned with:

- The historical interaction between theology and philosophy.
- The current relation between the two disciplines.
- Attempts to overcome the analytic/Continental divide in philosophy.
- The question of the status of 'metaphysics'. Is the term used equivocally? Is it now at an end? Or have 20th Century attempts to have a post-metaphysical philosophy themselves come to an end?

The Theology Department of the University of Nottingham, within which the COTP is situated, was awarded the top 5\* A grade in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2001). Nottingham was one of only two theology Departments who submitted all its staff and was rated 5\* A. For more information please contact Liselyn Adams at 514-848-2424 ext. 5429, or email her at [liselyn.adams@concordia.ca](mailto:liselyn.adams@concordia.ca). You may also visit the University of Nottingham's Department of Theology website by going to [www.nottingham.ac.uk/theology](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/theology).

### The Theology Adventure

By Martha Elias Downey

Everyone has their own reasons for exploring a discipline. Sometimes classes in a specific genre happen to work out best in your schedule. Or a particular avenue of study may be the most attractive and least painful of your available options. Perhaps you have always had a curiosity about a certain subject and decide to try a class or two to test the waters. There is also the possibility that family and friends influence your decision, offering solicited and no doubt, some unsolicited advice. Whatever the situation, the best-case scenario is that you are in a program of study because of love.

People study literature because they love words and the imaginative pictures one can paint with them. People study art because they love beauty and are invigorated by creativity. People study science because they are fascinated by the intricate mechanics and details of the universe. In fact, it is difficult to study a subject that one is not fond of to some degree. I study theology because I love God, and that is not merely a nice sentiment or a convenient cliché.

All disciplines involve the exploration of ideas, facts, theories, or some form of organised information. While this study is a noble and worthy pursuit, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Behind the data, beyond the facts, figures, equations, and conclusions, we find the really intriguing stuff, and that is personality. The unique beauty of theology is that in it we encounter a person, a story. And we study a person in a different way than we do facts or a skill set, or at least we should. While objectivity is still heralded in many circles as the only way to arrive at the truth, it is no substitute for loving proximity. Both of these positions, subjectivity and objectivity, deliver

different and complimentary results and should never be divorced from one another.

We cannot truly understand someone's contribution to knowledge unless we know something about them and their context. We cannot fully appreciate the point of view they offer us unless we are willing to look through their eyes. Most importantly, we will not have the patience to graciously and respectfully search for the hidden pearl of wisdom that resides in every human being if we do not find some measure of love for them within ourselves.

*"Theology is an invitation. It is a welcome mat. It invites us to come and bring all our thinking about life, about meaning, about truth, about unity, about justice, about the Divine, and to submit it to careful, courageous, sometimes slightly messy, but always loving, interaction. It invites us not only to study the grand story, but to give it a place to grow in us."*

A lack of love results in premature, biased conclusions. A lack of love allows us to categorise theories and opinions without coming face to face with the truth that we need to be examined every bit as much as the data or the text. Love and humility open the door to genuine learning that is not only enlightening, but transforming.

Theology is an invitation. It is a welcome mat. It invites us to come and bring all our thinking about life, about meaning, about truth, about unity, about justice, about the Divine, and to submit it to careful, courageous, sometimes slightly messy, but always loving, interaction. It invites us not only to study the grand story, but to give it a place to grow in us.

Someone recently asked me, "Why are you studying theology?" I replied, "Because I love it, and I want to learn how to make it accessible to people who will never enter the classroom. After all, that was what Jesus was about – making God accessible." I believe that a skilled theologian is able to explain profound concepts to a scholar as well as to a 5-year-old. And a good theologian knows that she can learn a thing or two from a 5-year-old, as well. Children appreciate mystery more than we adults do, because they do not feel the need to explain things that only ask to be wondered at. And in the adventure that is theology, one must always be willing to be surprised by

wonder: wide-eyed, wordless, reverent, and loving wonder.

### Why Theology?

By Lily-Catherine Johnston

I decided to take my first undergraduate Theological Studies class at Concordia on a whim, and because it was an elective that fit into my schedule well. From the first class on however, I was hooked! The energy and enthusiasm that radiated from my teacher, Dr. Dion enchanted me. She presented what could have been an otherwise dull and tedious university course in such a way that made the students want to interact with the material.

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*"I can say without a shadow of a doubt that the decision to do theology at Concordia was based largely on the fact that the faculty and staff of the department are so wonderful."*

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Because the experience was such a good one, I decided to take more Theology classes and eventually to make Theological Studies my minor. After loving every minute of my minor and having encountered that same passion for theology that Dr. Dion had in each of my teachers, I did a complete 180-degree turn around in my life plan. Rather than pursuing graduate work in my major, which was English, I instead took extra Theology classes and decided to pursue a Master's degree in the department.

Despite the fact that I enjoy theology and have developed many research interests in the field, I can say without a shadow of a doubt that the decision to do theology at Concordia was based largely on the fact that the faculty and staff of the department are so wonderful. Frankly, I am not sure that I would have made the same decision if I had encountered theology at another university.

## ATTENTION Notice of Upcoming Event

### Canadian Centre of Ecumenism and the Annual Meeting of the North American Academy of Ecumenists, Sept 24-26

The Canadian Centre of Ecumenism in Montreal has pioneered the cause of Ecumenism in Montreal and across Canada for over thirty years. The Centre also puts out a scholarly journal each quarter titled *Ecumenism*; well known for articles that cover both intra-Christian dialogue as well as inter-faith outreach. Copies of *Ecumenism*, both in English and French, are available at the Theology Department. Our Winter 2009/2010 issue focused on Icons and Iconography, the Spring 2010 issue on Secularism, and our upcoming issue will emphasize the Family of Saints and the canonisation of Brother André, which will be released towards the end of September. Future issues will cover doctrines as understood by different Christian churches and will feature the work of the Canadian Council of Churches.

The North American Academy of Ecumenists is the foremost body of ecumenists in North America. Every year this academy organises an annual meeting with great scholarly content. This year, the Centre of Ecumenism will host the conference in Montreal from September 24-26, which will highlight many eminent ecumenists and promises to be a most interesting meeting. Detailed information of the Academy and the Annual Meeting can be found on its web site at <http://www.naae.net/>.

*Brian Cordeiro currently serves as the Treasurer on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Centre of Ecumenism, and is the editor of Ecumenism.*





## Student Conferences and Events

Over the past couple years the Theological Studies student associations have made great strides in promoting a spirit of student involvement. In 2009 we had our first ever graduate conference *Theology Outside the Classroom: Exploring how Theology Mediates Between Religion and Culture*, and our second annual graduate conference in 2010 entitled



*The Bible as You Don't Know it: Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies for the Real World.* The undergraduate committee was also revived in 2008, and has since hosted several successful events with guest speakers, including the very popular lectures on *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Judas*, conversations with authors Dawn

Eden and Johnathan Goldstein, and a day long conference focusing on religious and theological studies and pop-culture, in collaboration with the Concordia Religion Students' Association.

Our *Theology on Tap* (TOT) events have also been very successful, by providing a venue once a month for students and faculty to socialize and network informally over food and drinks. Over the 2010-2011 year we plan on holding our TOT's at Mesa 14 restaurant on Bishop and Ste. Catherine's. Please see the Student Association Calendar of Events for dates and times, and come join us for some fun, food, and good company!

At the end of every term we also have a party to decompress and let loose. Just because we are scholars and theologians doesn't mean we don't know how to slam a few back, let down our hair and kick up our heels!!! This year's parties are scheduled for Friday December 10th and Friday April 8th, from 5-9 in the Theology building. Mark it down!

Every year we also organize a graduation celebration to recognize the contributions



and achievements of students in the department. We are also always on the lookout for new members to join our committees, so if you are interested in making new friends and getting involved, no matter what your age, background or interests, send us an email!

-Robert Smith  
TSGSA President 2010-2011  
[tsgsa@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:tsgsa@alcor.concordia.ca)



IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
VAUGHN THOMASSIN



## Student Associations:

The student associations endeavor to improve the academic and social life of graduate and undergraduate students in the department, by organizing academic events and hosting several social functions throughout the year. Our mandate is simple: to promote a student-centered spirit of community and mentorship that is focused on improving the university experience of students in the department. If you have any questions or would like to join the committees, please email us at the addresses listed below.

### TSGSA (Graduate)

2010-2011 Executive

President *Robert Smith*

Vice President *Lindsey Sandul*

VP Social *Calogero Miceli*

VP Communications *Lily-Catherine Johnston*

**[tsgsa@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:tsgsa@alcor.concordia.ca)**

### TSUSA (Undergraduate)

2010-2011 Executive

President *Daniel Tesolin*

VP Social *Marc-André Argentino*

VP External *Stephen Trepanier*

VP Internal *Eric Clement*

**[tsusa@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:tsusa@alcor.concordia.ca)**

For a list of upcoming events, please download our Calendar of Events by going to the Department website at:

**<http://theology.concordia.ca>**

## Student Centered Initiatives 2010-2011

### *Collaboration*

In the past the various student committees have operated and planned events independently from each other. This year, however, the student associations and journal committees are committed to collaborating on many of the events collectively, which will allow for a more effective and sustainable use of time and resources.

### *Community Building*

We also want to continue the legacy and precedent that was set by previous committees. Through trial and error we have learned how to organize and focus on key annual events, including department socials, *Theology on Tap* (TOT), and the graduation celebration. We have also made great strides in providing a more comfortable space for students in the department building, as well as promoting the visibility of student activity within the department and in the external community.

### *Mentorship*

This year, the student associations will be hosting a new *Student Presentation Series*, which will highlight several hour-long graduate research presentations, as well as an *Undergraduate Showcase Conference* which will provide undergraduate students an opportunity to begin learning how to prepare and present their research in a conference setting. The committees have also planned a couple writing workshops that will focus on applying for funding and preparing essays for publication.

### *Sustainability*

Last year we began a campaign to make our events and student space as environmentally friendly as possible. Since then, we have stopped using disposable cups and utensils, and we are growing accustomed to designing events that create as little environmental footprint as possible. However, there is a lot of room for improvement, so we will endeavor to continue to make changes to reduce our environmental impact. We have also adopted *Dans la Rue*, a charity which benefits homeless youth in Montréal, for our annual donation and food drive.

## Department Journals

### Word in the World: Concordia University Graduate Journal of Theological Studies

*Word in the World* is a unique, multi-disciplinary periodical produced by a team of graduate students at Concordia University's Department of Theological Studies. As a Peer-Reviewed publication it is dedicated to the many diverse aspects of scholarship and faith that shape the ever-evolving sphere of Theological Studies.

Our purpose is 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. We welcome scholarly articles, creative writing and visual art from students and faculty within the department. We also encourage all submissions from the many disciplines of study both within and beyond Concordia's community, as these shed their own crucial light on religious and theological concerns. The next deadline for submissions is scheduled for January 17, 2011. Please visit our website for submission guidelines.



For more information please email us at [witw@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:witw@alcor.concordia.ca), or visit our website at:  
[www.wordintheworld.ca](http://www.wordintheworld.ca)



2009-2010 Word in the World Committee  
From left to right: (front row) Calogero Miceli and Robert Smith (back row) Lily-Catherine Johnston, Elisa Pistilli, Martha Elias Downey; Absent: Colin Babin

### KannenBright: Concordia University Undergraduate Journal of Theological Studies

This last year has been a very exciting year for the undergraduate students due to the forming of *KannenBright: Concordia University Undergraduate Journal of Theological Studies*, which is named in honour of two of the department's most distinguished scholars: Dr. Charles Kannengiesser and Dr. Pamela Bright.

KannenBright is a multi-disciplinary periodical that recognizes the many diverse aspects of scholarship that shape the sphere of Theological Studies. As such, any scholarly articles, poetry, fiction, reflection pieces, or visual art that shed light on theological concerns were welcomed in the journal's call for papers. The journal presents an excellent opportunity for undergraduate students to have their work published in a peer reviewed academic journal. Deadlines for submissions are generally in May. Please visit our website for exact dates.

We are currently in the process of finalizing our inaugural edition. Be on the look out for the first edition to be published online later this fall!

For more information please email us at [kanbri@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:kanbri@alcor.concordia.ca), or visit our website at:  
[www.kannenbright.50webs.com](http://www.kannenbright.50webs.com)