PETER MARTYR NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 17

FALL 2008

Editors: Frank A. James III and Joseph C. McLelland

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE OBTAINS FIRST EDITION LOCI COMMUNES

It started with a tip from The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, senior minister of The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, where Presbyterian College holds its convocations. Among a deceased parishioner’s library (he was scion of an old Montreal family and collector of antiquarian books) Dr. Topping, a college lecturer, spotted some old books, including two by John Calvin and Peter Martyr.

Principal John Vissers and Librarian Dan Shute identified them as the 1576 Loci Communes edited by Robert Masson, and a first complete English original edition of Calvin’s Psalms commentary.

The price was a bargain, and both books are in excellent condition. The volume supplements the Library’s Vermigli collection, which includes the 1583 L.C.

McGill University
Universität Zürich
And University of Zurich
Sign Partnership Agreement

Faculty of Religious Studies and the Centre for Research on Religion at the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning (McGill University) Montreal, Canada and the University of Zurich, Institut für Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte recently signed a cooperative agreement making them partner universities.

The agreement calls for the two institutions to work together on common research projects and to arrange academic exchanges for staff and students. These exchanges may include both faculty and undergraduate and graduate students, as well as research publications, use of university resources (i.e. access to university libraries, computing facilities, etc.) for scholars in residence, and the holding of joint academic conferences.
Dr. Mariano Di Gangi

Dr. Mariano Di Gangi, retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada passed away on the evening of Tuesday, 18 March 2008. He was well known to Vermigli scholars, as holding the distinction of writing the first twentieth-century thesis on Peter Martyr Vermigli in North America. For his Bachelor of Divinity degree at Presbyterian College, Montreal, he wrote a thesis in 1949 titled: ‘Pietro Martire Vermigli 1500-1562: An Italian Calvinist.” His fellow Vermiglians were delighted when Dr. Di Gangi attended the opening sessions of the last Peter Martyr international conference – Humanism, Hebrew And Scholasticism: The New Hermeneutics of Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562) held in Montreal (8-11August 2007). Although he was not in good health, he managed to stand and receive the enthusiastic applause of his colleagues.

Di Gangi’s parents were immigrants from Italy. His father was a tailor and his mother a seamstress. He grew up in New York City, graduating from Brooklyn College at the age of 19, and graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia when he was 22. He accepted his first pastoral appointment at Beckwith Memorial Italian Presbyterian Church in Montreal. He was later called to St. Enoch’s in Hamilton, Ontario in 1951 and for the next decade he saw this congregation grow from about 150 to over 1100 members. In 1961 he succeeded the legendary Donald Gray Barnhouse as pastor of historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. While in there he served on the Mayor’s Race Relations Committee and integrated the leadership of his church. He was also known for his support of world missions. In 1965 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Gordon Conwell Seminary in Massachusetts.

Mariano Di Gangi returned to Canada six years later, accepting the position of general North American secretary of the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (which he later renamed InterServe). For the next twenty years this position put him in the forefront of international missionary activity and committed him to a punishing schedule of speaking and teaching across time zones. The ministry he most loved was his annual evangelistic visit to his family’s native Sicily.

After the establishment of Ontario Theological Seminary in 1975 he became Professor of Pastoral Studies there and for a decade influenced hundreds of preachers. He also served as Evangelist-at-Large within the Presbyterian Church in Canada during the 1970s and 1980s, and hosted a radio broadcast Amazing Grace.


He moved to Ottawa in 1999 to be near his daughter, Marian, and son-in-law, Rev. Jack Archibald, lead pastor at St Paul’s Ottawa. He leaves, in addition to his wife, Ninette, daughter Marian and two sons both of Ottawa: John with the Department of External Affairs and Peter in contract advocacy work with native Canadians. There are seven grandchildren. He will be missed by friends and family.

The editors have also learned of the passing of colleagues John Macintyre and Thomas Torrance. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their family and friends.
McLelland Completes Fifty Years at The Presbyterian College

Joseph C. McLelland completed fifty years teaching at The Presbyterian College, Montreal. He was called in 1957 as Robert Professor of History and Philosophy of Religion and Christian Ethics. In 1959 he began teaching also at the Faculty of Divinity, McGill University. In recognition, a special convocation was held during the final session of the Peter Martyr Conference (10 August 2007) in the College Chapel. The degree Doctor Divinatis (honoris causa) was conferred by Principal John Vissers. The presentation was made by Emidio Campi, with Frank James placing the hood.

In October a second event re-named the College Library “The Joseph C. McLelland Library.” A book of McLelland’s essays spanning the period was published as the first of “Presbyterian College Studies in Theology and Ministry.” Entitled “Understanding the Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology,” and published by Clements Academic Press, Toronto, it consists of eighteen essays on Theology and Christian Ministry, Theology and the Reformed Tradition, and Theology and Canadian Society. Two chapters involve Peter Martyr: “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination according to Peter Martyr and Zanchi” first published in STJ 1955, and “Peter Martyr: Renaissance Philosophy and Reform,” presented to SCStS, St Louis 1996. Dr McLelland has another book of essays, “Pluralism without Relativism: religious studies a la mode” to be published this Fall by Clements.

The editors have learned of a new Vermigli scholar—Bastian D. Bouman. A PhD student at the University of Utrecht, Bouman is working on his thesis. It tackles the question of Vermigli’s De libero arbitrio, studying his thoughts on the free will in the context of other reformers, especially Luther, Zanchi, and Calvin.

Bouman is looking for a digital version of his Loci communes. If you can help, please contact Bastian.

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Remembering Our Colleagues

David Wright

Professor David Wright of New College, Edinburgh, was a distinguished evangelical church historian and theologian in the Church of Scotland. An elder of the Kirk, he played a major role in debates in the Church of Scotland about sexuality and about baptism. He was an internationally recognised expert on the thought of the early fathers of the Church and the theology of the Reformation.

Born in 1937, Wright took a first in history and theology at Cambridge University, and was a research student in Lincoln College, Oxford, from 1961-4, when he was appointed lecturer in ecclesiastical history at New College, University of Edinburgh. He served here until his retirement in 2003, when he was appointed an honorary fellow. At New College, in 1964, he joined the lively group of young church historians around Professor Alec Cheyne, generally known as the “Cheyne Gang”.

Unlike most of the others, Wright was conservative theologically, but he worked amicably and productively with colleagues who were radical or liberal, and together the Cheyne Gang transformed the study of Church history, particularly in Scotland.

Wright specialised in patristic and Reformation theology, and he published extensively on the fathers of the early Church, especially Augustine, and on the magisterial figures of the European Reformation – Calvin, John Knox and Peter Martyr. He also wrote on contemporary ethical issues facing the Church, particularly questions of sexuality, where he took up a thoroughly conservative position.

He engaged vigorously in a continuing debate in the Church of Scotland about infant baptism, culminating in his book What has Infant Baptism Done to Baptism? An Enquiry at the End of Christendom (2005). But in some ways his greatest academic contribution was as an editor, particularly of Reformation and patristic texts, and of reference works such as the notable Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (1993).

His scholarship was internationally recognized, and he lectured all over the world.

He attracted to Edinburgh an impressive range of research students, particularly from the United States, who wished to work with him.

Wright was awarded the degree of doctor of divinity by Edinburgh University in 1997, and in 1999 he was appointed to an Edinburgh University personal chair in patristic and reforming Christianity. He served with great success in various areas of university life, where his leadership was greatly appreciated – as dean of the faculty of divinity, as convenor of the university library committee, and as a member of the DLitt committee and the university court.

Wright was equally involved in the life of the Church of Scotland, where he was frequently the spokesman for the conservative wing. A faithful elder of the Kirk, and a member of Holyrood Abbey Parish Church, he served for a year as moderator of the presbytery of Edinburgh, the first elder to serve in this position.

He was a member of many church committees. In the Church and the university, Wright had the rare gift of sustaining warm and attentive friendships with those with whom he disagreed.

For the last four years of his life he was the thoughtful and caring chairman of the Lothians and Borders prostate cancer support group, which provides support and encouragement to cancer sufferers.

He was supported wonderfully throughout his final illness by his wife, Anne-Marie, their daughter, Jenny, and son, Andrew.

This obituary is re-printed from The Scotman and www.reformation21.org

Robert Kingdon

As many of you know, Bob was taken ill while vacating in the family summer place in Cable, WI. He was flown to the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison where he spent four weeks in the neurological intensive care unit. On September 9 he was transferred to Select Specialty Hospital, which is a long term acute care hospital.

You can track his recovery at the Caring Bridge site his family maintains: www.caringbridge.org/visit/robertmkingdon
The growth of the Vermigli research is just incredible and one can hardly keep track of it!

Emidio Campi