attention to pacifist thinkers of whom most Mennonites haven’t heard, including John of Segovia, who studied Islam in the fifteenth century and concluded that the only way for the Church to approach it was through peaceful dialogue. John of Segovia thought, said Sanneh, that dialogue would “maintain Christianity’s reputation for peace and reconciliation, and was in any case less costly and less damaging than war.”

The conference brought together more than the leaders of missions agencies and academics, however: “It was a good variety of Christian people,” said junior Kendra Martin, who explained that many speakers were missionaries with years of experience relating to Muslims in the field.

Undergraduate students who attended agreed that it was this perspective that made the conference most interesting. “A lot of people liked the reports from different countries,” said junior Kate Waller.

The conference was well attended by representatives from the sponsoring agencies, academics, missionaries, and students from the seminary, the undergraduate program, and the Conflict Transformation Program. More than 220 registered for the conference, and as many as 270 attended some sessions, filling Martin Chapel to capacity.

Conference organizer and associate professor of Culture and Mission Linford Stutzman told Weather Vane that “The Church Meets the Muslim Community” was unique in bringing together so many people with field experience and in the sense of affirmation it generated for a variety of differing missionary approaches, from direct evangelism to more service-based philosophies.

The conference, said Stutzman, brought a “new awareness of the creative opportunities from 50 years’ experience of mission to Muslims.”

“The Church Monarchy” as an alternative model for administrative accountability at EMU.

Miller’s concept of a monarchy would not grant absolute power to the monarch; while faculty would not form a senate to take an active role in policy decisions—which Miller considered an “unwise use of resources” —they would have a say in the decision to hire the university president and periodically decide whether to keep him or her.

“If the subjects talk with the kings, as it were,” said Miller, “so they can have participation in the university president and periodically decide whether to keep him or her. "Let the subjects talk with the kings, as it were," said Miller, "so they can have participation in the decision-making."

Dr. Fred Kniss, professor of Sociology at Loyola University Chicago and EMU alumni, spoke about the role of Mennonite higher education within the church. Rather than focusing on dogma and creeds, Mennonites, Kniss said, have dealt with the changes of time by creating periodic confessions of faith as they seek to maintain a collective identity.

He described church colleges as ideally as institutions that support "disciplined, thoughtful conversation" and influence the church to grow and progress by connecting it to the larger world.

The kind of creative critical thinking that the church needs cannot happen if faculty and students fear for their livelihood and well-being if they transgress certain boundaries, especially when those boundaries are ambiguous as they nearly always are,” Kniss said.

The Bible and Religion Department Chair Nancy Heisey and Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Theology Christian Early also spoke about fear as a motivator in campus debates; in regards to faculty unionization and students’ faith development, respectively.

Heisey recounted her own experience with unionization during graduate school. She noted the fears involved in the experience of her fellow grad students and commented on similar fears in the EMU community, concluding that “Fear in an academic setting is deadly . . . Fear gets in the way of learning.”

Although Heisey does not consider herself a union advocate, she supported the underlying ideas of unionism including “dignity for all people involved in the work that we do and . . . the kind of participation that takes seriously the various gifts and functions.”

Addressing some students’ fear that college could weaken their faith, Early suggested that an active faith requires constant self-examination, and that being a good student means having the courage to ask tough questions.

“What? Are you saying that if I don’t ask critical questions of my faith it’s not real faith? Yah. What you’ve got there is a very healthy and vibrant fear,” said Early.

After illustrating his point with allusions to The Matrix, Early described two different models for universities as either businesses paid for by students or monasteries owned by religious authorities. As Early saw it, a school like EMU, in which faculty are paid by students but the institution is owned by the church, can suffer from the “all the worst things of both of them.”