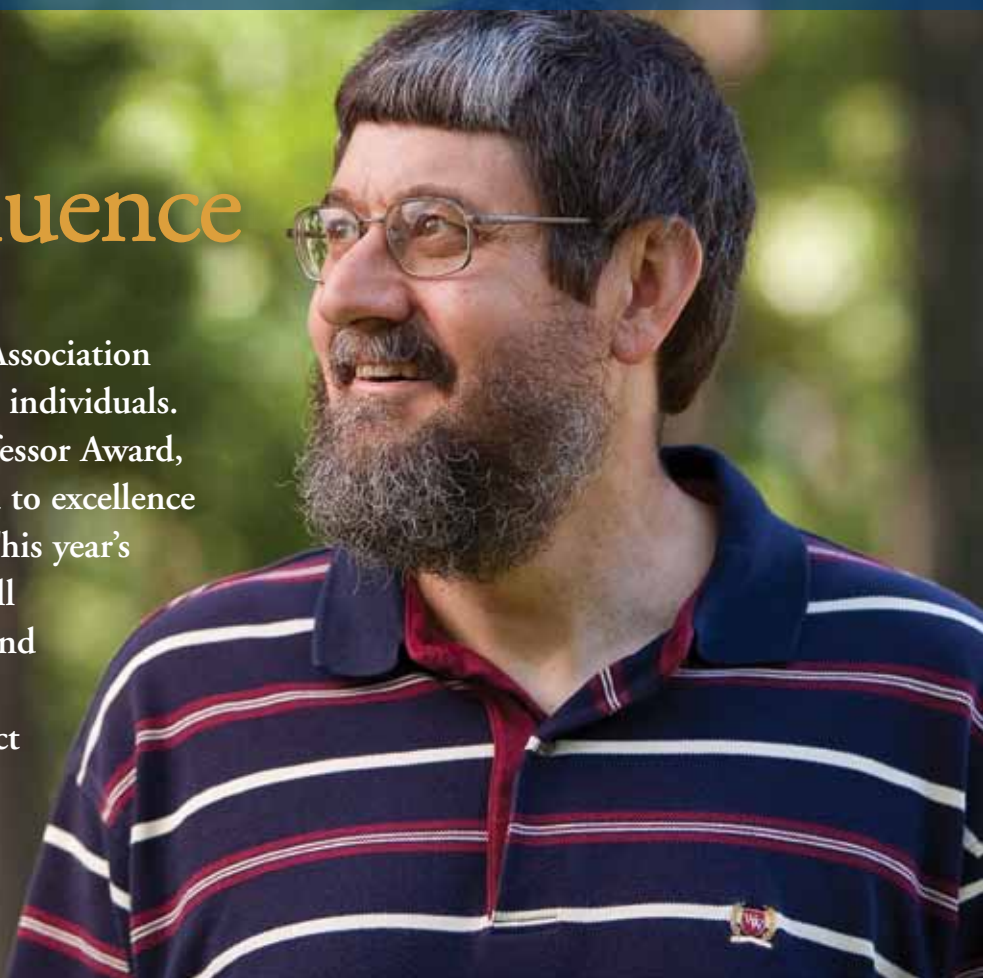


# A Lasting Influence

Each year the Bethel College Alumni Association presents various awards to outstanding individuals. One of those is the Distinguished Professor Award, presented to a faculty member devoted to excellence in teaching and mentoring students. This year's recipient, Timothy Erdel, Ph.D., is well known for his dedication to students and alumni. David Cramer ('05), alumnus and adjunct professor, shares the impact of "Brother Tim" on his life.



As an 18-year old entering my freshman year at Bethel, I never would have expected that my registration meeting with my new academic adviser, Tim Erdel, would be one of the most important meetings of my life. Though I entered the meeting with a general idea of what I wanted to study at Bethel, Tim somehow knew me better than I knew myself. At his recommendation, I changed my plans and registered for a double-major in Biblical Studies and Philosophy. After now completing my third degree in Bible/Philosophy, I have never once second-guessed Tim's recommendation!

Indeed, over the last eight years of my life, Tim's godly discernment has been one of the most important threads shaping me into who I am today. It is no secret to those who know Tim that he is passionate about promoting the Missionary Church's early Anabaptist convictions of peace and Wesleyan embrace of gender equality. I would say that Tim is "outspoken" about these issues, but his

influence is often more subtle and long-lasting than a simple argument or a speech could provide. Needless to say, upon entering Bethel as a red-blooded, pro-militaristic, alpha-male, my passions were far from Tim's. I even once wrote a paper for Tim's ethics class critiquing his own pacifist convictions! Although my paper was returned with quite a bit of red ink,

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While at seminary, something funny began happening to me. At a place where Tim's Anabaptist convictions were derided or simply ignored, I found myself strangely drawn to them. Now, as a Bible and philosophy teacher at Bethel

myself, my goal is to pass on Tim's convictions to others the way he has to me. I'm afraid to say that I am neither as humble nor as patient as Brother Tim. But, for better or worse, I do tend to be every bit as outspoken.

— DAVID CRAMER ('05)