

CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAMS AT EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY: A
COUNTER-NARRATIVE TO STUDY ABROAD

By

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Submitted to the

Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

of American University

in Partial Fulfillment of


the Requirement for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

International Training and Education

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Date

2013

American University

Washington, D.C. 20016

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ABSTRACT

Eastern Mennonite University has implemented, as part of its general education curriculum, a required undergraduate cross-cultural experience since 1982. This study explores the case of this private, liberal arts university by inquiring into the connection between the cross-cultural program and Mennonite history and identity, and then situating these connections in the broader field of international education. Through archival research and twelve interviews and subsequent data analysis, the study found that core Mennonite values of service, community, and social justice and peacebuilding heavily influenced the cross-cultural program, as well as its structure, participation, and the content of each individual program. Based on the data analysis, the study concludes that EMU offers a counter-narrative to the ways in which study abroad is practiced at other universities, and that the Mennonite case acts as a call to other institutions to assess the values and motivations of their study abroad programming.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the immense support and cooperation of Eastern Mennonite University's current and former faculty and staff, my academic advisor, or the many late-night and early-morning consultations to friends and family connected to this world and work. Special thanks are owed to Moira Rogers for her encouragement and love since I was a freshman at EMU, and to Elizabeth Worden for guiding me through this process with the right amount of challenge and support, as well as to Stephen Vassallo for serving on my committee. Thank you to the Mennonite community all over the world for allowing me to poke around and explore your theology, culture, and values—I am grateful to call myself a “convinced Anabaptist.”

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CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO STUDY ABROAD AND EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Begin reading any scholarly article related to study abroad or international education, and it will likely contain a reference to an interconnected globalized world, for which universities are responsible for preparing students. This is a call that has been increasingly made over the last decade, and one that has a ring of truth to it—however, the literature and language surrounding the education of “global citizens” through study abroad and internationalization leaves much to be desired when it comes to the goals and motivations for the practices involved. Rhetoric surrounding national security and economic competition motivate the funding and support that study abroad programs receive on a governmental and often institutional level, while issues that merit discussion are left largely untouched and unstudied. These issues include for example, cross-cultural communication, social justice, and economic and environmental sustainability.

This qualitative study seeks to investigate the case of one private, faith-based, liberal arts university in Harrisonburg, Virginia—exploring the connection between their institutional Mennonite identity and their unique cross-cultural programming that has engaged issues broader than global economic competitiveness and the national security of the United States. For this paper, the term “cross-cultural programming” can be read as study abroad, although in the following chapters, the term study abroad will be challenged with the idea that cross-cultural interaction, typically reserved for international experiences, can take place domestically as well.

Eastern Mennonite University was founded in 1917, and has required a cross-cultural experience of its undergraduate students since 1982. Rooted in the Mennonite theological and

cultural tradition, the school promotes a specific set of values and practices to its students and in the way it engages the world. The values of service, community, and social justice and peacebuilding underpin their cross-cultural programming, and in doing so offer a counter-narrative to study abroad as it is practiced in the United States.

Methodology

Framed by the research question: “In what ways, if any, does Mennonite history and identity influence Eastern Mennonite University’s cross-cultural programs?” I conducted both archival and qualitative research to investigate any points of connection. Using the Menno Simons Historical Library located on EMU’s campus, I read through the entirety of the student newspaper, the *Weather Vane*, from its beginnings in 1956 through the available print copies up until 2004. While reading, I noted any articles relating to cross-cultural programs, multicultural events on campus, international students, and to internationally-themed people and events.

Additionally, after obtaining approval from the Institutional Research Board, I interviewed twelve members¹ of EMU’s current and former faculty and staff, chosen either for their significant role in the development of the cross-cultural program, their role in the university overall, or their various experiences leading different programs (See Figure 1). Seven interviews were conducted in-person, two over the phone, one on Skype, and two via email correspondence.² Interviews ranged from 35 minutes to 80 minutes, were recorded and then transcribed; See Appendix B for sample interview questions. While I started with a set of codes, several others emerged during the process and were then coded as well, while others I set out

¹ See Appendix A for a listing of participants

² The two who contributed via email are, at the time of writing, leading cross-culturalists in the Middle East and in Guatemala/Colombia.

with were collapsed into different ones. All the data coming from the inductive and deductive coding is organized into the data found in Chapter Four. All of this original research was preceded by an extensive literature review into both the history of the Mennonite faith, and the theory and practice of international education.

Figure 1.

Participant	Role at EMU
Orval Gingerich	Former Director of CC
Ken J. Nafziger	Professor, Music Department
Don Clymer	Professor, Spanish Department, Former Director
Spencer Cowles	Professor & Department Chair, Business & Economics Department
Beth Aracena	Former Director of CC, Former Professor, Music Department
Vernon Jantzi	Professor Emeritus, Sociology
Gloria Rhodes	Department Chair & Professor, Applied Social Sciences
Deirdre Smeltzer	Current Director of CC, Professor, Math Department
Loren Swartzendruber	President
Kimberly D. Schmidt	Dept Chair & Professor, Washington Community Scholars' Center
Linford Stutzman	Professor of Culture and Religion
Ann Hershberger	Professor, Nursing Department

Throughout this research process, I was keenly aware of my own personal experience as related to this question—while I was not raised Mennonite, I attended EMU for my undergraduate experience and was deeply influenced by their cross-cultural programming, both on-campus and off, as well as the Mennonite identity so prevalent in the institution. Having wrestled with this identity myself, I was aware of the biases I could have going into the research, and focused intently on maintaining an academic and critical lens when collecting and analyzing data. This task was accomplished through the accountability of my advisor and my Proseminar peer working group, who analyzed my coding, as well as by recalling the mindset with which I entered Eastern Mennonite University in 2004—not knowing much at all about their beliefs or

culture. In particular, the working group helped me to keep my personal thoughts separate from my academic pursuit of the research question by challenging and. With these systems in place, I was able to conduct the interviews with an open mind and inform my analysis with my graduate training and coursework at American University in relation to the research process as well as to the field of international education.

Thesis Overview

Part I of Chapter Two explores the historical roots of the Mennonite church and faith, beginning with the Radical Reformation in Europe, and tracing their diaspora across the European continent, and eventually to North America. A persecuted people, this chapter explores the formations of their identity over the first five hundred years of their history, and ends with a brief introduction to EMU, the subject of this case study, as well as their cross-cultural program. Part II puts the literature surrounding the Mennonites in context—their historians, their theology, and their role in the world. This section discusses the influence of varying historical events and the resulting theological and practical shifts within the denomination, establishing the setting for the EMU cross-cultural experience of the last thirty years.

Chapter Three identifies the body of literature that this study seeks to contribute to—that related to higher education, Eastern Mennonite specifically, and finally that related to study abroad. While painting in broad strokes, this section surveys and highlights some of the clear gaps and weaknesses in the current body of literature, particularly those surrounding critical study abroad experiences.

Chapter Four begins with Part I, an introduction to the main themes obtained from the research for this study: service, community, and social justice and peacebuilding. Describing

their presence and prevalence within the EMU community, this section assesses the degree to which Mennonite identity influences the cross-cultural programs. Part II begins to explore the impacts of these themes, as well as the way EMU's programming compares to the broader world of higher education.

Chapter Five, the conclusion, summarizes the findings of the study and explains the ways in which EMU's program acts as a counter-narrative to study abroad, and what role that counter-narrative has in the broader world of international education.

CHAPTER 2

MENNONITE HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Part I: History

BEGINNINGS

In Germany on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses onto the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg. With this action, the Christian church would divide in a way that changed the world's participation in Christianity as a tradition, Christianity as a faith, and Christianity as a culture.³

From this reformation grew another—the Radical Reformation. In the eyes of the radical reformers, Martin Luther and other protestant leaders had stopped short of the full changes needed to truly reform the Catholic Church. Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland was one such leader—vocally questioning and criticizing common catholic practices such as mass and confessions, he led the reformers away from traditional practices, but in the opinion of a few of those gathered around him, he wasn't leading them far enough.⁴ Of particular consequence was the practice of infant baptism—sprinkling newborns with water and committing them to the care of the church and of God. In the eyes of the radical reformers, this was not a biblical practice—Jesus baptized believers (typically young adults or adults) who willingly chose to commit themselves to a life of faith, and thus, this should be the practice of the church. Zwingli was

³ Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, PA:Harold Press, 1993), 29.

⁴ Ibid, 34-37.

unwilling to push this issue with the spiritual or political leaders, and in response to his inaction, the Anabaptist movement was born.⁵

January 21, 1525 marked the first baptism of a group of men committed to the ideals of the radical reformation, in particular adhering to ‘believer’s baptism.’ Baptizing each other in turn, roughly a dozen men separated themselves from the state-affiliated church, and bound themselves to a Christ-centered life as laid out in the New Testament. Because of their actions on that night in Zurich, Felix Manz, Conrad Grebel, and George Blaurock are credited as the fathers of this movement that has led to the Anabaptist tradition as we know it today.⁶

SHIFTS AND SPREAD

Anabaptism was born into a resistant world. Fifteen hundred years after Christ, the world was not ready for the type of reformation these radicals were pursuing. Abandoning the structure and hierarchy of the Catholic Church for a community-focused, separate-from-the-state, pacifist belief system that bucked long-held traditions was an act that did not fit the sixteenth century. The separation that the group imposed on itself led to condemnation from governments, scorn from Rome and Protestants alike, a forced diaspora, and ultimately, persecution.

As the doctrines of this small group spread and became heard first across Switzerland and Germany, then across the rest of Europe, the form of their belief varied. Groups adhering to the charisma of one leader or another took on different key ideologies, and thus developed varying dogmas. Because of the Anabaptists’ rejection of many Catholic practices and beliefs, the State

⁵ Ibid, 38

⁶ Ibid, 33-48

pursued and persecuted them as the movement spread, prompting some of the sects to fight back in kind, while others clung to pacifist teachings from Jesus' life.

In Friesland, what is now a northern province of the Netherlands, one of these violent Anabaptist groups existed, and, like so many of the others, was often defeated because of their willingness to engage in fighting.⁷ Here, though, their deaths sparked a spread of pacifism in a meaningful way: one of the casualties was the brother of a man named Menno Simons.

MENNO SIMONS AND EARLY MENNONITES

Menno Simons, from the town of Witmarsum in Friesland, was born into a peasant family, yet was able to learn both Latin and Greek, and thus to study and train for the priesthood.⁸ Accepting a post in the nearby town of Pingjum, Menno used his early years in the priesthood with very little purpose, but when doubts began to find their way into his mind about the validity of Catholicism's key tenet of transubstantiation (the belief that the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Christ), Simons dove into the scriptures.⁹ Through these studies, he found guidance in the teachings of Luther and other reformers that led him to the conviction that the Bible did not support transubstantiation.

Continuing his study of the Scriptures, he also began to doubt the practice of infant baptism, pushing him past where Luther and other leaders of the Reformation had stopped, and landing him amidst Anabaptist doctrine. Even as he wrestled with these beliefs, and as he watched his brother Pieter subscribe to Anabaptist teachings, he stayed with the Catholic Church.

⁷ Ibid, 46-47.

⁸ Ibid, 102-103.

⁹ Ibid, 103.

In the end, what changed his mind was the death of his brother—a death caused by what Menno believed was misguided zeal—Simons officially broke with the Catholic Church and publically declared himself a part of the Anabaptist faith.¹⁰

Menno immediately went into hiding with the peaceful Anabaptists, and for his first year out of the Catholic Church, he studied and wrote, rooting himself more deeply in the cause to which he had committed. At the end of this year, several other Anabaptists came from across Europe and approached him, asking that he be the leader of their people. Although he must have known it would be a dangerous role to lead a persecuted group, Menno accepted it and fulfilled it for the remaining twenty-five years of his life.¹¹

The early years of the people who came to be known as the Mennonites were riddled with conflict—both with the State and the Catholic Church, but also with Lutherans, Calvinists, and other reformed groups. Because of this conflict, which often turned violent, they were often forced to hide or relocate to friendlier states (although the friendliness of a state was subject to the whims of current rulers). This period of heavy persecution is a defining feature of Anabaptists, and particularly Mennonites—the book *Martyr's Mirror* was published in its first edition in 1660, and continues to be relevant to Mennonites today.¹² Almost every Mennonite child knows the story of Dirk Willems, the Anabaptist martyr whose portrait regularly appears on the cover of the book. Dirk, imprisoned because of his Anabaptist beliefs, was able to escape one cold day in winter. His pursuer fell through the ice; Dirk turned back to save him, only to be

¹⁰ Ibid, 104.

¹¹ Ibid, 104.

¹² *Martyr's Mirror* is a collection of primary sources detailing the martyrdom of the early Mennonites, as well as the previous Christian martyrs back to Peter. This record maintains a relevance for Mennonites today as it reminds them of their heritage and those that died for their right to align themselves with the faith.

imprisoned again and burned at the stake a few short weeks later.¹³ In this story, the value of nonresistance is visible in its logical, albeit extreme, conclusion; nonresistance is such a fundamental piece of Anabaptist tradition in part because of those who were martyred for their commitment to it.

SEPARATION AND MIGRATION IN EUROPE

Throughout the years of persecution, the Mennonites were spread across Europe, and eventually farther across continents and oceans.¹⁴ Fleeing the harsh treatments of unfriendly governments and religious leaders, Mennonites took refuge in havens like South Germany, East Friesland, and Poland (Prussia). Mennonites were welcomed into these locations often because leaders perceived them as hard workers who would do well with difficult farm land; in exchange for their innovation on the farm, they would be granted their freedom to carry out their Anabaptist beliefs in peace.¹⁵ In fact, in some cases, because of their work ethic some Mennonites were able to achieve “civic prominence” and to be honored as leading citizens.¹⁶ Generally, over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, there was an increase in tolerance and safety for the Mennonites.

However, the centuries following the first baptism were not one clean line of growth and success—there occasionally arose leaders who brought divisions into the group. Most notable is

¹³ Thielman J. van Braght, *Martyr's Mirror*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1660), 741-742.

¹⁴ William Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 268.

¹⁵ Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, PA: Harold Press, 1993), 151-167.

¹⁶ Ibid, 166.

Jacob Amman who, known for strict adherence to the practice of avoidance¹⁷ and his frustration over the lack of discipline in the congregations, became the father of the Amish Church.¹⁸

Although the general trend in Europe over the course of the centuries following the first baptism was a positive one, many Mennonites, starting in the mid-seventeenth century, answered the call to plant colonies in North America, while others, in the late eighteenth century, answered a call to inhabit lands in Russia.¹⁹

RUSSIAN MENNONITES

Answering an invitation from Russia's Catharine the Great, many Mennonites from Germany and Poland relocated to Russia. Their admittance to the country was made on the condition that immigrants stay separate from the natives, and for a time, the Mennonites in this land were granted the freedom to live in their own communities, living out their Anabaptist beliefs in peace.²⁰

Although this time allowed the Mennonites in Russia to develop thriving communities that celebrated their heritage and values, when World War 1 began, this time ended. While men were allowed to enter into alternative service rather than fight, their communities' locations eventually landed them on the front lines of battle.²¹ Pillaged and starving, they sent an envoy to

¹⁷ Avoidance is the term used in relationship to the practice of excommunication, or shunning, church members who have sinned and not repented.

¹⁸ Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, PA: Harold Press, 1993), 53.

¹⁹ Ibid, 168.

²⁰ Ibid, 168-169.

²¹ Ibid, 186.

the United States pleading for aid—the response marked the founding of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The relief work done by MCC culminated in a steady flow of Mennonite immigrants out of Russia and into North America.²²

NORTH AMERICAN MENNONITES

While the Russian Mennonites arrived in the 1920s and afterwards, their predecessors had been there since the first call of William Penn in the late seventeenth century. Seeking religious freedom, large groups of Mennonites from South Germany moved to Pennsylvania, and over the next two hundred years, the population spread to Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, and Indiana. Additionally, Mennonite populations from Switzerland and the Netherlands joined as they too sought out a place to worship separate from the world.²³

While the Mennonites enjoyed their religious freedom as the country established itself, the group maintained its identity by being separate from the state and passively non-resistant; they did not fight in either the Revolutionary or Civil Wars.²⁴ In the twentieth century, the Mennonites would be confronted with a more active non-resistance through their involvement in conscientious objection.²⁵ This practice and its influence on the church identity will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

²² Ibid, 188.

²³ Ibid, 196.

²⁴ Ibid, 196-202.

²⁵ Conscientious Objectors were given the opportunity to serve outside of the military in times of war for religious reasons.

In the 1800s two major denominations were formed—the Mennonite Church (MC) and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC). The former was made up primarily of the earliest settlers living in Pennsylvania and Virginia, while the latter was formed of immigrants who came from Europe in the early 1800s.²⁶ While the two groups had their differences,²⁷ they formed in 2002 to become Mennonite Church USA (MCUSA). As these groups rooted themselves in the United States, they still maintained a “strong historical consciousness,” being “keenly aware that their spiritual forebears suffered and died for the faith and fled from one land to another in search of religious liberty.”²⁸ This deep sense of identity, similar to the experience of the Russian Mennonites, led to the establishment of schools, hospitals, and other structural support for the community of believers in the United States. One of these was Eastern Mennonite University, the subject of this case study.

EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAMS

It was under the auspices of MC that the Virginia Conference founded Eastern Mennonite University²⁹ in 1917 to establish an opportunity for a Mennonite education, affirming their “strong concern for faithfulness to the heritage.”³⁰ Attended exclusively by Anabaptists in

²⁶ Ibid, 214, 252.

²⁷ The GCMC had a different set of experiences in Europe than did the MC—they had experienced the “spiritual and intellectual freedom” which had come about in Europe, leading them to be “citizens of this world” even as they held to some of the traditional separatist values.

²⁸ Ibid, 233.

²⁹ EMU was founded as Eastern Mennonite School, then College, and in 1994, earned the title of university. For consistency’s sake this paper will use the term EMU exclusively.

³⁰ Ibid, 233.

the early years, it has grown into a liberal arts university with about half the students hailing from Mennonite backgrounds.

EMU has had an international focus for much of its history. Poring over old issues of the *Weather Vane*, the student newspaper, will illuminate a rich past of cross-cultural interactions in many forms. From feature articles introducing international students in the 1950s³¹ to visitors during Missionary Week coming from South America, Africa, and India,³² to announcements of graduating seniors planning to serve abroad scrawled across the front page,³³ the Mennonite world of EMU has been no stranger to global issues. Alumni serving abroad routinely contributed to the newspaper with updates on their work and observations, and as early as the 1950s, students participated in programs studying abroad through the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges and Brethren Colleges Abroad.³⁴

Starting in the 1960s, EMU began developing its own international programs, while in 1972, under the leadership of Al Keim,³⁵ the school was awarded a grant to develop its Global Village Curriculum. The following decade, various faculty members led ten experimental trips abroad, laying the “groundwork for the cross-cultural program as it is known today.”³⁶ Working with a task force made up of four faculty members and advocates of the program, Calvin Shenk,

³¹ “From Holland: Ida Erne” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Nov. 9, 1956

³² “Missionaries Give Challenging Talks” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Nov. 9, 1956

³³ “12 Students to Serve Abroad” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Mar. 21, 1958

³⁴ BCA is a long-running third-party provider that offers study abroad to partner universities. Rooted in the Brethren tradition, they also have Anabaptist roots.

³⁵ History Professor and Dean.

³⁶ Rachael Keshishian & Bonnie Price Lofton, “EMU Leads Way in Requiring Cross-Cultural Study,” *Crossroads: Eastern Mennonite University*, Summer 2012, 2.

Vernon Jantzi, Ann Hershberger, and Ken J. Nafziger,³⁷ the workability, benefits, and challenges of the program were assessed and evaluated. The proposal of a required program was met with similar resistance that it would find at a university today—certain academic tracks and athletic departments were concerned about the effect that taking a full semester off would have on students’ studies or on their ability to compete. However, after a summer full of deliberation and committee meetings with other members of campus, faculty were won over: in 1982, with the implementation of the Global Village Curriculum, a cross-cultural experience became required for every undergraduate student graduating from EMU.³⁸

Part II: Context

The following sections will explore the literature as it relates to Mennonite history and identity, setting up an understanding of the Mennonite context in order to discuss Eastern Mennonite University’s cross-cultural program critically and in-depth.

HISTORICAL WORK: EVIDENCE OF THINGS UNSEEN

There is no shortage of historical investigation within the Anabaptist tradition. As a people, they have devoted much to the preservation of their history and their culture, and this includes producing historians, heritage centers, archives, historical libraries, and a variety of other facilities that perpetuate a focus on the Mennonite historical identity.³⁹ Noted twentieth

³⁷ All but Calvin Shenk, who is now in his 90s, were interviewed for this study.

³⁸ Rachael Keshishian & Bonnie Price Lofton, “EMU Leads Way in Requiring Cross-Cultural Study,” *Crossroads: Eastern Mennonite University*, Summer 2012, 2.

³⁹ These institutions have come about even with a small overall populations—the Mennonite Church USA reported a total of roughly 114,000 members in 2003.

century historians such as Cornelius Dyck, Donald Kraybill, William Estep, and Calvin Redekop have produced dozens of works, covering not only the history of their faith tradition, but the modern Mennonite experience. Major historical libraries and archives exist in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Indiana, Kansas, and other areas with high Mennonite populations. Travel tours regularly run to Switzerland and Germany, as well as the Netherlands, as people seek to experience their history first-hand.

Within this body of work, there is a focus on the early years of the Anabaptist tradition. The plethora of study centered on the era of persecution and diaspora reflects the significance this period has for the church—as mentioned previously, works originating in that time period, like *Martyr's Mirror*, continue to maintain a relevance for the modern Mennonite. Dyck's *Introduction to Mennonite History*, and Estep's *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* provide an overview of the patterns and stories that shaped the church.⁴⁰ Throughout these texts, themes arise that begin to convey core Mennonite values: service, love, peacefulness, simple living, and a community focus. From the very beginning of their story, a clear image of Mennonite identity emerges.

Throughout the Mennonite story as told by Dyck, the importance of social justice and service becomes visible in the actions of the church as well as their theology.⁴¹ In placing the primacy of faith on Christ's life, the writings and reflections of early leaders such as Pilgrim

⁴⁰ Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, PA:Harold Press, 1993).
William Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).

⁴¹ Generally, the Mennonite view on justice involves healing and restoring relationships, and particularly following Biblical instruction to care for the poor and needy. For a detailed understanding of what justice means to the Mennonite tradition, the reader should refer to the Mennonite Confession of Faith (<http://www.mennolink.org/doc/cof/>).

Marpeck dovetail with the same emphasis on social justice seen in the early North American Mennonite colonies.⁴² Similarly, this theme carries across other historical writings: in *The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work: An Introduction*, Lehman traces the practice of service via relief work back to 1548, illustrating a demonstrated commitment to following Jesus by serving and caring for others.⁴³ Although initially much of this work was done within the Mennonite world or across other religious communities, there were multiple stories of service to outsiders as well—they organized relief funds for Native Americans in the eighteenth century, aid to India after a severe famine in the late eighteenth century, and even registered the first formal protest of slavery in the United States in 1688.⁴⁴

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDINGS: SHAPING THE MODERN MENNONITE

While many of the values that are traceable through historical texts are rooted in the gospel as well as in their historical context, over time, one can see a shift in the way these values are interpreted and lived out even as they remain a constant. The traditional value of being separate from the world—insular and primarily concerned with the edification of their own communities—began to look different in the twentieth century, primarily due to the work of several key theologians, including John Howard Yoder and Donald Kraybill.

⁴² Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, PA:Harold Press, 1993), 94, 196, 201.

⁴³ M.C. Lehman, *The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work: An Introduction. Mennonite Relief Service. Vol. 1*, Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1945.

⁴⁴ "The College That Was a Pioneer in the Racial Integration of Southern Higher Education." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 59 (2008): 27-28. M.C. Lehman, *The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work: An Introduction. Mennonite Relief Service. Vol. 1*, Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1945.

John Howard Yoder is perhaps the definitive Anabaptist ethicist and theologian. Best known for his defense of Christian pacifism, his most widely read book (in the secular and Christian world) is titled *The Politics of Jesus*, which ranked fifth in a list of the most important Christian books of the twentieth century.⁴⁵ This seminal work “rearranged the landscape of theological ethics,” and laid the groundwork for Mennonite social engagement.⁴⁶ With the World Wars and social changes disrupting the “posture of withdrawal”⁴⁷ held by the Mennonite community, Yoder and others at that time helped the Anabaptists to respond to current events in ways that reflected their values and beliefs⁴⁸ by arguing that pacifism and socially engaged living were the most honest reflections of Christ’s life and message.⁴⁹

Reflecting similar thoughts on Christians’ role in the world, Donald Kraybill contributed to the field with his work, *The Upside-Down Kingdom*.⁵⁰ While Mennonites previously chose to live out the kingdom of God in their insular communities, Kraybill argues that “kingdom living is fundamentally social,” and that Jesus’ teachings were not merely spiritually relevant but also

⁴⁵ David P. Gushee, “Books of the Century,” Christianity Today, last modified April 24, 2000, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/april24/5.92.html>

⁴⁶ Earl Zimmerman, *Practicing the Politics of Jesus: The Origin and Significance of John Howard Yoder’s Social Ethics*. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2007, 23.

⁴⁷ Traditionally, one of the key Mennonite values was separation of the church from the world—in a complete and total way. They were committed to living the lives they viewed as Godly in communities that supported these beliefs.

⁴⁸ Earl Zimmerman, *Practicing the Politics of Jesus: The Origin and Significance of John Howard Yoder’s Social Ethics*. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2007, 24.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 173-204.

⁵⁰ Donald Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978.

socially so.⁵¹ This text walks through various pieces of imagery from the gospels of Jesus' life, and explains them in a way that emphasizes the importance of a socially engaged Christian community, and particularly one that "arises from God's love, not a sectarian impulse to withdraw from the rest of society."⁵²

These two texts and their messages directly contradict the Mennonite tradition (particularly as seen in the early centuries), and revitalize the denomination's purpose to one that seeks to serve and love the world as a whole, in addition to their own communities. These highly influential works, while not causal to the change, definitively articulated a shift happening in the Mennonite church, and gave voice to what would become some of their defining characteristics.

MENNONITES IN THE WORLD

Theological work together with cultural and societal shifts in the Mennonite church have contributed to the creation of a denomination-wide conscience focused on social justice, even as there remains conflict within the community. The literature makes clear the presence the Mennonite Church has within the world of social justice, international development, and social engagement. Beyond the traditional evangelical Christian mission work, Mennonites' lives and service articulate a dedication to peacebuilding and living by Christ's example.

Sociological, historical, and religious literature is rife with instances of Mennonites at work in the world. From studies of the first instances of Anabaptist diaspora, to ethnographies of the Mennonite populations in their various cultural contexts, to research into the way Mennonites have been involved in international development, research shows this has been a mobile group,

⁵¹ Ibid, 18, 28.

⁵² Ibid, 17.

and one that has increasingly delved into social engagement both internationally and domestically.

With the founding of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in 1920, Mennonites launched themselves into the world of international development (ID). Many studies have been done on the work of MCC, usually by other Mennonites; however, one study sets the work of MCC and other Mennonite organizations into a broader context. Hoksbergen et al. review various Christian contributions to the world of ID, and finds that Mennonite traditions focus primarily on peacebuilding in their work, and do so not by imposing an explicitly "Christian peace," but rather by relating to the "needs of the people, especially the poor and victims" and instead aspiring to a "just peace."⁵³ This ethic was echoed in the work of the Mennonite church in India, which started in the late nineteenth century. Over MCC's several decades of relief work, it was a consistent priority that the Indians take ownership over their own church, and that Western Christianity not be imposed on those from the East.⁵⁴

This culturally sensitive aid work extends not only to that done overseas, but to marginalized populations in North America as well. Daphne Winland explores the experience of Hmong refugees in a Canadian Mennonite community.⁵⁵ The study dives into the joining of a group of Hmong families sponsored to leave Vietnam by a Mennonite congregation, and the resulting cultural encounters. Generally, the Hmong women appreciated the openness and

⁵³ Hoksbergen, et al. "International Development: Christian Reflections on Today's Competing Theories." *Christian Scholar's Review* 39 (2009): 11-35.

⁵⁴ John Allen Lapp, *The Mennonite Church in India, 1897-1962*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1972, 173-189.

⁵⁵ Daphne Winland, "Christianity and Community: Conversion and Adaptation among Hmong Refugee Women." *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 19 (1994): 21-45.

family-oriented values of the Mennonite church, and found it a place where they could blend their traditions with those of their new community.⁵⁶ In the United States, Eastern Mennonite University is lauded as a “pioneer” for its admittance of black students much earlier than the rest of the Southern colleges and universities, thus modeling a similar openness as those in the Canadian community offered to the Hmong.⁵⁷

This blanket acceptance and unimposing nature of cross-cultural interactions does not exist across all Mennonite communities, however, as some still remain rather insular. In 2008, Tomomi Naka performed an ethnographic study of two Mennonite congregations—one conservative and one liberal—and their patterns of belief and occupation.⁵⁸ Naka found that the conservative congregation, still emphasizing separateness from the world, primarily worked in jobs where they could work alongside other Mennonites, whereas those from the liberal congregation place little emphasis on the religion of their coworkers and thus seek service-oriented jobs consistent with their Mennonite values.⁵⁹

Oftentimes, in fact, there can be a wealth of cross-cultural interactions within the church. Congregations have sprung up in places with no ethnic connection to the Mennonite church, resulting in a diversification of the congregational body at large. Conrad Ostwalt Jr. examined a congregation in Boone, North Carolina, where the church was exclusively African-American with no direct ethnic roots in the Mennonite church, and where they chose to worship in a much

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "The College That Was a Pioneer in the Racial Integration of Southern Higher Education." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 59 (2008): 27-28.

⁵⁸ Tomomi Naka. "Faith at Work: Mennonite Beliefs and Occupations." *Ethnology* 47 (2008): 271-89.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

more dynamic style while still remaining rooted in traditional Mennonite values.⁶⁰ The experience of this congregation is representative of the newer Mennonite churches springing up across the world. Conversely, in *Disquiet in the Land*, Fred Kniss explores cultural conflict within the Mennonite communities of North America, exploring the tension between two key paradigms within the church, which Kniss defines as traditionalism and communalism.⁶¹ Kniss' title is a play on a nickname for the Mennonite community, "The Quiet in the Land;" in focusing on the discord within the Church, he highlights the differences that disrupt the group so focused on community and pacifism by explaining how each see themselves living it out in the correct way—traditionalists with separation from the world, and communalists with a focus on the larger, global community.⁶²

It is no wonder that the church has encountered these cultural conflicts—the global Mennonite body is spread widely over six continents. As of 2012, there are 1.77 million members of the church worldwide, with Africa claiming the highest membership.⁶³ Leo Driedger explores the trends of *Mennonites in the Global Village*, establishing patterns of beliefs and locations that shape the way various Mennonite groups interact with the world.⁶⁴ One of the main

⁶⁰ Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr., "Crossing of Cultures: The Mennonite Brethren of Boon, NC." *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association* 4 (1992): 105-12.

⁶¹ Fred Kniss. *Disquiet in the Land: Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

⁶² This is discussed in greater detail in the Theological Groundings section above.

⁶³ Bender, Harold S., Sam Steiner and Richard D. Thiessen, "World Mennonite Membership Distribution," Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, last modified January, 2013, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/W6763ME.htm>.

⁶⁴ Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in the Global Village*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

findings of this text is the urbanization of the Mennonite community, and the outward focus this has given the church as a whole. Urban Mennonites, having moved from their parents' and grandparents' rural farms and into the city where they are confronted with poverty, injustice, and violence much more frequently, are more willing and likely to actively engage in social issues.⁶⁵ Driedger and Kanagy provide an overview of Mennonite societal trends, studying this shift from rural to urban or conservative to liberal. They find the cause primarily rooted in the proliferation of participation in alternative service during World War II.⁶⁶ The practice of alternative service became clearly visible during interviews for this project, as many of the participants cited a conscientizing and increased international awareness as a result of their service, whether during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

The themes that arose throughout the above historical review provide a first iteration of the important values in the Mennonite world, which will be explored in relation to EMU in the following chapters.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 40-41.

⁶⁶ Conrad L, Kanagy & Leo Driedger. "Changing Mennonite Values: Attitudes on Women, Politics, and Peace, 1972-1989." *Review of Religious Research* 37 (1996): 342-53.

CHAPTER 3

FRAMING THE STUDY

Mennonite identity is a salient thing and carries from the pews to the home to the workplace to the classroom. This section will make this clear, and contribute to the broader research question of Mennonite history and identity by exploring the scholarly work related to Mennonite values as seen in Mennonite higher education in general, Eastern Mennonite University specifically, and finally the work related to study abroad, cross-cultural, and international education.

Higher Education

The same generation of North American Mennonites forced to wrestle with their Anabaptist non-violent values in the face of war was also one of the first to experience higher education as a norm. Mennonite institutions of higher education were founded beginning in the late nineteenth century, and as of now in the early twenty-first, there are five main colleges and universities in the United States,⁶⁷ as well as several seminaries and secondary schools.⁶⁸ The establishment of these academic bodies has produced scholarship and reflection on the nature of their work, and on their commitment to maintaining themselves as Mennonite institutions; this literature is discussed below.

⁶⁷ Bethel College, Hesston College, Goshen College, Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University

⁶⁸ Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Lancaster Mennonite School, Bethany Christian School, Central Christian School, Christopher Dock Mennonite School, etc.

Discussing this commitment and what it brings to their work, several Mennonite administrators and professors offered their thoughts in presentations to their peers on *Mennonite Education in a post-Christian World*.⁶⁹ This compilation offers insight into the priorities and identity of these institutions, and reflects many of the core values seen in other literature.

President of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) from 1987 to 2003, Joe Lapp asserts the importance of maintaining and fostering a distinctly Mennonite identity both internally and externally,⁷⁰ suggesting that

the origins of our Mennonite schools are integrally tied into our interests of preserving and passing on our faith and practice. . . Our emphasis is on preserving Jesus' teaching concerning nonresistant peace, mutual care for others within the community, concern for the physical and spiritual condition of the world around us, and a sense of witness by 'being' and 'doing.'⁷¹

Similarly, president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College Gerald Gerbrandt echoes these thoughts when he defines a set of distinctive qualities of Mennonite Higher Education: a church and world duality, the pursuit of the ethic of Jesus, internationalism, biblical authority, music, and communitarianism.⁷² Coupled with the presentation of Ted Koontz, professor at Associated

⁶⁹ Harry Huebner, ed., *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: essays presented at the Consultation on Higher Education*, Winnipeg, June 1997. Winnipeg, Canada: CMBC Publications, 1998.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 107-108.

⁷¹ Joseph Lapp, "Mennonite Education Administration: An Inside View," in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: essays presented at the Consultation on Higher Education*, Winnipeg, June 1997, ed. Harry Huebner. (Winnipeg, Canada: CMBC Publications, 1998.), 101-112.

⁷² Gerald Gerbrandt, "Who Are We? Mennonite Higher Education," in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: essays presented at the Consultation on Higher Education*, Winnipeg, June 1997, ed. Harry Huebner. (Winnipeg, Canada: CMBC Publications, 1998.), 17-39.

Mennonite Biblical Seminary,⁷³ a clear vision for service, community care, peace, and reflecting Jesus' life emerges as key values for Mennonite schools.

Within this communal scholarship another theme begins to emerge as well: internationalism. Gerbrandt articulates it as a distinctive (as a global body, Mennonites are a global community),⁷⁴ and Shirley Showalter, former president at Goshen College, mentions it as a powerful practice useful for “incorporating wisdom ways” into their structure.⁷⁵ The commitment to this value is visible in the many international programs at Mennonite institutions, and will be discussed at length throughout the course of this paper.

Mennonite values are not visible only in Mennonite scholarship—general research done into Christian education has identified key components from the outside. Richard Edlin, in a discussion of Christian scholars in a postmodern world, notes that Mennonite colleges focus on “peaceable service.”⁷⁶ Schmalzbauer and Wheeler include Eastern Mennonite University in their study of campus lifestyle codes, and uncover a commitment to the values of community and

⁷³ Ted Koontz, “Mennonite Education Administration: An Outside View,” in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: essays presented at the Consultation on Higher Education*, Winnipeg, June 1997, ed. Harry Huebner. (Winnipeg, Canada: CMBC Publications, 1998.), 113-128.

⁷⁴ Gerald Gerbrandt, “Who Are We? Mennonite Higher Education,” in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: essays presented at the Consultation on Higher Education*, Winnipeg, June 1997, ed. Harry Huebner. (Winnipeg, Canada: CMBC Publications, 1998.), 17-39.

⁷⁵ Shirley Showalter, “The Invisible Curriculum II,” in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: essays presented at the Consultation on Higher Education*, Winnipeg, June 1997, ed. Harry Huebner. (Winnipeg, Canada: CMBC Publications, 1998.), 145-153.

⁷⁶ Edlin, Richard J. “Keeping the Faith: The Christian Scholar in the Academy in a Postmodern World.” *Christian Higher Education* 8 (2009): 203-24.

cross-cultural experience, which contrasts with other various Christian institutions'⁷⁷ emphasis on individual freedom, personal choice, etc.⁷⁸

The issues these studies and discussions of Mennonite higher education raise are a manifestation of the theological and cultural groundings discussed in the previous chapter. The next section will focus on literature about Eastern Mennonite University, the subject of this case study, and explore these themes further.

Eastern Mennonite University

EMU has been the subject of multiple case studies and larger surveys, typically ensconced within the scholarship and community of Christian higher education, although not exclusively so.

In a survey of 156 Christian colleges and universities, EMU was chosen as one of nine institutions that “demonstrated evidence of a comprehensive interest in a moral education.”⁷⁹ This survey resoundingly confirmed EMU’s distinctive mission statement and value set as rooted in their commitment to their Anabaptist tradition, which leads them to

begin with practice and then seek to reflect upon what such efforts have taught them. As a result, few traditions have as rich a legacy as the Anabaptist tradition in terms of encouraging its members to commit their lives to efforts of service and reconciliation.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ These ranged from non-denominational to evangelical.

⁷⁸ Schmalzbauer, John A., and C. Gray Wheeler. "Between Fundamentalism and Secularization: Secularizing and Sacralizing Currents in the Evangelical Debate on Campus Lifestyle Codes." *Sociology of Religion* 57 (1996): 241-57.

⁷⁹ Perry L. Glanzer & Todd C. Ream, *Christianity and Moral Identity in Higher Education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 133

⁸⁰ Ibid, 151

The “denominational narrative” of the Mennonite church and the Anabaptist tradition is widely heard at EMU, and shapes their staffing and curriculum.⁸¹ The traditions of peace and community play out in almost every area of the university: residence life, discipline, curriculum, student life, etc. This survey found these values squarely planted in the Mennonite world, and affirms their balanced approach to “moral education of holiness, Christian virtue, social justice, and active service,” making clear the continuity of Mennonite identity throughout all levels of the institution.⁸² In this survey of 156 schools, EMU and one other institution were the two found to provide the most holistic and balanced approach to moral education, and were also the two schools that demonstrated the strongest connection between their specific Christian theology and their institutional identity.⁸³

The Council of Independent Colleges also included EMU (then Eastern Mennonite College) in a survey of ten liberal arts colleges in 1987, assessing faculty morale and satisfaction.⁸⁴ Over the several weeks researchers spent on campus conducting interviews and observations, it became clear that EMC’s faculty morale and satisfaction surpassed levels at many other small liberal arts colleges due to a shared commitment to a set of values. In this group of colleagues, there is a unified institutional culture—researchers perceived faculty as engaged in a common endeavor, rather than pursuing individual agendas. This result is consistent

⁸¹ Ibid, 152

⁸² Ibid, 156

⁸³ Ibid, 156

⁸⁴ Ann Austin, “Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia,” in *A Good Place to Work: Sourcebook for the Academic Workplace*, ed. Ann Austin et al. (Washington, DC: Council of Independent Colleges 1991.), 71-84.

with the Mennonite value of community, although the term “non-Mennos” that was used for faculty from a different background was met with mixed response by the research team.

Additionally, the team found service to be a significant theme in faculty (who often view their work for EMC as an act of service to the church) and in curriculum, another value consistent with the Mennonite tradition.⁸⁵ EMU exhibits this value in many institutionalized instances, one of which is through the Washington, DC, off-campus program, originally named Washington Study Service Year (WSSY). The WSSY was founded by Nelson Good, seeking to “integrate his studies in sociology with his Anabaptist tradition of service.”⁸⁶ The program began as a year-long service internship, and has since become the Washington Community Scholars’ Center (WCSC), offering semester- and summer-long programs to students of EMU. The WCSC has dropped “service” from its’ name, but it remains an important aspect of the program — students are encouraged to participate in internships serving marginalized populations in some form or another, while they simultaneously take seminar-style classes that enrich their understanding of the complexities of Washington, DC.⁸⁷ Aberle-Grasse writes that the WSSY/WCSC aims to: assist communities in DC by supporting organizations that service those communities either in advocacy or direct service; assist students in gaining knowledge and values related to community service and social change; and to assist in students’ growth in self-awareness, conflict resolution skills, and the ability to work with cultural and racial differences

⁸⁵ Ibid, 78.

⁸⁶ Aberle-Grasse, Melissa. “The Washington Study-Service Year of Eastern Mennonite University.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 43 (2000): 848-857.

⁸⁷ Kimberly D. Schmidt in interview with the author, February, 2013.

among colleagues and peers.⁸⁸ These skills, while specific to the program, are representative of Mennonite values broadly, and of EMU's programming specifically.

One of the most distinctive features of EMU's programming is their Global Village Curriculum (GVC)—the general education requirements for all students. Orval Gingerich explores the adoption of the GVC in his dissertation.⁸⁹ In this in-depth study, Gingerich approaches EMU's experience from the field of Comparative and International Education, discussing the rationale and process for adopting a model that requires a cross-cultural experience. This study reveals that EMC, while ahead of its time,⁹⁰ still encountered many of the normal challenges campuses face when internationalizing: faculty resistance, funding issues, to name a few.⁹¹ However, the resistance tended to be “pragmatic and related to institutional ... priorities rather than to the overall objectives or philosophical framework” of the requirement.⁹² During the process of adopting the GVC, it became clear that

cross-cultural education was an obvious way to give substance to EMC's mission of educating students for social responsibility with an emphasis on the welfare of all human kind, world peace, social justice, and equality of access to basic necessities for life and dignity.⁹³

⁸⁸ Aberle-Grasse, Melissa. “The Washington Study-Service Year of Eastern Mennonite University.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 43 (2000): 848-857.

⁸⁹ Orval Gingerich, “Internationalizing General Education: a Case Study of EMC and the Global Village Curriculum” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1995).

⁹⁰ Ibid, 31, 35

⁹¹ Ibid, 83

⁹² Ibid, 83

⁹³ Ibid, 73

Here again the Mennonite values that have been seen throughout their history—from the first baptism, to diaspora, to the cultural shifts of the twentieth century—appear as a clear marker of the institution’s identity.

As the majority of literature surrounding EMU commends its practices, it is clear that critical work or findings that challenge the school’s practices are absent from the literature.

Discussions in the work covered above leave untouched any of the tensions that arise at EMU because of the Mennonite identity, or how this identity can make the school’s interaction with other universities difficult, and certainly merit future research.

Study Abroad

With the adoption of the Global Village Curriculum in the 1980s, EMU established itself as a pioneer of international education, particularly one focused on drivers other than the dominant economic competitiveness or national security. As is made clear by the literature, this is a still-developing stance, and one that requires attention. Here is a place where EMU’s programming begins to be seen as a counter-narrative to the dominant world of study abroad.

Study abroad as a whole is a developing academic field, without a definitive or comprehensive body of scholarly literature. However, due to its growing popularity and the demand for knowledge, there has been an increase in writings on the topic. Within the literature on study abroad that currently exists, there are several themes that consistently emerge: campus internationalization, cross-cultural competence, global citizenship, as well as surveys of best practices and programs. These themes lend thoughtful elements to the body of scholarship on study abroad, however there exists plenty of room for further study and growth.

Most notable in the scholarship on study abroad is the term “global citizenship;” this term is found in nearly every article that touches on study abroad—indeed, it is a concept found in the first line of EMU’s mission statement: “EMU educates students to serve and lead in a global context.”⁹⁴ Ross Lewin edited a volume of thirty chapters that all address an aspect of global citizenship as it relates to the research and practice of study abroad.⁹⁵ Much of the literature under this heading argues that study abroad contributes to the national security of the United States by creating student ambassadors developing goodwill abroad, or that study abroad helps the student to become distinct and competitive in a tough, global market. This creates a narrative around study abroad that prioritizes the individual, and leaves untouched a discussion of the possibility for study abroad to be a furthering of values related to improving societies domestically or internationally.

Related to this concept of global citizenship, and often rooted in it as well, is the theory and implementation of campus internationalization. Lisa Childress provides examples of successful internationalization in her book,⁹⁶ exploring the particular cases of Duke University and the University of Richmond. While these cases are helpful in the broader world of higher education, and in identifying a particular pathway to a campus with an international focus, they do not explore a religious institution with the commitment to a specific religious identity that EMU has. Numerous other authors explore how it relates to mission, campus goals, faculty, and

⁹⁴ EMU Mission Statement, <http://emu.edu/about/mission/>

⁹⁵ Ross Lewin, ed., *The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad: Higher Education and the Quest for Global Citizenship*. New York: Routledge and AAC&U, 2009.

⁹⁶ Lisa Chlidress, *The Twenty-First Century University: Developing Faculty Engagement in Internationalization*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009.

student exchange.⁹⁷ These studies confirm that creating a campus that has an international focus in any capacity is inextricably tied to the university's identity, and to the identity of the faculty that work there. Any progression or development of student exchange programs must be rooted in campus support within those two areas. Due to the difficulty of unifying a campus around particular values, the common narrative around study abroad remains the same— either economic competitiveness and national security or merely student enjoyment.

Often, one of the goals of or products anticipated from campus internationalization and global citizenship is fostering students' intercultural competence, the definitions of which are hotly contested, and this is reflected in the literature.⁹⁸ Jane Knight surveyed the language of international educators in different capacities surrounding these terms, and found there to be little to no agreement on the definition of any. Regardless of this lack of cohesion, scholars have explored not only the presence of intercultural learning (or lack thereof) within study abroad programs,⁹⁹ but also explorations of the ways it does or doesn't occur between international

⁹⁷ Altbach, Philip and Jane Knight. "The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities," *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(2007): 290-305.
Brustein, William. I. "The Global Campus: Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education in North America." *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(2007): 382-391.
Gillespie, Susan H. "The Practice of International Education in the Context of Globalization: A Critique." *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6(2002): 262-267
Gray, Kimberly S., Murdock, Gwendolyn K., and Chad D. Stebbins. "Assessing Study Abroad's Effect on an International Mission." *Change*, 34(2002): 44-51.
Knight, Jane. "Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8(2004):5-31.
Stohl, Michael.. "We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us: The Role of the Faculty in the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Coming Decade." *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(2007): 359-372.

⁹⁸ Jane Knight, "Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8(2004): 5-31.

⁹⁹ Oten, Matthias. "Intercultural Learning and Diversity in Higher Education." *International Educator*, 7(2003): 12-26.

students and domestic students on university campuses.¹⁰⁰ Underpinning these conversations are ones that address the assessment of this kind of learning—different tools and strategies for discovering the impact of the experiences on students’ academic and cultural progress.¹⁰¹ Various inventories and measurements exist to take stock of the learning that happens abroad, however many are unwieldy, inaccurate, or too expensive to implement regularly.

Despite this growing body of research, there is a notable lack of critical scholarly work on the topic; nearly all articles are written with the assumption that the study abroad experience is a positive one. Zemach-Bersin penned a strong critique of this assumption in her essay, “Global Citizenship and Study Abroad: It’s All About U.S.”¹⁰² This article stands alone as a criticism of the institution presumed beneficial by most international education scholars. Zemach-Bersin, through her qualitative study of the language surrounding study abroad, argues that students participating in study abroad as it currently exists are participating in narcissistic

¹⁰⁰ Ashwill, Mark A. “Developing Intercultural Competence for the Masses.” *International Educator* 13(2004): 16-25

Hiyva, Oksana and John Schuh. “How a Cross-Cultural Learning Community Facilitates Student Retention and Contributes to Student Learning.” *Journal of College Student Retention*, 5(2004): 325-344.

Pritchard, Rosalind M. O. and Barbara Skinner. “Cross-Cultural Partnerships between Home and International Students.” *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6(2002): 323-353.

¹⁰¹ Milton Bennet, “Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity,” in *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, ed. Michael r. Page. (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press 1993.).

Deardorff, Darla K. “Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization.” *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(2006): 241-266.

Hammer, Mitchell R, Milton L. Bennett and Richard Wiseman. “The Intercultural Development Inventory: A Measure of Intercultural Sensitivity.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(2003): 421-443.

¹⁰² Zemach-Bersin, Talya. “Global Citizenship and Study Abroad: It’s All About U.S.” *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices* 1(2007): 16-28.

neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism: American college students using their parents' money are exercising a practice of self-absorption and imposing their American identity on the places to which they travel.¹⁰³

However, there exists a small set of writings that challenge the assumption that study abroad is purely beneficial, and instead call for practitioners to use study abroad for global awareness and the pursuit of social justice. Reilly and Senders,¹⁰⁴ Skelly,¹⁰⁵ and Gorski¹⁰⁶ all urge a shift from political and selfish internationalism towards idealistic, critical internationalism that is committed to addressing "issues of economic injustice and disparity...[pushing] students to analyze their own wealth more critically."¹⁰⁷ Whereas much of the rhetoric surrounding study abroad is that it furthers the cause of U.S. national security, or situates students to compete in a global economy, these authors push for a critical lens to be applied, and for study abroad to be a tool with which to work towards a just world, full of citizens that are passionate about improving both their space and others'. It is within this counter-narrative to the practice of study abroad that EMU's cross-cultural program is situated.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Reilly, Doug, and Stefan Senders. "Becoming the Change We Want to See: Critical Study Abroad for a Tumultuous World." *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 18 (2009): 241-67.

¹⁰⁵ Jenkins, Karen and James Skelly. "Education Abroad is not Enough." *International Educator* 13(2004): 7-12.

¹⁰⁶ Gorski, Paul. "Intercultural Education as Social Justice," *Intercultural Education*, 20 (2009): 87-90.

¹⁰⁷ Reilly, Doug, and Stefan Senders. "Becoming the Change We Want to See: Critical Study Abroad for a Tumultuous World." *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 18 (2009): 241-67.

This bent towards critical, idealistic study abroad is not unique to EMU, which, while a pioneer in the broader academic world, is not the first Mennonite institution to commit itself to international education. Goshen College implemented their Study Service Term starting in the 1960s,¹⁰⁸ exhibiting what is a church-wide commitment to cross-cultural learning. Faculty from Goshen contributed to the body of literature on study abroad as early as 1984, with an investigation into “The Impact of Study Abroad on the Personal Development of College Students,” finding that time spent abroad has an impact in several ways: it increases reflective thought in students, increases interest in the welfare of others, and that students demonstrated an increased sense of self-confidence and well-being.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, in 1992, a group of Mennonite scholars compiled a book exploring this impact more deeply and broadly.¹¹⁰ EMU steps onto the stage with Gingerich’s dissertation,¹¹¹ lending a scholarly analysis of the internationalization of EMU’s campus, as well as an academic perspective on Mennonite involvement with the world, to the body of literature on study abroad. It is to this body of literature that this study will contribute—exposing the values and challenges inherent in a Mennonite-based international education. Additionally, this study and its findings will act as a call for universities to assess the values and motivations behind their study abroad practices.

¹⁰⁸ Today, roughly 80% of Goshen graduates will have participated in an SST.

¹⁰⁹ Norman L. Kauffmann, George D. Kuh. "The Impact of Study Abroad on Personal Development of College Students." In Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 25. New Orleans, LA, 1984.

¹¹⁰ Norman L. Kauffman, Judith N. Martin, and Henry D. Weaver, *Students Abroad, Strangers at Home: Education for a Global Society*. Yarmouth: ME: Intercultural Press, 1992.

¹¹¹ Orval Gingerich, “Internationalizing General Education: a Case Study of EMC and the Global Village Curriculum” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1995).

CHAPTER 4

EMU'S IDENTITY, CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAM, AND ROLE IN THE WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Part I: Influences on the Cross-Cultural Program

Eastern Mennonite University is situated in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia—an idyllic place; the Blue Ridge Mountains are visible to the east and the rolling hills of the valley stretch off to the west. On one of these hills just outside of Harrisonburg sits a tiny campus punctuated with brick buildings and crisscrossed pathways. Banners on light posts around campus welcome visitors and students to this “Christian university like no other,” while bells from Lehman Auditorium chime out the announcement that chapel is starting. Yet, for all of the beauty visible in this place, EMU stakes a large part of its identity in sending students off-campus: cross-cultural programs are running Spring, Summer, and Fall, transporting participants to the Middle East, to Guatemala, to Washington, DC, China, South Africa, Lithuania, and many other locations. Speak with any faculty member, and the commitment to an international, experiential education becomes clear—many of them have deep roots in another country.¹¹²

As someone who did not grow up Mennonite, and who experienced the benefits and challenges of an education with this cross-cultural focus,¹¹³ I was grateful for the chance to academically explore the influencing elements Mennonite history and identity have on EMU's cross cultural program with this qualitative research. While many themes appeared throughout

¹¹² Many members of the faculty have served, researched, or lived abroad for several years of their lives.

¹¹³ See Chapter One, Methodology.

my twelve interviews,¹¹⁴ the following sections will explore the most salient ones: service, community, and social justice and peacebuilding. Each of these have had a deep influence on cross-cultural programs at EMU. While the larger themes were inductively coded, many of the sub-themes emerged from the data and were deductively coded.

SERVICE

The Mennonite notion of service is distinct from many other denominations—it is the act of working alongside a group of people to improve their living conditions and well-being, versus an evangelical conversion-oriented process. This value has trickled down through the generations, and has continued to impact the lives of young Mennonites. An illustration of this is an annual event at EMU: the Service Fair. Representatives from various organizations and agencies come to campus to recruit students to participate in various types of service. Whether this is for service domestically or internationally, one-year programs or three-year terms, students' attendance demonstrates the interest EMU students have in giving their time. From service projects around the city of Harrisonburg during First Year Orientation, to the completion of at least one community learning course,¹¹⁵ to the participation in Y-trips—a domestic alternative break—service is a visible part of the EMU culture. These are a few ways the Mennonite tradition of service is visible around campus; however, this tradition also deeply affects and shapes the cross-cultural program at the university in various ways through its institutional identity, faculty identity and, unexpectedly, through the deliberate exclusion of service work from the cross-cultural programs.

¹¹⁴ See Appendix A.

¹¹⁵ These courses include 15 hours of community service in various capacities.

Service in the Institution

The institutional commitment to leading lives of service is explicitly stated in the university's mission, vision, and shared values, as well as being visible in the campus culture. Its mission statement reads, "EMU educates students to serve and lead in a global context."¹¹⁶ Going deeper, its vision is for a "learning community marked by academic excellence, creative process, professional competence, and passionate Christian faith, offering healing and hope in our diverse world. To this end, we commit ourselves to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God."¹¹⁷ Even more clearly, the shared values of the university are those "enduring values of the Anabaptist tradition: Christian discipleship, community, service, and peacebuilding."¹¹⁸ These values present themselves in many ways within the institutional structure. The general education Global Village Curriculum requires participation in volunteer work during the first semester of school, a community learning course involving service work in Harrisonburg, and many of the service majors¹¹⁹ require practicums that serve local areas of need.

Leafing through the archives of the Weather Vane, EMU's student newspaper, the reader glimpses the institutional commitment to service in its written word, and is able to see the way it has been a prominent part of their identity for decades. Riddled with headlines like "Speakers

¹¹⁶ "EMU Mission Statement" Eastern Mennonite University, accessed March 29, 2013, <http://emu.edu/about/mission/>

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Social Work, Nursing, Education, etc.

Stress Christian Service,”¹²⁰ “12 Students to Serve Abroad,”¹²¹ and “Serving in Honduras,”¹²² the pages of the *Weather Vane* speak to the important role service holds at the university. For many decades, nearly every year-end issue included a list of graduating seniors who were heading abroad to serve, articles detailing the service work of faculty appear as regular features, and in the 1970s, articles about social work and nursing trips abroad begin to appear. These majors have traditionally been highly attended at EMU, and as they represent a service-oriented career, reflect a curricular commitment to work that puts others first.

Faculty Service Experience

The large numbers of student service majors is linked with the type of faculty on staff. With 75% of faculty affiliated with the Mennonite church, the links with the service tradition are strong. Many view the opportunity to work for a Mennonite institution as a way to give back to the church that raised them. Ken Nafziger, professor in the Music Department, shared, “it became very clear to me soon after I started grad school that I had received an incredible gift from my church, my denomination, and I knew early on that I wanted to repay that to my religious tradition.”¹²³ Deirdre Smeltzer, current Director of Cross-Cultural Programs felt that as a Mennonite, she “should be willing to give back, sort of like a service” to her church by working at the university.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ “Speakers Stress Christian Service” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Dec. 13, 1956

¹²¹ “12 Students to Serve Abroad” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Mar. 21, 1958

¹²² “Serving in Honduras” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Mar. 6, 1959

¹²³ Ken J. Nafziger, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹²⁴ Deirdre Smeltzer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

In this study, three of the seven male participants were eligible for the Draft and instead participated in conscientious objection through international service work, while yet another grew up in a service context with Native Americans in Canada, later going on to serve in the inner-city. The influence on the formation and perpetuation of the cross-cultural program is seen clearly in Spanish professor and former Director of Cross-Cultural Programs Don Clymer's comment, "when many [conscientious objectors] got back from either having been involved in missions or having had these experiences from being volunteers during the wars, said 'because of the way it impacted our lives, we want to see [that same] impact on the lives of the students who come to our universities.'"¹²⁵ Similarly, Vernon Jantzi, professor emeritus of sociology, believes that EMU's institutionalized cross-cultural experience is the "functional equivalent" of the things the draft did for past generations of Mennonites in increasing their global awareness and empathy.¹²⁶

Drafted men were not the only participants in this study whose lives involved international service—Ann Hershberger, nursing professor, spent many years in Nicaragua with Rosedale Mennonite Missions and Kimberly Schmidt, department chair and professor of the Washington Community Scholars' Center,¹²⁷ grew up in Indonesia where her parents were serving with MCC. Gloria Rhodes, sociology professor, reflects that international service contributes to the cross-cultural program "because faculty are coming off of these programs where they've gone abroad [for service or academic study]" and have "all different kinds of contacts, connections, and relationships" that feed into the cross-cultural program and "make it

¹²⁵ Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹²⁶ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹²⁷ See Chapter 3, Marilyn Aberle-Grasse.

really rich.”¹²⁸ Vernon Jantzi explains that generally, “Mennonite identity was heavily connected to service of one sort or another.”¹²⁹ This is articulated well in the lives of the participants of this study—whether by their choice to give back to the EMU community through their careers, or their service work done abroad.

Exclusion of Service from Cross-Cultural Program

Despite the articulated dedication to service, and the demonstrated commitment to leading lives that live it out, EMU’s cross-cultural program has expressly chosen, since its inception, to exclude service work from its programming. Vernon Jantzi, one of the original members of the cross-cultural committee, explained that,

even though we were about service, we could not project this program as a service program. This program was to be a learning from someone else’s culture . . . that they had the answers that we should have, not the other way around. So [if] you frame it as service, it typically may fall into the framework of saying . . . we know the answers to underdevelopment, we know this, that, or the other thing, and so service often included that kind of imperial thinking unfortunately. I tried to insist that we don’t call it service in any way, and that it focus on our being taught from people from other cultures. The greatest service we could do would be to be students.

The distinct intention to create cross-cultural programs centered around learning aids in avoiding the cultural imperialism and narcissistic neo-colonialism of which Zemach-Bersin speaks.¹³⁰

Spencer Cowles, EMU business professor for 24 years, noted his observation of the difference from other programs: “they are about going and learning about a culture rather than saying ‘oh,

¹²⁸ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹²⁹ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹³⁰ Zemach-Bersin, Talya. “Global Citizenship and Study Abroad: It’s All About U.S.” *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices* 1(2007): 16-28.

we're here to help you out,' and I think there's some great value in that."¹³¹ The delicate balance EMU maintains between the traditional dedication to service and the awareness that service can often be misdirected is a deliberate one—the all-too-common alternative break or weeklong mission trip often merely provides a service “that the community could probably provide for themselves,” and leaves out a consideration of sustainability.¹³²

The choice to maintain this balance leaves room for the cross-cultural programs to focus on learning—both experiential and academic. Reflecting on the formation of the program, Ken Nafziger shared, in order to get rid of any “‘we're here to help you' attitude, we decided to go with the [focus on] learning.”¹³³ This commitment to learning led to programs that explored richly complex themes uniquely catered to their location: environmental sustainability in New Zealand, “Renaissance Italy and Reformation Switzerland,”¹³⁴ urban justice in Washington, DC, international development in Jamaica. Beth Aracena, former director of the program, shared some of the things the cross-cultural committee looks for when approving programs, and identified “academic excellence and academic rigor” as one of the key components, as well as written, reflective pieces that “would allow students to engage in their learning.”¹³⁵ Ken Nafziger notes that he really wanted students “to take responsibility for their learning” while abroad.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Spencer Cowles, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹³² Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹³³ Ken J. Nafziger, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹³⁴ Kimberly D. Schmidt, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹³⁵ Beth Aracena, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹³⁶ Ken J. Nafziger, in interview with the author, January 2013.

In addition to structural elements that lend themselves to academic learning, much of the program is deeply dependent on and benefited by experiential learning. Most cross-cultural programs have a homestay experience, and this has become an identifying factor for the program overall.¹³⁷ The benefits of the immersion experience that an extended stay with a family offers are such that students often feel as though “they had made personal connections” in the region where they lived. More critically, “staying with families and becoming part of the family dynamic and routines . . . is very significant, because . . . it humanizes a particular social context.”¹³⁸ The experiential portion of the programs is often what stayed with students the longest, leading eight of this study’s participants to comment on the “life-changing” nature of the cross-cultural for the students—some soon after they return, and some many years later when they’re bringing their own children to attend EMU.¹³⁹ President Loren Swartzendruber comments that the evidence for this “less tangible but extremely real”¹⁴⁰ learning impact is when they’ll share that it shaped their life in such a way that they want to return for a year or two of service, or as Kimberly Schmidt notes, that they felt their values and career goals were shaped by the experience.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ A homestay experience is the practice of lodging with a local family while abroad—typically meals are consumed with the family, rooms may be shared with host siblings, and familial responsibilities are given to the student as well.

¹³⁸ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.
This element of the program will be discussed further in the following sections.

¹³⁹ Ken J. Nafziger, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁴¹ Kimberly D. Schmidt, in interview with the author, February 2013.

The presence and impact of service is visible in many ways within EMU's culture, curriculum, and campus. The institutional commitment to it, the faculty experience with it, and its deliberate exclusion from the program all influence the resulting cross-cultural programs in ways that last far longer than students' term abroad.

COMMUNITY

Another one of the "enduring values of the Anabaptist tradition" is community.¹⁴² Throughout their history, the Anabaptists often found themselves in close-knit communities in the midst of other cultures around the globe, particularly during the era of persecution.¹⁴³ Eastern Mennonite University reflects this tradition in many ways, extending even to the architecture of the main Campus Center, modeled after a barn, harkening back to the days of Mennonite community barn raisings.¹⁴⁴ President Loren Swartzendruber believes that "you can't study Anabaptist history and theology without becoming very aware that a central tenet of [the Mennonite] faith is this idea that when you become a follower of Jesus, you are a member of God's Kingdom and that [Kingdom] knows no national boundaries."¹⁴⁵ To the Mennonite world, community is much more than proximity or neighborliness; it is rooted in the idea of accountability, edification, intentionality, and mutual support. This community is evinced in the

¹⁴² "EMU Mission Statement" Eastern Mennonite University, accessed March 29, 2013, <http://emu.edu/about/mission/>

¹⁴³ The Russian Mennonites, discussed in Chapter 2, are a particularly relevant example.

¹⁴⁴ Ann Austin, "Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia," in *A Good Place to Work: Sourcebook for the Academic Workplace*, ed. Ann Austin et al. (Washington, DC: Council of Independent Colleges 1991.), 71-84.

¹⁴⁵ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

cross-cultural program; the framework creates a distinct counter-narrative to the world of study abroad where time spent on programs is about the individual's personal growth, adventurous experiences, and success. Within EMU's program, the tradition of community is most visible through the "island program" model,¹⁴⁶ the way the cross-cultural groups incorporate faith around the world, the involvement of the campus community, and the community that forms within each group.

Island Program

Each group that departs, whether for a semester or summer term, is embarking on an "island" model trip that will bring a group of roughly 20 students into a lifestyle of community. Groups attend classes together, travel together, (usually) live in pairs of two with different host families, and spend nearly all their time together. While this can be a recipe for seclusion and avoidance of immersion, for which it is certainly at risk, it is also one of the "only time[s] in most of our lives that we actually experience community,"¹⁴⁷ as well as a "cross-cultural experience in more ways than students expect."¹⁴⁸ While a student doesn't need to go on a cross-cultural to experience community, the intentionality and intensity of the program's communal structure offer a chance to students who might not otherwise invest in developing these kinds of relationships.

¹⁴⁶ Island programs are a classification of study abroad programs—they typically involve a group of students travelling together as a cohort and taking classes together rather than integrated or directly enrolled in the university in their location. The merits of this program within the field of international education will be discussed in the following section.

¹⁴⁷ Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

Orval Gingerich, former director of cross-cultural programs, reflects that the island model provides for a learning community as well, where students share what they learn with each other, “and when you share what you learn, you learn even more, and [hearing] what other people are learning and experiencing adds to what you learn.”¹⁴⁹ Faculty encourage this and support the students as they wrestle with what it means to live in community, and identify their role as “collaborative” in their learning with students.¹⁵⁰ The island model, in creating such close-knit groups,¹⁵¹ is uniquely situated to support the Mennonite value of community while students are on their cross-cultural program.

Global Faith Connections

While there is an intra-group community developing during cross-cultural programs, Mennonite connections are often what bring groups to the cross-cultural location in the first place. President Swartzendruber spoke of a “deep level of Mennonite connectedness [in that] often the groups get to connect with Mennonites doing international service on the ground” in their host country.¹⁵² Several participants mentioned a connection with or awareness of a Mennonite church in that country leading them to incorporate a specific site. Although Orval Gingerich had personal experience serving in Nigeria, when planning a program and considering the safety of the participants, he opted to visit Ghana instead, where he knew of a local

¹⁴⁹ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁵⁰ Kimberly D. Schmidt, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁵¹ Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013, noted, “the groups just absolutely love each other, even, well, in spite of sometimes, of real eccentric personalities.”

¹⁵² Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

Mennonite congregation.¹⁵³ Similarly, Gloria Rhodes has spent significant time in Russia and Northern Ireland, however, in the summer of 2013 she will be leading a group to South Korea and utilizing the Korean Anabaptist Center as a main resource on the ground.¹⁵⁴ The tendency of faculty to use this faith community around the world is a testament to the commitment of its members to each other.

However, it is not only the Mennonite faith that is an important aspect of EMU's community programming—a long-standing fixture, and perhaps the most frequently run program, is the Middle East cross-cultural. This program brings students first to Palestine, and later to Israel, allowing students to confront and wrestle with the significance of faith in other cultures. According to the current leader of the program Linford Stutzman, this experience has the goal to “bless everyone, and be blessed in the process . . . to relate positively to everyone, even if they fear and hate each other. It means not taking sides against a people.”¹⁵⁵ Beth Aracena reflected that this particular program continues to give the students an opportunity to serve as community builders and ambassadors of peace.¹⁵⁶ The inclusion of a faith component is a central tenet of EMU's cross-cultural program, and that has expanded to include those faiths outside of Anabaptism and Christianity as well; Deirdre Smeltzer notes that “as a faith-based Christian school I also think its very important . . . to experience other cultures. If you're in a place where there is Christianity there, it probably isn't going to be lived out in the same way.”¹⁵⁷ As the

¹⁵³ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Linford Stutzman, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁵⁶ Beth Aracena, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁵⁷ Deirdre Smeltzer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

Middle East cross-cultural shows, building relationships and building community are important no matter the faith context students find themselves in.

Campus Community

Meanwhile, students back on EMU's campus in Harrisonburg, VA, are part of each cross-cultural group's community in a small, but meaningful way. The Weather Vane begins nearly every semester with articles telling of the sending chapels held for departing groups—students, faculty, friends, and families gather to load the group onto a bus as they head for the airport, sharing prayers, hugs, and well-wishes for their time abroad. It is a tradition that has existed since the beginning of the program, and continues to be an important part of the experience: Orval Gingerich expressed that, “The commissioning of groups adds a seriousness to it . . . that was a significant moment for students oftentimes because they knew they were engaging in something very significant . . . it's part of the campus culture.”¹⁵⁸ While abroad, groups keep in touch with the broader EMU community through contributions to the student newspaper several times a semester, and now with blog posts and videos as well, and then upon returning, they will design and lead a chapel service sharing some of their reflections from the semester. These chapels “communicated to the next group of students that this is a significant learning experience,” and helped to set expectations for the rest of campus about the type of learning that happens.¹⁵⁹ Through the involvement of the campus community with the group,

¹⁵⁸ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

pre-, post-, and mid-program, a community of learners was formed, reflecting the Mennonite value of community inherent in so many of their practices.

Perhaps the most salient form of community shapes and emerges from EMU's cross-cultural programs is the community that forms within each group that goes abroad. Because of the island model most programs employ, each individual semester or summer term develops its own group culture—all with “different identities and personalities.”¹⁶⁰ Gloria Rhodes comments that students often expect the cross cultural to be a “here/there” comparison but that they find the “learning that comes from having to live with a group of people . . . is almost as much as you get from being in a different culture.”¹⁶¹ Deirdre Smeltzer, in her role as director of cross-cultural programs, perceived that certain leaders emphasize the idea that the group is a “tribe . . . there for each other and to support each other.”¹⁶² Spencer Cowles remembers that on his short-term summer trips, “the groups developed a good dynamic; [they were] together all the time, traveling together, living together, having a lot of new experiences together,” and he felt that this was an important part of the cross-cultural.¹⁶³

However, while this positive community experience is an important one, leaders expressed awareness of the tension that comes with it. Don Clymer shared that he sometimes wondered, “if it's good . . . if that trumps the rest of the experience and when students come back instead of remembering [the themes studied while abroad], they remember the group”

¹⁶⁰ Deirdre Smeltzer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁶¹ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁶² Deirdre Smeltzer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁶³ Spencer Cowles, in interview with the author, January 2013.

primarily.¹⁶⁴ Orval Gingerich also expressed this concern, saying he thinks, “it can create a little bit of a bubble, and that students become too dependent on the group.”¹⁶⁵ While he sees a lot of value in a shared learning experience, it needs to [empower] the group to “go out and do more learning” rather than becoming a refuge; “there’s some tension in that idea of being an individual and being a part of a learning community.”¹⁶⁶ Despite the tensions and potential challenges posed by such a community-focused program, it is a clear continuation and manifestation of the Mennonite tradition, and one that brings positive impacts to both individuals and the communities they encounter. Some of the ways in which these communities are able to make positive impacts will be discussed in the following section.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACEBUILDING

Historically, one of the identifying factors of the Mennonite church was its pacifist stance—accounts of this are riddled throughout *Martyr’s Mirror*, and are a core part of North American Mennonite culture.¹⁶⁷ The current generation of college-aged Mennonites can recount tales of grandparents, uncles, and fathers, who served as Conscientious Objectors during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. The work done during these wars led to an increased focus on social justice¹⁶⁸ and pacifism, as those serving around the world encountered poverty and injustice such as they hadn’t seen in the United States. In describing the tenets of the cross-

¹⁶⁴ Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Chapter 2: History and Context.

¹⁶⁸ See literature review footnote 41 for information on the definition of social justice.

cultural program, Orval Gingerich describes “the peace and justice part of Mennonite theology” as “operative” in the designing and structure of the programs.¹⁶⁹ This key set of values is an integral part of the Mennonite faith and of Eastern Mennonite University, and is reflected in EMU’s cross-cultural programs through their choice of location, and through the themes explored throughout each program.

Choice of Location

Although many of the early semesters abroad at EMU were dubbed “Euro-Term,” it is now rare to find a program that goes to the traditional study abroad locations such as Italy, France, and Germany. EMU’s most long-standing and highly-attended programs are those that go to Latin America and to the Middle East—painting an accurate portrait of the trend across all programs to go to underdeveloped or conflict-ridden locations.¹⁷⁰ Different participants gave varying reasons for this, but it was consistently noted that the locations of the cross-cultural programs are a reflection of Mennonite values. Gloria Rhodes reflects that because of the Mennonite focus on peacebuilding, oftentimes cross-cultural programs will travel to countries with conflict, and within these regions there will be a focus on “building relationships across divides.” She names these relationships as the place where “social change . . . peacebuilding . . . development . . . and the work of Jesus Christ” happen.¹⁷¹ Don Clymer leaves the possibilities for application open, but names several examples of the way peace and justice appear in different cross-cultural programs.

¹⁶⁹ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁷⁰ President Loren Swartzendruber reported that this is a “deliberate” choice—over half of the programs go to “third-world countries.”

¹⁷¹ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

Peace and justice is definitely a theme of all cross-cultural because you can't leave the country without being confronted by it . . . it could be with environmental issues [in the New Zealand semester], it could be racial issues like in [the South Africa semester], it could be empire issues in the Latin America semester, it could be political like in Israel . . . [peace and justice are core values] of EMU and the Mennonite Church, and it's something that we discuss and deal with at many levels.¹⁷²

Deirdre Smeltzer attributes the focus on “peace and justice as a way of living out your faith” to the “highlighting of Jesus’ interactions with disempowered members of society,”¹⁷³ and sees this theological basis for social justice as a key facet of the identity of EMU and the cross cultural.

This perspective and focus is not without its challenges, however. Vernon Jantzi recognizes the need for a balance:

If there was something about a program that I would like to see us do better, is that at times . . . since we tend to want to go where there are the most challenges cross culturally, that often puts us in very poor areas, or conflict-ridden areas like the Middle East or so forth. . . and so we sometimes get the impression from our cross-cultural experiences that everybody in Central America is poor, and that's not the case! And so what I would like to see us do is to actually look at some of the great literature, the great music, the things that come out of these cultures that are recognized world-wide, and so sure, Central America or Latin America or wherever you go, has lots of [poverty], (we in the US certainly want to identify and understand that because often international economics has a great deal of impact on their being poor), but there are also very great cultural contributions that are made. So I think we can do better on that, and at the same time as we identify with the marginalized sectors of society, that we also look at what are the great cultural things that have come out of these cultures.¹⁷⁴

While other study abroad programs might focus exclusively on these cultural contributions, Vernon Jantzi perceives that EMU's counter-narrative to that needs more balance than it currently has. The results of the focus on social justice and peacebuilding, namely seeking out locations of poverty and conflict, have the potential to undermine a student's experience and

¹⁷² Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁷³ Deirdre Smeltzer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

¹⁷⁴ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

blind them to the learning that can happen in the place where they are. Gloria Rhodes shares about a program she led to Northern Ireland in 2001, where students “complained that it wasn’t a real cross-cultural because they didn’t have to go without or sleep on the floor.”¹⁷⁵ Students at EMU have come to expect hardship as part of their experience, and as seen here, feel that they’re not getting a true cross-cultural experience if things are perceived as too easy.

While poverty and conflict provide ideal settings for grappling with issues of peacebuilding and social justice, the potential of equating cross-cultural experiences with locations suffering these conditions is unfortunate. The frustration with this line of thinking is mirrored in a number of articles in the *Weather Vane* as well—one student in particular contributed satirical pieces in the year 2000 critiquing the perception that the only legitimate cross-cultural experiences were those that “made America look bad,” and involved starving children.¹⁷⁶ This is a tension that has not fully been resolved—the classic Euro-Term to Switzerland and Italy that explores Mennonite heritage and the Reformation, is no longer being led. Whether or not this is due to changes in the faculty who lead the program or to the deliberate focus on “third-world”¹⁷⁷ countries is unclear, however it is clear that this program was a valuable contribution to students’ perceptions of their own Mennonite identity, and no new program exploring Western Europe or Mennonite history has taken its place.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁷⁶ Austin Jenkins, “Excursion or Excuse?” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Jan. 20, 2000.

¹⁷⁷ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁷⁸ The last cross-cultural to run to Western Europe for a semester was in the Fall of 2006.

Themes Explored While on Cross-Culturals

Still, through its focus on social justice and peacebuilding, the EMU cross-cultural program encourages its students to grapple with bigger issues and to challenge what they know,¹⁷⁹ which is “one of the explicit things [the program wants] to achieve with the cross-cultural experiences: greater global understanding and empathy.”¹⁸⁰ In this context, one participant observed that this act is a way of participating in “significant peacebuilding,”¹⁸¹ while another noted that the “non-violent orientation enables relationships to be built remarkably quickly with all kinds of people.”¹⁸² This method of programming enables the cross-culturals to help students “identify with the more marginalized groups” in the society they encounter, to the end of identifying with those societies in their own.¹⁸³

The perception of former cross-cultural director Beth Aracena is that Mennonites have a “strong commitment to social justice,” and that they are “willing to stand up for what they believe and take risks for their faith.” This could explain the choices they have made to go to countries typically viewed as unstable: Latin America in the 1980s (and to this day), the USSR in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Northern Ireland during the Troubles, the Middle East throughout the past three decades. These locations are not always easy places to travel, but as the most recent leader of the Middle East program says, “to observe the students grow and change

¹⁷⁹ Many of the participants in this study noted the value of stepping outside of one’s comfort zone to wrestle with beliefs and perceptions as an important part of the cross-cultural program.

¹⁸⁰ Beth Aracena, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁸¹ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁸² Ibid

¹⁸³ Ibid

dramatically in a demanding experience outweighs the hassles and challenges of negotiating the cultural and religious hazards of the Middle East.”¹⁸⁴

EMU’s deeply-rooted focus on social justice and peacebuilding is a defining feature of the university; coupled with its cross-cultural program (another key facet), it is natural that the two would overlap, and data from this study shows that they certainly do. Through program locations and themes explored, the peace and justice theology is clearly reflected in the cross-cultural experiences the university offers.

Part II: Situating EMU

Campus internationalization, study abroad, alternative breaks, global citizenship, intercultural competence, service learning—all of these are international education buzz words in the twenty-first century. While study abroad has been a practice for decades, the increase over the past several is dramatic and steep,¹⁸⁵ and thus merits academic exploration and inquiry—this study hopes to lend itself to the furthering of that research by exploring the case of Eastern Mennonite University.

EMU’s cross-cultural programs have been around, in the form they are now, since 1982, and have grown to become a defining feature of the university, setting it apart not only within the Mennonite and Christian college community, but in the broader community of universities in the United States, offering a counter-narrative to the traditional study abroad programming. In requiring every undergraduate student to participate in a cross-cultural experience, they are one

¹⁸⁴ Linford Stutzman, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁸⁵ According to the Institute for International Education’s Open Doors Data, participation has tripled in the last twenty years.

of only three universities in the country that have a required program like this.¹⁸⁶ This section will discuss the ways in which EMU's cross-cultural program fits into the world of international education based on three of its distinct features, (faculty-led programming, required participation, and the content of the program design) as well as explore the themes of service, community, and social justice as they relate to these defining features.

FACULTY-LED PROGRAMMING

One of the primary features of the EMU cross-cultural program is that it is a faculty-led, island program, setting it apart in a variety of ways. Although faculty-led programs have become a norm in the study abroad world,¹⁸⁷ they are typically confined to short-term experiences—summers, winter breaks, and sometimes even a program as short as spring break. Many universities send students abroad either to directly enroll in the foreign institution, or through a third-party provider,¹⁸⁸ which typically have established contacts and connections on the ground as resources for the students. Even when universities do design their own programs, it is rare for a faculty member from that institution's home campus to accompany the students for the entirety of a semester.

¹⁸⁶ Rachael Keshishian & Bonnie Price Lofton, "EMU Leads Way in Requiring Cross-Cultural Study," *Crossroads: Eastern Mennonite University*, Summer 2012, 2-6. Goucher College and Soka University of America are the others.

¹⁸⁷ The Institute of International Education reports that over 50% of study abroad programs in which US students participate are short-term, faculty-led programs. These programs involve a faculty member of the home institution traveling with, leading, and teaching their students.

¹⁸⁸ Third-party providers are organizations that manage study abroad programs. They manage all facets of the experience—coordination with the students, in-country personnel, and program content. These organizations will often work with multiple educational institutions.

The use of faculty-led programs, in EMU's case, allows for a specific set of values to be taught: namely, the Mennonite value of community. In looking at the role Mennonite identity plays, President Loren Swartzendruber believes that the "the key is in the faculty members who are actually leading those experiences," and the fact that these faculty are "by and large" Mennonite.¹⁸⁹ "Their values, shaped by Mennonite theology, then get transferred into the students, so there's a huge impact there that's maybe less tangible but extremely real."¹⁹⁰ Vernon Jantzi believes this to be "an important function that Mennonite institutions are playing, because [they're] not just a cross-cultural study abroad experience, [the program] has particular values that [it tries] to emphasize."¹⁹¹ In this way, the connection between Mennonite identity and EMU's cross-cultural programs is clearly articulated.

EMU's choice to consistently and almost exclusively¹⁹² use faculty-led programming is a reflection, as discussed previously, of the importance that the value of community holds for the institution and the faith. Kimberly Schmidt, director of the Washington Community Scholars' Center and former international cross-cultural leader, described the learning as "collaborative"¹⁹³ with the students—creating both a valuable learning experience for the students as well as a professional learning experience for the faculty member. This then creates opportunity for the faculty to enrich campus life with the learning they gained while abroad, which is one of Lisa

¹⁸⁹ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁹² EMU has occasionally had students earn their cross-cultural credit by using Brethren Colleges Abroad, a third-party provider affiliated with another Anabaptist group, the Church of the Brethren, or through individual study approved on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁹³ Kimberly D. Schmidt, in interview with the author, February 2013.

Childress' primary suggestions of ways to internationalize a campus.¹⁹⁴ Through the study of the *Weather Vane*, it becomes clear that EMU faculty do indeed provide that enriching experience to the campus—open letters, presentations, and campus forums were the result of their experiences leading cross-cultural programs. Scattered throughout the *Weather Vane* are articles telling of the various ways faculty shared of their experiences.¹⁹⁵

The closeness of the group, and the high amount of contact they have with each other (as discussed in Part I of this chapter), is often seen as something negative in the literature, as this type of isolation can contribute to a lack of cultural engagement.¹⁹⁶ However, within the faculty-led, island structure, there is still an inclusion of a host family experience and integrated ways of engaging their surroundings, helping to avoid isolation. In doing this, EMU takes steps to ensure that the students are confronting worlds beyond their own. Vernon Jantzi, who has himself performed studies related to the host family experience, “concluded that [the experiences] are very significant, even if they can only be for a month out of the semester.”¹⁹⁷ Orval Gingerich, former director, reported,

there is a very strong emphasis on engaged learning in the sense that when you go to a different culture to learn, you don't want to just hear from the experts pontificating . . . you also want to talk with the people who live the life there. I think the broad use of resource people beyond and outside the academic community is an important part of the learning experience at EMU.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Lisa Childress, *Internationalization*.

¹⁹⁵ Good examples of this are “Bender to Report Trip to Russia” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Jan. 11, 1957. And “Peachey Promotes Mennonite Peace Witness in Japan” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Feb. 20, 1959.

¹⁹⁶ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁹⁷ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

¹⁹⁸ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

Beth Aracena, another former director, affirmed this when she shared that each program needed to have a “demonstration of hospitality reciprocated . . . we wanted the understanding to be mutual, the learning to go both ways, and we were looking for a real partnership in the learning enterprise between the host culture and our own group.”¹⁹⁹ Visible here is a commitment to a just, community learning experience—and one that avoids cultural imperialism.²⁰⁰ In the world of study abroad where the narrative consistently involves personal gains for the students or the promotion of national interests, the concept of hospitality reciprocated counters the dominant narrative.

Eastern Mennonite University’s cross-cultural program has taken some of the larger risks and benefits of faculty-led, island programming and answered them with an intentional and carefully-executed balance: they are able to use faculty knowledge of and experience in a region,²⁰¹ and combine it with valuable homestay experiences and engagement exercises to further the values of community.

UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION

During the deliberation over the Global Village Curriculum in the early 1980s, one of the major issues that divided faculty was whether or not participation in a cross-cultural experience should be required or optional.²⁰² During the committee meetings and faculty seminars over the

¹⁹⁹ Beth Aracena, in interview with the author, February 2013.

²⁰⁰ As described in Zemach-Bersin, see Literature Review.

²⁰¹ As discussed in Chapter 3, Part I.

²⁰² Ken J. Nafziger, in interview with the author, January 2013.

summer of 1981, as faculty and administration went back and forth on the issue, the proposal to offer a summer option was the bridge that crossed the divide and united both camps for the cause of universal participation.²⁰³ To this day, each and every undergraduate from EMU is required to have a cross-cultural experience. As mentioned above, this is a rare practice in the world of academia, and offers a chance to evaluate the purposes of international education as a whole and within an institution, as well as see the themes of service and social justice reflected in the practice.

The Institute of International Education (IIE) annually provides data on U.S. students studying abroad, and their most recent statistics show that only 1.4% of students in higher education studied abroad in the academic year 2010-2011. This is a stark contrast to the 100% of EMU students who have a cross-cultural experience; one thing that makes this statistic possible is the nature of EMU's definition of "cross-cultural." Orval Gingerich, who was part of the initial debates and discussions, shares that the program was "organized around the theme of 'cross-cultural;' recognition that you don't have to go international to have a cross-cultural experience."²⁰⁴ Vernon Jantzi notes, "from the earliest years, we stressed having a cross-cultural experience rather than necessarily an international one."²⁰⁵ This has translated into programs that engage with the Navajo Nation, Appalachian communities, the Washington Community Scholars' Center, and multiple inner city locations, allowing students the crucial recognition that

²⁰³ Orval Gingerich, "Internationalizing General Education: a Case Study of EMC and the Global Village Curriculum" PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1995.

²⁰⁴ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²⁰⁵ Rachael Keshishian & Bonnie Price Lofton, "EMU Leads Way in Requiring Cross-Cultural Study," *Crossroads: Eastern Mennonite University*, Summer 2012, 3.

the United States is a wealth of diverse cultures, and holds within its borders a similarly sized wealth of social justice conflicts and issues.

Recognition of this fact should be more broadly acknowledged within the community of international educators. The goal of international education should not be to see the sights or take photos in famous places—it should be real learning that develops empathy in participants, helping to mold them into citizens of the world committed to making it a better place—whether this happens outside of U.S. borders or not. EMU leads the way in recognizing this and in implementing this counter-narrative so effectively—participants in this study consistently noted empathy as a learning goal and outcome for their programs.²⁰⁶ Orval Gingerich recalled, “the core of the program was developing a learning style related to understanding and relating to other cultures.”²⁰⁷ This, again, can be traced to a Mennonite theology: President Swartzendruber hopes that, after their time at EMU and specifically after their cross-cultural, when students think about conflicts around the world “that are often religiously or culturally based, they will have a personal way of beginning to process all that, and not jump to conclusions so quickly . . . All of that is rooted in this theological concept that God’s Kingdom is much bigger than one nation.”²⁰⁸ Through the required participation, a Mennonite commitment to social justice and the development of a global community can be seen.

EMU’s required participation also exposes more students to issues and cultures that they then feel connected to, prompting their return to these regions after graduation to engage in

²⁰⁶ Don Clymer, Gloria Rhodes, Kimberly Schmidt, Vernon Jantzi, Beth Aracena, Orval Gingerich, in interviews with the author.

²⁰⁷ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²⁰⁸ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

voluntary service. Drawing a line between the cross-cultural program and the theme of service in a new way, several participants in this study noted students' intentions of returning to the Middle East or to Latin America to work with or serve alongside the communities they experienced on their cross-cultural.²⁰⁹ Loren Swartzendruber articulates this as creating a virtuous cycle for EMU—students who study abroad are led by faculty who typically had experience working, serving, or studying in that region, and the students can then feel compelled to return and carry on that work.²¹⁰

However, as noted by several participants, “not [every student] wants to do this,”²¹¹ and it can sometimes feel like “force feeding cross-cultural experience to students who might not see the value of it right away.”²¹² Herein lies one of the inherent risks of required participation—the program can then sometimes act as “an inoculation” rather than an inspiration; Loren Swartzendruber noted that rather than encouraging the student to learn more and explore further, they can instead feel grateful the program is over with and they are back in America, an attitude which is clearly not the goal of the cross-cultural.²¹³ Regardless of this risk, student appreciation of this requirement has, in general, been high. When the Weather Vane published a segment where students responded to the question, “do you think the current policy of requiring a cross-cultural experience is needed? Why?” all responses but one of seven were a resounding

²⁰⁹ Loren Swartzendruber, Don Clymer, Vernon Jantzi, in interviews with the author, 2013.

²¹⁰ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

²¹¹ Deirdre Smeltzer, in interview with the author, February 2013. Deirdre also adds, “not everybody’s parents want them to do this either.”

²¹² Spencer Cowles, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²¹³ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

“yes,” with various explanations ranging from “it’s a great way to expand your perception of reality,” to “it helps tear down misconceptions of the other,” to “yes, most students have a limited worldview.”²¹⁴ The one student responding negatively communicated that it left “no freedom of choice.”²¹⁵ While this is true, the adherence to the belief in the value of the experience, and the system with which EMU implements it, is an ideal reflection of Sanford’s Theory of Challenge and Support.²¹⁶ This theory of student development holds that there needs to be an intentional balance between challenging students and supporting them through new situations—while EMU’s cross-cultural program certainly challenges those who might not want to study abroad, they ensure there will be support for them in the community of students, the campus community, as well as with the faculty while they are abroad.

CONTENT AND DESIGN

EMU orients each individual cross-cultural around different themes and issues unique to the region in which they are traveling. While the Euro Term trip focused on Mennonite history and the Radical Reformation, the trip to South Africa focuses on racism and inequities in that culture: this design greatly influences the content of the programs. This is a practice of study abroad broadly, however, it is typically limited to short-term programs, while EMU integrates it into the semester-long model. Additionally, the three major themes that arose during this study (service, social justice and peacebuilding, and community), all impact the content of the cross-cultural program, and will be discussed below.

²¹⁴ “Sounding Board” *Weather Vane* (Harrisonburg, VA), Apr. 22, 1988.

²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁶ Fanta Aw, “Student Development Theory” (Lecture in SIS 628-007, March 24, 2012).

Whereas the inclusion of “service-learning” or alternative breaks has become a trend in international education, these practices generally lack a critical element, and as articulated by one participant, can deteriorate into projects that are neither valuable to nor able to be sustained by the community they are meant to be serving.²¹⁷ In EMU’s exclusion of service from its programs, the programs take on the task of teaching students, first to empathize with the people and the culture,²¹⁸ and then to critically explore the learning processes in which they are engaged while immersed in that culture.

The faculty’s personal participation in service that led to the formation of many of these sojourns, as well as the students’ commitment to serving after they graduate, reflects the value of service as practiced by the Mennonite Church—the act of working alongside a group of people to improve their living conditions and well-being, versus an evangelical conversion-oriented process. This, however, does not mean that the cross-cultural program will include that type of service work—EMU recognizes the academic, learning-oriented nature²¹⁹ of its cross-cultural programs, and works to maintain their integrity through the exclusion of service work.

Similarly, social justice and peacebuilding are integral themes within each cross-cultural. Arguments made by Reilly and Senders,²²⁰ Skelly,²²¹ and Gorski²²² in their individual essays all

²¹⁷ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²¹⁸ Beth Aracena, in interview with the author, February 2013.

²¹⁹ See Part I, Section 1.

²²⁰ Reilly, Doug, and Stefan Senders. "Becoming the Change We Want to See: Critical Study Abroad for a Tumultuous World." *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 18 (2009): 241-67.

²²¹ Jenkins, Karen and James Skelly. “Education Abroad is not Enough.” *International Educator* 13(2004): 7-12.

promote the use of study abroad in the way that EMU practices it—helping students to gain an awareness of self and of the problems in the world, in order to be a part of their solutions.²²³ This goes against the common arguments of economic competitiveness and national security that are so often the dominant part of the discussion around study abroad.

Additionally, the value of community greatly impacts the content of the cross-cultural program. As detailed above, it emphasizes the host family experience as well as the cohort experience; while also influencing the issues being discussed. One participant noted an adage that has floated around the cross-cultural department at EMU for decades: “every culture both reflects God’s image and distorts God’s image,”²²⁴ adding that the cross-cultural experience was an ideal time to tease out this idea among the students. The students explored the ways both they, as Americans, distort this image, and the ways in which the culture they are immersed in does as well, thus humanizing and uniting students and hosts as a community under the theological standpoint that the kingdom of God knows no national boundaries. This happens frequently, due to the fact that many of EMU’s programs travel to regions rife with current or historical conflict, and in desperate need of community building.²²⁵

The cross-cultural committee also requires a journaling element for each cross-cultural program, as a way of facilitating students’ engagement in their learning process and in the

²²² Gorski, Paul. “Intercultural Education as Social Justice,” *Intercultural Education*, 20 (2009): 87-90.

²²³ Several participants in this study noted that an invaluable part of the cross-cultural experience is students’ awareness of their own culture and of the privileges they have been party to as Americans.

²²⁴ Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²²⁵ Latin America, Middle East, South Africa, and Northern Ireland are some consistent examples.

culture. Different programs use different structures (prompted responses, free-writes, required topical reflections), but all ask that their students take time and thought to reflect on what they see day-to-day.²²⁶ This encourages the students to process their personal experiences, and in doing so, enables them to better foster community both with each other, and with their host culture as they reflect and learn from their daily experiences.

²²⁶ Beth Aracena, in interview with the author, February 2013.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

It is no wonder that Eastern Mennonite University has a distinct Mennonite identity—what is interesting is the degree to which that identity influences their cross-cultural programs. This study has taken the perspective of administrators, faculty members, and of student voices as expressed in the Weather Vane in order to assess that degree. Finding that there is a clear connection between the two, this study concludes that the historical Mennonite values of service, community, and social justice and peacebuilding are prevalent in the formation and implementation of the cross-cultural program at Eastern Mennonite University.

This cultural and theological grounding for the program are part of what make it so unique, and part of what makes its success possible. The immense faculty support for the program is a rarity in the world of international education, and in EMU's case, a result of the university culture. As expressed by President Swartzendruber, despite there being no requirement for faculty to have international experience or connection, "often the teachers attracted to [EMU] are attracted because of the cross-cultural," and thus help to perpetuate the support for the program.²²⁷ When Swartzendruber came to EMU in 2004, the school budget was in need of tight management, but he recognized and held that the cross-cultural program was a "high priority" and that they would have to find other ways to adjust finances—a presidential support for international education such as his would be coveted by study abroad professionals at nearly any other institution.

²²⁷ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

Unfortunately, it is hard to imagine recreating this same support and institutional commitment at many other universities: the connection between that commitment and the Mennonite identity is deep and influential. Orval Gingerich observed, “I felt that EMU was ahead of the curve, but I don’t feel that EMU has done a good job of leading in the field [of international education].”²²⁸ The school operates

out of such a particular theological reference point, it’s difficult to move into the field of international education and articulate what we’re doing because people say, “oh, that’s interesting, but we’re not Mennonite.” So the question is, how do you articulate what EMU is doing apart from the kind of theological reference points?²²⁹

This is an important question, and one that merits further research—would such a system, rooted in these values, work at a non-Mennonite university? The first step in this process is one that requires the articulation of these values, as well as the “educational and philosophical” ones that inform the program—the latter two are topics for further research.²³⁰ Admittedly, these values are deeply connected to the Mennonite church, but surely other schools value service, community, social justice, and peacebuilding as well. The counter-narrative to the study abroad experience which EMU’s program offers acts as a call to other institutions to assess the values and goals behind their programming, and to enact them equally effectively.

Furthermore, what can be done to improve the program within EMU? Based on this study and on responses from its participants, it is clear that EMU could and should find new, innovative ways to incorporate the learning students experience into the campus life once they return. Re-entry from a study abroad program is a topic of growing interest in the field of

²²⁸ Orval Gingerich, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²²⁹ Ibid

²³⁰ Ibid

international education, and one that has earned the attention of professionals.²³¹ While students do communicate with the campus community about their experiences while abroad and immediately upon their return, “there is still a frontier there—that [EMU] can design the curriculum around [cross-cultural experience] at the base.”²³² Ken Nafziger, who was part of the initial cross-cultural committee and has also led several programs, feels that, “the idea of cross-cultural experience and what we learn in other places ought to come back and affect campus life much more than it does.” Vernon Jantzi echoed these thoughts when he reflected, “how do we reinforce the experience students have had once they return to campus, and how can we take a particular semester’s experience that students feel very passionately about, and get that into the broader campus community?”²³³ EMU is an ideal place to explore and work with this question—with such faculty and institutional support and high student participation, there is a wealth of resources with which to develop a progressive and productive re-entry program.

Additionally, several participants noted that the nature of EMU’s Mennonite identity can be a challenge at times—the focus within the cross-cultural programs on learning from and with the other are put to the test at a university that is currently experiencing its lowest Mennonite enrollment ever.²³⁴ For a culture that has, until recently, been defined in part by its separation from the world, the past insular nature of the Mennonite church, as well as its small size, provides administrators and faculty something with which to wrestle. While it is required that

²³¹ Betina Szkudlarek, “Reentry: A Review of the Literature,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(2009): 1-21.

²³² Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

²³³ Vernon Jantzi, in interview with the author, February 2013.

²³⁴ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

75% of tenured faculty identify as Mennonite, the school is hiring more non-ethnic Mennonites (ethnic Mennonites being of Swiss-German/Dutch descent),²³⁵ and this certainly affects the cultural element of the institution: the question is “how can we do a better job of being inviting to other persons?”²³⁶ As one participant noted, “if we’re serious about engaging different others, we must talk about [what our core is] and be less concerned with what our boundaries are.”²³⁷ When so much of EMU’s success with the cross-cultural program has come from its Mennonite identity, the extent to which they seek to preserve it (whether through enrollment trends or through faculty hires) will be an issue to wrestle with in the coming years.

In the meantime, increasing an awareness of EMU’s model in the world of international education would provide an opportunity both for the institution to reflect on the places where there is room for growth, and for other institutions to assess whether a version of this model is feasible for theirs. Seeing the case of EMU as a call to align international education with an institutional identity creates a space for conversation to occur on the motivations behind study abroad, and hopefully for conversations that engage the practice in a critical way. For the Mennonite context, however, EMU’s cross-cultural programming is certainly a positive and progressive reflection of their values.

²³⁵ Don Clymer, in interview with the author, January 2013.

²³⁶ Loren Swartzendruber, in interview with the author, February 2013.

²³⁷ Gloria Rhodes, in interview with the author, February 2013.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: List of Participants

Participant	Role at EMU
Orval Gingerich	Former Director of CC
Ken J. Nafziger	Professor, Music Department
Don Clymer	Professor, Spanish Department, Former Director
Spencer Cowles	Professor & Department Chair, Business & Economics Department
Beth Aracena	Former Director of CC, Former Professor, Music Department
Vernon Jantzi	Professor Emeritus, Sociology
Gloria Rhodes	Department Chair & Professor, Applied Social Sciences
Deirdre Smeltzer	Current Director of CC, Professor, Math Department
Loren Swartzendruber	President
Kimberly D. Schmidt	Dept Chair & Professor, Washington Community Scholars' Center
Linford Stutzman	Professor of Culture and Religion
Ann Hershberger	Professor, Nursing Department

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

BACKGROUND and IDENTITY

1. What are the ways that you identify yourself?
2. Please describe your academic background and your current role at EMU.
3. What experiences, personal or professional, brought you to EMU?
4. Can you talk about your perception of Mennonite identity? The way your personal identity intersects, or doesn't intersect, with that identity?
5. For you, what has informed that perception (of Mennonite identity)?

EMU CROSS CULTURAL

DESIGN

6. Please describe your involvement with EMU's Cross-Cultural Program.
7. What do you see as the key tenets of the program overall?
8. What do you see as the key tenets of the program with which you are involved?
9. What factors are taken into consideration when designing a program, in your experience with that process?
10. Please identify a few key experiences you've had in relation to the designing of your program.

IMPLEMENTATION

11. Can you describe the culture of your program while abroad?
 - a. Students, Faculty, Hosts, etc.
12. Can you think of a few ways, if any, that Mennonite identity plays out throughout the course of the program? For example, group interactions, programming, etc.
13. Please identify a few key experiences you've had while abroad with a program.

WRAP UP

14. Are there any important pieces of information I should know about your program in particular which weren't already discussed?
15. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

APPENDIX C: Sample Coding Information

Macro Code	Description
Social Justice	Used when participants explicitly used the term, or spoke of things related to social justice work and theory. Also used to code any elements of cross-cultural program design that incorporated a concern for social justice issues.
Service	Used to code participants' personal service experiences, general institutional examples of service, and particularly used for discussions of service as it related to the cross-cultural program.
Program	This broad macro code contained many micro codes related to elements of the cross-cultural program from cultural engagement to program planning to homestay experiences.
Community	Data was coded with this macro code whenever it related to relational experiences among the cross-cultural groups, the campus community, or participants' personal experiences.

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