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For me to live a Christian life and be part of the community of Christ, I have to love my neighbour — to be reconciled to life with my neighbours.

Jon Coutts

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She did what she could
by Katherine Gibson, Associate Chaplain and Assistant Residence Director at Ambrose University

Cover photo by Angie Coutts
Celebrating the Seminary

Ambrose is composed of a number of faculties and schools. We are so very pleased to be marking a key milestone in the history of our Seminary — established in 1970 and this year celebrating 50 years of providing quality graduate theological education for the church in Canada and globally.

Birthdays and anniversaries are ways to celebrate lives, marriages and even the history of an organization, institution, school or, in our case, a Seminary. Throughout this year, we will be celebrating the five decades since the formation of the institution which began as Canadian Theological College, was renamed Canadian Theological Seminary and is now what we proudly know as Ambrose Seminary at Ambrose University.

This celebration is personal for me. I graduated from the Seminary back in 1978 when it was still a rather young institution. I am deeply grateful for the quality women and men who were my professors and who invested in my life through their teaching, mentorship and encouragement. So it is a particular delight to look back and see how the Seminary has grown and evolved and, with the move from Regina to Calgary, expanded its impact and influence.

The Seminary continues to have as its primary focus the work of equipping women and men for religious leadership for the church, both for service in Canada and internationally. It continues to respond to the changing needs of churches and communities.

The Seminary is now a key venue for the formation of chaplains, and a more recent development includes a Chinese-language program. Increasingly, in contrast to my Seminary days, more and more people are coming to graduate theological education in mid-career to take advantage of the diverse and flexible ways by which they can pursue their formation for ministry.

Please join us in celebrating the good work of our Seminary, an integral part of Ambrose University. We are proud to share part of that wonderful story in this issue of *Anthem*.

Gordon T. Smith, PhD
President
Professor of Systematic and Spiritual Theology
An unprecedented time
Ambrose University responds to the COVID-19 pandemic

Having celebrated Ambrose University’s graduating students through virtual graduation ceremonies on May 15, 2020 — and as we applaud students for their tremendous work completing the last few weeks of their semester online — we took time to reflect on this current season of change.

On March 16, 2020, Ambrose University made the decision to transition to online learning in order to ensure the health of our students, faculty and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the advantages of our small campus was the ability to make this transition quickly and to remain flexible when government regulations were changing day-to-day, and at times what seemed to be hour-to-hour. Ambrose values community and the idea of losing the in-person interactions we all valued was daunting, especially when we knew this transition meant losing many events that drew us all together. But as with all change, it is something we accepted and did our best to power through together.

Though this time of change has been difficult, not only for us at Ambrose but also globally, this pandemic has given us the opportunity to get creative and take intentional steps towards creating community in new ways. At Ambrose, we have seen videos shared by our students providing words of encouragement, at-home workout ideas and academic advice. Ambrose faculty and the Academic Student Success and Student Life departments went above and beyond to ensure Ambrose students were well supported to finish their semesters on a strong note.

As a Christian institution, we are fortunate to know that God is with us during this time, as we seek comfort in His word. It is our prayer that as our students go out into their various vocations, they will be able to speak the Word into the lives of people they meet.

We value the health and welfare of our students and place a high priority on creating a community that is safe for everyone. During this pandemic, we must follow the directions and regulations of our public health authorities and government. Our planning is guided by principles that place your health first. As a result, the fall 2020 semester will be unique at Ambrose. We want to have a full return to campus when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we have developed a hybrid model of program delivery which includes in-person experiences, as it is safe to do so, as well as online learning.

We are uncertain about the future of this pandemic, but we know one thing: We will get through this together. We hope we will be able to see you on the Ambrose campus at one of our events or at an Alumni and Friends gathering in the near future.

While this issue of Anthem was in production, the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down.

For up-to-date information on Ambrose’s response to COVID-19, we encourage you to visit ambrose.edu/covid19. We hope you stay healthy during this time and that, though we are apart, we can remain in community.
**Room for wellness**

The recently opened Wellness Room is a pilot project to create new opportunities for the Ambrose community to focus on wellness-related activities and enhance the conversation around mental health and mental health issues. The intentionally “calm,” judgment-free and “no homework” space is perfect for de-stressing, having meaningful conversations or taking part in the variety of programs to be offered. In addition, sharing the general pod space with Student Academic Success will expand what’s possible within the space. The Wellness Room is located on the first floor of Residence.

**Local and latte**

A new concession has opened on campus, extending the options available at the Ambrose cafeteria. Lattes, cappuccinos, smoothies, gourmet sandwiches, soft-service ice cream and more — with an emphasis on locally sourced products — will tempt every tastebud and perk up every morning, afternoon or evening. Once current COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, stop in Tuesday–Friday, 7:30–11:30 a.m., and Friday–Saturday, 5:30–10:30 p.m..

**Finding a clear and simple path forward**

The theme of this year’s Pastors’ Conference — Life Together: Discipleship in an Age of Distraction — could not have been more timely. Pastors from across the country gathered at Ambrose University on Feb. 19, 2020, to take part in the event, which was presented this year in partnership with the Flourishing Congregations Institute. The conference looked at ways to break through the noise and clutter of today’s world, by presenting the latest research on Canadian churches as well as strategies from some of Canada’s leading church thinkers and practitioners.

**Day of Prayer**

Students, faculty, staff and the wider church community gathered in groups large and small on Feb. 4, 2020, for the annual Ambrose Day of Prayer. Despite cold weather, student-led prayer walks gave participants an excellent opportunity to gather in prayer while appreciating the wonderful parks and paths around the University.

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For the latest news and information, visit ambrose.edu/news

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**A visit from Her Honour**

The Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, visited Ambrose University on Nov. 15, 2019, meeting with President Gordon T. Smith before addressing participants at the annual Soul of the Next Economy Forum.
Lions battled for gold
The Ambrose Lions Men’s Basketball team took their best regular season in program history (13–8) as far as it could go: to the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference gold-medal game. The Lions went into Championship weekend as the third seed in the ACAC South. They had a unique opportunity to take on the home team and second seed in the North, the Augustana Vikings, in the quarter finals, and quieted the home crowd with a 95–85 win. In the semi-finals, the Lions took on the large technical institute from the North, the NAIT Ooks, also defeating them in an amazing team effort for a 103–98 win and a berth in the final. The gold-medal game was a battle against the home-town rivals, the perennially powerful SAIT Trojans. In the end, the Lions took home the silver, and proved their tenacity and the strong competitive spirit they had displayed all year long.

Lions Isaac Amsing (top left) and Nhial Phillip (top right) were presented Tournament All-Star awards, recognizing their strong on-court performance.
B.Ed. celebrates its first decade

It seems like only yesterday, but Ambrose’s two-year Bachelor of Education (after degree) program marks its 10-year milestone in 2020. Since its debut, the program has developed a reputation for preparing outstanding elementary teachers like Kendall Delamont (pictured, BA – Behavioural Science ‘10, B.Ed. ‘12) who are leaders in their schools. Every day, alumni — now totalling 233 from the program — make a difference in the lives of pupils in schools throughout Alberta and beyond. Share your story! If you’re a B.Ed. alum, visit ambrose.edu/alumni to make sure your contact info is up to date, and to share where you’re teaching and what you’re doing. Watch your inbox for more!

Boosting Business learning

Four Business students and Associate Professor of Business Administration Tim Vanderpyl (photo L–R: Sarah Janz, Fern Rayas, Hanson Qin, Tim Vanderpyl, Rob Rayas) took part in the HRC West Case competition at MacEwan University in Edmonton, March 6–7, 2020. The competition was jointly hosted by CPHRAB and CPHRBC, and 20 business schools in Alberta and B.C. attended. Ambrose teams also took part in 2018 and 2019.

Through publications, presentations and myriad other scholarly activities, Ambrose faculty and staff contribute to the expansion of knowledge worldwide. Here are some recent highlights.

Mark Buchanan
David: Rise and God Speed: Walking as a Spiritual Discipline
March 2020

Edwin Gnandt
The Inner World of Fryderyk Chopin: Psychology, Medicine and the Majorca Period
November 2019 (co-authored)

Barrett Hileman
99 to 1 – Canadian Badlands Passion Play
July 2019

Matthew Morris
Alberta Fishes
Fall 2019 (co-authored)

Rob Snow
Matthew: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition
2019 (co-authored)

Joel Thiessen
None of the Above: Non-Religious Identity in the US and Canada
March 2020 (co-authored)

Visit the Ambrose Bookstore for books and other materials authored by Ambrose faculty and staff — ambrose.edu/bookstore.
In collaboration with Alberta graduate theological institutions Ambrose launches our new 21-credit Certificate in Spiritual Care in Fall 2020. Students will complete courses in Spiritual Care, Ethics, Leadership, and Diversity while incorporating hands on experience through field placement or clinical pastoral education (CPE).

The Certificate in Spiritual Care fits in with your schedule and your goals. Choose from daytime, evening, online, modular (weekend and week-long) and hybrid (weekend and online) course options.

Call 403-410-2000 or email enrolment@ambrose.edu for more details.
Something to sing about

The director of the Ambrose University Singers raises voices for the benefit of students and society
Mark Bartel is used to leading the choir. These days, he’s also singing the praises of moving to Calgary in August 2019 to join Ambrose University’s full-time music faculty and to lead “all things choir.” After teaching in the U.S. for 14 years, Bartel had the opportunity to come back to Canada (he and his wife are both Canadian, and his wife’s family lives in Calgary) to take on a meaningful professional challenge at an institution that understands and values the connection between academic excellence and what it means to be a community.

“I hadn’t thought it would be possible to follow the path back,” he says. “I’ve been to Calgary and Ambrose many times over the years, and always thought it would be great to live and work here.”

Bartel specializes in choral and vocal instruction, and also teaches conducting, music history, music and worship, and music theory to students completing a Bachelor of Music major or minor. He also instructs students from all University programs who are completing their programs’ fine arts requirement (part of Ambrose’s liberal arts model). And he leads the school’s high-profile choir: the 25-member Ambrose University Singers.

Bartel hopes to build on the ensemble’s popularity by starting a second choir and also by launching the new Ambrose Arts Academy, which will employ a conservatory-style, community-based model to develop young musicians. The aim is to enhance both curriculum and outreach, serving the community and also inspiring people to enrol in Ambrose’s undergraduate programs.

For the Singers group itself, more outreach and collaboration is being planned. This includes visiting high schools and inviting school choirs to visit Ambrose (recently, 120 high school singers joined the Ambrose ensemble in concert) and planning for domestic and international tours. “We’re thinking about the nature of Ambrose choirs on and off campus,” he explains. “How do we build them as part of the music program? How do we enhance the choral program in a way that serves the entire University day-to-day, and also supports the future? How does the choral program help attract music and non-music majors?”

The choral program is infused into daily life at Ambrose and is integral to many arts and science students’ expression of their faith. That connection resonates with Bartel.

“In the arts, we often speak about beauty and meaning — the aesthetic and also what it’s all about,” he notes. “When you come to a place like Ambrose, the beauty of music goes hand-in-hand with meaning. The professors and the students want that to happen. It’s a recipe for greater impact on the student and in society when you pursue that integration.”

Ambrose, MRU make music together

Mount Royal University Conservatory students and alumni can now complete their Bachelor of Music degrees at Ambrose University, thanks to a new partnership.

Starting in Fall 2020, students and alumni of MRU’s Advanced Performance Program, a performance-focused, non-credit extension certificate for post-secondary students, will be able to complete their baccalaureate at Ambrose. Current APP students will receive credit for up to two years of study. Ambrose’s Bachelor of Music program offers students an array of excellent undergraduate courses in music, fine arts (including dance, theatre and visual art), liberal arts and science, all taught by highly qualified faculty.

“This partnership represents the mutual effort to serve students who will have a strong impact on the cultural footprint of our city and beyond,” said Barrett Hileman, Chair of Ambrose Arts. “Both institutions have a deeply held mandate to provide excellence in musical training alongside the formative personal development that results in good citizenship and contributes positively to the larger culture around us. I’m absolutely thrilled to see what this partnership will produce. It’s an exciting moment in the history of Ambrose Arts.”
A five-decade journey to serve evolving needs for graduate theological education

by Sandy Ayer
Ambrose Seminary’s story begins with Canadian Theological College in Regina, which arose in response to the demand for graduate theological education in the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) in Canada in the 1960s.

At that time the C&MA could offer only the one-year course of the Jaffray School of Missions in Nyack, N.Y., or the master’s degrees of its official seminary, Wheaton Graduate School of Theology. Neither option appealed much to Canadians.

Enter Alvin Martin, President of Canadian Bible College (CBC), and Sam Stoesz, the academic dean. By 1967, they had convinced the General Council of the C&MA to permit CBC, located in Regina, to develop a graduate school tailored to Canadian needs. Their brainchild, Canadian Theological College (CTC), opened on the CBC campus in September 1970. Each of the inaugural year’s 20 students paid a mere $265 per quarter for tuition, fees, room and board. The new school had the distinction of being the first non-mainline, non-Baptist, non-Reformed seminary in Canada.

In March 1972, CTC began publishing its own journal, Church Growth: Canada (later His Dominion). The following year, the seminary received its provincial charter and became affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan. By 1975, it had established the Canadian Church Growth Centre. Four years later CTC had 90 students and its own building, had gained administrative independence from CBC, and had appointed its first dean, Albert Cramer. On July 9, 1982, the name change to “seminary” — to emphasize the graduate-level theological education being offered — became official.

Canadian Theological Seminary (CTS) made a significant contribution to Alliance scholarship with the 1986 publication of Birth of a Vision, a collection of essays by faculty to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the C&MA. The following year, the School established a Doctor of Ministry program, and two years later the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) granted full accreditation to its master’s programs.

The Seminary has always had a strong complement of international students, and during the 1980s it played a crucial role in forming leaders for the C&MA in Africa. In 1990, financial difficulties at CBC/CTS led to cutbacks, including the cessation of His Dominion. Later in the decade, the D.Min. program was terminated, much to the relief of the overextended faculty. However, 1999 saw a rejuvenation in the form of two extension sites, CTS-West, as part of the ACTS consortium at Trinity Western University, and CTS-Toronto (later renamed CTS-East).

In 2003, the Seminary and Bible College relocated from Regina to Calgary to join Nazarene University College — in what would later become Ambrose University. When the undergraduate institution changed its name to Ambrose University College on May 1, 2007, CTS followed suit and became Ambrose Seminary.

Things seemed to be looking up for the seminary in 2004, after the ATS formally approved CTS-East as an extension site. Two years later, however, the Government of Ontario denied the school’s application for degree-granting status in Ontario, and the site was eventually closed in 2010. The 2006 decision caused the seminary to re-examine the viability of CTS-West, and in 2009 that site closed as well. Both closings were blessings in disguise because they enabled the seminary to give appropriate attention to the development of online courses and to local initiatives such as the Theological Studies in Chinese program, which began in the fall of 2011.

Ambrose Seminary currently serves 151 mostly part-time students from five continents and more than 30 denominations. It draws primarily from the Calgary area, but also reaches a wider constituency via its online offerings. Students can choose from chaplaincy, ministry formation and general theological programs, and have access to Ambrose’s three research institutes: Canadian Poverty Institute, Jaffray Centre and Flourishing Congregations Institute.

Like many of its counterparts, the Seminary is happily embedded in a university. This close relationship helps it weather cultural and demographic challenges and frees it to build on the strength of its faculty, the success of its alumni and the relevance of its programs — and to look confidently to the future.

Sandy Ayer is the Director of Library Services at Ambrose University. His service to Ambrose and its predecessors dates back to 1984, when he became Director of Library Services at Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary. As Ambrose’s archivist, he also administers the archives of the Church of the Nazarene, Canada, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada.

DEANS OVER THE DECADES

1970–1978 CBC/CTC shared administration
1979–1984 Al Cramer
1984–1989 David Hartzfeld
1989–1990 David Buschart (acting)
1990–1994 Fred Wilson
1994–1998 Gordon T. Smith (Academic Vice-President; Dean of CBC/CTS)
1998–2002 Raymur Downey
2002–2007 Joe Hassey
2007–2009 Paul Spilsbury (Dean, Faculty of Theology)
2010–2014 Arch Wong (Dean, Faculty of Theology)
2014–present Jo-Ann Badley (Dean of Theology)

Sandy Ayer
To help celebrate five decades of Seminary education, *Anthem* asked two alumni to share thoughts from “then” and “now”

**Doug Gerrard**  
M.Div., D.Min.  
CTC 1975–78; CTS 1996

While studying to become a geography teacher, my youth pastor asked me to think and pray about being in ministry. I did and was convinced I should pursue that calling. He wisely counselled me to finish my B.A. and then head to seminary. I'm glad I did.

On the very practical side, it seemed to be the best route available to prepare for pastoral ministry.

**Leonard Lam**  
Ph.D., M.Div.  
Ambrose Seminary 2005–16

Serving as an elder at the Calgary Chinese Alliance Church, I took my first seminary course out of interest and to enrich my church engagement. During the Joint Missions Convention in Ontario, I responded to God’s calling and committed myself for full-time ministry.

I hoped my experience would equip me to be a faithful servant of God. I expected to gain an in-depth understanding of the scriptures, a proper perspective of Christian theology and the necessary skillsets to serve as a pastor.

**Why did you choose to go to Seminary?**

**What did you hope your experience would provide?**

**What was the experience like?**

**Do you have a favourite memory?**

**What are you doing today?**

**How has your Seminary experience contributed to what you do today?**

I'm in my 7th year as the Executive Vice President of the C&MA. This follows 10 years as a superintendent in the Canadian Midwest District of the C&MA and 25 years pastoring churches in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba.

I am serving as senior pastor of the Mid Town Calgary Chinese Alliance Church, which is a new church plant. I am also the treasurer of the Canadian Chinese Alliance Churches Association.

It provided the foundation for most of what I have needed throughout my ministry. My learning included basic facts, methods of leading and teaching, and relationships with students and faculty that lasted far beyond my time on campus. I enrolled in the D.Min. program at CTS about 10 years after first graduating from seminary.

Without the seminary experience, I would not be able to do what I am doing today. What I have learned significantly improves my study of the scriptures and my preparation of sermons. More importantly, the experience opened my eyes to the wondrous love of God and His salvation plan for humanity. I can present the gospel now with personal conviction.

Joining a 30-day study tour to the Holy Land. It was indescribable to stand in front of the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, meditate in the Upper Room in Jerusalem where Jesus had His last supper and drink cool water from Jacob’s well in Samaria.

I enjoyed the time I spent at Ambrose very much. The campus is beautiful, and the staff are nice. I particularly enjoyed the prayer room where I could pray, rest and wait upon the Lord.

The wonder that overtook me as I began studying the Bible at such an in-depth level. I thought I was so privileged to be able to do that.

These were good days for both CBC and CTC. The morale was high, the student body was energized, the faculty were engaging and the physical plant was being expanded.

I'm in my 7th year as the Executive Vice President of the C&MA. This follows 10 years as a superintendent in the Canadian Midwest District of the C&MA and 25 years pastoring churches in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba.
LAUNCHING A LEGACY ENDOWMENT

Thanks to $1 million in community support, all future M.Div. students will be able ‘finish free’
by Gordon T. Smith

One of the most powerful ways in which people support and encourage Ambrose University students is by investing in their education. For students in the Seminary, that includes a number of entrance and continuing scholarships.

We are especially pleased to announce the launch of the Rev. Professor Sing-Yui King Legacy Trust Endowment Fund, which carries on and provides continuing funding for the Finish Free program for Master of Divinity students.

The M.Div. is a three-year program in theological formation with comprehensive study in theology, Scripture and the practices and competencies of ministry. It equips women and men to be senior-level leaders in the church — domestically and internationally — and for other avenues of service, including chaplaincy.

Several years ago, a supporter partnered with Ambrose to underwrite the costs of tuition for M.Div. students in their third year. This wonderful initiative was subsequently named “Finish Free,” because students who completed two years of the program would have their tuition covered for the third.

Now, something special has happened: An endowment fund has been established to provide for Finish Free in perpetuity, and Ambrose will no longer have to raise funds for it every year.

Chandra Mannix (M.Div. ‘19) and Ambrose board member Ken Tsang spearheaded efforts that resulted in $1 million being raised for the fund by mid-January 2020.

The impact and value of the Finish Free program cannot be understated. M.Div. graduates frequently head into ministry with significant debt loads. Ambrose believes that we can help those who need and want to pursue an M.Div. by removing at least some of the financial obstacles.

Establishing the Rev. Professor Sing-Yui King Legacy Trust Endowment Fund encourages people to participate in the M.Div. program by reducing some of the costs. We are deeply grateful for the community of support that makes this possible.

“Something special has happened: An endowment fund has been established to provide for Finish Free in perpetuity.”

Learn more about the Finish Free program at ambrose.edu/finishfree.

Rev. Professor Sing-Yui King passed away in February 2018. A new endowment fund in his name will enable Seminary M.Div. students to ‘finish free’ in perpetuity.
An Ambrose Lion takes his quest for competition to the classroom, court and pitch.
What does a highly competitive person do when he goes to university? Why, join a varsity team, of course. Unless you’re Adrian Strandberg. Then you join two.

Strandberg, who graduated in May 2020 with his Bachelor of Business Administration degree, made the most of his Ambrose University days. He was a member of the Lions Men’s Volleyball team for five years —captaining the squad in his last year — and a member of the Men’s Soccer team for the past two.

“I’m extremely competitive by nature,” he says with a laugh. “In general, I have a very competitive personality. So sports are an essential part of my life, and always will be.”

Adrian adds, “Being in a competitive atmosphere, part of a team and figuring out everyone’s role, working hard to identify my own role and find my place … I have a passion for that.”

“At Ambrose, I could push myself to the limit and see what I could accomplish.”

Strandberg admits that balancing sports (which often included five practices a week and games on weekends) and studies wasn’t always easy. When his academic performance suffered and he had to sit out a year of volleyball, the same drive that enabled him to excel on the court and pitch helped him succeed in the classroom.

“I realized that if I wanted to get back on the court again, I needed to be a better student,” he explains.

“There was a moment when I realized what I was capable of — when I realized I could be a great student.”

His accomplishments didn’t go unnoticed by teammates and coaches. They voted him Assistant Captain of the volleyball team in his fourth year, and Captain in his fifth.

“I learned a lot about leadership in my program, and there was some practical application with the team,” he says.

“I enjoyed the decision making, teamwork and problem solving, and helping to shape the culture of the volleyball program. It’s been a joy to be an influencer.”

At Ambrose, I could push myself to the limit and see what I could accomplish.

Discipline Leadership Confidence Selflessness
Dr. Jim Cresswell researches the connection between tech and our minds. He knows tech is here to stay and that it’s fundamentally changing us. Knowing why, how and what we can do about it is one way to retain control of one of our most precious resources — our time.

Not too long ago, I had a “wow!” moment first thing in the morning — one of those moments that rupture the rhythm of life and make me stop to reflect.

I have a usual morning routine. I get up, take some time for prayer and reflection, and then go about my day. But something interrupted this routine and I didn’t really notice it … at first.

It was a really powerful desire to grab my phone and check my email. I felt as if I NEEDED to check my email. As if it were a life-and-death situation. It felt like there must be some fundamentally important email that desperately needed to be answered IMMEDIATELY upon waking. Until then, I hadn’t realized that I’d been habitually checking my email first thing in the morning for a couple of weeks already. >

The lure of tech devices and apps sometimes seems irresistible. That shouldn’t come as a surprise. Most are designed to keep us online and immersed for as long as possible, so we release brain chemicals that make us feel good about it — and leave us wanting more.
Needless to say, this “wow!” moment wasn’t the positive one we hope for in the context of prayer and reflection. Rather, it was more like, “Wait a second. What’s wrong with me? Why do I feel this way? Where did this strange compulsion come from?” As a psychologist, I’m trained to wonder about human behaviour, and this moment led me to take a closer look at technology and why I was feeling this strange compulsion in the morning.

For the last couple of years, I have been looking into research on technology and how it ties to our minds. Have you ever experienced a moment where you can’t remember the words to a song when you’re chatting with friends, but you can sing the whole thing when it plays on the radio? This is an example of what psychologists mean when they say that the human mind is functionally integrated with the environment. Many people don’t realize that the way minds function — how they do what they have to do — is integrated with where we find ourselves and what we find ourselves doing. So when we say that thinking is functionally integrated with the environment, we are saying that the way people think, remember and feel is tied to what’s going on around them. Technology, like our smart phones and their applications, is a huge part of that environment.

Technologies of all sorts have always had a powerful relationship with our minds. Take, for example, what now seems like a taken-for-granted technology: the clock. Clocks and wrist watches radically shifted how we think about tasks and time. Before the widespread use of clocks and watches, how people thought about their day, what they had to do and how they had to regulate their lives, was completely different. How would you think about your day if there was no way to keep time and you’d never used a time device? The very way we think was changed through the technology of the clock.

The way we think, remember and feel is tied to what’s going on around us. Technology, like our smart phones and their applications, is a huge part of that environment.

What does this have to do with my “wow!” moment? My research found that in addition to technologies shaping the ways in which we think, there is one really big difference when it comes to applications. I can look at the clock and wish I had a couple more hours to sleep. The clock shows no mercy and does not change time to adapt to my desire to sleep in.

Current technologies like social media and various applications, however, are specifically designed to adapt and customize themselves to our desires. Most current applications are intentionally designed to keep us on them for as long as possible, because the biggest commodity out there is our attention, and gathering data about where we focus it. Our “time served” on an application creates information, and that information is what companies can sell for huge profits. So, applications use sophisticated computational algorithms to adjust and adapt to our needs, making us want to stay on them — making us feel like we need them.

One tech insider, Jaron Lanier, a computer philosophy writer and widely considered the founding father of virtual reality, has written extensively about how adaptive technologies — apps — are often designed to reward us by manipulating the release of feel-good chemicals, such as dopamine, in our brains.

What was happening to me when I felt the need to check my email first thing in the morning? Basically, I was looking for the release of some feel-good chemicals, and my email application has been designed to offer that “hit.” It looks like coffee is being given a run for its money!

I don’t think I’m alone in my experience. Lots of people are familiar with that almost overwhelming compulsion to check a social media platform after leaving it, that feeling of disquiet when we forget our phone at home, or the urge to check our email “just in case.”

What do we do about it, given the ubiquity of technology in our lives? I don’t suggest we throw our smartphones in the river. Rather, I suggest we all take a few simple precautions — turning off notifications unless they come from real people, and tracking or limiting the time we are on applications, for example — to reclaim control that tech seems to be stripping away.

When we do that, we can make room for experiences where some prayer and reflection leads to a different kind of “wow!” experience.

Dr. Jim Cresswell is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Ambrose University. His research interests range from cultural psychology to cognitive science and literary theory. A key area of ongoing research is developing theory about the relationship between mind and culture.
Professor and pilgrim

The two-decade journey Down Ancient Paths has been a quest for understanding...
For the past 20 years, Dr. Charles Nienkirchen has led members of the Ambrose University and wider Christian communities on global journeys of discovery, inviting people to experience and explore some of Christianity’s most meaningful historical places.

Down Ancient Paths is the Alberta government award-winning, post-secondary travel study program Nienkirchen founded, directed and led as Professor of Christian History and Spirituality.

During visits to 34 countries, the program pushed learners beyond their own limits, physically and intellectually. It provoked reflection and enabled people to respond to the intrinsic spiritual nature of their being, and also played a role in recovering the treasures of global Christian heritage, which have made contributions of inestimable worth to the story of humanity.

“The four watchwords of the DAP program — exploration, imagination, integration, educational travel, when converging with Christian history and spirituality, aims at personal transformation.

Professor and pilgrim

A. Borgund Stave Church in Laerdal, Norway
B. The Wailing Wall and Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem
C. The Library of Celsus in ancient Ephesus, Turkey
D. Moai stone statues on Easter Island, Chile
E. Roman Triumphal Arch of Caracalla in Volubilis, Morocco
F. Wall murals at Narga Selassie monastery on Lake Tana, Ethiopia
G. Apostle Thomas Statue in Palayur, India
H. Dr. Nienkirchen lecturing en route to the Holy Island of Patmos, Greece
I. Saint Basil’s Cathedral in Moscow, Russia
J. The Church of St. George in Lalibela, Ethiopia

The Wadi Rum desert in Jordan (background)
Dr. Charles Nienkirchen retired from Ambrose University in spring 2020, following 29 years as a full-time faculty member. He was designated Professor Emeritus of Christian History and Spirituality by the Ambrose Board of Governors in April 2020. Read more on page 29 of this issue of Anthem.

Dr. Nienkirchen writes and shares more thoughts, memories and photos at ambrose.edu/news.
Life abroad offers insights into the urgency of being part of Christ’s ongoing work to bring people together — to love our neighbours.

Reconciling Differences
Dr. Jonathan Coutts has come home. While he only joined Ambrose University as an Assistant Professor of Christian Theology in August 2019 — and he and his wife haven’t lived in Calgary since their four sons were born — his journey has led him right where he needs to be. Right where he belongs.

Coutts attended Canadian Bible College and Briercrest Seminary before pastoring with The Christian and Missionary Alliance. He earned his PhD in Scotland and has spent the past five years teaching ethics for future ministers at Trinity College in Bristol, England.

“I developed a better sense of my own Canadianness, and of the importance of place and belonging,” he says of living in countries not his own. He also admits to feeling like a “foreigner” or “other,” especially when interactions as simple as communicating in a seemingly common language led to misunderstandings and a perpetual reminder of his outsider status.

“Even after living in Scotland for a couple of years while working on my PhD, and being from a country that’s part of the Commonwealth, it was hard, in Bristol, to imagine being fully accepted.”

Feeling palpably what he knew intellectually, and seeing himself in new ways, was challenging. At the same time, it provided invaluable perspective. “It’s important to realize how easy it is to marginalize people,” Coutts says. “We have ways of making people feel like they are secondary citizens, of failing to help each other feel welcome.”

The international experience led to profound personal and professional insights. It has enriched Coutts’s studies and research, which focus on forgiveness and reconciliation, especially related to Canada’s Indigenous peoples. His paper, “The Prince of Peace Smokes a Peace Pipe: A Church Response to the Challenge of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” published in Theology and the Political in 2020, is the result of more than a decade of work.

“The TRC inspired me to ask questions about how Christians should be involved in the reconciliation process,” Coutts says, explaining that his PhD centred on forgiveness because he was so fascinated by what was happening in Canada.

“I’ve realized through this journey that for me to live a Christian life and be part of the community of Christ, I have to love my neighbour — to be reconciled to life with my neighbours,” he says. “I believe this is something Jesus would be passionate about, and that it is something we churches should be engaged with.”

That, he believes, requires “coming to a new understanding about what it means to apologize and what it means to take part in something, to heal old sins and wrongs, when we didn’t commit the original sin.”

“Sins of the past have a legacy, and we have a responsibility as a church to be aware of and involved in healing and renewal,” Coutts says. “We can see that the Holy Spirit has moved on ahead of us and without us, and has stirred up things that are good. We don’t own the TRC, but that’s the Spirit at work, and we need to be involved.”

Wrestling with the TRC’s recommendations, Coutts believes, would take churches deeper in their understanding of the gospel and what it means to love God. “We shouldn’t be afraid to think about it,” he says. “It should bring us great comfort. Reconciliation isn’t an alien language to Christians.

“We don’t have to fix everything ourselves. We don’t have to cast judgment on others. We are simply asking God to show us what we should or should not be doing today; asking God to show us the way and deliver us from evil.”

“That’s sobering and liberating at the same time. For me, it has been life-changing, changing my view of the gospel and of life itself.”

Dr. Jonathan Coutts’s most recent publication is “Hail Caesar! A Jesus Film in Search of a Christ Figure,” published in the Journal of Religion & Film April 2020 issue. In 2019, Coutts published Church Leadership in the SCM Studyguide series.
Ambrose University is blessed to be part of a large, growing and vibrant community. Meet some of the many people within it — and share your own news with others by visiting ambrose.edu or emailing anthem@ambrose.edu.

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A celebration 5 decades in the making!
Ambrose Seminary marks 50 years of theological education in 2020. Alumni, students, faculty and staff from around the world are invited to get in touch — and to share highlights and memories with family and friends in the Seminary community and beyond.
Visit ambrose.edu/anniversary to share your stories and photos.
Sign up for This Month @ Ambrose to stay up-to-date on current events in your area.

Professor Emeritus of Christian History and Spirituality
The Ambrose University Board of Governors has honoured Dr. Charles Nienkirchen’s extraordinary service to the University and his commitment to its vision and mission, naming him Professor Emeritus of Christian History and Spirituality.
Dr. Nienkirchen has taught at faith-based and public post-secondary institutions in Canada and the U.S. for 43 years, including 29 years as a full-time faculty member at Ambrose and 30 years as Visiting Professor of Christian Spirituality at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. He retired from Ambrose in April 2020.
He is the Founder and Director of Down Ancient Paths, an Alberta government award-winning, post-secondary travel study program that has enabled members of the Ambrose and wider communities to experience some of Christianity’s most meaningful places, leading journeys to more than 34 countries over more than 20 years.
Dr. Nienkirchen joins distinguished colleagues William McAlpine, David Neale and Donald Quantz, who have previously been named Professors Emeriti.

Do you have a fond or fun memory from your student, teaching or work days?
Share it with Family & Friends in Anthem!
Send a note, a few bullet points or a thought or two (and a photo, if you have one) to anthem@ambrose.edu to be included in an upcoming issue.
You’ll help grow the Ambrose community and inspire others to do the same!
Dr. Mark Bartel, Ambrose Associate Professor of Music, has been appointed Artistic Director of Spiritus Chamber Choir, Calgary’s international award-winning chamber choir. The ensemble is recognized for its high-quality performances, musicianship and unique collaborations, and has performed and competed in locales across Canada and around the world. Mark will be integral to planning and delivering the upcoming season which, like so much of life, is being buffeted by the impact of COVID-19.

Ben Elliot (CBC ’01) got creative when challenged by the need for physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pastor of Deer Park Church in Red Deer, Alta., was inspired to share the Gospel by inviting people to drive their cars to a parking lot, where his words could be heard via FM radio transmission. Ben received permission for the novel idea from the Alberta Premier and Chief Medical Officer of Health. On March 20, 2020, more than 60 vehicles gathered to take part, and the Church ensured social distancing protocols were followed by parking attendants, musicians and the pastor himself. (Photo published in Todayville, Red Deer)

Tom McCullagh (CBC ’95) has been the Chaplain of the RCMP ‘F’ Division since March 2008, and oversees a group of 21 volunteers across Saskatchewan providing care to RCMP employees and their families. He coordinates the Division’s Critical Incident Stress Management team (overseeing the response to events that are potentially traumatic) and is also a volunteer with the Search and Rescue team. He received a Chief of Police Leadership Award for his work with the RCMP in May 2019.

Jason Sedore (NUC ’99), Pastor of Edmonton First Church of the Nazarene, recently received his Doctor of Ministry degree in Semiotics and Future Studies.

Ric Strangway (CBC Bachelor of Theology’89; CTS Master of Divinity ’95) has joined Ambrose University as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Coordinator of Field Education.

Dr. Derrick Thiessen (best known by old friends as Dr. David T) (CBC 1980–81) has published two short e-books, Archaeology: What You Need to Know (books2read.com/u/bW1Z0G) and Noah’s Flood Did Take Place: An Examination of the Non Scientific Evidence (books2read.com/u/brvoyW).

Daniel and Kara-Anne (Bryans) Yu (Bachelor of Business Administration ’11 and Bachelor of Arts – Behavioural Science ’13, respectively) are delighted to announce the birth of Ethan Daniel on Dec. 4, 2019, a little brother for Ezekiel.
Dr. Arnold Cook (CBC, CTS) passed peacefully into God’s presence on Jan. 23, 2020, at the age of 87. Arnold was the President of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada from 1992–2000. Prior to this, he served as the Pastor of Alliance churches in Ft. Qu’Appelle, Parry and Regina, Sask., a Missionary in Colombia, Argentina and Peru, a faculty member at CBC/CTS, and was the C&MA Vice President, Personnel and Missions, prior to being elected President. Following this, he was President of the Alliance World Fellowship.

Rev. David Fearon (CBC ’61; Board of Governors 1970–71) passed away on March 5, 2020, in Surrey, B.C. David and his wife, Vivian, were engaged in pastoral ministry with the C&MA in Waterdown and Cobourg, Ont. In 1972, David took over management of a Christian bookstore, Logos, in Kingston, Ont., which flourished for 26 years.

Derrick Gilbertson (BA – Behavioural Science ’10) passed away in a tragic motor vehicle accident on March 6, 2020, at the age of 32. He was fiercely loved and is remembered by his family: wife Rebecca (Thistle) Gilbertson (BA – Behavioural Science ’10), parents Ric and Ruth-Anne (CBC, CTS) and sister Karissa (Bachelor of Arts – Christian Studies ’13). Derrick is also survived by his Draper and Thistle families, who have many meaningful ties to the Ambrose community.

Eleanor Little (CBC ’53) went to be with her Lord and Saviour on March 12, 2020, at the age of 83. Eleanor spent her working life in retail sales in Calgary, first at Woodward’s, then to help launch Heritage House of Fashion, to finally partnering in her own venture, Bayshore Fashions.

Rev. Bob McLellan (CNC ’74) passed into the presence of his Lord and Saviour on Dec. 6, 2019, in Shelburne, Ont. Pastor Bob will be remembered as a light in the darkness by those in three Church of the Nazarene congregations he led over more than 45 years of continuous ministry, and by people around the world through online ministry, books and articles, seminars and volunteer work with organizations and nursing homes.

Rev. Eunice (Veley) Smith (WCBI ’51, CBC ’68, CTS ’75) passed away on Nov. 14, 2019, at the age of 89, in Richmond, B.C. Eunice was the mother of Dr. Gordon T. Smith, President of Ambrose University, Judith Henry and Benjamin Smith. She and her husband, Cecil (who passed away in 2012), served as missionaries with The Christian & Missionary Alliance in Ecuador (1956–81) and later in Mexico, enabling Eunice to share her passion for teaching to both impart knowledge and spark students’ enthusiasm for learning more. She retired to Richmond in 1996. In 2013, Eunice was ordained at the Richmond Alliance Church, the first woman ordained by the Canadian Alliance. In a profile of Eunice in the Summer 2013 issue of Anthem, Eunice acknowledged her parents’ faith and openness to follow the Lord’s leading as laying the foundation for her own life of service. “When I teach the Pentateuch, I summarize the Lord’s instructions for Ancient Israel, and for us, with a simple sentence: Trust and obey and remember and tell the children. Those words characterized the life of my parents.”

Justine Speirs (WCBI ’50–’51) died on Dec. 20, 2019 after a lifetime of church-going, hospitality and support for higher education. She was predeceased by Roy Speirs (WCBI ’53) and is survived by several children and grandchildren whom she had a significant hand in guiding to college and seminary. These include alumni Dorothea (Speirs) (CBC ’73) and Stewart Coutts (CBC ’73, CTS ’76), Ronda Speirs (CBC ’72–’73), Jeremy Weaver (CBC ’00), Angie (Zelensky) (CBC ’01) and Jon Coutts (CBC ’01, CTS ’01–’03), Dave (CBC ’96–’02) and Amy Russell-Coutts (’99–’00), Jeff BergCoutts (CBC ’99–’01) and Darcy Coutts (CBC ’00–’01).

Stephen Tilley (CBC ’85) passed away suddenly on March 19, 2020, at the age of 63. Steve’s dedication to caring for others was evident through his many years of service in camp ministry, including more than 20 years devoted to Moorelands Camp, near Dorset, Ont., serving kids affected by poverty.
Changing business. Impacting society.

The annual Soul of the Next Economy Forum was another resounding success, bringing people from the non-profit sector, government and educational institutions to Ambrose University Nov. 14–15, 2019.

Inspiring presentations and thoughtful conversations gave a diverse group of participants insights into local and global social and development challenges — and fostered connections among peers and experts who are helping to grow sustainable, business-oriented solutions.

“It is when we come together with our unique, individual expertise and creativity that we can innovate and find value, both for our own organizations and the world that we live in,” said Angie Redecopp, Forum Chair and Associate Professor of Business Administration at Ambrose.

The Soul of the Next Economy Forum is hosted by Ambrose University, Vibrant Communities Calgary, REAP and Thrive.

Planning is underway to present Soul of the Next Economy Forum this fall. The evolving COVID-19 response situation is being closely monitored. Community health and safety is a top priority, and plans will be adjusted as required.

Visit soulofthenexteconomy.com for the latest information.
“She did what she could.” (Mark 14:8) The woman who boldly walked up to Jesus to pour expensive perfume on His head gave everything she had to worship God incarnate. Ridiculed by those watching, she gave all she had to express her raw love and respect for a man who would brutally die on a cross to save her life.

As I get ready to graduate with my Master of Divinity from Ambrose Seminary, what strikes me most about “she did what she could” is that it suggests this woman “could” have done more. And she probably could have. If she somehow possessed even rarer perfume or if she better understood who Jesus was in that moment, maybe her worship would have reflected His true worth. But that woman owned no rarer perfume, and her understanding was incomplete — yet, her worship was still somehow enough.

If I’m being really honest with myself, I am terrified of graduating this May and of not living up to everything God has called me to. But, in this woman’s willingness to give all that she could, I see a model for engaging and serving God that transcends my own human limitation — largely because it accepts that it is limited.

I see a woman whose love of God encompassed the deepest part of herself, even though it looked limited to the world, and was acknowledged as being limited by Jesus Himself. I also see a God who valued worship so deeply that He not only told those challenging this woman to “leave her alone,” but praised her (Mark 14:6).

Getting ready to say goodbye to Ambrose has left me completely transfixed by this story. Because if this woman’s limited, “what she could” style of loving God in Bethany thousands of years ago was enough for Jesus then, my limited “what she could” style of loving God must be enough for Him now, too.

This woman has pushed me all year to believe that those things in which the world sees little value are the very things I should be doing more often to express my love for God.

In fact, the model of this woman’s worship challenges me to believe that the limited nature of what I do for God every day is not wrong, but something He takes great pleasure in watching me do. If that is true, I believe God would want me to embrace the incomplete nature of my service to Him. Accepting every choice I make to glorify Him after I graduate is actually uniquely beautiful, instead of a rebuke of what is lacking or what could have been done better.

At the end of the passage, Jesus says, “she has done a beautiful thing” (Mark 14:6). In my own future ministry, I am going to actively choose to see all the “beautiful things” that my God gets excited about, loves me for and equally values, too.
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Ambrose higher education programs are relevant for today’s employers and tomorrow’s careers. Strong student support comes with any program at Ambrose, which starts with your first inquiry through admission and is sustained with student services, faculty mentorship and spiritual nourishment.

Though this Fall will look different from the typical in-class delivery, the Ambrose commitment to providing excellent Christian education will not waiver. Whether your courses are delivered in a hybrid or online method, you will receive the same quality of education you have come to expect from Ambrose.

Take our virtual tour to see why Ambrose is the right fit for you this fall.

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