Prof-File: The Bible Department’s Dynamic Duo

By Noelle Selb
Staff Writer

Bonnie and Clyde, Donald Duck and Daisy, and Sonny and Cher all bring to mind famous couples. But an even more compatible duo at EMU has been leaving their mark on the Bible and Religion Department since 1996.

They jokingly likened themselves to Jim and Tammy Faye Baker — the infamous TV evangelists. Yet Kathleen Temple, Instructor for the Bible and Religion Department, and Ted Grimsrud, Associate Professor of Theology and Peace Studies, are far from that ostentatious, and now divorced, couple.

Married on March 19, 1977, Temple and Grimsrud first met at a church. At that time, they were both living in Eugene, Oregon attending the University of Oregon.

“Kathleen is from Arizona, and she came to Oregon and we let her in,” Grimsrud explained about his not purely Oregonian wife.

Temple retorted that, “real Oregonians, people who are born there, are really snobby about it. They don’t let people like me, who were there when they’re 18 claim to be.”

Since they were both co-pastors at a church in South Dakota before coming to EMU, they are used to working together.

Temple said that sometimes, “when people work at the same place, it gets boring because there’s not enough new stuff coming in. But, man, there’s new stuff coming in all of the time, I don’t see any downside in working together.”

Grimsrud agreed, saying that, “I think we have similar values and things we care about, so it’s been really great to kinda share the same kind of work; adding that, “because we’re both so interested in the same stuff, we don’t get tired of talking about it. I think we both feel like teaching gives us energy. I mean it takes up energy, too, but I don’t feel like we’re wiped out by it everyday. It’s something that we like to think and talk about.”

Self-proclaimed “chatter boxes,” this couple admitted they can just talk about anything. Temple revealed, “that’s one of the main things that brought us together. We knew we would never get tired of talking to each other.”

Along these same lines, Grimsrud said that the conversations flow because “it’s just not the talking about teaching. It’s talking about the idea.”

Working in the same area of instruction, this couple often eats lunch together if they have similar schedules. However, working in the same classroom back-to-back poses a problem, Temple says, remembering a semester from last year. She said her husband “would leave the chairs and tables out of order, and so I would get after him. I made him put everything back the way I wanted them.”

Aside from religion and theology, this husband and wife have other subjects of interest. Grimsrud would choose to be a professor of history if he switched fields, because, “I think just learning about where we come from and how we got here is very interesting to me and fun to talk about.”

Working part-time teaching Introduction to Bible and Introduction to Philosophy, Temple is also co-pastor of Shalom Mennonite.

She conceded that if she had to switch fields, because “I’m really into all the people stuff. I think I would just want to do more stuff to get me involved with students. My pastoral work is involved with students, but Student Life would also provide me with that opportunity.”

Enjoying her work as a co-pastor, Temple said her roots in the church date back before college. “I’ve been involved in the church ever since I became a Christian as a teenager. And I’ve just always loved church life and bringing people together around the really, really big questions of life,” she says.

Grimsrud, hailing from the other side of the country, grew up in both Shalom Mennonite and Temple’s favorite church, Shalom Mennonite.

She sewed and did tailoring for love as a co-pastor, Temple said her roots in the church date back before college. “I’ve been involved in the church ever since I became a Christian as a teenager. And I’ve just always loved church life and bringing people together around the really, really big questions of life,” she says.

When Grimsrud added that his wife’s duty at Shalom allows her to “incorporate people in the community who are kinda on the margins: old people, all kinds of people. A big part of it is the opportunity to be involved with people as they face crises.”

Grimsrud has likewise been touching the community and beyond through his writing. Having written three books, he said that he runs into people on the street who tell him they’ve not only read his work, but it has helped them as well.

Temple believes her husband’s most influential book is Triumph of the Lamb. This book on Revelation, she said, has “made a pretty big impact because it’s a really practical kind of approach to reading the book of Revelation and it’s been used by Sunday School classes and college classes for a long time.”

Devoting their careers to studying and instructing the Bible, Temple and Grimsrud have had ample time to choose a favorite character.

Grimsrud picked Paul, “because of how he operated out of his calling and sense of conviction, even in the face of persecution from others.”

Temple, on the other hand, picked Jesus. “He spoke so strongly for love and healing, justice and compassion. He was so courageous and risky,” she said.

Like any two people who spend a lot of time together, this couple knows each other’s preferences. Remarkings that Temple’s favorite movie was Blues Brothers, both gushed at the same time that she “loves slapstick comedy.”

She also likes to sew and makes clothes for herself and others. Temple says a little known fact is that before she became a pastor, she sewed and did tailoring and dress making.

Grimsrud, hailing from the West Coast, is a devoted sports fan. His particular favorite teams are the San Francisco Giants, the 49ers, and Portland Trailblazers.

Perhaps unknown to his students, Grimsrud’s biggest passion is rock and roll, and he even hosts a weekly WEMC music show called “Wavelength.” Running on Saturday afternoons from 3-5 p.m., he calls it, “the best of popular music at the intersection of folk, country, and rock and roll.” Recently, this themed show has been centered around “Songs for America.”

EMU has become a family affair for Temple and Grimsrud, as well. Their son, Junior Johan Grimsrud and daughter-in-law, Junior Jill Humphrey, attend classes here. With a smile, Temple said, “it’s really fun being on campus with them.”

While some believe opposites attract, in Temple and Grimsrud’s case, it is their common interests that bind them together. They are able to share with their students their love for Christ without the use of flashy jewelry, big hair, and a television show.

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