



Intersections

Volume 3, Number 3
Winter 2005-06

Bringing news and resource information to those seeking to
enrich the religious life of American Christians.



Welcome from the Associate Director

Welcome to the 9th issue of *Intersections!* With the close of 2005, the Louisville Institute granted nearly 125 grants and hosted several distinct gatherings. Read about our most recent event at the SBL/AAR meeting in this issue. This issue also features the reflections of three former SGPL grantees on their sabbatical time. Finally, we congratulate our General Grant recipients from December 2004-August 2005. Enjoy this issue of *Intersections*.

Bill Brosend

“WHAT WOULD IT BE DELIGHTFUL TO DO TODAY?” — HEARING FROM THREE SGPL GRANTEES

The Louisville Institute’s Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders (SGPL) program is in its second decade, and has awarded 338 grants to pastoral leaders for an amazing array of projects. This edition of *Intersections* features the reflections of three recent grantees, a UCC pastor, a Roman Catholic priest, and a National Baptist director of an ecumenical organization. Between them they represent not only the rich diversity of our grantees, but the variety of projects and plans found in the program. Our guest writers are:



Rev. Msgr. Vincent Rush
Pastor
Church of Our
Lady of Grace
West Babylon, New York



Dr. John P. Wesley
Senior Minister
First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Bowling Green, Kentucky



**Rev. Dr. Angelique
Walker-Smith**
Executive Director
The Church Federation of
Greater Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana



THE LOUISVILLE INSTITUTE

The Louisville Institute is a Lilly Endowment program based at Louisville Seminary supporting those who lead and study American religious institutions.

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CONGREGATION-BASED BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP PANELS AT SBL/AAR ANNUAL MEETING

Approximately 200 members of the Society of Biblical Literature and American Academy of Religion gathered on Monday afternoon, November 21, to hear leading observers of the American religious scene talk about “What Congregations Need from Biblical Scholars” and then examine examples of that literature by Prof. Patricia Tull of Louisville Seminary, Fred Craddock and Gene Boring, and N.T. Wright.

Writer-scholars Phyllis Tickle and Diana Butler-Bass joined Rabbi Jonathan Rosenbaum, president of Gratz College in Philadelphia, and Bill Cahoy, Institute board member and Dean of the Seminary and School of Theology at St. John's University as panelists, and were serendipitously joined by Marva Dawn, current Institute grantee, for a wonderful and insightful conversation about what parishioners are reading, what they are not, and what they would like to read. Dr. Fred Craddock moderated the discussion. Our only

regret is that we failed to record the panelists' comments and discussion.

The second, more formal panel featured three works considered exemplary of congregation-based scholarship, Tull's *Esther and Ruth*, Craddock's and Boring's *Peoples' New Testament Commentary*, and Wright's *Paul for Everyone* series (in an unintended coincidence, all are published by Westminster John Knox Press). Associate Director Bill Brosend moderated the discussion, which included book “reviews” by parish and academy-based scholars, a wonderful “homily” by Fred Craddock, generous praise of Wright's series by Ben Witherington III, past Institute-grantee, and, unfortunately, not enough time for questions.

In 2006 “Congregation-based Biblical Scholarship” will become a formal Section in the life of the Society of Biblical Literature. Those interested in serving on the steering committee should contact Bill Brosend.

RENEWING THE KNIFE'S EDGE

Rev. Msgr. Vincent Rush, Pastor
Church of Our Lady of Grace
West Babylon, New York

It was the end of Summer 2004 when I stepped into the vacation home that had been offered to me for my sabbatical. I had received diocesan permission for this time away as part of a transition: twelve years as senior pastor in a large multicultural parish were drawing to a close, and I expected to be reassigned to another pastorate the coming June. My plan was to live simply and alone, following a cycle of reading, writing, seminars, and unscripted periods for a total of six months. I would return to my parish just before Easter, celebrate the liturgies of that season, and say my goodbyes before reassignment. My diocese supplied some financial assistance, and an SGPL grant covered the balance.

The first few weeks were dedicated to what I had told my congregation: “Doing as little as possible.” I found my way around a new neighborhood, met the neighbors, walked the local ocean beaches, and enjoyed long stretches with the luxury of asking myself, “What would it be delightful to do today?” without any obligation to others. I had several seminars scheduled with the Alban Institute and one with a local university, three or four writing projects sketched out, and a date to return to the parish. Beyond that, I was

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BEING STILL

Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith,
Executive Director
The Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana

As I read the first question on the SPGL evaluation form I found myself a bit amused. “What did you do on your sabbatical?” What an interesting question! My sabbatical was not about the doing, “it was about standing still.” The Psalter said it best in Psalms 46, “be still and know that I am God.”

The daily highlights of my day were: walking my young daughter to and from school; walking to the University of Pretoria library; finding a library corner just for me; morning and evening meditations with and without family; reading, research and writing; playing in the park with my daughter, her friends and the other neighborhood children. The experience brought to mind some of my fondest days of Seminary and doctoral studies. Creative writing became a concrete expression of my inner journey and intellectual project as I began developing the objectives of a book and a book proposal.

My family and I found a new temporary home in a modest 1-½ bedroom flat located in an integrated apartment building in Arcadia (Pretoria, South Africa) that became home. We lived in between Embassy Row to the right of our flat (apartment) and a “working class”

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GOD'S MINISTRY RENEWED

Dr. John P. Wesley, Senior Minister
First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In the spring of 2004 I closed the door to my office and walked out of the church harboring a child-like feeling of freedom and excitement. I was beginning a twelve week Sabbatical, the first I'd had in more than thirty years of ministry. That evening my journal entry included this prayer, “Lord, this is your ministry—not mine—so renew it in the days ahead.” I had no idea how legitimate my feelings were that night or how completely that prayer would be answered.

The focus for my Sabbatical was worship. I wanted to reflect on how people in the pew encounter God in corporate worship. A grant from the Louisville Institute allowed me to address this focus in at least a couple of different ways. First, I was given time to read a number of books about worship. Among my selections were Gordon Lathrop's *Holy Things*, James White's *Introduction to Christian*

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RENEWING THE KNIFE'S EDGE

Rev. Msgr. Vincent Rush

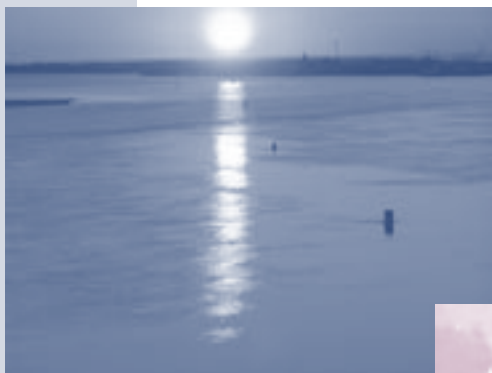
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interested to see what would emerge from the empty space.

I had known for years that effective pastoral ministry was a knife's edge at which the prose of church leadership and the poetry of the soul converged. I suspected that my years as senior pastor had tipped the balance, and that prose had pushed poetry to the margin. This time away was an attempt to reset the tension. Seminars ("Leading multiple-staff teams"; "Leading change"; and "Consulting for vital congregations") would help me to take a step back from my immersion in the prose; writing would invite me to structure my ideas; and free time would allow space for the unbidden to arise from my memories, hopes, dreams, fears, and faith.

And arise the unbidden did. It announced itself with two weeks of writer's block, highly unusual for

me. Then facility with writing suddenly returned, as if to remind me that the deeper flow of life could not be managed, only served. I also began to dream again, allowing me to resume a type of inner work that I had set aside over the years. A return to my former



Scenes from Vincent Rush's Sabbatical:
Sept. 2004 - March 2005
LT: Shinnecock Bay at dawn. : Early morning fog on the bay.

only to my own depths but to parishioners as well, since I had created a website and was posting a journal so that they could follow my sabbatical experience; my photographs became part of that communication.

(The web journal remains available at www.vincentrush.com/sabbatical.)

Parish life often falls into a series of routines with only occasional novelty. In contrast, negotiating the domestic air-travel network for trips to seminars provided ample opportunity for emergency problem solving and feelings of

satisfaction after several elegant improvisations. Meeting clergy from other denominations, especially in settings in which I was the only Roman Catholic as regularly happened, offered the chance to become explicit about assumptions and perspectives that were taken for granted and unspoken within my own church culture.

hobby of photography opened another artistic channel not

Of course I came back to the parish refreshed, energized, and full of new ideas. One slightly awkward result of my approaching reassignment was that there was no chance to put ideas into practice immediately; that would

have to wait for my new posting. All these things were expected. Other impacts were not. One is that I have become more assertive and



forthright about my perspectives and judgments; I suspect this comes from having lived and thrived outside the enmeshing clerical culture of my tradition.

I have also adjusted my priorities. Sabbatical and transfer were an occasion for me to wrap up several ongoing responsibilities in my diocese, and I now have a clearer sense of what I am willing to give time and effort to, and what I can fairly leave to others. Prose and poetry are in better balance, and the edge is back.

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GRANT-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

The following publications related to Louisville Institute grants have been received since our last newsletter:

BOOKS

Passionate Spirituality: Hildegard of Bingen and Hadewijch of Brabant

Elizabeth A. Dreyer

Paulist Press (2005)

Humility Matters for Practicing the Spiritual Life

Mary Margaret Funk

Continuum (2005)

Leadership From Inside Out:

Spirituality and Organizational Change

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Crossroad (2004)

On the Heels of Freedom: The American

Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to

Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the

Soul of a Divided Nation

Joyce Hollyday

Crossroad (2005)

Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in

San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present

Timothy Matovina

Johns Hopkins University Press (2005)

Discernment and Truth: The Spirituality and

Theology of Knowledge

Mark A. McIntosh

Herder & Herder (2004)

Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood

Joyce Mercer

Chalice Press (2005)

Post-Rapture Radio: Lost Writings from a Failed Revolution

Russell Rathbun

Jossey-Bass (2005)

"Who Are You to Say?" Sources of Authority in Matters of Faith

Dale Rosenberger

Brazos Press (2005)

There's Never Been a Show Like Veggie Tales:

Sacred Messages in a Secular Market

Hillary Warren

Alta Mira Press (2005)

Righteous Content: Black Women's Perspectives of Church and Faith

Daphne C. Wiggins

New York University Press (2005)

ARTICLES

"The Integration of Preaching & Transformational Leadership"

Mariann Budde

www.resourcingchristianity.org (2005)

"Building Traditions: Comparing Space, Ritual, and Community in Three Congregations"

Sally K. Gallagher

[Review of Religious Research](#)

(September 2005).

"A Desert Experience"

Ann Helmke

www.resourcingchristianity.org

(2005)

"A Clergy Sabbatical: God's 'Set Aside' for the Soul"

Lawrence Pray

www.resourcingchristianity.org

(2005)

"Multiethnic Mix: A Model of Congregational Diversity"

R. Stephen Warner

[Christian Century](#)

(July 26, 2005)

"Burden of Choice: Why More Options Make Us Less Happy"

R. Stephen Warner

[Christian Century](#)

(July 13, 2004)

"Coming to America: Immigrants and the Faith They Bring"

R. Stephen Warner

[Christian Century](#)

(February 10, 2004)

"They're OK; We're OK"

R. Stephen Warner

[Books and Culture](#)

(March/April 2004)

DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS

Below are three completed dissertations, which we have received since our last publication. If you are a Dissertation Fellowship grantee who has completed your dissertation, please let us know and we will be happy to note that fact in a future issue of *Intersections*. In the meantime, congratulations to the following!

Rebecca Y. Kim

Emergent Ethnicity: Second-Generation Korean American Campus Evangelicals' Religious Participation and Ethnic Group Formation

University of California Los Angeles (2003)

R. Bryan Bademan

Contesting the Evangelical Age: Protestant Challenges to Religious Subjectivity in Antebellum American

University of Notre Dame (2004)

Carolyn Chen

Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigrants Converting to Evangelical Christianity and Buddhism

University of California, Berkeley (2002)

BEING STILL

Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith

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neighborhood to the left of our apartment building. We lived three blocks from our daughter's international public neighborhood school and approximately a 20-25 minute walk to the University of Pretoria.



Angelique Walker-Smith's

Sabbatical: March - July 2005

LT: South Africa Apartment with family. **RT:** Daughter, Asha, with Nelson Mandela.



I particularly enjoyed my daily walk across the University green of the once segregated University of Pretoria where I could see students that mirrored the diversity of the New Rainbow Nation of South Africa. Although at times it felt odd to be at the very place, University of Pretoria Theology Department, where both the theology and political system of apartheid was born. At the same time, I was thoroughly heartened by the presence of a new cross-racial and cross-cultural generation of youth and young adults learning together. This has affirmed and re-invigorated my ministry priority to have the same in my own ministry.

worship in a wide variety of churches. We visited a number of churches "in transition." These were churches that were primarily composed of white Afrikaners that were becoming Black (South African and other African groups that were immigrant and refugee communities), Colored, or mixed in some way. This experience expanded my lens of immigration communities in Greater Indianapolis and throughout the USA. This became a timely reflection when I returned to my Greater Indianapolis area ministry of Christian unity that worked with churches in

the resettlement of families affected by Hurricane Katrina and Rita.

Towards

the middle of my sabbatical time, I had the pleasure of being a part of my husband's hosting of two University groups from Butler University and Morehouse College. The visits included places I had already lived and/or visited and new places. It also included stimulating dialogue and reflection in the company of young University students and leadership throughout the country. Recreation was also on the agenda.

My thanks to SPGL for this great opportunity to further and deepen my spiritual journey and call to ministry. This brief article is but one more example of God's grace at work. May your tremendous program bless others!

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GOD'S MINISTRY RENEWED

Dr. John P. Wesley

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Worship, Marva Dawn's *A Royal Waste of Time*, Thomas Schattauer's collection of articles in the book *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission*, and what became my favorite read, R.C. D. Japer and G.J. Cuming's *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*. There was nothing like having time to think and dialogue as I read through these books. I spent several days the first two weeks of Sabbatical just sleeping late and then reading under a large shade tree in the yard. It was balm for my soul!

The second method I used to explore how God was

encountered in worship was observing worship in a variety of settings and interviewing a limited number of worship leaders. I ended up attending twenty-three worship services, ranging from mundane to celestial, in three states and four different countries. The *ordo* of ancient worship discussed by Lathrop in his book provided a tool by which I interpreted these services. I looked for the ways prayer, word, offering and meal were woven into the experience of worship.



John Wesley's Sabbatical: March - June 2004

LT: Lutheran Cathedral in Helsinki, Finland. **RT:** Wesley outside Oran's Chapel at Iona.

My wife and I spent almost five weeks traveling in Scotland, England, Finland and France. Dr. Lester Ruth, a professor at Asbury Seminary, helped me plan some of my study experience abroad. He introduced me to the concept of alternative worship in England and

suggested churches where I could experience this worship style. He also introduced

Alum Updates

Joyce Ann Mercer

(General Grant 2001, 2003) has written *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood*, which was released in November 2005 from Chalice Press. Her book draws on the Children in Congregations project, written during her 2004 sabbatical.

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GOD'S MINISTRY RENEWED

Dr. John P. Wesley

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credited with beginning the Mass in 1988. I also spent a day with a lay leader who directs the Thomas community's silent retreats. She took us to an evening bells service, a special service of prayer designed especially for those who lead the St. Thomas Mass on the following evening. Though it was all in Finnish, it was a quiet, reverent, beautiful service of prayer.

The St. Thomas Mass I attended was held at the Lutheran Cathedral in Helsinki on Sunday evening, May 23, and was one of the most holy and unique services of my life. In some ways it was a very liturgical service, but it was built around a period of prayer in which movement, art, music and silence brought the awareness of God's presence to all who gathered there. The service ended with a joyous Eucharist for all. It was easy to understand why 800-1200 people come each week to the Helsinki Mass and why it has grown in popularity throughout northern Europe.

At the close of that day I wrote in my journal, "Today's experience has been worth the time, effort and expense of my travels. We got to experience the St. Thomas Mass and I felt such joy—such celebration—such a healing presence." I went away from Helsinki believing I understood as never before what it meant to worship and experience God in community.

There were many other high moments in our travels. Services at the Minster in York and at St. Martin in the Fields in London, were especially memorable. But nothing surpassed a four day retreat my wife and I took to Iona, in Scotland, at the beginning of our travels. Services each day in the Abbey, conversations with people from many places after the services, and long walks together through sheep laden fields and along breathtaking coastlines made us appreciate why the Scots believe Iona to be a "thin-air" place. We felt wrapped in a holy presence that brought us closer to one another and prepared us for all the new experiences that were to come.

My congregation has celebrated my Sabbatical in part because of the change they saw in me when I returned. My preaching became more engaging as I began to move beyond the

pulpit to talk more conversationally with those who came to worship. I returned with a better understanding of worship and became more faithful to the ancient *ordo*. I shared my renewal by teaching a well attended class in the Fall at the church. We also began a Thomas Mass last September and it continues to meet once a month. The service has brought together Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists. Two services akin to our Thomas Mass have been started in other cities after persons attended our Mass. I continue to receive mail addressing the profound experience of worship encountered by people who have participated in the service.

For me the greatest benefit of the Sabbatical was the remodeling of the sanctuary Olli Valtonen said was located in the gut, the place where our deepest values are kept. The places, people and ideas discovered during my time of rest grace the windows of this inner holy place and provide me a broader view of the world where God is active. God's ministry has been renewed in me!

2004-05 GENERAL GRANTS

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Rev. Janet Peterman

Saint Michael's Lutheran Church
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*Publication Expenses for "Down Silent Hallways:
New Rites for Christian Worship"*
\$1,000.00

Rev. Kelly Peters

Avon Lake United
Church of Christ
Avon Lake, Ohio

*Leadership in the Mainline
Protestant Church: Identifying
and Encouraging Healthy Habits*
\$6,274.00

Ms. Laura Phillips

Council for Higher Education Ministries
(CHEM-UMHE)
Charlotte, North Carolina

*Young Adult Ecumenical Forum on
Globalization and Poverty 2005*
\$3,761.00

Professor Kent Richards

Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta, Georgia

*The Spiral of Benefits - Regional
Events of Engagement*
\$57,500.00

Dr. J. Deotis Roberts

Strebor Books International
Largo, Maryland

Seasons of Life
\$26,000.00

Dr. James Ross

Madison, Georgia

Exploring Pastoral and Denominational Roots
\$3,450.00

Dr. Anthony Stevens-Arroyo

The Research Foundation of CUNY on Behalf
of Brooklyn College of The City University of
New York

New York, New York
*Cultural Homeland in American Congregations:
The Latino Perspective*
\$45,000.00

Dr. Richard Wood

The Regents of the University
of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico
Nexus: Religion in the Public University
\$33,521.00

Dr. Charles Zech

Villanova University
Villanova, Pennsylvania

*U.S. Catholic Diocese Financial
Accountability and Reporting Project*
\$12,695.00

Give Us Your Feedback...

The Louisville Institute's *Intersections* Newsletter is published three times per year. Your comments or suggestions are greatly appreciated as we continue to improve this publication. Also, if you would like to update your mailing information or be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

Write us at:

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1044 Alta Vista Road
Louisville, KY 40205

Or email us at:

info@louisville-institute.org

Alum Updates...

If you are a current or former Louisville Institute grantee and have had a significant milestone or achievement in your career or personal life, we want to hear about it. Please email us at info@louisville-institute.org, subject: "Alum Updates" to include your achievement in upcoming editions of *Intersections*.

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Intersections

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The mission of The Louisville Institute is to enrich the religious life of American Christians and to encourage the revitalization of their institutions, by bringing together those who lead religious institutions with those who study them, so that the work of each might inform and strengthen the work of the other.



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