

Memories: The Way Don Tells It

Don C. Benjamin

Storytelling isn't making things up. Storytelling processes our experience so we can separate what happened from what it means for us.

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10/21/2014 4:50 PM

Storytelling

In ordinary conversation many use the word *stories* as a synonym for *lies*. Some parent say to their children: *Stop telling stories!* For anthropologists stories hand on the meaning – the truth -- in our experience. Even the badly told and inaccurately remembered stories we tell each other over meals, around campfires, and while drinking cold beer teach us what to learn from what happens to us, and what we want to remember.

Art is a radical act of self-disclosure. Artists are only artists to the extent that they can forgo the privacy which most of protect with our lives. Memoir is

an even more invasive art than other genres of writing. Memoirs not only disclose the private lives of their authors, but also all those people who come and go in their lives.

I have always told stories to my students to help them better understand and appreciate the importance of storytelling in traditional cultures like ancient Israel. Many of my stories are autobiographical. The half-life of autobiographical stories in the college classroom is short. When I first started teaching, there were stories from the civil rights movement, from the anti-war movement, then there were examples from the revolution in Iran and the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, then there were stories from the rich and colorful culture of Texas from all the years when that was our home. As I moved on in my life, and as my students became younger and younger, stories left my portfolio, and new stories took their place.

Hopefully, my students would begin to see that stories are not *lies* or *made up*, but rather are a strategy for processing human experience. I find it easier for my students to understand the importance of storytelling in ancient cultures if they first learn to understand the importance of storytelling in their own cultures. When I tell them stories about my own life they are not only a good audience, but also developing their skills as a good audience for the stories from the world of the Bible which are the focus of my classes. I hope that their interest in me leads develops in them an interest in the Bible.

I am always flattered when former students drop by to tell me how much they enjoyed my courses. I am even more flattered when they remember something I actually taught them. Generally, however, they will say: *I have never forgotten that story you told us about your father and his biscuits!* Many remember the stories, long after they have forgotten my lesson plans.

My teaching career began at Rice University (Houston) with occasional visiting appointments to the University of Houston and the University of St. Thomas (Houston). Houston is over 1000 miles from Tucson where my parents and siblings lived. There was little opportunity for my students to meet the characters in my stories, which could potentially embarrass both me, the storyteller, and them, my characters.

Actually, on one occasion when my parents were visiting, and I took them to campus, a student complemented my mother by telling her how much she enjoyed my stories about our family. My mother was from the school that no one talks about their families except to their families. She lowered her head as the student spoke: *I wish he would stop doing that*, she sighed. When Patrice and her mother, Frances, and I were with friends, and I told a story which involved Frances, they would often turn to her for corroboration. She was too genteel a woman to say *Bullshit!* She would simply smile and say:

That's the way Don tells it.

8/17/2010 5:27 AM
10/12/2014 7:52 AM

Don Sr.

Growing up I called my father *Daddy*, and his father – my grandfather – *Dad*. I called my father's mother – my grandmother *Nana*. As I remember Nana called her husband – my grandfather – *Dadda*, which is probably why I called him *Dad*. Since his death in 1988, I have called my father *Don Sr.* because I am *Don Jr.*

Don Sr. was a soldier. He fulfilled his 2-4 years compulsory service in the Navy Reserve. Then he went to work for the telephone company – known by its customers as *Ma Bell* – in Omaha. He worked for a friend of the family – Ray Blaine, who not only found him a job, but served as his mentor. Ray told Don Sr. that he could never have a family on what Bell paid pole climbers and that Dad needed to go back to school.

Dad's family was poor. His father, James Byron, who I called *Dad*, had served in the Army during the Spanish American War – as an infantryman and engineer. His dispatch papers describe him as an *artificer* who distinguished himself in the trenches during the battle for Manila. Dad then supported his family as a carpenter. Dad bought run down mansions, and converted them into apartments, flats or condos. In fact they rented the second floor of their home to a couple – the Flowers.

In the beginning Dad worked for the railroad – traveling through the Dakotas. When I was growing up, he and Nana had settled in Omaha, built their own two story home from scratch.

There was no money in Don Sr.'s for school. Ray told Don Sr. that if he went into the Army, the Army would send him to school, and he would also get the experience he needed to make a decent living at the phone company. It would mean a commitment of 4-6 years, but Ray promised Don Sr. to save a job for him.

Don Sr. enlisted in the Army, and fell in love with it. Ray kept pressuring him to leave the Army and come back to work for him. I think Don Sr. was a major before Ray accepted the fact that the Army and not Bell was his career. He served for more than 30 years.

Don Sr. never talked about his war years – more than 10 during his career. I do remember an in-law – Jose Perez Chiesa – telling stories about Don Sr. Jose was from Puerto Rico. He married my cousin Adelaide. Jose was also a soldier – in the First Cavalry.

Don Sr. was in the Signal Corps. During wartime he traveled all over the front inspecting and repairing communications between units. He used his mobility to check on people for their families back home. When he was in Africa he traveled to the site of a plane crash to verify that one of the crew had, in fact, been killed. I forget just how he got that information back to my mother in code. Censors would have intervened if he reported back in clear English.

Jose's stories were about the Korean Conflict. He was wounded during the winter, and my Dad traveled to the MASH unit with blankets and winter socks for Jose. At the beginning of the war many American soldiers were fighting in summer uniforms, and freezing. Jose called Don Sr. a *Combat Santa*. He rigged a refrigerator in the back of his jeep which gave it a clearly recognizable profile. Soldiers could see his *sleigh* coming. Although Don Sr. did not drink, the fridge was always full of beer and other luxury treats for soldiers on the front.

Korea was hard on Don Sr. in many ways. Physically his legs froze; consequently he suffered from varicose veins for the rest of his life. Emotionally, he was passed over for the third and final time for promotion to full or *bird* colonel. He would leave the Army as a lieutenant colonel. Not a bad accomplishment for a kid from Omaha who enlisted as a private.

1/12/2015 7:17 AM

Blessed are the Peacemakers!

(Matt 5:9)

During graduate school in Washington DC (1964-1968), I trained to work in the Civil Rights Movement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference founded by Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) in 1957. King was strongly influenced by the non-violent world view of Mohandas Ghandi (1869-1948), the leader of India's independence movement from Britain. Consequently, our training taught us to protest, but non-violently. In the course of my training, I became more and more committed to non-violence.

I had already, at least once, attempted to identify myself as a pacifist, and failed. When I was old enough to register for the draft, I tried to register as a conscientious objector, but was told that since the Catholic Church supported just wars and because I was a Catholic I could not select that option.

Soldiering had been the Beltz, Benjamin, Benkosky family profession back to Spanish American War (1898) and beyond. Neither my brother, nor I, chose military professions. Jim and I were the first generation in our family which could have attended the military academies. Don Sr. and Ms. Edith's

fathers both served as non-commissioned officers. Don Sr. and his generation in the family began their careers as non-commissioned officers, and retired as officers. I was quite amazed that Don Sr. did not disown either Jim or me for our career choices. I always said that he and Ms. Edith had happy childhoods, so they never forced their children to do things they wanted to do, but did not. Jim actually won an appointment to West Point from the state of Arizona, but then chose medical school.

Don Sr. was aware of my pacifist commitment, and once asked: *Where the hell did you get those ideas?*

From you! I told him

Like hell you did. He objected.

Do you remember when I was in second grade, and every kid my age wanted a Daisy Air Rifle for Christmas? I lobbied you and mother from Halloween until there wasn't a dozen BB guns left for sale in Augusta GA.

When I made my last pitch to you, you asked me: What are you going to do with an air rifle?

I told you I was going to shoot stuff.

What stuff?

You know, birds, squirrels....

Who do you think you are, Davy Crockett? We don't live off the land, we go to the grocery store.

Every kid in the neighborhood got an air rifle. I got an erector set!

When I was in fifth grade I took a chapter from the National Rifle Association's play book, and asked you if we should have a gun in the house.

You told me: Guns in the house, shoot people in the house!

But what about when the bad guys break in and want to rape mother and the girls? I countered

Who do you think you are: The Military Police?

But what about when the Communists come? Again, you asked: What do you think I do for a living.

Now it is not a big jump from the kind of common sense and controlled approach you took to guns as a soldier, to my commitment to use only non-violent means to resolve conflicts.

Like hell! as I recall, were his final words.

10/14/2014 5:36 AM

1/12/2015 7:17 AM

Native Son

Growing up I called my mother -- Edith Marie Beltz Benjamin -- *Mother*, and her mother -- my grandmother - *Mom*. Since her death in 2004 I call my mother *Ms. Edith*. Don Sr. was away from the family for half the first 25 years of their married life. Ms. Edith was head of our household.

My mother, Edith Marie Beltz Benjamin, died suddenly on October 14, 2001 -- 13 years ago today. She had lived on her own from 1988, when Don Sr. died, until her own death. Her life was full of activity. She swam laps at the gym; she and Don Sr. were both strong swimmers. She played golf, and never rode in a cart. She liked to speed-walk to daily Mass. She knelt by the bed to say her daily prayers. The Saturday before her death she mowed the lawn; Sunday morning she went to Mass.

Later Sunday, when she began having trouble breathing, she called and left messages for Jim and Chris, and then called her friend Annie who lived nearby. Annie asked Ms. Edith if she wanted her to call 911. Ms. Edith told her that she just wanted someone to be with her until she felt better. Annie said that before she got to the bedroom to get her keys, Ms. Edith called back and said: *Call 911!* Annie lives only 5 minutes away, but by the time she arrived, the medics were already there. Ms. Edith had gone into the bathroom, and as she stood up from the toilet collapsed badly bruising her face as she fell against a side table in the bathroom where she kept magazines.

Chris arrived as the medics were wheeling the gurney out of the house. She stopped them, and took a minute to straighten Ms. Edith's clothes. Her appearance always meant a lot to her. Ms. Edith's pulse was weak as the EMTs put her in the ambulance. She died on the way to the hospital.

After Ms. Edith was pronounced dead, Chris sat with her body in the Emergency Department holding her hand. Chris remembers Ms. Edith's hands being soft and warm even after she had died.

One of my favorite stories about my mother and me is the special bond she gave me with the writer Richard Wright (1908-1960). His *Native Son* was – sort of – the first book I read, according to my mother. Here is the story.

I moved to Washington D.C. in the fall of 1964 to begin work on two graduate degrees: one in Semitic languages, one in Catholic Studies. My mother and father were stationed at Ft. Meade MD not far away. Shortly after starting graduate school I also began working in the Civil Rights Movement.

Both my parents grew up in poor families in the Midwest. Black people were not part of their world, and they did not understand why I was making civil rights for African Americans such a big part of my world.

Neither of my parents went to college. Nonetheless, my mother was an avid reader. For example, she read the *Reader's Digest* every month as well as the other magazines which came into our home while I was growing up. She also read fiction. She also subscribed to the *Reader's Digest* Book-of-the-Month, which became the key which unlocked the door of her understanding my involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.

My mother called me one day and announced: *Now I understand why you have such sympathy for those people!* She was unaware how prejudiced ...those people sounded.

Tell me, I said.

When I was pregnant with you, I read Native Son by Richard Wright.

Native Son was the first novel by an African American to become a Book-of-the-Month Club selection (1940). Wright tells the story of a young black man who commits murder in a moment of panic. It was a best seller and the first novel by an African American writer to enter the mainstream of American literature.

I was fascinated that my mother was absolutely convinced that not only what she ate and drank would affect her unborn child, but also what she thought and read as well. I will always be grateful to Richard Wright for his gift to her, and to me.

In 1969 when I started my high school teaching career in South Central Los Angeles, my white, African American, Hispanic and Asian students in my sophomore English class and I read *Native Son* together, once again.

Do Not Call Your Mother *Edith!*

I was born on March 14, 1942, and the first troops from the United States arrived in North Africa during World War II on May 11, 1942. Don Sr. was sent from Barksdale Field LA where I was born to Ft. Benjamin FL and then Philadelphia for training before his deployment to Africa. I have pictures of Don Sr. with me in Louisiana before his deployment, but, of course, no memories.

Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, and Don Sr. was re-deployed from Africa to the Pacific Theater. In route he visited Ms. Edith, me and my grandmother Mom in Kansas City MO. My mother was born and raised in Kansas City, and moved there during the war to be near her family.

That visit was the first personal memory that I have of Don Sr. He was lying on the bed reading the paper. The image is vivid. The bedroom is on the west side of the house. There is a chenille bedspread. Don Sr. still has his shoes on, but they are off the side of the bed, not on the bedspread.

I am not three years old. I looking in the linen closet in the hall for towels and cannot find them. I call out to Ms. Edith: *Edith, where are the towels?* I have no memories of when I decided to start calling my mother *Edith*, or whether I had just heard Don Sr. call her *Edith*, and I thought I should too.

Immediately, Don Sr. orders: *Young man, come in here.* He gave me one hard smack on the butt with his open hand and warns me: *Don't you call your mother Edith. She is your mother!*

The next thing I know is Ms. Edith is arguing with Don Sr. about spanking me on the first time we met, or the first time he had seen me in three years. I was not hurt by the event physically or emotionally, just confused. Did not understand the harm in what I had done, or frankly in what Don Sr. had done to me. I do not remember whether Ms. Edith did or did not spank me, or even how she disciplined me. Don Sr. left in a few days, and I was on my own again with Ms. Edith and Mom.

10/16/2014 7:47 AM

Life Savings

Ms. Edith and Don Sr. taught me thriftiness from almost the day I was born. When I was growing up, adults gave children, like me, coins. Sometimes

they gave me a penny, but often a nickel, a dime or a quarter. It was not my birthday, or Christmas. Giving a kid a coin was just what they did.

I was fascinated with the money, and I wanted to spend it, but my parents had other ideas. Mr. Rutherford, our elderly next door neighbor in Kansas City MO, bought me a huge piggy bank. No telling how large it actually was, but to a kid my size it seemed like a fifty gallon drum.

Every time an adult gave me a coin, I was told to say *Thank you*, and then go and drop it into the piggy bank. Spending the money was replaced by fantasies of spending the money. Actually, I got more enjoyment out of the fantasies than out of spending it. A kind of economic pornography!

The fantasies ended when my mother and I moved to Japan. We were one of the first 25 American families to go to Japan after the war ended. I had watched the movers pack my piggy bank in a real wooden barrel on a bed of wooden excelsior. I stayed in the room until the packer sealed the barrel with a lid.

Months later in Japan after all our household goods were unpacked, and my piggy bank was missing, my parents told me an awful story. When the dock workers were unloading our barrels using a net on the end of a large crane, one net full of barrels broke, and the barrels fell into the water. My piggy bank, as far as I know, is still at the bottom of Osaka Bay.

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10/17/2014 10:47 AM
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Our Home in Japan

On May 7, 1945 Germany surrendered. May 8, 1945 was declared *Victory in Europe Day* and the post-war era began. Few Americans had a greater impact on that legacy than George C. Marshall (1880-1959). As Secretary of State, he directed the *Marshall Plan*. Between 1948 and 1951, the United States invested more than thirteen billion dollars to rebuild the economy, the agriculture and the industry of Europe.

On August 15, 1945, the Japanese surrendered, and World War II was over. On August 30, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur (1904-1985), the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Pacific, flew into Japan to become the Supreme Commander of the Occupation.

MacArthur exercised a post-war genius similar to Marshall in transforming Japan from a feudal and war-making empire into a democratic and peace-seeking nation. Marshall restored the political, economic and social structures that governed European life before World War II. MacArthur introduced an entirely new way of life to a culture that had no traditions of elected government, free markets and self-determination.

Two aspects of the *MacArthur Plan* for Japan dramatically affected my young life. First, General MacArthur would not permit Americans to live together in compounds. Second, he required Americans to hire one Japanese worker for every member of their family. Consequently, Ms. Edith, Don Sr. and I did not live on a military base, but in the country outside Osaka. Americans could not live together in compounds. We were required to live among Japanese families. Therefore, the army confiscated a Japanese home for my mother and father and me.

The house was a large two-story building – bigger than any house we had in the US. Too big for three people. The floors were bamboo, not tile or carpet. The inside doors slid back and forth on tracks. I had never seen sliding doors. The doors were paper stretched on thin strips of wood like model airplane wings.

Mary, Jeannie and Henry

Three Japanese — *Mary, Jeannie* and *Henry* -- came to work in our home. *Mary, Jeannie* and *Henry*, of course, were not the real names of these Japanese women and man. Even in later life, I never asked my parents who named them. Perhaps they translated their own names into English, but more likely their English names were just mispronunciations of their Japanese names. As a child, however, I was clueless. All that I knew and loved was that I was surrounded by loving adults – my parents and these three wonderful people from a strange and fascinating world which was now my home.

Mary and Jeannie did not speak English, but Henry did. He was Nisei from Canada. The Nisei were the second generation of Japanese to call North America home. This generation was both Japanese and North American in attitude and cultural heritage.

Henry had returned to Japan to bury his father in the days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor at 7:53 AM on December 7, 1941. On that day Japanese fighters and bombers launched from aircraft carriers 274 miles off the island of Oahu left 2,403 dead, 188 destroyed planes and a crippled Pacific Fleet that included 8 damaged or destroyed battleships. Trapped by

these terrible international events, Henry remained in Japan throughout the war.

Like so many Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans Henry lived a life of double jeopardy. Born in a country that was now the enemy of his ancestral homeland, he was doomed to the life of a prisoner of war in Japan while 120,313 Japanese Americans were sent to concentration camps in the United States. 90,491 were transferred from assembly centers, 17,491 were taken directly from their homes; 5918 were born to imprisoned parents; 1735 were transferred from INS internment camps; 1579 were moved here after being sent from assembly centers to work crops; 1275 were transferred from penal and medium security institutions; 1118 were taken from Hawaii; and 219, mostly non-Japanese spouses, entered voluntarily.

I don't know where Henry lived during the war, but after the war he came to work in our house.

Mary, Jeannie and Henry treated me like their own child, and like a special child. I was four-times gifted in their minds. First, I was a male child. Second, I was an American – the conqueror's — child. Third, I had blond curly hair, which few Japanese had ever seen. Fourth, I absorbed Japanese culture, and was soon speaking Japanese – although like a woman.

Mary and Jeannie took me everywhere with them. When they went to the market to shop for food, I went. When the marketing was done, and they stopped at a food stall to eat, I ate.

The outings drove Ms. Edith crazy. She was sure I was going to eat something and die. I not only ate everything, I loved the food. When I would come home and tell her I ate white rice seasoned with seaweed from a bowl with chopsticks, she was sure that the seaweed had been pulled from a harbor polluted with human waste.

The American adults in my life were always talking about human waste. They would never eat the abundant fresh vegetables in Japan; because they knew the only way to grow such great produce was to fertilize it with human waste. The Americans called fertilizer made from human waste *honey*. The Japanese would shovel the contents of the pits beneath their outhouses into buckets, which Americans called *honey buckets*.

We had to ride in our jeep to visit the nearest American family. The meal in our American neighbor's home always opened with the same ritual. As we came to the table, lovely, large, fresh garden salads sat at each place. Everyone froze. Then our host would break the silence. *Don't worry. I only fertilize the garden with my own honey!* Everyone would laugh, and, to my amazement as a child, they would eat the salads. No one died.

A Crocus for Don Sr.

My mother and I were among the first 25 American families to go to Japan at the end of World War II. Douglas MacArthur, the commander of Allied Forces in the Pacific and the Military Governor in Japan, issued some very enlightened directives for American dependents in Japan.

Americans could not live together in compounds. We were required to live among Japanese families. Therefore, the army confiscated a Japanese home for my mother and father and me. It was a large two-story building – bigger than any house we had in the US. Too big for three people. The floors were bamboo, not tile or carpet. The inside doors slid back and forth on tracks. I had never seen sliding doors. The doors were paper stretched on thin strips of wood like model airplane wings.

One day a Japanese family came to the back door, not the front door. The father of the household wore a tuxedo and a top hat like the Japanese officials who signed the articles of surrender on the battleship *Missouri*. The women wore traditional kimonos. They never came inside the house, and they never came to the front door. They were in a little garden and talked to Ms. Edith and Don Sr. standing on the stairs. I guess Henry translated the conversation. They asked to see my father, and presented him with the first crocus which had bloomed in their yard that spring.

I asked my mother who they were. She said that they owned the house where we lived. I asked her where they lived. She said she did not know. When I asked why they gave dad a flower, she told me it was a sign of great respect.

Their oldest child – a son – had been very sick. They came to ask Don Sr. for help. Don Sr. was able to get some antibiotics from the military hospital, and their son recovered. The crocus was a gift for Don Sr. who healed their son. It was a sign that the war was over, and that the west and the east would not only learn to live together, they would also help each other. I was so proud of what he had done for someone who only months before had been his enemy. I am sure Don Sr. was not supposed to use medicine intended for the American military and their dependents for the Japanese, but my father did it anyway. I always admired his sense of right and wrong. He was a truly ethical human being.

Illiterate Me

Although I have been an intellectual all of my adult life, there was a time when I could not read. Illiteracy made it painful, and dangerous, for me to get to and from kindergarten.

I began kindergarten twice – once in Kansas City before Ms. Edith and I went to Japan, and then again in Long Branch in New Jersey after she and I and Don Sr. came home. Until I graduated from kindergarten at the Star of the Sea Academy I could not read.

In Kansas City I remember walking to kindergarten, but nothing about kindergarten itself. Since I could not read I had to navigate my way to school using landmarks. As I left the driveway I knew I had to turn right and walk to the next corner. Sometimes there was a police officer at the corner to help me cross; sometimes there was not. Without the help of this adult, I had to cross the street on my own. I always thought I was going to get run over, because I could not calculate just how much time I needed to get from one curb to the other.

Once I got across the street, there was a rock retaining wall. I knew I had to follow that wall to the next corner, and continue following it like a string until I reached the school.

I suppose I should have been proud that Ms. Edith had enough confidence in me to let me walk to school on my own, but I did not. I suppose I should have told Ms. Edith how frightened I was to walk to school alone, but I did not. I just wondered every morning why I had to do it by myself.

When Ms. Edith told me we were going to Japan, and that I would have to drop out of school, I was so happy, not because I was leaving school, but because I would not have to walk there by myself.

When Don Sr. was reassigned from Japan to Ft. Monmouth NJ, I did not go to the kindergarten on the post. Ms. Edith wanted me to go to a Catholic kindergarten in another city – Long Beach NJ – over four miles away.

The first leg of my second journey was from our quarters area -- called *Splinterville*. Even though I knew this was a nickname for the World War II era wooden barracks which had been converted into junior officers' quarter, I still thought it was odd. I also remember that Splinterville was built along the shore of a polluted lake. I had to walk to the highway at the edge of the post. I do not know how long the walk was, but it seemed like a long walk to me. The route was straight, so not being able to read street signs was not an issue. The new problem for me was there was no sidewalk. I had to walk on the gravel along the roadside. When it snowed, I had to walk in the road, as close to the snow bank the plow had created.

When I got to the bus stop, only one bus ran the route, so I did not need to read its destination sign to get the right bus. The trip home was more challenging. Again I had to cross the street from the school to the bus stop. There was a light, so all I had to know was to wait for the green. Busses from all over made a stop here. Since I could not read the destination sign on the busses, I recognized my bus by its driver. This strategy worked most of the time, but when the regular driver was off, I had to identify the bus by its passengers, which was much more difficult. I could have asked the driver if the bus was going to Ft. Monmouth, but I did not.

One rainy day, Ms. Edith sent me off wearing my galoshes. I could never get the clips to close. I also had a yellow rain coat, and a rain hat that looked like the helmet from a suit of armor. On the trip home, the regular driver was off, and so I boarded a bus with passengers I thought I recognized. I walked all the way to back and took off my rain hat. Just before the bus pulled away, I realized I was on the wrong bus. I looked out the window and saw someone I knew road my bus everyday getting on another bus. I ran to the front and my bus, got off and followed the person I recognized on to the Ft. Monmouth bus. As it pulled away, I realized that I had left my rain hat.

10/31/2014 6:09 AM

Trick or Treat

Trick-or-treating is a ritual which developed from the medieval Catholic belief that, on the eve of All Saints Day (November 1), the dead returned from the afterlife to their earthly homes. When the dead came to the door, their families could not recognize them as they appeared after death, and thought they were strangers. The dead then asked for food, to see if their families were hospitable to strangers. If the families of the dead were hospitable, the dead blessed them with heaven; if they were not, they condemned them to hell.

When I was in fifth grade and we lived at Ft. Bragg NC, Ms. Edith and the other mothers in her group developed an entirely different interpretation of trick-or-treating. They turned trick-or-treating into a kind of amateur night. When children came to the door, Ms. Edith would invite them into the living room, and they would all sit on the floor. One at a time, each child would need to perform – tell a joke, sing, do a pantomime, and then she would reward the performer with a treat.

Since I was taking piano lessons, Ms. Edith had me practice a piece to play for the other mothers to earn my treat. I was mortified. Playing the piano was not cool in my group. Playing the piano in public was even worse. Nonetheless, I practiced.

When I returned home with all my candy, Ms. Edith felt proud that I had reflected so well on our family in front of her friends that they had rewarded me with so much candy. Then my sisters told her that I did not play my piece on the piano. Instead, when asked to perform, I did my favorite animal imitations like barking. Ms. Edith was mortified.

1/12/2015 7:17 AM

Car Wash

The 1976 movie *Car Wash* is the story of a day in the life of the employees at a Los Angeles car wash. Not all of the employees are African American, there's a Mexican American and a Native American also out on the line. The *pop bottle bomber* chase around the car wash and the scene with the *mummy* in the car are two classic scenes. Richard Pryor as the money-hungry preacher *Daddy Rich* is loosely based on a famous Los Angeles preacher from the 1970's. One of the DJ's heard in the movie is J.J. Jackson who later went on to be one of the original MTV Vee-Jays in the early 1980's.

My own car wash story in South Central LA involved Mother Zenda, nee Emma Kmetz. Mother Zenda was a street person, although not without means. She had worked in a defense plant during WW II, and received Social Security, but she did not believe in paying rent to her landlords.

I met her when a family in the neighborhood called to ask if the *nun* living in their mother's home was for real. Mother Zenda had fashioned a look-alike nun's outfit for herself. She cut the brim off a man's black hat, and used the remnant to fashion a small cross on the front of it. She wore it like a fez over her short cropped grey hair. She wore a men's black shirt with a

button down collar and long sleeves. She always buttoned her shirt at the collar. Her black skirt was plain, and fell to mid-calf. She wore a men's leather belt to hold the skirt in place. Black shoes and black ankle socks completed her outfit.

Mother Zenda would come to mass and use the prayer list of folks who were sick as her guide. She would call on each, introduce herself as a Catholic nun, and when she found a suitable shut-in, just move in with them.

She described herself as the Mother General of the Hungarian Sisters of Notre Dame. From the rambling conversations she and I had over the years, I may have reconstructed some of her actual autobiography. At some period of political turmoil in Hungary, her father seems to have taken her to an orphanage run by the sisters to protect her from impending threats. Her father seems to have been a wealthy and politically powerful person and a target for revolutionaries. He called Emma his *little nun*. Eventually her father died or was killed, and before WW II immigrated to the US.

There were only five women who came to daily Mass at her funeral. I sent a message to the second grade teacher, and asked if she would bring her children to fill in the congregation. It was a joyful, song-filled service, but at the end when the funeral directors wheeled her body to the door of the church, the hearse would not start.

The funeral home sent a second hearse to jump start the first while the congregation watched in awe. Once the motor was up and running, and her body loaded, the faithful five decided to accompany her body to the cemetery, so our small procession set off.

I was riding shotgun in the hearse, who took a yellow light stranding the faithful five in their small sedan. Undeterred, the woman ran the red light right in front of a police officer who pulled them over. I told the driver of the hearse to stop, and he pulled into a car wash, which created its own excitement.

As I got back to the women and the officer, I overheard the driver say: *But officer we are going to a funeral.*

The kindly officer faced with five grandmothers replied: *Ma'am if you keep running red lights without an escort, you are going to your own funeral.*

No ticket, just conversation. I made my way back to the car wash, and worked through the crowd peering in the rear window at Mother's Zenda's casket. Shortly, we were on our way again.

At the cemetery we were greeted by a Boris Karloff figure in a black suit and tie. He had a shock of blond hair that he combed like Hitler to one side. He spoke with a heavy German accent. I cannot imagine who in human resources thought this was an appropriate placement.

The gatekeeper directed us to the charity section of the cemetery. The parish had convinced the Catholic diocese to give Mother Zenda a free grave. The charity section was on a steep slope, and since there was no cemetery detail, our crew had to guide her casket and cart carefully down to the grave. If we had lost control Mother Zenda would be off for a wild ride. We were quite a sight.

As our procession reached the grave the faithful five suddenly realized that Mother Zenda's grave had no flowers, which just would not do. They disbursed in five directions, scavenged flowers from other graves saying: *We did not take all the flowers from any grave, and I'm sure the deceased would want to help.*

On the way back to drop me off, the hearse driver turned on a talk radio station blaring hate and bigotry, and just as we were coming down the freeway ramp the hearse was side swiped by a city garbage truck.

Mother Zenda had left the world as she had lived in it: a free spirit for whom decorum was not often in place. I went back alone at a later date to say a prayer for her at the grave. The headstone simple read: *Mother Zenda, nee Emma Kmetz.*

10/19/2014 6:54 AM

Denver, our Australian shepherd

When Patrice and I rescued Denver at the Humane Society here in Phoenix almost 15 years ago, we knew nothing about Australian shepherds. We always said: *Denver chose us.* I am sure he never saw sheep, but he knew we needed herding.

Jon Katz, who wrote about his life with Orson a Border collie, was our guide during those days – months, years of getting to know this wonderful animal. I do not even remember how we came to find his *A Dog Year* (2003) – and all the books since. We read to learn, and built a long and wonderful life with Denver.

That life came to an end on Wednesday, May 1 at 10:40AM, 2013. As I stood over him in the bed of my pickup truck and watched him struggle to breathe through his laryngeal paralysis I remembered when he would run like the wind in the park. I also remembered when I used to run marathons.

Patrice and I have buried our parents, and a wonderful aunt who played her concert violin at our wedding, but Denver's death was so much harder. Perhaps we were younger when we buried the other members of our family. Perhaps the pain now is that we like Denver are now old and nearing death.

I wished Denver could just lay his head in my lap and die, not struggle to breathe, not need a vet to put him to death.

We knew Denver was an important part of our lives, but in the hours since his death, we miss everything. I woke this morning because I thought I felt him pushing against my legs – we called it his *herder's hug*. He used the hug not only to show affection, but to position each of us so that he could better keep an eye on us. I went out for the paper, and realized I did not need to tuck the plastic bag into my pocket for our walk in the park.

I tried to get back to work on my feminist commentary on the book of Deuteronomy, and realized I was reading an article on the use of animal – not just human – metaphors for Yahweh. It made me wonder if the pain of Denver's death is that his loving face was the most powerful metaphor in my life for the face of God.

So, I downloaded *Going Home* - Jon Katz' book about when dogs die, and went back to the place – the person – who taught us so much about how to love a dog, and let a dog love us.

4/25/2011 8:48 AM
10/22/2014 7:42 AM

Ayn Rand

Atlas Shrugged by author Ayn Rand was published in 1957. It is 1,168 pages long. I was a junior in high school.

Rand's characters are caricatures that reflect her ideas and ideals. Businessmen are good, government bureaucrats are bad. There is no middle ground. Selfishness or *rational self-interest* is a virtue. Capitalism is the only moral system allowing individuals to act in their own self-interest. Productive achievement is the noblest activity and happiness, the ultimate goal.

I never read Ayn Rand, but I was a witness to how profoundly her world view impacted my college classmate, Joe C. Joe grew up in Los Angeles. He was quiet, too quiet for a college kid. Good athlete, serious student, but never said much in class.

After we finished school, Joe and I both took jobs at Mt. Carmel High School in South Central Los Angeles (7011 S. Hoover). This Catholic school for boys opened in 1936 and by the 1960s has a student population of some 600 - mostly white, mostly from working class families. Following the Watts Riots in August 1965 the student population dropped below 300 -- mostly African American, mostly from working class families. Mt Carmel closed in 1976 and was torn down in 1983 to create Mt. Carmel Park.

I arrived in spring 1969. Joe had started teaching there in the fall 1968.

Joe was still quiet, had lost his athletic weight, and was almost completely silent outside of his classroom. I questioned the changes until he confided in me that he had embraced Ayn Rand's *Objectivism*.

For Joe, Ayn Rand believed that all evil in the world – from the heartbreak of psoriasis to the depletion of the ozone layer – was a consequence of altruism. Christians, for example, who teach *Love One Another*, are condemning each other to a lifetime of suffering. Happiness, for Rand, is practicing the discipline of *self-sufficiency* – what her critics call *selfishness*.

To prevent suffering humans need to be absolutely clear about what they are getting for what they are giving. No random acts of kindness. Everything has a price, and should only be exchanged on par or for profit. For Joe this even applied to conversation. Speech could only be used for business, not pleasure.

On one occasion Joe came into my office to ask for a sleeve of staples. I gave it to him, and he wrote me a receipt!

When I tried to talk with Joe casually, he would put his finger across his lips, and turn and walk away.

I rose to the challenge. One evening after school I cornered him and attempted to convince him of the socially redeemable value of just casual conversation. My premise was that when we come to a point where we desperately need to talk with someone – about a problem, about an investment – about anything for which Rand would approve the use of conversation, we cannot know with whom to speak if we have not done consistent research in

just casual conversation with one another.

Joe was good enough to listen to me. I waxed eloquently, and long, but – in the end – he was unconvinced. He was intellectually trapped in the commitment to avoiding relationships without price tags.

Joe quit teaching – too interactive -- and took a job as a checker at a big box store. Everything had a price. No conversation necessary.

11/9/2014 1:30 PM

J.B.

Today is my brother's birthday. Jim is 12 years younger than I. He was born when I was in 8th grade. We did not grow up together. I boarded away from home for high school, and then went away to college.

Jim and my family returned to the US from the Panama Canal Zone when I was a senior in college. They all came to visit, and Jim stayed with me in my dorm room. I could tell that he liked me, but I also could tell that he did not think of me as his brother. *My mother said I should wear these pants and shirt together*, he told me when we getting dressed. *My mother*, not *Mother*.

I wanted to get to know my brother, and I wanted my brother to get to know me. So we went on a two week road trip together. I was graduate student poor, but I got a job delivering a car from Washington DC to Iowa for a military family returning from an overseas assignment. I borrowed the \$300 deposit from *our* mother, we picked up the car and set out for our shared adventure.

I had only \$200 for the entire trip, so I had to avoid toll roads. We slept in the car at rest stops. Along the way we stopped to visit relatives, and when we left, they gave me money for a motel for our next night's stay. The room had vibrator beds. For a quarter the mattress would shake for three minutes. A little of that went a long way with me, but Jim kept putting more quarters in the meter on my bed just when I had fallen asleep.

We were going to stay over with our grandmother – Blanche Susan Landaker Benjamin – whom we called *Nana*. She lived in Omaha. I got lost in route and we ended up ploughing along muddy dirt roads for hours. By the time we reached Nana's home, the car looked like we had been in a stock car race. Jim and I hosed it down, delivered it to the owners, and headed back to DC on the bus.

Our bonding continued with another driving trip from Tucson through Mexico to Guadalajara and back, and on more than one back-packing trips into the California Sierras.

11/9/2009 8:02 AM
10/24/2014 5:06 PM

WWJD?

As a kid I was never much good at lying. Of course I was the oldest of four, so I was always more responsible than ordinary children. There was not much to be gained by lying to Ms. Edith and Don Sr., who expected the truth from each of us. Furthermore, their discipline of us was never violent, nor unreasonable – which teaches children to lie.

So I came to storytelling not because of a childhood of lying, but rather because of a lifetime of teaching. I used the stories of my life to make my point.

I did not think that my life as a whole was an outstanding example of living or living well. Writers are encouraged to write what they know, and so I told what I knew – my experiences – good and bad, large and small.

When students come back years after our time together in high school or college has ended, I am always flattered when they say: “You were the first person who made me think about Eve – the biblical woman in the garden – as intelligent, moral and self-sacrificing. I had always thought everyone hated her!” More often, however, students come back and say: “I have never forgotten the story about your dad staying home to bake biscuits while the rest of the family went off to Mass.”

I was a sophomore at Salpointe Catholic High School in Tucson in 1956-1957. The first day of religion class, the Carmelite priest who was our teacher asked: *Who in here would tell a lie to save the world.* Without hesitation I raised my hand, only to realize, almost immediately, that mine was the only hand in the air.

The Father glared at me and shouted: *Lying is a sin!*

“*I know,*” I replied, *but even if I go to hell, everyone else gets to heaven.* I could not help thinking that I had done what Jesus would do by laying down my life for the whole world.

Nonetheless, the Father would not give it up. He spent the entire period trying to break me. After the first couple minutes, I was no longer a theologian,

I was just stubborn. I would not be moved.

The Father stormed out of the room at the end of class, and I resigned myself to a long, long year. But God was good. The next class a new Father appeared to teach us, and I never found out whether the first Father was more afraid of me than I was of him. It was the beginning of a promising career for me in religious studies.

5/31/2011
10/23/2014 7:48 AM

Memorial Day

In Flowers for My Grandfather (Arizona Republic, May 29, 2011) Patricia Biggs writes: It's likely that few people will spend Memorial Day on Monday as its founders intended by scattering flowers on the graves of Civil War soldiers.

The national holiday Congress established for federal workers in 1887 had grown out of community events throughout the North and South since 1866. This year marks 150 years since the Civil War began. It is hard to imagine the deep grief and overwhelming loss survivors faced four years and 600,000 deaths later.

The tradition of placing spring flowers on graves had become commonplace before 1861, but the practice grew quickly after the war ended. Women in the South and North tended the graves of the men they'd known, loved and lost during the war. They brought flowers, requested prayers at church services and sang hymns in attempts to assuage their deep grief.

Veterans, many missing arms or legs, joined in the practice to honor the men with whom they had served. They struggled to fashion some meaning out of the battles they'd survived.

In time, grief subsided and Memorial Day shifted away from its sense of personal loss. Today, people might think that Congress undermined the importance of the day of commemoration when it passed the 1971 Monday Holiday Bill. But as early as the 1890s, veterans groused that the day had become a holiday rather than a solemn day of remembrance.

Today, none of us has direct connections with the Civil War. But I come from a family of writers; storytellers and packrats...

My grandmother – Blanche Susan Landaker Benjamin – was born in Kankakee IL. I called her *Nana*. At some point her people moved to Ames IA.

She referred to Memorial Day as *Decoration Day*. Her people were farmers, and she once told me that they rode in a cream cart out to the cemetery to clean graves and leave flowers. She remembers as a small child falling asleep in the cart on the way home. I was touched by the image of my grandmother – whom I considered old – as a small girl, sleeping in the back of a farm wagon.

Nana also told me about going to her grandmother's funeral in Kankakee when she was very young. Her grandmother was laid out at home in her own bed. When I asked her if she was afraid of being in a room with a dead person, she told me: *No, I thought she looked like she was asleep.*

8/1/2011
11/2/2014 8:18 AM

Sr. Mary Eileen A Sister of Charity in Convent Station (NJ)

Sr. Mary Eileen was born in Ireland, a Sister of Charity of Convent Station NJ and my kindergarten teacher.

I always finished her assignments quickly, but before I could get bored and start acting out, she would come to my desk and ask: *Would you like to learn to write cursive, like first graders?* or *Would you like to learn how to add and subtract like first graders?* She even sent me home with a first grade math book, which I carried around like an Oscar.

I am sure I thrived on the intellectual stimulation she gave me, but I know that I thrived on her attention.

When my dad was transferred from Ft Monmouth NJ to Ft Gordon GA after kindergarten, I was allowed to skip first grade and go straight into second!

Years later while I was in graduate school at Catholic University in Washington DC, I met another Sister of Charity, who was also a graduate student. She had worked at the Covenant Station infirmary and cared for Mary Eileen after she retired. She told me that Mary Eileen got up every day and put only her old time undergarments that religious women in wore those days. Although her underclothes were more than modest, for some unknown reason, she did not put on her outer habit. Then she would go to the day room at the care center, sit in a rocker and teach an invisible class of former students. She would call us by name; she would teach, take us out for nutrition breaks and recess. Actually, I will never know if she called my name.

My friend told me that Mary Eileen was a delight to care for -- and that she wished she had known my name then to listen for it as Mary Eileen called role.

One of my students at ASU is an Assyrian Orthodox Christian from Iraq. At the end of the semester he invited me to talk to the graduates his parish was honoring. I told the graduates my story about Mary Eileen, and about what a difference good such good teachers make in our lives, even at the end of it all they end up teaching in their underwear.

6/15/ 2011
10/26/2014 7:01 AM

Why Religious Studies?

Sometimes students ask: *What's a nice guy like you doing in Religious Studies?*

I was not called to a cave by the angel Gabriel like Muhammad. I did not hear the voice of Yahweh calling to me from a burning bush like Moses. I did not hear the voice of Jesus call my name on the road to Damascus like Paul. When I was a student -- like most students today -- I wanted to make a living, and I also wanted to make a difference So I looked around to see who was making a difference in the world I was about to enter and it was people connected with religion. There were scholars like Hans Kung (University of Tubingen) and pastors like Martin Luther King Jr. who were making a difference. I was drawn to that light.

Religious studies struggles with the big questions -- life, death, suffering, selflessness, for example -- and those were the questions I, as a student, was asking.

I was also fascinated with a field which challenged students to step fearlessly to the edge of darkness and shout: *Who's out there?* And then to ask what difference it makes if there is someone out there for how were understand who we are here, and how were should treat other humans and all creatures who share this earth with us.

Every department on every university campus deals with questions first raised by religion. If humans are going to ...*love their neighbor* then they have to understand humans -- the work of anthropology, sociology and psychology. If humans are going to care for poor and the suffering then they have to

understand suffering, disease and healing --- the work of medicine, education, and economics.

Martin E. Marty (University of Chicago) is one of my heroes – he is both a scholar and a person of faith. During his career he taught, he published, he has spoken all over the country and around the world – even at ASU. He has written more than 50 books! In my career I have written just six books, and I am no slouch.

Marty's colleagues tell good natured jokes about how much Marty gets done in a single year. One joke goes. Someone calls his office at the University of Chicago and asks to speak with Marty. The admin says to the caller: *I'm sorry but Dr. Marty is writing a book!* To which the caller responds: *That's alright, I'll wait.*

I enjoy reading Martin Marty – he is more passionate than I am about how important it is to study religion in college.

6/15/2011
1/12/2015 7:17 AM

The Sacred Canopy

One of the courses I taught at Arizona State University was *Ritual, Symbol and Myth* – a 300 level course which also fulfilled a general education requirement for research writing. I encouraged my students to be patient with this difficult read, promising them it would be worth the effort.

...Why read Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* at the very beginning of the semester? Berger wrote the book more than 40 years ago. *The Sacred Canopy* is, without doubt, the most difficult book I will read with you this semester. Finally, why read such an old book and such a difficult book to understand first in the semester?

I have had any number of students come back and tell me that they were the only one in some other class who even knew who Berger is. They were absolutely amazed to discover how much influence Berger has had. I have only had one student who came back more than once to tell me that reading Berger changed her life!

Berger, Eliade and Turner were part of movement in the middle of the 20th century which radically changed the way scholars study religion today. Before their work religious studies was *theology*. Theologians assume that there is a body of divine revelation which must be deciphered. Theologians work to understand the mind of God.

Berger, Eliade and Turner approach the study of religion from an entirely different direction. Theology focuses on God; religious studies focus on people who have experienced God. Berger, Eliade and Turner assume that all humans experience the divine. They study how humans react to their transcendent experiences. Religion for Berger, Eliade and Turner is not something which God reveals, but rather something which humans create when they experience the divine to preserve and to pass on their experience to others.

Berger taught in the US, but was born in Germany. He is an old world professor who punctuates his chapters with Latin phrases and big words. That is how professors talked in the 1960's – even in American universities. The style demonstrated to their students that they were learned. Of course, if your instructors today talked to you online or in class the way Berger writes, no one would take their courses. Don't spend time looking up all the words you do not know, just keep reading. You may want to start by reading only the first paragraph in the chapter and the last paragraph, and then take some time to think about what you have learned.

4/18/2012 7:09 AM
11/5/2014 12:11 PM

A Contemplative Corner

In February 2012, Patrice and I decided to launch a remake of our home in Phoenix to welcome ourselves into retirement on February 2013.

We replaced the white eight inch tiles which the developer had installed in 1986. The new tile in the kitchen, family room, baths and hallway is 18 inch porcelain in warm earth tones, installed diagonally.

We replaced the interior slab doors with new six panel doors. Each door has new brushed nickel hardware.

We painted throughout. The ceilings are white. The accent wall in the living room remains whipped strawberry red framed by three walls painted frosting cream. The kitchen remains laurel mist green; the family room,

hallway and laundry room are also white. The bed rooms and bath room walls are Coral Gable Biltmore Mediterranean Mocha.

Between December and April, we donated some 1500 novels, poetry and biographies to the Phoenix Public Library. Then, I contacted Jeff Ball of Dove Books to sell my academic library. I packed it all into boxes now waiting for shipment in the garage. My library was a physical monument to more than 30 years of scholarship and teaching. The separation began with difficulty, but soon became exciting.

I moved from my office from the family room adjoining the kitchen to a much smaller front bedroom, and began to build what Ann Morrow Lindberg calls "...a contemplative corner" of my own (*A Gift from the Sea*. New York: Pantheon, 1955: 9-11). Like her I am now searching for a new pattern of living. I need to build another rhythm in my life with more creative pauses. I need more space and time for my own needs. I need new and more alive relationships with myself and with others.

5/15/2013 5:53 AM

12/8/2014 3:02 PM

Retirement Planning

Patrice masterfully planned her retirement for Feb 1, and reached the goal. We spent some quality time during 2012 educating ourselves about retiring -- reading, seminars, talking to folks in retirement. There are both financial and the emotional challenges, trying to understand Medicare, selecting the correct Medigap policy to cover what Medicare does not -- there are almost 26 plans -- and what prescription policy to use.

The journey was full of good stories. One Medigap broker, for example, was helpful on the phone and online, but when we got to her office, how different. Ask a question, and she repeated what she had just said. Her office was covered with right wing, anti-government posters, and bumper stickers. Her politics are all quite ironic considering she makes her living brokering a federal health program.

Ernie Zelinski has two good books on adjusting to the life without having a job to tell you who you are: *The Joy of Not Working: a book for the retired, unemployed, and overworked* (2003) and *How to Retire Happy, Wild and Free: retirement wisdom that you won't get from your financial advisor* (2011).

Quite frankly, although I am not a fatalistic, I am absolutely amazed I reached Social Security age. What a gift.

Although I had planned to retire with Patrice, I only got as far as withdrawing from my on-campus courses. Not having to commute is wonderful. I did not meet my 2012 deadline for completing my work in progress: *Deuteronomy, a feminist commentary*, so I still need library support, and need to be an employee to get it. I do enjoy teaching, so perhaps continuing to teach online is good for me.

I gave my tools away, so I am no longer doing my own maintenance and remodeling work. Fortunately, some of the contractors who have worked with me over the years have filled the void well. This morning our landscaper is here removing two tall palm trees. He is doing a great job, but I keep looking out the window and remembering when I was up in the tree. I also donated and sold my library. Gave about 600 books to the public library, and consigned some 2000 lbs of professional books to a friend who has a resale business in Detroit. Actually, I have well-adjusted to both these moves.

Our Medigap policy came with a gym membership, so Patrice and I go six days a week for group cardio, yoga, Zumba and tai chi. A really healthy and relaxing development. Being together throughout the day, and not having to process all the work chaos in the evening is also a real blessing. We now have time to cook our own meals -- and are eating more healthily as a result.

Tomorrow we are having solar installed, so we will be generating our own electricity. It takes about seven years to recover the investment, but felt it was a good investment. We also did some major renovations to the house during 2012 -- replaced tile floors throughout, new bathroom furniture, new interior doors, and new interior paint. Now that we are here more, it is exciting to have a comfortable and more affordable environment. I did pretty well subcontracting the work instead of doing it myself.

11/5/2014 12:34 PM

The Mercy Papers: A Memoir of Three Weeks.

By Robin Romm (2009)

Robin Romm is the author of the critically acclaimed short story collection, *The Mother Garden*, which was a finalist for the 2008 PEN USA Fiction Award. Born and raised in Eugene OR she currently lives in Berkeley CA and New Mexico, where she is assistant professor of creative writing and literature at the College of Santa Fe.

When Robin Romm's *The Mother Garden* was published, *The New York Times Book Review* called her a close-up magician, saying, *hers is the oldest kind [of magic] we know: the ordinary incantation of words and stories to help us navigate the darkness and finally to hold the end at bay.* In her searing memoir *The Mercy Papers*, Romm uses this magic to expand the weeks before her mother's death into a story about a daughter in the moments before and after loss.

With a striking mix of humor and honesty, Romm ushers us into a world where an obstinate hospice nurse tries to heal through pamphlets and a yelping grandfather squirrels away money in a shoe-shine kit. Untrained dogs scamper about as strangers and friends rally around death, offering sympathy as they clamor for



attention. The pillbox turns quickly into a metaphor for order; questions about medication turn to musings about God. The mundane and spiritual melt together as Romm reveals the sharp truths that lurk around every corner and captures, with great passion, the awe, fear, and fury of a daughter losing her mother.



The Mercy Papers was started in the midst of heartbreak, and not originally intended for an audience. The result is a raw, unsentimental book that reverberates with humanity. Robin Romm has created a tribute to family and an indelible portrait that will speak to anyone who has ever loved and lost.

From time to time Ms. Edith would give me instructions about how she wanted to die, and how she wanted to be buried. I did not want to talk with her about her death and burial, and I did not want to promise her that I would do the things she wanted done, especially without my sisters and brother in the conversation. I would tell her that if these end of life desires were important to her, she needed to go to a lawyer, write them out, and then put them with her will.

Privately, I worried about Ms. Edith getting to a point in her life when she needed care outside her home or even in her home by outsiders. She wanted neither. My prayer was that by the time that day came; she would have Alzheimer's disease. I never had much success influencing her thinking about even simple things. I could not imagine how I could convince her to move to an assisted living facility, or hiring a caregiver. When the day came her prayers were answered. She lived a full, active life until the day she died. No assisted

living, no ventilators, no decisions about dying with dignity. Sometimes I wish I had had more time to prepare for her death, but then, after reading Robin Fromm's *The Mercy Papers*, I realize how grateful I am that I did not.

12/4/2014 6:33 AM

Henry, My Zen Master

When I was quite young, Henry worked for my family as a cook. He was also my teacher.

Ms. Edith tells the story of how Henry would carry me upstairs to put me to bed even though I was as long as he was tall. He helped me face the fear of night. When the dark frightened me, Henry brought a small wicker basket full of fireflies to our house. He had woven the basket from bamboo, and caught the fireflies by hand. This was before the days of nightlights. We sat together on the floor, and he talked to me about the magic of these small creatures, and then hung the basket where I could see them light and then go dark as I fell asleep. The talisman was short lived. Ms. Edith did not want insects of any kind, even magic fireflies, in the house.

One day when a typhoon blew into Osaka, Henry with great patience, and no alarm, took me out of the house, and down the hill to a grove of trees. All during our journey he talked with me about paying attention to my senses – the ground under my feet, the wind and rain on my face. When we reached the trees he chose one with a trunk just large enough for me to wrap my arms around. *Grab the tree*, he told me, *and feel it bend in the wind. If you can bend in the wind, like this tree, you will never be uprooted.* He turned the practical need to get me out of a house which the typhoon might destroy, and to a safe place during the storm, into a moment of learning.

Not all Henry's meditations with me were successful. He came to work one morning with a live lobster. He had tied a thread to the lobster to use as a leash. He tried to show me how to *walk* the lobster on the tile floor in the kitchen, but I was not very good at it. The lobster's claws scratching on the floor seemed eerie to me. At some point the lobster pinched me, and I started to cry. I would not let Henry console me or get me back to walking the lobster. I stood pressed into the far wall of the kitchen while he boiled water. I watched -- almost with satisfaction -- as he dropped the lobster in the pot, and I saw one claw opening and closing above the rim until it died.

Bishops

I met Cardinal Joseph A. Fiorenza at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic Church in Houston in 1978. He was the chancellor – chief operating officer -- of the Catholic Diocese of Galveston-Houston. Roger Bonneau, a friend who was also a priest and a hospice chaplain at the Texas Medical Center in Houston, had invited me to hear Ernesto Cortes, Jr., the Southwest Regional Director of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), speak to The Metropolitan Organization (TMO) at the parish.

I had only recently moved to Houston to accept a one-year teaching position at Rice University. During the previous 10 years I had worked in South Central Los Angeles organizing the 24 Catholic parishes in that area of the city. After Ernie's talk Roger introduced me to, then, Monsignor Fiorenza. As I remember, he shook my hand, said *Joe Fiorenza* and welcomed me to Houston.

Some weeks later I paid a courtesy call to John L. Morkovsky, the bishop of Galveston-Houston. At the receptionist's direction, I opened the door to the bishop's office and stood in front of his desk.

I am Don Benjamin, I began I am teaching in the Religious Studies Department at Rice University.

So where did you get your education? the bishop asked. He had earned a Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD) at the Gregorian University (Rome) in 1935.

I have a Ph.D. in Religion and Old Testament from the Claremont Graduate University, I answered.

Don't you have any Catholic Old Testament? he asked.

I had no idea what the bishop meant by *Catholic Old Testament*, but I answered. *I studied Old Testament with Roland Murphy, O. Carm. and New Testament with Christian Ceroke, O. Carm. for four years.*

Just the kind of priest Nielson would hire, he grumbled.

Niels C. Nielsen, Jr., who had hired me, founded and chaired the Religious Studies Department at Rice University. He was an institution at the university and in Houston. His reputation was built on creating strong relationships with faith based communities in the city. *We are here to serve these good people,* he would say, *..not antagonize them.* He had wrongly

assumed that Bishop Morkovsky would be pleased to have a priest with a Ph.D. teaching an Ivy League school like Rice.

Did you receive permission from me to say Mass in the diocese?

Yes, I answered.

Good.

The interview ended as quickly as it had begun with me still standing in front of the bishop's desk.

As I stepped out of the door of the bishop's office, I saw Msgr. Fiorenza sitting at his desk, strategically placed, I assumed, to spot casualties emerging from their meetings with the bishop.

He was on the phone. Nonetheless, he waved me over to his desk, motioned for me to take a seat while he finished his phone call. When he hung up the phone, he reached across the desk shook my hand, and said: *Don, it is good to see you again.*

He remembered my name. He asked me about my work at the university, and ended with words of appreciation that became the routine with which our meetings over the next many years would close.

Don, I appreciate what you are doing for our students at Rice. Thank you for representing Catholics there.

Whether at clergy gatherings or when he was on campus to offer a benediction at commencement, Bishop Fiorenza always sought me out, asked about my work, and thanked me for my presence in the diocese and at the university. He acknowledged me both as a priest and as a scholar. I felt wanted. I felt needed. I was glad to be where I was and doing what I was doing. My one-year appointment at the university was renewed annually for more than 20 years. During all that time I basked in the acceptance and appreciation of that good man.

My experience of Bishop Fiorenza was my experience of so many priests who inspired me to become a priest. He was good; he was hard working; he was pastoral; and he was kind to me. I would say much the same about Bishop Markovsky -- who softened his approach to me as time went along -- and Bishop John E. McCarthy, who also served in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston.

In 1997 I accepted a position as the dean of the Kino Institute of Theology for the laity in the Catholic Diocese of Phoenix. Then Bishop Fiorenza wrote Thomas J. O'Brien, bishop of Phoenix, a letter of recommendation. The gesture was not necessary, but it was another welcomed endorsement by him of me.

Although I should have known that all bishops are not created equal I was completely unprepared and ultimately completely unsuccessful at working with Bishop O'Brien, who was both embarrassingly anti-clerical and admittedly anti-intellectual. By nature he was a shy and anti-social man who disliked being around people; most of all he disliked being around his own priests including me. He was also unlearned and threatened by learning. He liked to joke that he only read one book a year – on vacation. He would announce the titles at his meetings with me and the other directors of diocesan ministries. *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* by Thomas Cahill (1997) was one summer's selection. O'Brien considered my scholarship to be pride, not a profession.

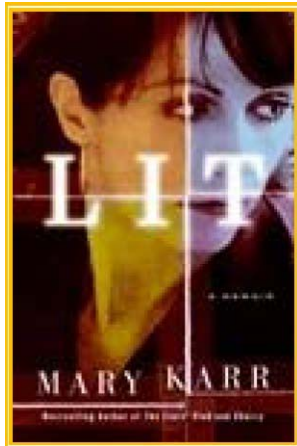
Bishop O'Brien's director of education, Dolorette Farias, a School Sister of Notre Dame, once tried to counsel me: *Don't think your Ph.D. means anything.*

Of course it does, I protested. In 2000 only 1.2% of the population in the US held Ph.D.s (National Center for Educational Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest>). She walked away.

Bishop O'Brien never acknowledged me as a priest or as a scholar. I never felt wanted in his diocese. I never felt needed. I was unhappy to be where I was and doing what I was doing. What a difference words – both kind and unkind -- make.

Lit: A Memoir.

By Mary Karr (2009)



In *Lit*, the long-awaited sequel to her *New York Times* bestselling memoirs *The Liars' Club* and *Cherry*, Mary Karr chronicles her descent into the inferno of alcoholism and madness, and her astonishing resurrection. A recollection of her struggle to come to terms with her Christian faith after years as an agnostic that explores the relationship between spirituality and substance abuse and depression, *Lit* is also about getting drunk and getting sober; becoming a mother by letting go of a mother; and learning to write by learning to live.

Mary Karr was born in January 1955 in Texas, the daughter of J. P. Karr, an oil refinery worker, and Charlie Marie Karr, an artist and business owner. She had a difficult childhood which she describes in *The Liars' Club* and she left home when she was seventeen. Karr enrolled at Macalester College in St. Paul MN but left after two years in order to travel. In 1978, she was admitted to Goddard College in Vermont where she met writers Tobias Wolff and Frank Conroy, both of whom encouraged her to write.



5/15/2013 5:31 AM
12/8/2014 3:27 PM

Shavuot

One of my most endearing memories of my years of teaching at Rice University in Houston was being invited to celebrate Shavuot. The Jewish community would gather at Temple Emanu El across the street from campus for a night of Torah study. Participants would gather into minyans at tables in the hall at sunset. Every hour throughout the night a presenter would begin with a short introduction to a section of Tanak, and then each minyan would discuss what divine gift the tradition brought into the community. The study ended with worship at dawn.

I was the only presenter who was not a rabbi, and who was not even Jewish. I was honored with that community's trust. My teaching slot was usually in the early hours of morning – 2 or 3 AM. Difficult time to begin a workday!

The challenge of the early hour was softened by the ritual of the blintzes. Women of the temple baked the most exquisite pancakes which were usually

served during the pause after my sessions. I never see or eat a blintze today without remembering those wonderful times celebrating the gift of Torah – as a stranger in a strange but wonderful land.

11/11/2014 1:00 PM
11/13/2014 6:34 AM
11/17/2014 6:11 AM

Veterans' Day

Today is Veterans' Day – November 11. Soldiering was a common commitment for the Benjamin, the Beltz and the Benkosky families.

Because I grew up in a military family, I assumed that all families, especially during wartime, had someone in the military. Then one year at a memorial service on Veterans' Day – before the Gulf Wars -- the members of our small *Upper Room* community, which met on Sunday mornings, were invited to name the members of their family who had served in the military. I was the only one in the room related to a soldier. I was amazed, as I called our family's role.

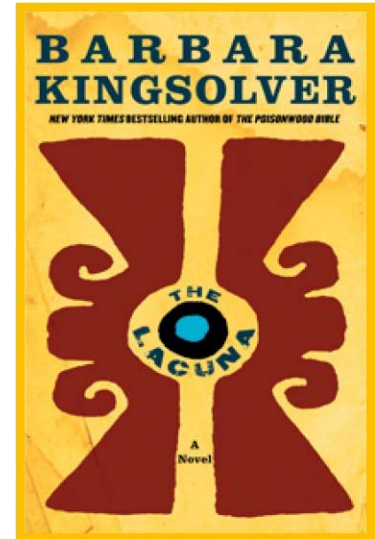
My mother's great uncles (War Between the States)
My father's father: Pvt. James B. Benjamin (Spanish American War)
My mother's father: Sgt. Walter Porter Beltz (Spanish American War)
My mother's aunt (WW I)
My mother's uncle (WW I)
My father: Lt. Col. Don C. Benjamin (WWII, Korea)
My mother's brother in law: Col. Stephen W. Benkosky (WWII)
My mother's nephew: Frank T. Benkosky (WW II)
My mother's nephew: Lt. Col. Stephen W. Benkosky (Korea)
My sister's husband: Raymond Jean Leimkuhler (Vietnam)
My cousin's husband: Jose Perez Chiesa (Korea)
My niece: Cynthia Justina White

The Lacuna

by Barbara Kingsolver (2009)

The Lacuna is a poignant story of a man pulled between two nations as they invent their modern identities, told on a journey from the Mexico City of artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to the America of Pearl Harbor, FDR, and J. Edgar Hoover.

Born in the United States, reared in a series of provisional households in Mexico — from a coastal island jungle to 1930s Mexico City — Harrison Shepherd finds precarious shelter but no sense of home on his thrilling odyssey. Life is whatever he learns from housekeepers who put him to work in the kitchen, errands he runs in the streets, and one fateful day, by mixing plaster for famed Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. He discovers a passion for Aztec history and meets the exotic, imperious artist Frida Kahlo, who will become his lifelong friend. When he goes to work for Lev Trotsky, an exiled political leader fighting for his life, Shepherd inadvertently casts his lot with art and revolution, newspaper headlines and howling gossip, and a risk of terrible violence.



Meanwhile, to the north, the United States will soon be caught up in the internationalist goodwill of World War II. There in the land of his birth, Shepherd believes he might remake himself in America's hopeful image and claim a voice of his own. He finds support from an unlikely kindred soul, his stenographer, Mrs. Brown, who will be far more valuable to her employer than he could ever know. Through darkening years, political winds continue to toss him between north and south in a plot that turns many times on the unspeakable breach—the lacuna—between truth and public presumption.

“Unlike some authors who begin with a period of history they're fascinated with, or a voice that starts speaking to them, she begins with a big question. A "big question so compelling that everyone would be compelled by it." Then she begins to write her way to "some sort of illumination" for herself and her readers.” (Britt Kaufmann, Interesting Theory (on-line))

Barbara Kingsolver was born on April 8, 1955. Other than a brief time (1963) spent in a small village in central Congo, she grew up "in the middle of an alfalfa field," in the part of eastern Kentucky.



Kingsolver has always been a storyteller: "I used to beg my mother to let me tell her a bedtime story." As a child, she wrote stories and essays and, beginning at the age of eight, kept a journal religiously.

Kingsolver left Kentucky to attend DePauw University (IN) where she majored in biology. She also took one creative writing course, and became active in the last anti-Vietnam War protests. After graduating in 1977, Kingsolver lived and worked in widely scattered places. In the early eighties, she pursued graduate studies in biology and ecology at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she received a Master of Science degree. She also enrolled in a writing class taught by author Francine Prose.

Kingsolver's fiction is rich with the language and imagery of her native Kentucky. But when she first left home, she says, "I lost my accent . . . [P]eople made terrible fun of me for the way I used to talk, so I gave it up slowly and became something else." After graduate school, a position as a science writer for the University of Arizona soon led her into feature writing for journals and newspapers.

From 1985 through 1987, Kingsolver was a freelance journalist by day, but she was writing fiction by night. Married to a chemist in 1985, she suffered from insomnia after becoming pregnant the following year. Instead of following her doctor's recommendation to scrub the bathroom tiles with a toothbrush, Kingsolver sat in a closet and began to write *The Bean Trees*, a novel about a young woman who leaves rural Kentucky (accent intact) and finds herself living in urban Tucson.

The Bean Trees (1988), and reissued in a special ten-year anniversary hardcover edition in 1998, was enthusiastically received by critics.

For Kingsolver, writing is a form of political activism. When she was in her twenties she discovered Doris Lessing. "I read the *Children of Violence* novels and began to understand how a person could write about the problems of the world in a compelling and beautiful way. And it seemed to me that was the most important thing I could ever do, if I could ever do that."

The Bean Trees was followed by the collection, *Homeland and Other Stories* (1989), the novels *Animal Dreams* (1990), and *Pigs in Heaven* (1993), and the bestselling *High Tide in Tucson: Essays from Now and Never* (1995). Kingsolver has also published a collection of poetry, *Another America: Otra America* (Seal Press, 1992, 1998), and a nonfiction book, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (ILR Press/Cornell University Press, 1989, 1996). In 1998 she published *The Poisonwood Bible*, a story of the wife and four daughters of a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family

and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. A tale of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction, over the course of three decades in post-colonial Africa, *The Poisonwood Bible* is set against one of history's most dramatic political parables. It is a compelling exploration of religion, conscience, imperialist arrogance and the many paths to redemption—and Barbara Kingsolver's most ambitious work ever.

Barbara Kingsolver used to live outside Tucson but now lives in Southern Appalachia with her husband Steven Hopp, and her two daughters, Camille and Lily.

Given that Barbara Kingsolver's novels cover the psychic and geographical territories that she knows firsthand, readers often assume that they are autobiographical. However, Kingsolver says that this is not the case. She acknowledges that "there are little things that people who know me might recognize in my novels ... but my work is not about me. I don't ever write about real people. That would be stealing, first of all. Second of all, art is supposed to be better than that. If you want a slice of life, look out the window. An artist has to look out that window, isolate one or two suggestive things, and embroider them together with poetry and fiction, to create a revelation. If we can't, as artists, improve on real life, we should put down our pencils and go bake bread."

11/20/2014 7:06 AM

Walter P. Beltz Sargent, U.S. Army

Ms. Edith's father, Walter P. Beltz fought in the Boxer Rebellion in China (1898-1890) and the Spanish American War (1898-1901) at the battle of San Juan Hill in Puerto Rico.

Grandpa Beltz died before Don Sr. and Ms. Edith married. Ms. Edith told me he probably died of a kidney failure. He got seriously ill after supper, and so they called the doctor. The doctor told them to give him some bicarbonate of soda, and that he would come by the house to examine him the next morning.

Ms. Edith sat beside her father's bed throughout the night. The two talked. Finally, he said to her: *Kid, when it gets light I am going to go.*

Kid was her father's pet name for Ms. Edith.

Just as dawn was approaching, Edith looked up from her father to see a breeze blowing through the open window and waving the lace curtains her mother had sown for the bedroom windows. She remembered thinking: *He's gone. That breeze was my father's soul leaving the house.*

Ms. Edith looked back to her father, and he was dead.

Barrett, the Honors College at ASU

RE: Fall 2010?

[Margaret Nelson](#)

Sent: **Sunday, April 18, 2010 8:31 PM**

To: [Don Benjamin](#)

Don,

I don't know right now. We will have a rough estimate of enrollment numbers by the end of May and I'll know more then. Sorry not to be able to answer. I will say that I don't anticipate a need at this point. Thanks for all you are doing for Barrett students.

Sincerely, Peggy

Margaret C. Nelson

Vice Dean, Barrett Honors College

Professor, School of Human Evolution and Social Change

PO Box 871612

Tempe, AZ 85287-1612

(480) 965-9520

(480) 965-0760 FAX

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Benjamin

Sent: **Tuesday, April 13, 2010 10:55 AM**

To: Margaret Nelson

Subject: Fall 2010?

Hi Peggy,

Do you know yet if you will be offering me any sections of 171 in Fall 2010?

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Near Eastern Studies

Arizona State University, Tempe 85287-3104
School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies
Barrett, the Honors College at ASU
<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Wednesday, June 09, 2010

Hi Don,

I hope your summer is going well. Peggy has designated your office as an office for one of our new faculty members in the fall. As such we would appreciate it if you could have your things moved out by the end of the month, so that we can prepare the room for him. Once you are moved out you can turn your keys into me. Please let me know if you have any questions, thanks,

Karen

Karen G. Mascia
Secretary, Office of the Dean
Barrett, The Honors College
Arizona State University
(480) 965-8042

Sent: Tuesday, June 08, 2010 2:39 PM

So it ends. Not with a phone call or e-mail from Peggy Nelson, the vice dean, or from Mark Jacobs, the dean, but a friendly e-mail from an admin.

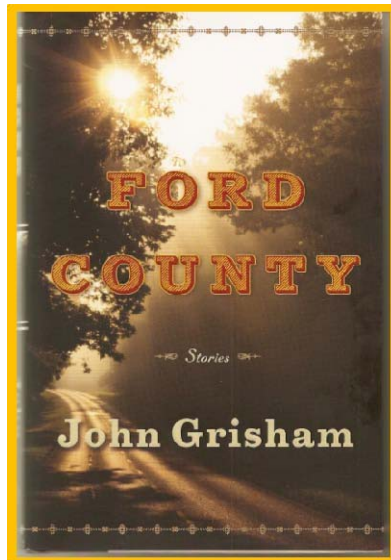
You may think that a job matters because it enables you to bring home a paycheck. It does not. Barrett, the Honors College at ASU was paying me \$3,000 for each Human Event section (20 students) – a Great Books reading course – plus a really nice office. I could make more money working the same number of hours as the night manager at Circle-K convenience stores. In Arizona Circle-K pays its retail managers \$30,000-\$40,000!

From 2007-2010, I taught one or two sections each semester at Barrett. It seemed truly insensitive not to have anyone say *thank you*.

Ford County Stories

by John Grisham (2009)

John Grisham's first collection of short stories is set in Ford County MS, the setting of his first novel, *A Time to Kill*. Featuring a cast of unforgettable characters, these stories bring Ford County to vivid and colorful life. Often hilarious, frequently moving, and always entertaining, this collection makes it abundantly clear why John Grisham is such a popular storyteller.



Grisham was born in Jonesboro AR February 8, 1955. His father, a cotton farmer and itinerant construction worker moved the family frequently, from town to town throughout the Deep South, settling in Southaven MS in 1967. Although his parents lacked formal education, his mother encouraged him to read and insisted that he prepare himself for college. After graduating from the University of Mississippi law school, he returned to Southaven and established a small private legal practice. He was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1983.

For years, Grisham arrived at his office at five o'clock in the morning, six days a week, to work on his first book, *A Time To Kill*. His manuscript was rejected by 28 publishers before he found an unknown publisher who was willing to print a short run.

At age 36, his career as a novelist bloomed when movie rights to *The Firm* were sold, even before the book had found a publisher. *The Firm* sold more than seven million copies and spent 47 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list.

Today, Grisham, his wife and two children, keep homes in Oxford MS and near Charlottesville VA. Apart from his writing, Grisham is a generous supporter of Little League teams in Oxford and Charlottesville and has endowed writing scholarship at the University of Mississippi. He is also a board member of the Innocence Project, an organization that promotes the use of DNA evidence to exonerate the wrongly convicted.



11/23/2014 3:00 PM

Stephen W. Benkosky, Jr. Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army

Stephen W. Benkosky, Jr. (March 27, 1927-- June 15, 1981) whom we called *Benny*, was also career military and much decorated for his combat courage. He was the younger son, but he, and not his older brother Frank, was named for his father. Online discussions often confuse Uncle Ben with his son, and my cousin, Benny.

The Korean War Casualty File Summary notes:_

1st Lieutenant Stephen W Benkosky from North Carolina. Service number O-1897768. Benkosky was enlisted as 1st Lieutenant, Armored, Field Communications Chief, Ab Div Abrn Rgt, Organized Reserve Corps ORC. Government archival records show as a casualty on November 29, 1950 in North Korea Sector. Status of the incident is listed as "Seriously Wounded in Action by Missile Returned to Duty FECOM.
<http://www.koreanwarcasualties.org/index.php?page=directory&rec=42080&do=ab>

An online post also notes:

These dog tags belonged to [Lt.] Colonel Stephen W. Benkosky who served as the Assistant Chief of Staff, G2, Headquarters, Combined Command Reconnaissance Activities Korea (CCRACK) from February 1952 until August 1953. This unit was responsible for Special Operations Partisan missions in North Korea and COL Benkosky was one of the units Senior Intelligence Officers. The tags are marked "BENKOSKY, STEPHEN W, O-28852 , T51 , AB , C " Also included are copies of his Bronze Star Citation and retirement biography that I received from the Army when I was researching the tags. Nice set of dog tags from a very

special unit. (<http://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/korean-war-dog-tags-of-colonel-stephen-benkosky>)

Benny's most heroic exploit, as I remember it, was an operation like that celebrated in *A Bridge too Far* (1977) directed by Richard Attenborough. In Korea Benny commanded the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team with the 82nd Airborne Division in 1952-1953 which parachuted behind enemy lines. The mission was to link to another unit advancing from US lines. The mission failed, Benny's unit was surrounded. Benny refused to surrender, was seriously wounded, and suffered extensive casualties. Nonetheless, he and his surviving paratroopers fought their way back to US lines. I remember being at his Bronze Star ceremony and listening to the reading of his commendation with such pride.

In retirement Benny took a job as the director of a federal program intended to break the cycle of poverty for the long term unemployed. The strategy was to take orders from local industry for a certain number of workers with certain skills. For example, if a North Carolina employer needed a dozen industrial sewing machine operators, Benny's program would train a dozen industrial sewing machine operators. Benny's program thrived even though it failed across most of the country.

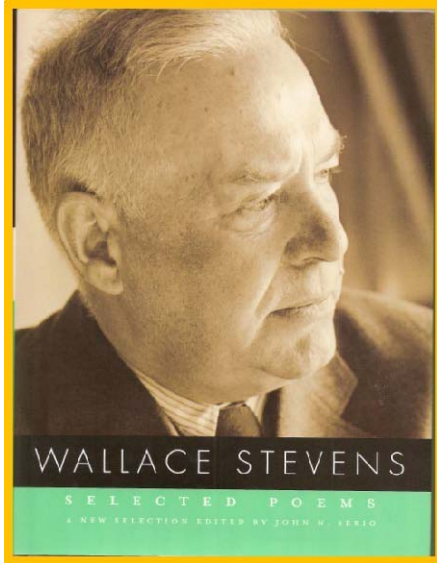
I do not remember Benny as a social liberal, but he did a great job with the people of color in his program. When they graduated he told them to take their jobs seriously, or they would have to answer to him. He told their employers that if any of his graduates were late to work, or did not do the job expected of them, they were to call him. When Benny got a call, he went straight to his student's home, pulled him out of bed or sobered him up, and took him back to the job.

Ms. Edith went to Benny's funeral. She told me how inspiring it was to see two such different communities paying their respects to Benny. His military community – mostly white and middle class; his war on poverty community – mostly Black and poor, stood together at his grave. I was proud of him.

Lt. Col. Stephen W. Benkosky is buried in the Main Post cemetery at Ft. Bragg, NC (Row- 15 Plot- I 400-A). His wife Mary Alyce (June 29, 1922 – August 10, 2012) is buried with him. Mary Alyce was previously married to another soldier, Tech Sgt Otto Fletcher, Jr. with whom she had two sons – Jeffrey and James. Benny and Mary Alyce had no children.

Collected Poems

By Wallace Stevens (1955)



Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) was born in Reading PA. He attended Harvard University and planned to travel to Paris as a writer, but after a working briefly as a reporter for the *New York Herald Times*, he decided to study law. Though he had serious determination to become a successful lawyer, Stevens had several friends among the New York writers and painters in Greenwich Village, including the poets William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore and E.E. Cummings.

Stevens moved to Connecticut in 1916 to work for Hartford Accident and Indemnity and eventually became its vice president. He had begun to establish an identity for himself outside the world of law and business, however, and his first book of poems, *Harmonium*, published in 1923, exhibited the influence of both the English Romantics and the French symbolists, aesthetic philosophy, and a wholly original style and sensibility: exotic, whimsical, infused with the light and color of an Impressionist painting.

More than any other 20th century poet, Stevens was concerned with the transformative power of the imagination. Composing poems on his way to and from the office and in the evenings, Stevens continued to spend his days behind a desk at the office, and led a quiet, uneventful life. He did not receive widespread recognition until the publication of his *Collected Poems*, just a year before his death. His major works include *Ideas of Order* (1935), *The Man with the Blue Guitar* (1937), *Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction* (1942), and a collection of essays on poetry, *The Necessary Angel* (1951).

11/24/2014 8:45 AM

Frank T. Benkosky

(1924-1968)

Betty F. Benkosky (1923-2010), 87, retired legal secretary, died Friday, February 19, 2010. Rosary, 7 p.m., Thursday, February 25, Downing & Lahey Mortuary West. Service, 10:30 a.m., Friday, February 26, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Preceded in death by husband, Frank; brother, Vincent

Jones. Survivors: daughter and son-in-law, Janet and Dr. David Robl of Wichita; granddaughter, Dr. Megan Robl of Detroit, MI; sisters and brothers-in-law, Rosalee and Clyde Wood and Donna and Willis Baker. Memorials established with St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, 7335 W. 33rd St. N., Wichita, KS 67205 and Wichita Children's Home, 810 N. Holyoke, Wichita, KS 67207. She is buried in El Paso Cemetery, Derby KS.

I remember Frank as the family maverick. His father and brother both joined the Army, and served with distinction. Frank was drafted, and, as he irreverently put it, -- *bled on the commode for his country* – referring to the dysentery common among troops in the Pacific Theater.

Frank blamed President Roosevelt for knowing that Japan was planning to attack Pearl Harbor, but allowed the attack to occur in order to get a popular mandate for the US to enter WW II.

At a family gathering at the home of Walt and Lydia Beltz, my aunt and uncle, in Parkville MO we ran short of something, and Frank offered to make a run to the store. I was small, but he took me with him. Frank always had showy cars. When the clerk handed Frank his change there was a Roosevelt dime. He threw the coins at her shouting: *Don't give me money with that SOB's picture on it*. The coin was first minted in 1946. Prior to that the dime had a Liberty head on it. As a kid I was both stunned, and delighted with our adventure.

Frank and Ms. Edith had a special relationship. She loved his flair, and he loved showing off for his favorite cousin. She enjoyed telling the story about when he came by her house in a white Buick convertible, and took her for a ride.

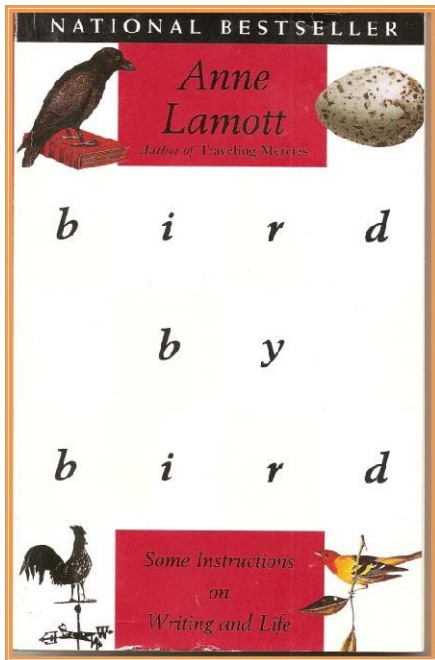
Frank was deployed to the Philippines. He was a gunner on a bomber assigned to fly along the China coast as a warning to the Japanese. Because the attack on Pearl Harbor had left US troops without adequate supplies, Frank did not have ammunition for his gun. He used to grumble that kid with a slingshot could have taken down his plane.

Frank was the first in the family to earn a Ph.D. in psychology. He worked for Boeing Aircraft Company in Wichita KS as a company negotiator with their union employees.

Frank was also the first in the family to earn serious money, which unlike the other members of the family, he enjoyed spending. He drove fast cars, drank expensive liquor and smoked Cuban cigars. He died as he lived on a hunting trip in Canada.

Bird by Bird: some instructions on writing and life

by Anne Lamott (1994)



"Thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write [it] was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, 'Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.'"

With this basic instruction always in mind, Anne Lamott returns to offer us a new gift: a step-by-step guide on how to write and on how to manage the writer's life. From "Getting Started," with "Short Assignments," through "Shitty First Drafts," "Character," "Plot," "Dialogue," all the way from "False Starts" to "How Do You Know When You're Done?"

Lamott encourages, instructs, and inspires. She discusses "Writer's Block," "Writing Groups," and "Publication." Bracingly honest, she is also one of the funniest people alive.

If you have ever wondered what it takes to be a writer, what it means to be a writer, what the contents of your school lunches said about what your parents were really like, this book's for you. From faith, love, and grace to pain, jealousy, and fear, Lamott insists that you keep your eyes open, and then shows you how to survive. And always, from the life of the artist she turns to the art of life.

Anne Lamott was born in San Francisco (1954). She has authored novels and works of non-fiction. She is also a progressive political activist, an acclaimed public speaker and a teacher of writing. Her works are largely autobiographical, with strong doses of self-deprecating humor, marked by their transparency. She writes about her alcoholism, single motherhood, and Christianity. "I try to write the books I would love to come upon, that are honest, concerned with real lives, human hearts, spiritual transformation, families, secrets, wonder, craziness — and that can make me laugh. When I am reading a book like this, I feel rich and profoundly relieved to be in the

presence of someone who will share the truth with me, and throw the lights on a little, and I try to write these kinds of books. Books, for me, are medicine."

Lamott is a graduate of Drew School (San Francisco CA). Her father, Kenneth Lamott, was also a writer and was the basis of her first novel *Hard Laughter*. She has one son, Sam, who was born in 1990. Lamott's life is documented in Freida Lee Mock's 1999 documentary *Bird by Bird with Annie: A Film Portrait of Writer Anne Lamott*. Lamott is a writer who captures well the style of narrative nonfiction called "particularism", coined by Howard Freeman.

Jose Perez-Chiesa

U.S. Army, 1st Cavalry
(1923-2000)

My cousin Addie married Jose Perez Chiesa (May 15, 1923-March 13, 2000) from Puerto Rico. Jose was an officer in the First Cavalry. I remember a picture of Jose and Addie leaving the chapel after their wedding. They are walking under a pergola created by Jose's fellow officers with their raised and inverted ceremonial swords.

Jose's obituary says Jose served during World War II and the Korea War. He would have been only 16 years old in 1939. I only know that he served and was wounded in Korea, not in WWII.

I remember Jose telling stories about Don Sr. Jose was wounded during the winter, and my Dad traveled to the MASH unit with blankets and winter socks for Jose. Jose called Don Sr. a *Combat Santa*. He rigged a refrigerator in the back of his jeep which gave it a clearly recognizable profile. Soldiers could see his *sleigh* coming. Although Don Sr. did not drink, the fridge was always full of beer and other luxury treats for soldiers on the front.

Jose is buried in Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio TX (Sec 26; site 1754).

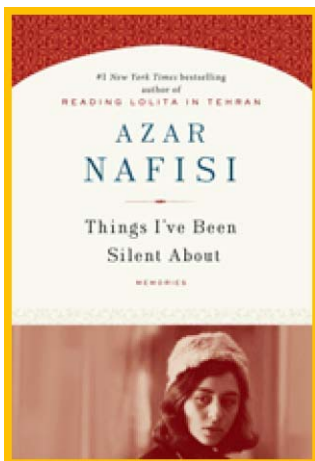
Adelaide Perez-Chiesa died January 20, 2014 in Dallas, TX. She is proceeded in death by her parents Colonel and Mrs. Stephen Benkosky, brothers Frank and Stephen Benkosky, Jr., and her husband. Adelaide was born July 8, 1928 in Fort Riley, KS. Addie, as she was known to her friends and family, resided in San Antonio for most of her life. She was active in her community and volunteered on a regular basis at Elrod Elementary School in San Antonio, TX, where her grandchildren once attended. Addie and husband, Jose, were honored in 1996 by Northside Independent School District with the Tribute to Aging and Human Spirit award given to senior citizens who have not allowed aging to stop their growth and capacity for service. They were recognized for enhancing the

education of students at Elrod Elementary, which was work both she and her husband were tremendously proud of. Addie's pride and joy were her husband, her children, and especially her grandchildren. She was loved and admired for her gumption, sense of humor, creativity, and burning of the biscuits. She is survived by her children Addie Perez and Jose Perez, who lovingly cared for her in her later years, and her daughter, Kathy Colvard. She is also survived by her adoring grandchildren, Aubrey Labanowski and husband John, and Caity Colvard; sister, Sally Ann Brown, nephew Martin Furlow and his husband Michael, niece Laura Tucker, Dr. & Mrs Dave Robl, as well as various (and numerous) friends and relatives.

Things I Have Been Silent About: Memories

by Azar Nafisi (2009)

Azar Nafisi is best known as the author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, a compassionate and harrowing portrait of the Islamic revolution in Iran and how it affected Nafisi, a university professor and her female students. The book is an exploration of the transformative powers of fiction in a world of tyranny. Her *Republic of the Imagination* is about the power of literature to liberate minds and peoples.



Nafisi lives in Washington, D.C. and is a visiting professor of aesthetics, culture, and literature at Johns Hopkins University where she also teaches courses on the relation between culture and politics.

Things I Have Been Silent About: Memories is a story of growing up in Iran, memories of her life lived in thrall to a powerful and complex mother, against the background of a country's political revolution. A girl's pain over family secrets; a young woman's discovery of the power of sensuality in literature; the price a family pays for freedom in a country beset by political

upheaval.

Nafisi's intelligent and complicated mother, disappointed in her dreams of leading an important and romantic life, created mesmerizing fictions about herself, her family, and her past. But her daughter soon learned that these narratives of triumph hid as much as they revealed. Nafisi's father escaped into narratives of another kind, enchanting his children with the classic tales like the Shahnamah, the Persian Book of Kings. When her father started seeing other women, young Azar began to keep his secrets from her mother. Nafisi's complicity in these childhood dramas ultimately led her to resist remaining silent about other personal, as well as political, cultural, and social, injustices.

Things I've Been Silent About is a deeply personal reflection on women's choices, and on how Nafisi found the inspiration for a different kind of life.



Raymond Jean Leimkuhler

USMC

(1944-2014)

My sister Cynthia married a Marine – Raymond Jean Leimkuhler (1944-2014). Among all the military professionals in the family, Jean was the only Rambo or Chuck Norris. The rest were simply patriots who served without heroics. Jean served three tours in the Vietnam War (1959-1975), and specialized in one-man reconnaissance missions.

Jean is cited in the following blog: *In the German language (which I speak) the formal translation into German for "US Marines" literally translates "the American SS". According to a US Marine, who loved to study history and did so at New York University and the New York Public Library Archives, this was because, in the German View, both the US Marines and the Waffen SS were "storm troops" (assault troops). The Marine's name was Raymond Jean Leimkuhler, and he was the last of a long line of German professional soldiers. [Last because no others survived WWII]* (Message edited by el cid 9/10/2014 4:59:49 AM <http://www.matrixgames.com/forums/tm.asp?m=3693526>)

To my knowledge, Jean did not fight in WWII. He did admire the German military, and was cited as a NY City police officer for modifying his own uniform in imitation of the German SS – jack boots, leather jacket.

Jean considered all judges to be compromised left wing radicals. Therefore, if someone in his precinct, which I think was depicted in the movie *Ft Apache, the Bronx*, complained to him about a robbery, he would ask: *Do you know who did it?* If the person did, he would tell them to round up some friends and wait for him at the outdoor basketball courts at the Christian Brothers' High School. Jean and his partner would pick up the suspect, drive to the school, and turn him over to the complainant to administer vigilante justice.

Jean went through patrol partners one after the other. He also rolled on every call as if it had been reported as top priority. One story he told me. He and a new partner were responding to a call which the dispatcher had coded as a barroom brawl. When Jean pulled up to the bar, it turned out to be a mob hit. Two cars with four officers who had arrived before him were already dead. The bad guys sprayed his car with automatic weapons' fire mortally wounding his partner. As Jean low crawled from the cruiser he shouted back to his partner: *Before you die, get on that radio and tell the dispatcher what the hell we are dealing with here.* Using the illegal grade ammunition he always carried, Jean took out all the bad guys, and had the situation under control before backup arrived. He was nominated for a commendation, which made its way up the change of command until someone realized that they were going to decorate an officer for any number of department violations.

Jean regularly appeared on the list of NYPD officers cited for excessive use of force in carrying out their duties. He considered the recognition an acknowledgement for doing a good job for the people of NYC.

Jean was a firm believer in the right to bear arms. When I was visiting Jean and Cynthia for the baptism of one of their younger children, there were guns all over the house – on the dresser, on the coffee table. I have a memory of rushing into the bathroom for a bowel emergency, and only after I had plopped down on the commode, did I remember seeing a gun on top of the water box behind me.

Even when Jean was walking around the house in shorts and a T shirt, he had a gun in his butt crack. When I asked him if he worried one of the kids would play with the guns, and hurt themselves or someone else, he told. *They know if they touched one of my guns, I would kill them!* Curious response.

During the entire weekend celebration, I never met anyone who was not either a police officer or a fire fighter. I asked Jean if he and Cynthia had any friends who were not in law enforcement. He told me it was just easier for law enforcement folks to hang out together – they knew the rules. He said that during the holidays, he and Cynthia were in NYC for a party at a friend's

apartment. Cynthia went into the bedroom to use the bathroom, and one of the guests was going through the coats and purses on the bed. She started screaming, Jean responded and, even though off duty, arrested and cuffed the perpetrator. *You don't get invited back after you arrest one of your host's guests*, he said.

Jean seems to have signed the following petition which I have edited for length.

2006 Repeal of section 658 of Public Law 104-208

Target: United States Congress

Author: Chris Nolan (cnolan1225@metrocast.net)

URL: <http://www.petitionspot.com/petitions/Lautenbergrepeal/>

(1) Domestic Violence remains a very serious problem in the United States. It is a dangerous crime and should be punished as such, including, where appropriate, as a felony.

(2) Many States have classified Domestic Violence crimes as misdemeanors, others as felonies. States are the proper authority, rather than the Federal Government, to classify Domestic Violence offenses.

(3) Where appropriate, States should classify Domestic Violence offenses as a felony.

(4) Section 658 of Public Law 104-208, commonly referred to as the Lautenberg amendment, oversteps Federal authority, violating States' rights, because no nexus has been shown to exist between Domestic Violence and interstate commerce.

(5) The Lautenberg amendment does not deal with a subject delegated to Congress under article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States and is therefore unconstitutional under the tenth amendment to the Constitution, as interpreted by United States v. Lopez.

(6) The Lautenberg amendment oversteps Congress's power to regulate commerce as delineated by the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution.

(7) Some of the strictest gun control laws are found in cities where the number of incidents of guns being used in violent crimes is the highest. Therefore, the Lautenberg amendment does not reduce incidents of domestic violence.

(11) Law-abiding citizens use guns to defend themselves against criminals as many as 2.5 million times every year. Of these self-defense cases, as many as 200,000 are by women defending themselves against sexual assault.

(12) Section 658 of the Treasury-Postal portion of Public Law 104-208 will, if allowed to stand, result in the disarming of millions of citizens, including women, on account of misdemeanor offenses which, in many cases, were committed long before the effective date of that Act.

(13) Section 658 of the Treasury-Postal portion of Public Law 104-208 will, in many cases, disarm battered women who need access to firearms in order to protect themselves from their battering spouses as well as from common criminals.

SIGNATURES

205. raymond jean leimkuhler (4/30/07) -

206. E. Bergeron (4/30/07) - FEAR THE GOVERNMENT THAT FEARS YOUR GUN

207. andrew smith (4/30/07) - this Lautenberg amendment was a ploy to get the female (N.O.W.) vote for slick willy...its high time this ex-post-facto trash be done away with. it was done for votes and has nothing to do with preventing domestic violence

208. Pamela Ellis (4/30/07) - Wave your flag but NEVER WAIVE YOUR RIGHTS.

211. Lisa Chamberlin (4/30/07) - We all deserve the right to defend ourselves against those who mean us harm. In some cases, that means the ability to legally carry a weapon. Those who have committed a crime of violence, not in self-defense, should be stripped of their right to carry a weapon as they have proven the willingness to harm others.

215. jeffrey lance (4/30/07) - Gun control enabled the VA Tech massacre because the good people follow the rules, therefore, there were no guns in the hands of good people, making the killer king.

217. John Freeman (4/30/07) - Rights come from the Creator and cannot be taken by men!

224. Rahn K. Lawson (4/30/07) - I support the United States Constitution and reject criminal activity and fraud committed under color of law done by the current criminals holding government office. These people are traitors to the United States of America and are not upholding their oath of office.

230. Charles Davis (4/30/07) - Gun control is not the answer we have enough laws ENFORCE them.

231. John Luszcz (4/30/07) - It's time for states to stop ignoring the US Consitution!

232. John Hassey (4/30/07) -

233. Susan Porvaznik (4/30/07) - Leave all the guns alone. Second amendment is here because look what Hitler did. History will repeat itself if we lose our rights.

241. DAVID MILHOLEN (4/30/07) - The first Law of Nature is Self Defense. Are we to be denied the right to Self Defense, because of some unconstitutional law? When are people going to use their Common Sense! Those not for us are against us!

254. Neil Evangelista (5/1/07) - The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.

255. Scott Douglass (5/1/07) - *It was bad policy to begin with, it only ended up hurting the law abiding gun owners, as usuall.About time we did something to repeal it!*

After he retired from the NYC PD, he worked as a paramedic in Middletown NY.

Jean's obituary reads:

Age 69, passed away May 7, 2014 in Murfreesboro, TN. Raymond was always proud to serve, starting as a member of the United States Marines who served in Vietnam, who later became a New York City Police Officer who retired after twenty years. Jean was raised by his mother: Natalie Marie Leimkuhler. Survived by daughter, Cynthia Justina White; sons, Jean Michael Leimkuhler and Joseph Don Leimkuhler; six grandchildren, David Lee White, Anthony Jean White, Nolan Daniel White, Joseph Lawrence Leimkuhler, Don Raymond "Buggy" Leimkuhler and Raymond Jean Leimkuhler. A Memorial service will be held at Mount Olivet Funeral Home Friday, May 9, 2014 at 2 p.m., with a visitation one hour prior.

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/tennessean/obituary.aspx?pid=170958582#sthash.VQ1rjVxU.dpuf>

Istanbul: memories and the city

by Orphan Pamuk (2003)

"NEAR the end of "Istanbul," a dissolute and errant architecture student called Orhan Pamuk sits in the family apartment with his mother -- his father is out with his mistress and his older brother, Sevkett, is studying in the United States -- while she lays out with appalling precision how his passion, which is



to paint, will lead him either to the bottle or to the asylum.

"Everyone knows that van Gogh and Gauguin were cracked," she says, and goes on:

"You'll be plagued by complexes, anxieties and resentments till the day you die."

Seized by guilt but

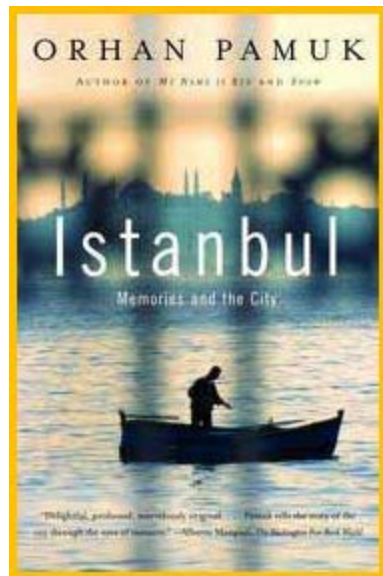
revolted by the bourgeois life his well-born mother has mapped out for him, Pamuk steps out into Istanbul's "consoling streets," but not before experiencing a dramatic conversion. In a parting shot to his mother -- and also to the reader, for these are the book's final words -- he says: "I don't want to be an artist. . . . I'm going to be a writer."

"To judge by the spasms of self-abasement that Pamuk records here -- "I belong to the living dead," he writes in a late chapter, "I am a corpse that still breathes, a wretch condemned to walk streets and pavements that can only remind me of my filth and my defeat" -- the old lady had a point. Pamuk is not a sunny memoirist, but neither is he a sunny novelist. In this memoir of his youth, as in the six novels he has set in the city, Istanbul bears only a fleeting resemblance to the smiling and vibrant place many Westerners know from vacationing there. Pamuk's hometown is rarely consoling; it is more often troubled and malicious, its voice muffled and its colors muted by snowfalls that happen more often in the author's imagination than in real life. "From a very young age I suspected there was more to my world than I could see," Pamuk writes, and so it goes. Far from a conventional appreciation of the city's natural and architectural splendors, "Istanbul" tells of an invisible melancholy and the way it acts on an imaginative young man, aggrieving him but pricking his creativity.

"As a Turk, a painter and -- eventually -- a writer, the journey Pamuk depicts in "Istanbul" lies between what many outsiders, in his sardonic observation, "like to call East and West," but which he terms past and present. The past is represented by the Ottoman Empire, a vast many-limbed polyglot whose heart once beat in Istanbul, its dazzling capital. But the empire no longer exists, and its surviving memorials -- the imperial mansions and expanses of woodland, the marble fountains and clapboard waterside villas -- are being devoured by developers, fire and neglect. The present is the Turkish Republic, Ataturk's secular, Western-oriented, homogenizing nation state, which has its seat in a big Anatolian village. Istanbul is no longer a city of consequence, let alone a world capital. It is an insular little place sinking in its own ruins, "so poor and confused that it can never again dream of rising to its former heights of wealth, power and culture."

Pamuk is himself a product of the Ataturk revolution. Born in 1952 into a quarrelsome, irreligious family, surrounded by "positivist men who loved mathematics," he grew up, as he tells us, in a family-owned apartment building in the upmarket Nisantasi district, free to read Freud and Sartre and Faulkner, drink alcohol and have a love affair -- beautifully evoked in Maureen Freely's fine translation -- with a schoolgirl. As a young painter, he saw his city through the pictorial and written accounts left by visiting Europeans, and also through four republic-era Turkish writers who have been, "at one point in their lives, dazzled by the brilliance of Western (and particularly French) art and

literature." Naturally, the reader pauses to reflect on Pamuk's own debt to the West -- on the architectonic precision of his novels, on their assured leaps from Proustian introspection to a narrative sorcery that recalls Borges and García Márquez. If, as Pamuk writes, "there is no Ottoman painting that can easily accommodate our visual tastes," it is because "we" have been schooled to see things in a different, Western way. He is drawn to the 18th-century painter Antoine-Ignace Melling because Melling "saw the city like an Istanbulu but painted it like a cleareyed Westerner."



"Pamuk's achievement in 'Istanbul' is to show the human damage done by Ataturk's revolution without succumbing to the benighted nostalgia of many Turkish Islamists. He is appalled that many secular Turks -- including, presumably, Pamuk himself -- must "grapple with the most basic questions of existence -- love, compassion, religion, the meaning of life, jealousy, hatred -- in trembling confusion and painful solitude" but he offers no solution. Mapping his own complexities, he turns to the streets of his hometown, to the "last traces of a great culture and a great civilization that we were unfit or unprepared to inherit, in our frenzy to turn Istanbul into a pale, poor, second-class imitation of a Western city." One of Pamuk's qualities is his

constant striving to be worthy of that inheritance; all his novels, and particularly "My Name Is Red," testify to the author's self-education in the Persian and Islamic origins of Ottoman culture --an education that had no place in the progressive curriculum of his private high school.

"For many secular Turks, that word "imitation" has a disagreeable resonance. Naturally, they bridle at suggestions that their pursuit of a European identity is mimicry. Pamuk is an exception, a secular Turk who has too much integrity to seek authenticity in so contrived a national mission -- which he finds exemplified in his parents' house, where the piano is untouched and the porcelain is for show and the Art Nouveau screen has nothing to hide. Again, he turns for meaning to Istanbul's decrepit outlying neighborhoods, and to the photographer Ara Guler, whose images illustrate Istanbul and who shares Pamuk's fascination with decay and snow. Above all, Pamuk identifies with his four "lonely, melancholic" Turkish writers, who use European tools to evoke a peculiarly Turkish sense of loss.

"Istanbul" is full of byways that lead the reader into Pamuk's fiction -- sometimes with a jolting literalness. The quarrels between young Orhan and Sevkett mirror the rivalry of two siblings, also called Orhan and Sevkett, in "My Name Is Red." In "Istanbul," the young Pamuk recalls reading that Flaubert

once imagined writing a novel about a Westerner and an Easterner who "come to resemble each other, finally changing places"; this happens to be the plot of Pamuk's "White Castle." But it is "Black Book," the story of a quest that begins (and ends) in a family-owned apartment building in Nisantasi, that flickers most vividly across the pages of "Istanbul." There is so much of Pamuk in the novel's solitary flâneur, Galip, and also in Galip's missing cousin, Jelal -- a collector, like Pamuk, of semihistorical trivia about Istanbul and forgotten curiosities of Turkish history. "Istanbul" stops when Pamuk is still a young man. A sequel would reflect subsequent changes. As Turkey puts its economic house in order and edges closer to European Union membership, parts of Istanbul are acquiring gentrified airs. Three formerly down-at-the-heels streets in Pamuk's beloved Beyoglu district were recently transformed into a sort of Disneyfied "French Quarter," with security guards, chic boutiques and outside tables where rich Turks can nibble Camembert and lip-sync to the Brassens soundtrack. It would be nice to hear what Pamuk thinks of that.

11/28/2014 10:51 AM

Cynthia Leimkuhler White

U.S. Army

Cynthia Justina White -- *Little Cyndy*, as we called her -- is the daughter of Raymond Jean Leimkuhler and my sister, Cynthia Jean Benjamin. Cyndy and her mother Cynthia were born on the same date: February 26. She graduated from Pine Bush High School (Pine Bush NY) in 1991.

Cyndy introduces herself on her family webpage:

I was born on Feb. 26th, 1973 in Manhattan, NY. I grew up in Middletown, NY, about 60 minutes from the city. At the age of 17 I left home after high school and traveled across the United States in my car with my dog, who sadly got lost in El Paso. At the age of 19 I entered the US Army on active duty, and went to Germany where I met my wonderful, good looking, very smart, athletic, witty, humorous, and downright sexy husband of now four years, David. (Note: The adjectives where added by David to help our viewers). While in Germany, I traveled to Holland, Spain, France, and Italy. After two years there, we were sent back to the states to Fort Polk Louisiana. While in Louisiana, I became pregnant and left the military. Shortly thereafter, we were blessed with our son David Lee White II. We then moved to North Carolina and stayed there for a year before David left the Army. A good job opened up for him in Nashville, Tennessee, so we relocated there and have been here for a two and a half years now. Since we have been here, we have experienced the addition of Justina Corinne White, and most recently, Anthony Jean White. I enjoy soccer, dancing, role-playing games, reading, and my most favorite is spending time with my family, especially weekend mornings when we all relax and play around.
<http://home.comcast.net/~dewguru/family.html>:

Cyndy and her husband, David Elwyn White, are the only two living veterans in our family.

Hello, I'm, aka DEWGuru. I'm not too sure why you'd be interested in anything about me, but since everyone else seems to have a personal info section I figure it'd only be proper for me to have one also. So here goes; I've taught myself many things in my lifetime, and I'm not listing them here anymore in fear of boring those who read this. I love my wife (Cynthia), and we've been married for over five wonderful years now. We have a beautiful boy named David Lee White II (after his grandfather on dad's side), a daughter who blessed us in Justina Corinne White, and a second wonderful boy named Anthony Jean White (after one of his uncles and his grandfather on mom's side) I have many good friends in the world, but unfortunately they are all spread out in various corners of it from Tacoma WA to Guam to Bosnia to New York and many places in between. Someday I'd like to get the chance to bring them all together in a weeklong celebration, but until I make my first million, it'll have to wait. Hmmm, I seem to of grown bored talking about myself so until I feel like talking more about myself, adios!

They have three sons (David Lee, Anthony Jean, Nolan Daniel), and a daughter, Justina Corinne, who died of AIDS.

Justina Corinne White was born on May 5, 1999. It was a beautiful day as the White clan increased its number by one. Justina spent the next seven months enriching our lives and the lives of the people she encountered. She brought happiness and made many people feel happy, for everyone that took the time to smile and hold or play with her received a pure and sincere smile from a baby who knew only love. At a time when much of the world was celebrating a successful change to the year 2000, our daughter passed away. It has been difficult at times since that day, but whenever I (or others I've talked with) look back on the time we were able to spend with Justina - we only have fond memories of a baby who made everyone smile. Our family truly appreciates the kind words and support offered by so many caring people. We only ask that you please notice the next time you see genuine love and appreciation in the smile of a baby, and know that Justina held such a smile for you.

While Cyndy was on the road, she would call Ms. Edith from time to time. She also called Ms. Edith on the day she graduated from Basic Training. *Your grandfather would be so proud that you followed in his footsteps*, Ms. Edith told her. Ms. Edith and I traveled to Ft. Polk LA for the baptism of Cyndy and David's first child, David Lee.

Cyndy and her three boys came to Ms. Edith's funeral (October 14, 2001). In the limousine on the way from Tucson to Ft. Huachuca, one of the boys had to pee. There was nothing but desert between I-10 along AZ 90 to Ft. Huachuca, so the driver pulled over to the side of the road. The little fellow was so embarrassed he could not go. The driver who had three boys of his own was so gentle with him, took him away from the limousine and helped him pee.

11/28/2014 5:28 PM

Unaccustomed Earth

By Jhumpa Lahiri (2008)

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London and reared in Rhode Island. She

now lives in Brooklyn. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, and author of two previous books. Her debut collection of stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the PEN/Hemingway Award and The New Yorker Debut of the Year.

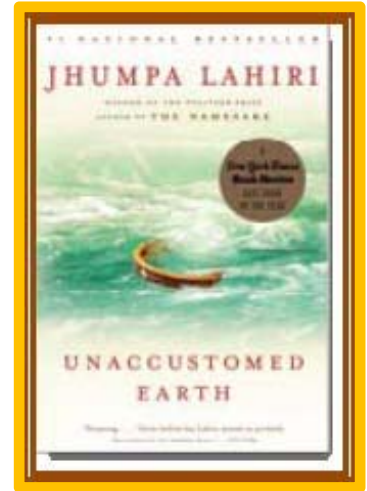


The Namesake, her first novel, begins when newlyweds Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli emigrate to Cambridge MA in 1968, where Ashima immediately gives birth to a son, Gogol – a nick name that becomes permanent when his formal name, traditionally bestowed by the maternal grandmother, is posted in a letter from India, but lost in transit.

Ashoke becomes a professor of engineering, but Ashima has a harder time assimilating, unwilling to give up her ties to India. A leap ahead to the '80s finds the teenage Gogol ashamed of his Indian heritage and his unusual name, which he sheds as he moves on to college at Yale and graduate school at Columbia, legally changing it to Nikhil. Gogol moves into the home of a family of wealthy Manhattan WASPs and is initiated into a lifestyle idealized in Ralph Lauren ads. Here, Lahiri demonstrates her considerable powers of perception and her ability to convey the discomfort of feeling *other* in a world many would aspire to inhabit.

Unaccustomed Earth is a superbly crafted new work of fiction: eight stories — longer and more emotionally complex than any she has yet written — that take us from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand as they enter the lives of sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers, daughters and sons, friends and lovers. Lahiri is a master storyteller. Her language is exquisite. With true genius she probes the challenge of belonging – *Can outsiders ever become insiders? Can any of us who build bridges between two cultures live anywhere but on the bridges we build?* The penalty for leaving home is excommunication, and the hospitality of our new culture never completely integrates us.

In the stunning title story, Ruma, a young mother in a new city, is visited by her father, who carefully tends the earth of her garden, where he and his grandson form a special bond. But he's harboring a secret from his daughter, a love affair he's keeping all to himself. In *A Choice of Accommodations*, a husband's attempt to turn an old friend's wedding into a romantic getaway weekend with his wife takes a dark, revealing turn as the party lasts deep into the night. In *Only Goodness*, a sister eager to give her younger brother the perfect childhood she never had is overwhelmed by guilt, anguish, and anger when his alcoholism threatens her family. And in *Hema and Kaushik*, a trio of linked stories — a luminous, intensely compelling elegy of life, death, love, and fate — Lahiri follows the lives of a girl and boy who, one winter, share a house in Massachusetts. They travel from innocence to experience on separate, sometimes painful paths, until destiny brings them together again years later in Rome.



11/29/2014 4:01 PM

Our Aunt in World War I

Ms Edith said she had an aunt who was the first nurse from Kansas City deployed to Europe during World War I.



The First World War began in Europe in the summer of 1914. America remained neutral until the spring of 1917 when, provoked by unrestricted German submarine warfare, it declared war on Germany and immediately began preparations for sending troops to Europe to join Britain and France in the fight against Germany. Under the aegis of the War Department, during the next year, the United States Army mobilized medical

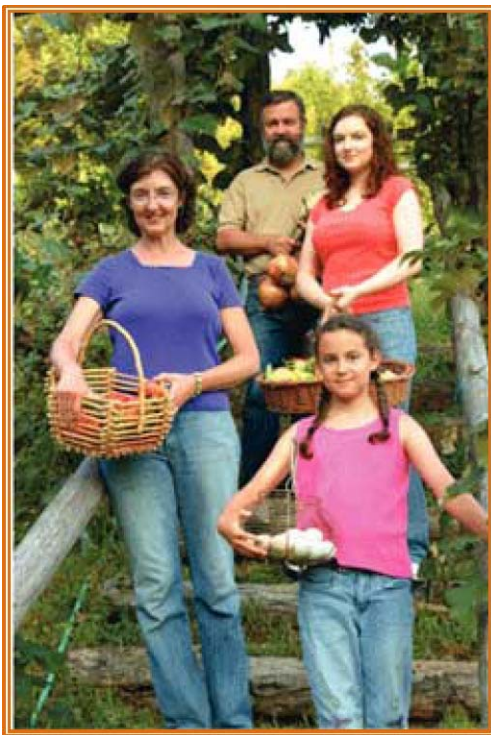
resources in major American cities to create one hundred large base hospitals that would be located many miles behind the front but immediately accessible by highly efficient ambulance trains. This website (<http://www.kumc.edu/wwi.html>) has been created to tell the story of Base Hospital #28, the 2,500 bed military base hospital that was formed by Kansas City doctors and nurses and which arrived in Limoges, France, in July 1918. During the six months of its active operation it served nearly ten thousand patients. The hospital was led by

doctors who were associated with the medical school of the University of Kansas before and after The Great War. The website will also examine unexpected medical challenges, e.g. the influenza epidemic of 1918 and gas gangrene.

Nurses who served at Base Hospital #28

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life

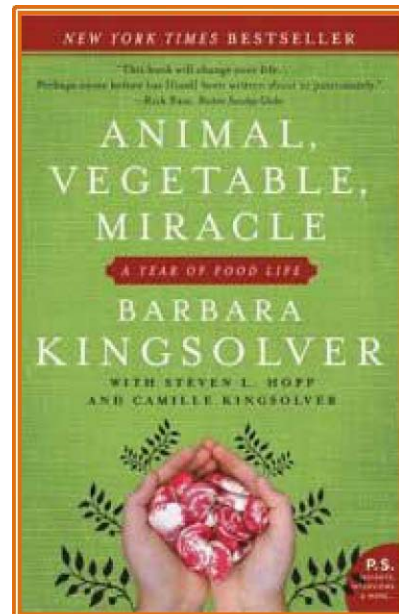
By Barbara Kingsolver (2007)



Growing up in rural Kentucky, Barbara Kingsolver did not know that she would also become a best-selling writer: *The Bean Trees* (1988), *Animal Dreams* (1990), *Another America* (1992), *Pigs in Heaven* (1993), *High Tide in Tucson* (1995), *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998), *Prodigal Summer* (2000), *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (2007), and *The Lacuna* (2009).

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle; A Year of Food Life is a memoir explaining how she and her family carried out a vow to only locally grown food for

one year and why food has become a political and environmental issue, about the challenges involved with finding a variety of local food year-round, and how the commitment ultimately changed her family's life for the better. Her family produced about 70% of what went on their table from their own farm in Virginia—everything from tomatoes to turkeys. What they could not grow they mostly bought from local farmers.



eat

Since June 2004, Barbara and her family have lived on a farm in

southern Appalachia. Barbara believes her best work is accomplished through writing, raising her children, and being an active citizen of her own community

12/6/2014 12:18 PM

Spiritual Bouquets

One year the Catholic Sister, who was our teacher, had us give at least one *spiritual bouquet* every week. In her *Catholic Craft Corner*, Paula McEneaney says that a *spiritual bouquet* is simply a list of prayers the giver has offered or will offer for the recipient. Write your spiritual bouquet on a purchased or homemade card for the special occasion, or make a card with a spiritual bouquet theme. You can even refer to the prayers as representative flowers, or make an accompanying tissue paper flower or bouquet (http://www.ewtn.com/CatholicCrafts/spiritual_bouquet.htm).

Sister would give a brief introduction to the person who would receive our bouquet that week. Then she would pass around a sheet divided into columns. We would print our names in the column on the left of the sheet, and fill in the columns to the right of our name with the numbers of prayers and good works we were going to do for our beneficiary.

Now Sister also assigned us seats in the classroom alternating boys and girls – I assume to promote good behavior. My fate was to be seated behind a girl who was an understudy for St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897). She always filled in her columns with two or even three digit numbers. She promised to say the rosary 12 times or to recite 100 aspirations or make 30 visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

The rosary was a medieval prayer form. Catholics prayed the rosary by reciting the Lord's Prayer once, and then the Hail Mary ten times, and then repeating the sequence five times while meditating on an event from the lives of Jesus or Mary described in the New Testament. Aspirations were a form of Catholic mantra like the *Jesus Prayer -- Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me* – which Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) borrowed from *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament were simply moments of quiet prayer made by Catholics in a church where the bread consecrated during Mass was reserved in a tabernacle.

In the competitive environment of third and fourth grade boys and girls at Catholic school, my honor required that I promise to do more for

our beneficiary than the girl ahead of me in the row. I wrote down numbers I knew I could never, and would never complete.

To this day I have fantasies about my own particular judgment. Somewhere in the great book is a notation that before I am able to enter heaven, I must complete all the long overdue promises in Sister's spiritual bouquets – hopefully without interest and penalties!

Monday, June 20, 2011

Poder es Servir

Jeffrey Procter-Murphy was wonderful yesterday as the celebrate for Sunday service at Asbury United Methodist Church! I have always understood the vocation of any of us in authority to be to affirm what God is doing in the lives of others. By nature, and hopefully as well by continuing to sharpen our sense of the presence of God through living a reflective life, we are smitten by divine creativity. We are like children on an Easter Egg hunt – never tiring of finding God in all the people who come our way. All the sermons and sacraments are simply elaborate ways of saying: *Yep! That's God.*

Sounds simple, and truly it is, but it has a powerful impact. The *Love Story* interview was such a powerful – and painful -- demonstration of how religious authority saying: *Nope! That's a sin* can torment and derail the life of a woman with stunning talents for almost 20 years. Then you watched and listened and admired and kept repeating like a child writing standards in class – *Yep! That's God* until finally she believed you – and believed God could love her, and could bless her love.

I also found your exchange with one of the Asbury members who were there when you came, and her first memory of you. *I took a class with you on Sex!* Your response was telling – *And then you worked on the first commission here to develop a policy on inclusiveness which led to this congregation becoming a welcoming church where GLBT people could find a full church home.* Not your words, but mine, yet it made me aware of what lies ahead at Via de Cristo.

It took 18 years to move from that class on sex to the *Love Story*, but what a difference it made in the lives of so many. Via de Cristo is not where Asbury is – times have changed. Perhaps it will not take 18 more years of watching and listening to make that community grow, but if you can find the patience it will. *Poder es server.*

4/18/2012 7:09 AM
12/1/2014 11:23 AM

A Contemplative Corner

Early in 2012, Patrice and I decided to launch a remake of our home at 3910 E. Marconi Ave in Phoenix to welcome ourselves into retirement on February 1, 2013.

We replaced the white eight inch tiles which the previous owner had badly installed. He tiled right up to the dishwasher, so that it could not be moved out from under the counter for service. When he got to the door jambs, he did not trim the bottom of the frames and slide under, but simply used the tile nippers and left the ragged edge showing. The new tile in the kitchen, family room, baths and hallway is 18 inch porcelain in warm earth tones, installed diagonally. The look is wonderful, the colors forgiving of poor housekeeping.

We replaced the interior slab doors with new six panel doors. Each door had new brushed nickel hardware.

We painted throughout. The ceilings are frosting cream white. The accent wall in the living room remains whipped strawberry red framed by three walls painted frosting cream. The kitchen remains laurel mist green; the family room, hallway and laundry room are frosting cream. The bed rooms and bath room walls are Coral Gable Biltmore Mediterranean Mocha.

Between December and April, we donated some 1500 novels, poetry and biographies to the Phoenix Public Library. Then, I contacted Jeff Ball of Dove Books to sell my academic library. I packed it all into boxes now waiting for shipment in the garage. 2000 pounds in all. My library was a physical monument to more than 30 years of scholarship and teaching. The separation began difficult, but soon became exciting.

I moved from my office from the family room adjoining the kitchen to a much smaller front bedroom, and began to build what Ann Morrow Lindberg calls ...*a contemplative corner* of my own.¹ Like her I am now searching for a

¹ Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea* (New York: Pantheon, 1955), 9-11.

new pattern of living. I need to build another rhythm in my life with more creative pauses. I need more space and time for my own needs. I need new and more alive relationships with myself and with others.

4/19/2012 11:31 AM
12/2/2014 6:13 AM

Thank You, Teilhard

Thank you, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) for living during my lifetime. I am blessed, not to have known you personally, but to have been inspired by reading *The Phenomenon of Man*² and *The Divine Milieu*³ in college, and the *Hymn of the Universe*⁴ again today. I am blessed to have lived in a time of holy, learned and faith filled women and men like you.

Time magazine crowned you: *One of the 20th Century's most remarkable prophetic thinkers, an Aquinas of the atomic era* in October 16, 1964 – the year I began graduate school in Washington D.C. You looked beyond the ancient, but exclusive rituals of a Catholic world, into the vast expanse of human life and of the cosmos. You were amazed at how great was God beyond the Church which cradled your faith. You saw God present everywhere. Although you were filled with reverence for the material world, you were continuously aware of all things spiritual.

I followed your invitation into that world with equal fascination, not as a paleoanthropologist in the Gobi Desert of China, but as a scholar of biblical and Near Eastern cultures. Like you my own journey into life and learning did not destroy my faith; it has strengthened it.

You consecrated the sunrise, and embraced the entire earth on which that sun shed its light as divine. That your vision could be so grand not only for you, but also for so many who learned from you, frightened men of lesser vision like Alfredo Ottaviani (1890-1979).

On June 30, 1962, under the direction of Cardinal Ottaviani, the Holy Office decreed: "*Several works of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin ...abound in such ambiguities and indeed even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine.*"

² de Chardin Teilhard, Bernard Wall and Julian Huxley, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 1959).

³ de Chardin Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu: An Essay on the Interior Life* (New York: Harper, 1960).

⁴ de Chardin Teilhard, *Hymn of the Universe* (London: Collins (Fontana Bks), 1970).

The Holy Office ordered your work removed from all Catholic seminaries and universities.

A curious historical footnote to your condemnation by Ottaviani is the condemnation of the Holy Office under Ottaviani by none other than Josef Ratzinger – then secretary to Cardinal Frings, archbishop of Cologne. On behalf of his Cardinal, Ratzinger is said to have penned Frings' famous line about the Holy Office, asserting that its *...methods and behavior do not conform to the modern era and are a source of scandal to the world*. Ironically, Ratzinger himself would one day head the Holy Office, would be caricatured -- as Ottaviani was -- as the *...pope's Rottweiler*, and then as Pope Benedict XVI, to be as conservative an opponent of the Catholic Church in the modern world as Ottaviani himself!

Your grand embrace surrounded an ocean of humanity for which I am in awe; and your grand embrace surrounded me for which I am grateful. Like you *...it is to this deep that I thus desire all the fibers of my being should respond. All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase; all those that will diminish; all those too that will die; all of them, I promise to ...try to gather into my arms... as an offering one day at a time.*⁵

4/21/2012 4:45 AM
12/3/2014 12:44 PM

Courage: homage to Paul Tillich

Paul Tillich (1886-1975) delivered the Terry Lectures at Yale University in 1952 – when I was only 10 years old. Nonetheless, his exploration of *The Courage to Be* would continue to be a defining influence not only on the academic world of philosophy, but on me – and my generation – during my years in college (1959-1964).⁶ Curiously, although I majored in philosophy, I did not meet Tillich in the classroom. My courses at a small Catholic college in Niagara Falls, Ontario focused only on the scholastic philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. I read Tillich on my own.

For Tillich courage defines humanity. For Tillich, as a philosopher and as an ethicist, the only authentic human beings are courageous human beings. Without courage humans are simply another species of great apes. The connotations of the title of his seminal work are: *to be is to be courageous*.

⁵ Ibid., 20

⁶ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to be* (London: Nisbet, 1952).

Humans are not created at conception, but only in the moment of their first courageous act.

For me, the woman in the *Stories of Adam and Eve* (Gen 2:4—4:2) should be celebrated for her courage, not condemned for her original sin. The biblical traditions themselves acknowledge her intelligence. The snake asks about the garden rules, and the woman answers her correctly. The Bible also considers the woman to be ethical. She not only knows that the garden rules prescribe that she and the man not eat from the tree in the center of the garden; they must not even touch its fruit. In what would become characteristically rabbinical style, she builds a fence around the law. Finally, the *Stories of Adam and Eve* celebrate the woman for her selflessness. She lays down her life so that others can live. She is the *Mother of Us All*.

The woman is a model of Tillich's ...*courage to be*. She affirms her own being in spite of those elements of her existence which conflict with her essential self-affirmation.⁷ She chooses to embrace mortality with all its suffering, because it offers her a chance ...*to be*. Humans are most human not only when they conceive a child, but when they lay down their lives so that another can live. Humans become human only when they have the courage to be.

12/7/2014 12:07 PM

James Neil Hollingworth (1933–1996) was a [beatnik](#), [hippie](#), writer, and former manager of the psychedelic [folk rock](#) bands [Quicksilver Messenger Service](#) and [Ace of Cups](#). He wrote under the [pseudonym](#) Ambrose Hollingworth Redmoon.

An often quoted [aphorism](#) penned by Hollingworth is "Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than one's fear."

The mysterious Ambrose Redmoon's healing words

March 29, 2002 | By Julia Keller, Tribune cultural critic.

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2002-03-29/features/0203290018_1_chicago-police-officer-terry-hillard-courage

Did he, on an evening when the stars seemed to linger a little closer to the earth, when the wind murmured its strange, lost language, ever dream of this?

Did he know that somehow -- six years after he died -- his words would be spoken 2,000 miles away by a Chicago police officer to honor a fallen comrade?

⁷ Ibid., 3

Just when you think that the world is fresh out of magic, that all of its secrets have been revealed, along comes the odd and uplifting saga of Ambrose Redmoon.

He wrote one of the most memorable and oft-quoted definitions of courage in the contemporary world -- "Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than one's fear" -- but he was, until now, an utter mystery to the people who used the line, a cipher to those inspired by it.

Our story begins last Saturday when Chicago Police Supt. Terry Hillard eulogized Donald J. Marquez, an officer shot and killed March 18 while trying to serve a warrant. Identifying Redmoon as a "noted author," Hillard recited the quotation, adding, "Officer Marquez displayed his courage for what he deemed important: Helping others."

But who is Ambrose Redmoon?

The quotation seemed so profound, so fitting in this time of renewed appreciation for public safety personnel that naturally one wondered if Redmoon had written other memorable work. Was there a novel, perhaps? An essay collection?

Yet a check of the Internet yielded a curious fact: While the "courage" definition attributed to Redmoon is repeated frequently on Web sites ranging from corporate home pages to quotation compendia to personal weblogs, there was not a crumb of biographical information about the author.

A check of Lexis-Nexis and other Internet databases that archive articles from major newspapers and periodicals brought the same result:

Nothing.

The quotation was repeated plenty of times with Redmoon's name attached, but when it came to Redmoon himself -- nothing.

The mystery deepened: Who is Ambrose Redmoon?

Dennis Bingham, a public relations specialist for the Chicago Police Department who wrote the speech Hillard delivered, said he came across the quotation several years ago. "I thought, 'Now, when can I use this? Where's a good place?' I do a lot of work for the police department when officers are killed in the line of duty. I look for things about courage and self-sacrifice, above and beyond, that sort of thing."

The mysterious Redmoon

And Redmoon's identity?

"I believe," Bingham ruminated, "that he's a novelist."

Yet a check of booksellers' Web sites, which include novels in and out of print, turned up plenty of references to Stephen Ambrose and Ambrose Bierce - but none to Ambrose Redmoon.

A consultation with several university librarians also went nowhere. They discovered the same passel of references to Stephen Ambrose and Ambrose Bierce and even Chicago's Redmoon Theater -- but no Ambrose Redmoon.

Yet tucked away in a dusty, forgotten corner of the Internet, like a scrap of paper that flutters to the floor when you bump against an ancient rolltop desk in the attic, was a clue. There, on a Web page for Gnosis: A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions -- a magazine of New Age spirituality and mysticism that went out of business three years ago -- was a table of contents listing for a 1991 issue. Among the authors: Ambrose Hollingworth Redmoon.

Jay Kinney, co-publisher of Gnosis with his wife, Dixie Tracy-Kinney, said he vaguely recalled receiving the article -- "No Peaceful Warriors!" -- from a man calling himself Redmoon.

"We only had contact through the mail," Kinney said from his San Francisco office. "And it was 11 years ago, so I don't remember a whole lot about it."

At the bottom of the article -- a five-page exhortation against people who think they can protest injustice without physical sacrifice -- was an author's note saying Redmoon had written "poetry, plays and a military unit tactics manual" and "served as occult editor on the original staff of Rolling Stone." The article included the famous "courage" quotation.

So there it was: The origin of the line that has become so ubiquitous that it appeals to CEOs, engineers and police chiefs alike. Impossible to know who first quoted it on the Internet but once there, it has spread exponentially for the last decade, a sort of whispering campaign of wisdom.

But the original question still loomed: Who is Ambrose Redmoon?

It was time to call in the heavy artillery, i.e., David Turim, crackerjack researcher in the Tribune's Editorial Information Center.

You will be spared a tedious recitation of the many missteps and false leads and blind alleys that accompanied the quest-- not out of modesty, but out of space constraints.

Just accept the fact that there eventually dawned the golden moment when Redmoon's daughter, Alexandra Carnacchi, was located -- and Redmoon's long, strange odyssey stood revealed.

Man of many faces

According to Carnacchi, Ambrose Hollingworth Redmoon was born James Neil Hollingworth in Painesville, Ohio, and he died at 63 of cancer in Santa Rosa, Calif., after an amazingly varied and multifaceted life. He hung out in New York's Greenwich Village with the beat poets of the late 1950s and early 1960s, counting iconic comedian Lenny Bruce among his friends. Moving to San Francisco after a brief stint in Chicago, he was manager of the legendary rock band Quicksilver Messenger Service, which emerged in San Francisco at the same time as the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane.

Redmoon spent the last three decades of his life in a wheelchair, after a car accident outside San Francisco in 1966 -- as he was on his way to a Quicksilver concert -- left him a paraplegic. He lived in a small garage apartment in Santa Rosa, a town about 70 miles north of San Francisco, where he kept such a low profile that his landlord, David Yoast, said earlier this week that he didn't realize that his tenant was a writer.

But writing was his life, Redmoon's daughter said. "I have to say, I cried. It's just mind-boggling," she said, describing her reaction to the news that her father's "courage" quote is widely disseminated on the Internet, that he is practically a household name -- yet still a mystery man -- to millions.

"We've got volumes and volumes of his writing," said Carnacchi, who goes by the name of Weyaka. The name, she said, was given to her by her father in a naming ceremony when she was 16.

Her father was also wont to take on other names, she said. "My father couldn't stand his name. He decided to take his father's middle name [Ambrose]." And the Redmoon surname? "He traced his heritage back to Native Americans -- there was Native American blood on his father's side."

Weyaka, a schoolteacher and mother of two who lives in the Santa Rosa area, said her father was "quite radical. He was seriously radical on every level. He was a scary person when he had a passion. He was very, very, very intense. He was a verbal assassin.

"He was a really serious warrior. He felt that he was a warrior for the earth, for women's rights, for Native American culture. Any battle worth fighting, he was there."

Weyaka was born on Chicago's South Side, she said, where her father and mother lived for several months in 1962 on their way from New York to San Francisco.

From beatnik to hippie

Redmoon performed briefly with Second City, she said. He and his wife, Dakota (formerly Louise) Durham, who lives near Weyaka, divorced when Weyaka was 4. Durham declined comment on Redmoon.

"My father was a beatnik and from the beatnik scene he went on to the hippie scene. He couldn't go back to the straight world because he was so outrageous," Weyaka said. "He never really fit in anywhere. He said things that really blew people away. Everywhere he would try and publish his writings, they found him too wild."

Weyaka is certain that Redmoon didn't know his definition of courage had become famous and in wide circulation. "It was very frustrating to him that people were not listening. You have no idea. He tried for so long and worked so hard to be heard."

She has tried repeatedly to get more of Redmoon's work published, to have it known beyond a relatively small circle of mystics and fanciers of neo-paganism.

How would her father feel about the news that a police officer had been laid to rest to the accompaniment of his words?

"He would be very, very proud," she said quietly. "Relationships between beatniks and the police weren't that good. But the police changed. And he changed, too. It's so ironically perfect."

She was with her father in the hospital when he died. "He died fighting intensely. It was really, really hard for him to die. He fought for the very last second."

If you are ever tempted to dismiss a phrase as "only words," remember this: A line written more than a decade ago by a forgotten man living in a garage apartment has been quoted thousands, if not millions, of times, has circled the world via the Internet, has given hope to those who hear it, including the many who grieve for a Chicago police officer slain in the line of duty.

Remember Ambrose Redmoon.

The most quoted Redmoon

From "No Peaceful Warriors!" (1991) by Ambrose Redmoon:

As a real, live, initiated, trained, experienced, traditional, hereditary warrior with thirty-seven body scars and a trophy or two on my belt, I find such expressions as "peaceful warrior" offensive, trivializing, and insulting. "Peaceful warrior" is far more than a contradiction in terms. The function of a warrior is to eliminate an exterior enemy presence. Cowardice is a serious vice. Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than one's fear. The timid presume it is lack of fear that allows the brave to act when the timid do not. But to take action when one is not afraid is easy. To refrain when afraid is also easy. To take action regardless of fear is brave.

4/30/2012 4:07 PM

12/8/2014 2:54 PM

Dag Hammarskjöld

Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-1961) was born in Sweden. In 1953 he became Secretary-General of the United Nations. He died in a plane crash en route to the Congo to negotiate a cease fire. I used his anthology of free verse poems – *Markings* -- for meditation in college.⁸

I felt a bond with Hammarskjöld. Our fathers were soldiers who believed that *...no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country – or humanity. This service required a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions.* Our mothers were women of faith which *...found natural expression in an unhesitant fulfillment of duty and an unreserved acceptance of life, whatever it brought them personally of toil, suffering – or happiness.*⁹

Hammarskjöld inspired me as a student because he was a monk in public life. He inspired me as an adult because he never ceased to be hurt by criticism from his opponents. I too wanted to be a Christian in the real world; I too wanted to remain sensitive to both the good and the bad which would be said about me.

⁸ Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, Vol. 1st American ed (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1964).

⁹ Ibid., vii-viii

Hammaraskjöld was a professional man of action ironically living an intensely contemplative life. He was not a priest or a pastor. He was a public servant. His active life was driven by his commitment to contemplation. He did not belong to a church or take sacraments. Nonetheless, he held himself accountable to Jesus day after day. I still have an intense need to be part of a community of shared faith, which allows me regularly to renew my commitment to my baptismal promises – to celebrate with me when I have been faithful, to forgive me when I have not. Often the community is not there for me, but as it was for Hammaraskjöld, the Bible is always there for me.

Debate defines politics. Successful politicians develop an ability to ignore their critics and live relatively calm and peaceful lives of self-worth. Hammaraskjöld was a consummate politician. Nonetheless, he remained emotionally vulnerable. Throughout his career in politics, he suffered from every negative comment as if it were an indictment of his personal integrity, and so do I.

I read and prayed Hammaraskjöld with such reverence so long ago, that it surprises me today that I find his poems darker than Pascal's *Pensees*.¹⁰ He was defeated by criticism and felt guilty when praised. He faced life with resignation, not excitement. I felt saddened that he could not see his own greatness. I read and re-read *Markings* seeking something which spoke to me.

In the end I kept:

*It merely happens to one man and not to others ...but he can take no credit to himself for the gifts and the responsibility assigned to him ...destiny is something not to be desired and not to be avoid ...it is a mystery not contrary to reason, for it implies that the worlds, and the course of human history, have meaning.*¹¹

...and

*We have to acquire a peace and balance of mind such that we can give every word of criticism its due weight, and humble ourselves before every word of praise.*¹²

Both were written the year I decided to leave home and begin my life as an adult. It was 1957. I was 15.

¹⁰ Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* Pantheon Books, 1952).

¹¹ Hammaraskjöld, *Markings*, 144

¹² Ibid., 151

12/8/2014 4:24 PM

Mother Time's tick-ticking, so I'm tap-tapping

by **Karina Bland**

The Arizona Republic Sept. 5, 2010 12:00 AM

I've been at the same company for 20 years. My hormones are all out of whack. My kid's teachers, the dentist and my personal banker all look like children. And I haven't done anything trendy with my hair in a decade. I'm due for a midlife crisis any day now.

But with working full-time, running the carpool, making dinner and walking the dog, I've only got time for a small one. I'm not interested in an affair or an overdose. There's no extra cash for a flashy new car, plastic surgery or even a weeklong spiritual retreat in Sedona. I can't take a year off to eat, pray and love. I've got to be at a PTA meeting Thursday.

Besides, the word *crisis*, while fittingly melodramatic, seems wrong for my experience. We all grow and change constantly, erupting from childhood into teenagers and then morphing into women. By the time we hit 40, we're ready to transform again. The change can be exhilarating, even when forced by unhappy circumstances like divorce, a layoff or the death of a parent.

Men sometimes seem surprised to wake up one morning and discover that they're thicker around the middle, thinning a bit on top and unlikely now to become an NFL quarterback or president of the United States. Their stereotypical midlife crisis might take them to the land of hair plugs, Porsches and trophy dating.

I think women see it coming more, due to the steady tick, tick, tick of our biological clocks. The woman freaking out about her age may be coloring her gray hair, buying expensive skin cream and considering Botox. She may buy a motorcycle (12.3 percent of motorcycle owners in 2008 were female, up from 9.6 percent in 2003), make a career change or file for divorce (two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women now).

But if you look inside, in either gender, it all comes down to this: Where are you in your life now, compared with where you thought you'd be by this age? What didn't you do that you thought you would?

I don't want a motorcycle, and I don't need a divorce, but I do want to do something hip and cool. Oh, sure, my clothes are *retro* - but only because I've been wearing them since the first go-around. (I'm vintage but not on purpose.) I'm still listening to '80s bands. My Facebook posts are more about my kid's accomplishments than mine. He landed the lead role, got an A on his math test and sprouted three armpit hairs, but what have I done lately?

So many of the big plans I had - backpacking across Europe, a white-dress wedding, a best-selling book - didn't pan out. At this time in my life, I have to realize that maybe they won't. Somewhere along the way, while I was building my career and raising a son, I set aside some important things: my hiking boots, my paintbrushes, my dance shoes.

I've decided I need to find them again - and me. Not the me I know now, but the me I had planned to be. So I'm learning to tap-dance. No, really. Stop laughing.

I saw *Stomp* at ASU Gammage last year and was mesmerized by the dancing. It took me months to find a beginner's tap class that didn't entail me suiting up in tights with 8-year-olds. Saturday mornings now find me at the community center of a senior citizens' mobile-home park near my house, learning how to shuffle/ball change while lively cribbage matches take place on the other side of the room.

I don't care how ridiculous I look. It makes me deliriously happy, and not just for the hour and a half that I'm there. The feeling lasts through the weekend until the rush of Monday stamps it out of me.

I'm painting again, too. But instead of covering white canvas with bright hues, I'm painting the hull of a pirate ship across two king-size bed sheets for my kid's theater group.

For the first time in 20 years, I went camping - in an actual tent. No showers, no makeup and no worries. We got soaked by the rain and eaten alive by mosquitoes, and no brush could tame my tangled hair. But I could see the stars from my pillow.

And I took up unicycling - something I've wanted to learn since I was a kid - much to the delight of my neighbors. They have lined up with cocktails and lawn chairs on the sidewalk to watch me fall again and again. So maybe I don't backpack across Europe. But I can save for a week in London next year, and maybe a week in Italy the year after that. I'll tap-dance and not care who sees me. I'll worry less about writing a book and live a life that would be worth someone writing about someday. (Which I could read with my brand-new reading glasses.)

I'm trying to breathe deeply, even if it's just for a few minutes in the elevator at work. I'm sipping green tea that I brew myself. When my girlfriends worry, I'm feeding them chocolate.

And in my growing wisdom, I'm giving up the unicycle before I break my tailbone. I am, however, eyeing the pool man. He's 50, and may be having a midlife crisis of his own.

Created on 8/20/2010 5:17 AM

Burying the Dead

When I attend funerals, I am often discouraged that we humans do not do a better job of burying on another after all the years – now millions – that we have taken each other to the grave.

The most recent funeral I attended reminded me of how the service is so often a struggle to explain our sorrow, our suffering and our death. For a long time I have been convinced that once suffering enters our lives there is not much of a learning curve. We are committed to facing the challenges with the theology we have when the suffering begins. I think we would do a better job of burying one another if, before the ritual of death and dying begins, we had spent more quality time developing a theology of death and dying. We lack a cultural basic training for one of the most demanding experiences of human life.

Mainstream culture in the US quarantines the dying and the dead so successfully, that few of us have any contact with them. We are not witnesses to the dying and the dead; we do not have opportunity to observe how other react and process the experience. Consequently, we almost never rehearse for dying and death. Then suddenly we are confronted with the experiences firsthand, and understandably our reactions are seldom appropriate.

The first dead body I saw outside a hospital or funeral home was in South Central Los Angeles. The experience was an important rehearsal of dying and death for me.

From 1969-1978 I worked in South Central as a high school teacher and a community organizer in a small Catholic parish. Seven in ten families were African American; two in ten were Hispanic; the rest were Euro and Asian Americans.

One midmorning during the school year I went over to the school playground when the little kids were having juice break. As I walked into sight a group of second graders came running over full of energy and excitement yelling: *Mr. Don, Mr. Don there's a dead man in the dumper!*

No way! I thought to myself. *People don't put dead men in a dumper.*

Show me! I challenged my guides.

Pulling me by both hands we headed across the yard to the dumper and hung like socks drying over the edge gazing down into a world of cast offs. And sure enough, there was ...*a dead man in the dumper!*

There was an extended moment of paralyzed silence. I don't know what the children were thinking, but I was thinking *How different the human body looks in a casket, than in a dumper!*

The silence was broken when one of the children announced: *It's old Crazy Charlie!*

Who's Crazy Charlie? I asked.

He's the old drug head lives in the alley behind the church. Pushers probably off-ed him.

I had been working in the community for more than a year, and never met Crazy Charlie. Another period of silence followed Charlie's identification.

Finally, one of the second graders spoke: *Shouldn't we get him out of here, Mr. Don?* Out of the mouth of babes and infants... (Ps 8:2)

Without much organization, but with a lot of enthusiasm the children and I muscle the dumper onto its side, and the body of Crazy Charlie rolls without ceremony onto the playground blacktop. Again silence.

Again the voice of a child speaks: *Shouldn't we say a prayer for Charlie, Mr. Don?*

Right. Right. A prayer. So the second graders and I took turns talking with God about Crazy Charlie, about dying, about life in the hood. The impromptu service was not grand, but it was authentic, and it was powerful. Crazy Charlie must have been proud.

Five Year Plans

I have always been a 5-year planner – at least since college. It all started when I was a novice – a monk in training.

There is a mantra among monks: *Keep the schedule, and the schedule will keep you.* It is a theory of salvation by time-table. Every hour of every day in the monastery is designated. Doing what is supposed to be done is the discipline of living in a monastery. Time faithful monks are saved; those who are undisciplined are damned.

Eventually, Pete Seeger led me to the biblical tradition where monks, no doubt, began their love affair with timing spirituality. *Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)* is a folk song adapted from the Book of Qoheleth (Eccl 3: 1-15). Pete Seeger (1919-2014) set the verses to music in 1959 – the year I graduated from Salpointe High School in Tucson. He added the chorus:

*To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
And a time to every purpose, under Heaven.*

Seeger included *Turn, Turn, Turn* on his album: *The Bitter and the Sweet* (1962). Forty-five percent of the royalties were donated to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions.

I would include the tradition in *Old Testament Story, an introduction* (2004: 308-309).

Audit of Harmony

(Eccl 3:1-15, author's translation)

*For everything there is a season;
A time for every matter under heaven.
A time to be born;
A time to die.
A time to plant;
A time to harvest.
A time to kill;
A time to heal.
A time to destroy;
A time to build.
A time to cry;
A time to laugh.
A time to lament;
A time to dance.
A time to throw away stones;*

A time to gather stones together.
A time to make love;
A time to abstain from making love.
A time to seek;
A time to lose.
A time to keep;
A time to throw away.
A time to tear;
A time to sew.
A time to keep silence;
A time to speak.
A time to love;
A time to hate.
A time for war;
A time for peace.

In the book of Ecclesiastes (Hebrew: *Qoheleth*) the Wise Woman audits the book of Proverbs. Like the Wise Woman in the book of Proverbs, who was there when Yahweh created the cosmos (Prov 8:27), Qoheleth is the wise woman who was there when David ruled Jerusalem (Eccl 1: 1).

The wise were expected to re-evaluate their teachings. Blind obedience was disloyal. Unquestioning loyalty was treason. Untested faith was heresy. The only true faith was a questioning faith. The only real loyalty was a tested loyalty. The only genuine obedience was an obedience given by students who had passed through the novitiate of doubt. The wise woman is not a skeptic. She is a quality-control engineer like the snake in the book of Genesis or the Satan in the book of Job. This wise woman is responsible for assembling and evaluating traditions like those in the book of Proverbs, not to destroy them, but to improve them. The title page assures audiences that the book of Ecclesiastes is an official audit of Israel's teaching traditions, and not an eccentric rejection of them.

The wise woman reviews the book of Proverbs in order to remind students that its teachings are wise, but not all-wise. Discipline and learning and material possessions have value, but they do not always bring happiness. The wise woman formulates her assessment of the book of Proverbs with the words *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity* (Eccl 1:2). In Hebrew *vanity* does not mean *useless*, but *limited*. Like a breath of air (Isa 57: 13; Job 7: 16; Ps 39:5-6, 11; 62:9; 78:33; 94: 11; 144:4; Prov 21 :6), wisdom has important, but limited, uses. This *wind* (Eccl 1: 17) is absolutely necessary for life, but it is hopeless to try and save or *chase after* it. Humans must inhale one breath at time, then exhale and discard it. The teachings in the book of Proverbs are not useless, but they are limited.

The most common genre in the teaching of the wise woman is an audit. Audits have four parts: a citation, a mandate, a research report, and an evaluation. The mandate explains how the Proverbs tradition will be evaluated: *I said to myself, I will audit pleasure*. The research report explains the method which the wise woman used to test the Proverbs tradition: *I cheered my body with wine ... I acted like a clown to see if this is how humans should live their lives* (Eccl 2:1-3). The evaluation presents the wise woman's conclusions: *laughter is insanity and pleasure is foolishness* (Eccl 2:2).

In the book of Proverbs the wise enjoy sensual pleasures. They *laugh at the days to come*

(Prov 31:25) because they can anticipate the future without anxiety. The wise woman audits this teaching by satiating the senses in search of laughter, only to discover that laughter is not happiness, but lunacy. Those who laugh are not wise; they are fools. Their overindulgence destroys their ability to learn.

In an *Audit of Harmony* the wise woman cites the Proverbs tradition (Eccl 3: 1-8). Then she states her mandate (Eccl 3:9), and reports her research (Eccl 3: 10), before making an evaluation (Eccl 3: 11-15). The creation story that opens the audit praises Yahweh for the harmony in creation: *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven*. The hymn praises Yahweh for establishing an appropriate occasion for every human endeavor.

In Western industrial cultures today, time is neutral. Those who use calendars must assign each month, day, and hour its task. In the world of the Bible, time was predetermined. Each day and each hour of the day had an assigned task. The wise identify the purpose assigned for each month and day and hour and harmonize their lives with the tasks to which each time was dedicated. Fools embrace when it is time to refrain from embracing, keep when it is time to throw away, and are silent when it is time to speak.

The hymn also praises Yahweh for the balance in creation. Birth is balanced with death. Planting is balanced with harvesting. Killing is balanced with healing. This twin motif also appears in the yin-yang teaching from the *Tao te Ching* of Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu (570-490 B.C.E.). The *yin* feminine balances the *yang* masculine. The *yin* darkness balances the *yang* light. The *yin* cold balances the *yang* heat. The *yin* wet balances the *yang* dry. The wise know that life is not all laughing, dancing, and gathering stones together. They know that life is also weeping, mourning, and throwing stones.

The books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs agree that Yahweh blesses creation with harmony and with balance. For the wise woman, however, humans are always out of tune and out of balance. Creation is ordered; human beings are not. They are forever tearing apart when they should be sewing together, hating when they should love, and making war when they should make peace. Living in harmony with creation and with the creator is impossible for human beings. *Yahweh, our Creator, has created a time for everything ... yet humans never know what our Creator is doing* (Eccl 3: 11).

The audit concludes with two recommendations. First, the wise woman recommends that her students eat and drink and enjoy their lives (Eccl 3: 13) as a divine gift, not as a human wage. Human toil produces nothing. Food and drink and pleasure are the blessings of Yahweh (Eccl 3:9). Second, the wise woman recommends that her students let Yahweh take care of the cosmos. Human work cannot keep anything in place. Only Yahweh can repair and replace things in the world. Work does not impact the ongoing cycle of creation. Whatever motivates humans to work, it cannot be the desire to keep the cosmos going.

The monks who trained me were men of Proverbs; I was a student of the Wise Woman of Ecclesiastes. They wanted me to stay in line; she wanted me to ask why I was in line. They promised me that I could harmonize my unruly life; she taught me that only God, and the world God created were orderly.

Humans like me were disorderly. I needed to accept my lack of order, not frustrate myself trying to organize it. I did not learn what the Wise Women in the book of Ecclesiastes was trying to teach me easily.

12/8/2014 4:57 PM

Mission Statement

2002

To live as Jesus lived.

To remember that God and I keep our promises to one another.

To remember that God cares for me, so I can care for others.

To wake with a song in my heart, not a cramp in my stomach.

To be consistent, but flexible.

To be wise, not compulsive.

To be hopeful, not cynical.

To live *thank you*, not *please*.

‘Atta ‘ammi

Lo’ Tira

1/12/2015 6:21 AM

The buzz for the movie Selma (2014), directed by Ava DuVernay, prompted Gladys Schuler, the wife of a classmate who died this past year, to send me this piece of history which she found among his effects. On March 11, 1965 we were picketing the White House to send federal marshals to protect the civil rights workers in the Mississippi Delta.



Actually, I am on the right. *Ignatius Loyola* was the name I assumed when I took vows as a member of the Order of Carmelites.

Don Sr. and Ms. Edith were stationed at Ft Meade MD at the time, both with security clearances. When Ms. Edith saw the paper she challenged me: *Is that what you are doing all this for, the publicity?*

A couple days later an old family friend who had lived near us in Japan dropped in to visit. He had known me when I was only 3-4 yrs. old. When he asked about me, Ms. Edith forgot we were not talking, told him I was in graduate school in DC, and then called me to ask if they could come by for a visit.

I said, of course, but that I was a picket captain at the White House early

that evening, so I would not have much time unless they were willing to drive me instead of my taking the bus. When I think of what I said today it sounds like entrapment, but honestly at the time I felt it was just information.

While I visited with the family friend, my classmates did a great job of converting them to our cause, and by the time we left for the White House they were quite sympathetic.

I had Don Sr. and Ms. Edith drop me north of Lafayette Park, and gave them directions to the beltway. I crossed through the park and took charge of the line, and suddenly some Congress of Racial Equality members broke from the line and lay down in the street to block traffic.

I had lost control of the line, and my parents were in the first car stopped. Instead of taking my directions and going home, they had circled around to see me at work.

Seemed like it took the District police forever to arrest the CORE folks and clear the street, while I carefully lead my line right alongside my parents'

car singing *We Shall Overcome*. Honestly, thought that would be the last time I would see them.

As my mother's politics evolved over time she became quite liberal – I suppose to try and understand me. Dad remained conservative until his death.

Start here

Remembering Yesterday, Living Today, now Memories: the way Don Tells It

Remembering Yesterday, Living Today is not just a key to my personal identity, but a reflection on how the last half of the 20th century changed the way we all live.

Remembering drives some of the most enjoyable, and most perceptive, work being written in the United States today. Authors like Pat Conroy, Annie Lamott, Bill Geiss, Amy Burfoot, Garrison Kieller, Barbara Kingsolver, Maya Angelou, Tom Bodet and Leon Hale are not writing autobiography, but remembering their lives in both fiction and non-fiction.

The contents of *Remembering Yesterday, Living Today* is neither logical, nor chronological. I tell the stories that come to mind each day when I write. I go where remembering leads.

Table of Contents¹³

1. What is the first creative moment you remember?

When we were living on the main post at Ft. Bragg, I decided to make divinity fudge like my friend Henry in Georgia.

2. Was anyone there to witness or appreciate it?

¹³ Twyla Tharp, [The Creative Habit: learn it and use it for life, a practical guide](#) (2003: 45-46)

The divinity did not turn out well. I think I had to substitute clear Karo Syrup for one ingredient. I put it in the freezer to try and force it to set. Mother was furious. She told my father. He made me eat it all. I designed a strategy of twisting a table spoon into the blob, and every day when I got home from school, I pried it free, and ate it like a taffy sucker.

3. What is the best idea you've ever had?

Marry Patrice.

4. What made it great in your mind?

I got control of my life. I was able to integrate my life with Patrice, and my work at the university, and my writing life.

5. What is the dumbest idea?

Every though during my interviews in Phoenix for the job of the Kino Institute of Theology, I realized that Dolorette Farias, a School Sister of Notre Dame, was not very smart. Although she once taught catechism in St Patrick parish in Bisbee AZ, she had no professional experience in education. Nonetheless, Bishop Thomas O'Brien had hired her as his Director of Educator, and she would be my supervisor at Kino. Bishop O'Brien was likewise incompetent and terribly insecure of himself. I, however, had the dumb idea that I would work successfully with these people. I was wrong.

6. What made it stupid?

Intelligent and self-confident people threaten ignorant and insecure people. I was intelligent, competent and self-confident. Farias, O'Brien and Leo McCarthy, the Carmelite provincial, were ignorant, incompetent and insecure. I thought Dolorette could say – "I know Don is great. I hired him." She couldn't.

7. Can you connect the dots that led you to this idea?

I wanted to please my mother. I wanted to please the Carmelites. I wanted to please the Church. I never wanted to please myself. I want to make people like the perfect little models in my head. I have a perfect supervisor. I have a perfect student. I have a perfect TA. In reality, my supervisor, my students and my TA are real people. Real people have both good and bad qualities. I need to accept people as they are, not as I want them to be.

8. What is your creative ambition?

I want to write and I want to teach. I want to live like Jesus lived.

9. What are the obstacles to this ambition?

A lack of focus. I am always doing other things. Laundry. Cooking. I think these are creative things to do in order to lead a balanced life, but then the day is gone. I have not written. I do not give myself the time to do these things. I am too responsible to the expectations of others – including my students – and I am not responsible to my own expectations. Writers need to write. To read. To think.

10. What are the vital steps to achieving this ambition?

Consistent application of myself to fewer tasks. Pray. Read. Write. Teach. Everyday.

11. How you begin your day?

I get up at 5AM. I have coffee. I pray (30 mins). I read a good book (30 mins). Feed the mind first. I run (60 mins). I write (60 mins). I work out (60 mins). I grade papers, edit manuscripts, write book reviews (60 mins). I meet a colleague for lunch (120 mins). I prepare class (120 mins). I listen to fiction on tape (120 mins). I teach (180 mins). I meet with students (60 mins). I cook supper (90 mins). I watch TV (60 mins)

12. What are your habits? What patterns do you repeat?

I am very consistent. I have lots of habits. See the above schedule.

13. Describe your first successful creative act.

I edited and wrote for my high school literary magazine – the *Tower*.

My first series of articles on religious studies was published in *Hi-Time -- Catholic School Teen Magazine* (Milwaukee WI). There is a 1961 copy on sale today on ebay for \$9! Henrietta Mackin (1901-1983) founded and edited the magazine. I am not sure how she got my name. I was teaching at Mt. Carmel High School in Los Angeles, when she called and asked if I was interesting in writing articles for her. I wrote for several years, and she even brought me back to Milwaukee for a show and tell. My visit coincided with the February 9, 1971 earthquake in Los Angeles. I had been complaining to the Hi Time staff about how cold Milwaukee was on one day, and the next day they came back with the news that LA was in ruins! I also ate my first baked Alaska at one of evening meals during the trip.

Henrietta was very theologically conservative especially about issues like the evolving consciousness of Jesus. She also wanted only priests or at least only men to write for her. She would edit my work to reflect her views, and then publish it without giving me a chance to revise or withdraw my name! Ugh.

Nonetheless, it was the beginning of a publishing career for me. I am grateful to her for giving me that opportunity.

I framed a cover which had a line from one of those articles. The line reads: *Violence is for those who do not have time to love.*

My first book was *Deuteronomy and City Life*. I designed it from my dissertation. I wanted to show that the theology of ancient Israel was not exclusively a nomadic theology. It was an urban theology – a theology of justice at the gates.

14. **Describe your second successful creative act.**

My second book was *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250-586 B.C.E.* I collaborated with Victor H. Matthews, Ph.D. (Missouri State University, Springfield). We had the book done at least three times, and then decided to start over.

15. **Compare them.**

By the time I wrote *Social World*, I had a cleaner, more readable style.

16. **What are your attitudes toward: money, power, praise, rivals, work, play?**

Money: Growing up I thought of myself as “an expense” – I spent much of my adult life trying to avoid being an “expense”, trying not to spend money – which, of course, is impossible.

Power: Ability. Use it well.

Praise: Praise and criticism are the tools of friends – not critiques or the public. Choose carefully those from whom you seek praise or criticism.

Rivals: Life is not a race. I run, but I do not compete. I collaborate, but I do not want to destroy. I want into the conversation; I do not want to stop it.

Work: The creative part of my life. We spend too much time at work, not to enjoy it.

Play: The spice of life, the Sabbath during which we step back and enjoy the work of others, especially God.

Which artists do you admire most?

I admire Annie Lamott, Pat Conry, Garrison Kiellor, Van Gogh and the other impressionists,

18. Why are they your role models?

I treasure their skills in helping me see things in life I would have missed otherwise. Artists tune my senses.

19. What do you and your role models have in common?

I give my students ideas that will help them see things in life – in the Bible differently. I have the utmost respect for my students' own spirituality whether formal or informal. My goal is never to mock or discredit what they believe. My goal is to help them realize that the Bible is often *under-read* in the preached tradition. The Bible is about the big thoughts, the big questions, and many who teach and preach it trivialize the Bible. They use biblical traditions like trampolines bouncing into the air off a text and never touch base with the text again until their own thoughts about life loose altitude. For example, the Bible prohibits same sex relationships – primarily because they cannot produce a child. Furthermore, the *Stories of Lot and his Daughters* includes a threat of same sex rape – to shame the male strangers to their household by treating them like women. Nonetheless, the stories are not *about* the fate of homosexuals; the stories prohibit the mistreatment of strangers. If you are going to preach the Stories of Lot and his Daughters, and take that message to the street, you need to challenge the immigration policies of the country where you live, not organize vigilante raids on gay bars in your community. Using the Bible to preach against homosexuality is not wrong, but it trivializes the power of the biblical tradition. Such teaching and preaching emphasizes the superficial, and ignores the substantial.

20. Does anyone in your life regularly inspire you?

Patrice. Her intelligence. Her commitment. Her selflessness. Her ability to endure pain. Her faith. Her love for me.

21. Who is your muse?

Patrice. Authors I read. Leaders I admire.

22. Define “Muse”.

My muse is the person who inspires me, who motivates me to get up in the morning, to do what I do well, to grow, to change, and to survive.

23. When confronted with superior intelligence or talent, how do you respond?

I am in good company, so I start learning.

24. When faced with stupidity, hostility, intransigence, laziness, or indifference in others, how do you respond?

Some few students – not a majority, thank God, by any means -- have a truly aggressive consumer mentality which I find distracting and discouraging. As a teacher, my work is, basically, quite simple. I am helping students develop a set of skills. I am not solving the problems of the world, nor am I solving life's problems for a particular student. Some students, however, see teachers as omnipotent. Everything, good and bad, in their lives is in the power of their teachers.

The consumer mentality in students is the attitude: *I paid for you; therefore, you will do what I tell you!* Or *You don't know what you are doing.* Or *No other teacher does this.* It turns learning into a blood sport – a cock fight.

Students, in general, are not personally creative. Their behavior is modeled by the way in which teachers have dealt with them. Unfortunately, when teachers make bad judgments, students internalize the experience as the truth.

I get tremendous satisfaction from helping a student learn. I get not satisfaction from helping them avoid the consequences of their actions. Students with a consumer mentality have had too many teachers who get litter satisfaction from helping a student learn, and tremendous satisfaction in rescuing students from the consequences of their actions. I get the impression that some teachers set standards for their students, primarily for the satisfaction of dispensing them from the standards. I do not ask a student to do anything that I do not expect them to do. Do it, and I will help you. Don't do it and you face the consequences of your actions alone. Students in the liberal arts and sciences need a study partner, just as students in the physical sciences have lab partners. I am not asking students to work with a partner just to have the opportunity to say: I will be your study partner.

Most students are not malicious. Some do lie, most poorly, some well. Most, however, are really convinced that they do not have to suffer the

consequences of their actions. They don't read directions. So what? They don't meet deadlines. So what? Parents and teachers have raised far too many children to deny the reality of cause and effect.

Dealing with students with a consumer mentality distracts. I find it a waste of my time. I do not like the aggressive behavior of these students. I do not like being put on trial – You will have to prove to me that you cannot do what I am telling you to do. But these sessions become a nightmare for me. I think about them. I dream about them. I search for a better way to explain cause and effect to students. I want to be omnipotent, and I hate the experience of powerlessness. I wish I could tell a student that it does not make any difference whether or not they are passing a course. I wish I could tell a student that it does not make any difference that they need to add or drop courses by the deadline. Even though it is the student who has failed, I consider myself the failure.

I have not yet developed a workable way to unplug my attention, and to get back to work with the students who are working with me.

25. When faced with impending success or the threat of failure, how do you respond?

I try to get ready to move on. On the day of my ordination, I put a note on my door: "Out to be ordained. Back at 12PM!" I always need a mission. So, whether the last mission failed or succeeded I need a new one. I am waiting here today for FedEx to deliver my copy of Old Testament Story, an introduction. I am writing this book. Book Four is finished. Book Five is underway.

26. When you work, do you love the process or the result?

Both. Patrice and I say to one another that if we did not stop so often to admire our work, we would finish projects in half the time. I love the challenge of planning and problem solving. I also love the result, when the picture in my head is on the paper or on the wall.

27. At what moments do you feel that your reach extends your grasp?

At the end of the day, when, instead of a sense of satisfaction at having accomplished all that I have accomplished, I feel a sense of frustration that I still have so many things on the list for the day.

28. What is your ideal creative activity?

Teaching well. When the students understand. When they understand. When they laugh. When they ask good questions.

29. What is your greatest fear?

My greatest fear is that I will become cynical, that I will despair, that I will lose faith, that the best days of my life are behind me.

History and Story

In the world of the Bible, where I have spent my working lifetime, households listened to the story of how Yahweh freed the slaves in Egypt, and they told their own stories of how Yahweh set them free. Biblical faith – social identity – was created by hearing and telling. Israel was a people who listened, and a people who told.

I teach by listening to the biblical stories, and by telling my own stories. I try to model hearing-and-telling not only to teach, but also to define myself. Listening to stories and telling stories my spirituality. I live to tell stories, and am alive because of the stories I tell.

Hearing biblical stories tunes our ears—and our other senses—to recognize God in our lives. The stories we tell mark our sightings of God in our lives. A story says: “God was here!” The stories I tell my students about my life, and about my family, are all stories which re-tell, in some way, the biblical stories.

Not all stories carry theological tags like “Therefore, God is love!” Often stories are just stories, which mark God’s passing through our lives. Perhaps at some later moment the meaning of the story – the morale of the story – will become clear, perhaps not. Nonetheless, picking up the pieces, in itself, is a way to live a more conscious life – a life connected, rather than separated, from what is going on around us. Humans are only human to the extent that they become actively aware of their interconnectedness on the human plane, and to the divine plane.

For Muslims, Christians and Jews, it is the Bible that gives significance to the stories we tell. What makes the Bible such an enduring part of the cultural landscape for these three world religions is the riveting stories it tells about how God passes through human life. Even though these biblical stories come to most Jews, Christians and Muslims once removed, they are, nonetheless, unforgettable. The Quran, the New Testament and the Talmud cannot obscure the power of the Bible they retell.

The defining story in the Bible is the Exodus. Yahweh is the God who sets slaves free. Muslims, Christians and Jews are people who identify themselves as slaves-set-free, and who free slaves.

Committees charged by congregations to evaluate how well they are living biblical values often struggle mightily to establish criteria for their study. I have never served on such a committee, but they could simplify their work by asking a single question: Who are the slaves we are setting free? This is plot of every biblical story, and every story that we tell about our own lives. They are stories of where slaves are freed, the hungry fed, the naked clothed and prisoners visited. They are stories about where we found God.

Now I am trying to write my stories down, not to preserve them for eternity, but to tell them to a larger audience in a different way.

Robert Fulghum said he started to write [All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things](#) (1993) by simply taking the refrigerator notes which the members of his congregation stuck to the doors of their refrigerators to remember his better sermons. The classroom is Fulghum's refrigerator in my life.

2001

Scientists look forward to understand the present. Storytellers look backward.

Scientists do research. Storytellers tell stories!

Scientists problem-solve by research – learning things that have never been known. For traditional cultures the key to problem-solving is storytelling. For traditional cultures problems are not caused by what humans do not know, but what humans have forgotten. When problems plague a traditional culture, they “read the directions” which came in the past. Traditional cultures do not try to read mail that has not yet been delivered. Nostradamus is the hero of fortune tellers. Homer – or Moses—is the hero of story-tellers.

Born in 1503 at St. Remi, Nostradamus was the first son of Jewish parents, forced by the Inquisition to convert to Catholicism. His grandfather taught him languages, math, astronomy, and astrology. Later he studied liberal arts at the University of Avignon and medicine at the University of Montpellier, where he specialized in treating plague. Tragically, the plague took the lives of his wife and two children. Distraught and pursued by the Inquisition, Nostradamus wandered Italy and France, before settling in Salon where he and Anne Ponsart Gemelle raised six children. In 1564 Nostradamus became Royal Physician to King Charles IX.

At 52, Nostradamus began composing four-lined, rhymed poems in the most obscure language – Mabus, King of Terror, Third Anti-Christ, Crusade, Plague, Hollow Mountains, Hister. Devotees of Nostradamus claim his nine hundred quatrains prophesy the defining events of the last five hundred years—the French Revolution (1789), Napoleon (1769-1840), Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), Hitler (1889-1945), Neil Armstrong walking on the moon (July 20, 1969), the Challenger Shuttle explosion (January 28, 1986) and the attack on the World Trade Center (September 11, 2001). Nostradamus has become the guide for those who find the meaning of the present in prophecies about the future.

I am a storyteller, not a scientist. The key to living today for me is in remembering. Problems, for me, are solved by remembering what I have forgotten, not by trying to figure out what I never knew in the first place. The millennium, for me, did not begin at midnight, December 31, 1999. It began at 3 PM on October 20, 2000. Until then I had told stories. From that day on, I also began to write them down.

Searching for a starting place to write, I began by remembering Stanley Kubrik's movie: "2001: A Space Odyssey". I had seen the film on the same evening that NASA put Apollo 7 into earth orbit – October 11, 1968.¹⁴

I was teaching High School.¹⁵ It was my first real job, and it was painful.

Leo, the assistant principal, assigned me four preparations – Standard English, Honors English, Creative Writing and Religion—in a school where virtually no one taught more than two preparations. I had never taken a course in Creative Writing. I gave writing assignments I did not know how to grade. So, I just took them home and started stacking them against the wall.

Years later I was having dinner with Michael, a college friend, who had also gone into teaching. When I started telling the horror stories from my first year teaching, he laughed sincerely. "My assistant principal tried the same shit with me," he commented. "What did you do?" I asked. "I just prepared one class each day, and taught it four times." "But what did you do when the same students you had for Honors English came back into your classroom for Creative Writing?" "I told them that repetition is one of the most effective ways to learn." For the price of a long distance phone call, I could have saved myself hours of scrutiny, guilt and frustration. Michael should have been my mentor.¹⁶

The assistant principal—whom I later learned thought I was too smart for my own good, and was on a personal mission to teach me a lesson in humility—also assigned me seventy-five sophomores for personal counseling.¹⁷ I had never taken a course in counseling. I learned to listen sympathetically, and then conclude with a standard admonition. "Do me a favor," I would ask these fifteen year olds. "Keep a journal. It may seem impossible today, but you too will have a fifteen year old. If you don't think seriously – in writing – about how to solve the problems your parents are creating for you, then we will never get better at parenting. The next time you will think about all the things you have talked with me about today will be when you hear your fifteen year old

¹⁴ I went to that film with David Engle. I had worked with Dave as a carpenter when I was in college. He was the business manager at the high school. We had both joined the Carmelites from Tucson.

¹⁵ Salpointe High School or as it is now known Salpointe Catholic High School in Tucson AZ

¹⁶ Michael Mulhall

¹⁷ Leo McCarthy was the assistant principal. The first time I met the man was in the hall at the Carmelite Junior Seminary during a Vocation Camp. I was working with his friend: ??? When I passed them in the hall, I greeted ??? without calling him "Father". Leo was furious with his friend for not correcting me. Leo was lace stocking Irish. His family were millionaires, and had property alongside the Kennedy's. As fate would have it Leo was provincial when I went to Kino and later resigned.

cutting through the family room and out the back door, and you hear yourself – in your mother’s voice – shout: “Where the hell do you think you’re going?” The book store manager initiated me into my new professions by not ordering teacher-editions of the text books we were expected to use. I had no assignments and no answers to the discussion questions. There were no explanations of how the author of the textbook designed the chapter. Unfortunately, I took this sadistic behavior personally. It was not until much later that I learned he tortured every first-year teacher the way he tortured me. I went to see a film about the universe because I needed to think big to keep the littleness of my suffering from overwhelming me. My decision to go to the movie became a personal celebration of a national achievement. I was not just being flogged to death in one small classroom, I was part of a grand, new era – the space millennium.

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I sat as close to the screen as an adult can without attracting attention. The year was 1968. I was twenty-six years old.

When the real millennium arrived in my life, I sat in a hot tub in my back yard in Phoenix looking into a black and star filled night sky. There was not a plane landing or taking off from Sky Harbor airport.

I tried to resist all the doomsday warnings, but, on New Year’s Eve, I had rushed off to Walmart to refresh my disaster supplies. I bought oil for my hurricane lamp and a flat rubber stopper so that I could fill the bath tub with water. I picked up several kinds of batteries for my flash lights. I also put enough bags of dry beans and cans of tuna in the cart for three months.

The adventure reminded me of my back-packing days in Sierra Nevada Mountains in Southern California.

START HERE

I did not have room in my kitchen cupboard for everything, so I just stacked it on the floor. all this extra The real 2001 has since come and gone. As it turned out, my own personal Y-2K crisis took place in 2001, not as 1999 became 2000, as the media and Nostradamus had predicted.

October 20, 2000: I was asked to resign from my job as the Executive Director of a School of Theology.

February 28, 2001: I ended a 45 year relationship with my religious order, and a 35 year vocation as a priest.

March 14, 2001: I turned fifty-nine.

April 12, 2001: I married for the first time.

June 2001: I finished a book I had been writing since 1978.

October 14: my mother died unexpectedly.

2001 seemed like a good time to ask: What=s an adult like me to do with the life we adults actually live, not with the life we plan in high school, and for

some of us, in college to live. It is one thing to set goals, it is quite another to assess reality.

I never wrote one of those letters outlining where I wanted to be at fifty. Never occurred to me personally to write such a letter, and not one of my college instructors ever made the assignment. I now know that if I had written the letter, I would never have guessed who I would be in my fifties, and what the world where I was living would be like. Having made that disclosure, I also need to say that I am not the least bit unhappy that I was not my own travel agent. God has done well by me. I like who I am and where I am, not because I got here on my own five year plans, but because I have learned to enjoy what God is doing, and what others are doing, and what the world is doing more than what I am doing or want to do. Perhaps, by nature I am easily distracted. I am the kind of student who spends more time pulling books off the shelf in a library and reading snatches from one section of the other than I do surgically seeking those books I need for my own research. Nonetheless, peace comes to my life more by enjoying the ride, than in being the driver. I still make five-year plans, because I have also learned that is part of me, but in all honesty, none of the important people, places and achievements to date, have been entered into my Franklin planner by me. And I would not have missed one of them for the world.

The Box

I am the oldest of four children. Not that being the oldest in our family came with any particular authority, or any money either. Even during the week of my mother=s funeral, nobody asked my permission. The standard opening line was: AUncle Don, I hope you won=t be angry.... A

My sister, twelve years younger, was the child whose adult life was woven most intimately with the lives of my parents. Except for a short period when a soon to be failed marriage moved her from Arizona to Alvin, TX, she never lived more than five miles from Mother and Dad. Early in her adulthood, my sister needed them. Soon they needed each other. After my father died, she and my mother became inseparable. She called every day. They rode together as my sister called on her customers. They would take off in the middle of a work-day afternoon to see a movie. They bought each other forbidden foods. They fought like girlfriends. They were a true sisterhood.

The day before she died, my mother=s good friend stopped by the house unannounced. The friends recalled that she was out running errands and, quite unplanned, got to thinking about mother. At first she planned to stop by the house, then changed her mind because she had work to do at her own home. Traffic forced her to miss the turn into her own neighborhood, and brought her to the intersection leading to my mother=s home. Instantly, these two aging women were celebrating their lives, past and present, over coffee at the breakfast bar. The talking, laughing, crying went on. My mother did not even excuse herself for mass, which was a ritual for her on Saturday evening.

I always admired my mother=s ability to know a sacred moment, even when it had nothing to do with church.

At one point in the seredipty the night before my mother died, my sister appeared with a bag of cookies. She and her husband were having company, and she was making a final run to the grocery store. The cookies called her name, and as she often did, even in the midst of her own life, she bought them to deliver in secret to mother. A calorie heavy act of love. When she arrived, the three women laughed and hugged. My sister left for her company. The next day, after my mother=s death, my sister found the bag of cookies. It was almost empty. AI can=t believe she ate all those cookies in one night@ I heard her say as much to herself as to me, as she started into my mother=s refrigerator.

My mother=s death was simple, and quick. For her a grace. For those who loved her, and who needed her, the suffering was intense. My sister mourned by going to my mother=s house as regularly after her death as she did during her life. She cleaned. She watered. She arranged cut flowers. But more importantly, she patiently read the story of my parents lives in all the things they left behind on their walls, in their drawers, hanging in closets and stored in boxes. She posted reports with each of us like a journalist at the front.

Thanksgiving morning, the first without mother, my sister called early. AI need you to come by mother=s house before we go to dinner. I=ve cleaned and decorated her house for Thanksgiving. I need you to see it.@ The day we returned from the cemetery, I promised myself as we backed out of the drive, that I would not come back to my mother=s house. I needed to preserve the memories of her home, as it was the day she died. I had captured those moments on my new digital camera the day before, and later posted on my computer screen saved. Nonetheless, I broke my promise to myself. I wanted to be there for my sister.

When I pulled into the drive, we started to cry. My sister and her husband walked the house with us. It was clean. Mother would have approved. Cut flowers from her own bougainvillea filled her cut glass pitcher on the dining room table. It was nice, but it was not the same. I noticed that the spindly legged table in my mother=s bathroom, which held her library of Reader=s Digest and Women=s Health was gone. The weight of her dead body had smashed it as she fell to the floor. The tour continued silently, room to room, closet to closet, drawer to drawer.

As we walked back to our cars, my sister popped the trunk of their vintage Cadillac. AI want you to take your box,@ she announced. AI put some of Mother and Dad=s things in them for you. A She handed me one box, and handed Patrice another. We each carried our portion like it was a larger version of the little stainless steel box containing my mother=s ashes which were had taken to the Post Cemetery at Fr. Huachucha less than six weeks ago.

I wanted to rip through my box as soon as we backed out of the drive. The child in me could not wait for Christmas morning. I forced myself to choose two presents to open. The family tradition dictated one present, but, hell, I am a fifty year old man, and you half to make allowances.

First, I carefully slide the cap off a metal tube. It was about the diameter of a nickel, and twice length of a good cigar. Tightly rolled inside were military discharge papers. At first, I thought they belonged to my father, whose military career lasted more than thirty years. They were not. The papers belonged to my father's father. I knew he was a soldier. Fought in the Spanish American War. I did not know that he had stayed in the Army for almost ten years as a carpenter. The papers called him an Artificer. My father had used that word whenever he was to affect sophistication, or answer but not answer some question we, as children, would ask. Dad, tell us what you did during the war? we would ask. I was an artificer, my father would answer. I never knew where he found that word.

Second, I opened my father's jewelry box which had spent its useful life on the top of my parents chest of drawers. As I lifted the lid I remembered how my mother had given me my father's two Masonic rings at his funeral. One my father had worn every day of his life. The compass and trowel symbols on the ring were worn almost smooth. The other ring was new, never worn. It was like a thin gold wedding band with the Hebrew letter, yod, incised on it. The first letter of Yahweh or YHWH, the name by which the Hebrews knew their divine patron in the Bible. I did not wear the rings, but placed them in a ceramic cup on the top of my dresser. I had them only a short while. When my house was robbed, the thieves took the rings. The insurance company paid me for them. I called the Masonic lodge to find out where to replace them, but I could not do it. Like my father they were gone....

Relocating

I try to time my daily three-mile run so that I make the turn east toward home just as the sun begins to appear over the mountains. Like the Egyptians in the days of the pharaohs I have this ancient commitment to help the sun rise.

Today sunrise was 7:14AM. I left the house at 6:45AM.

Today is day two of working out with Denver, our new Australian shepherd. Denver is a Humane Society Alum. Weighs about 50 lbs. Has beautiful eyes, and a rich deep red and tan coat with a cut bobbed tail. Australian shepherds were bred through collies, so they have similar a face and muzzle, but with shorter hair. Denver is still a child, just a year old.

In August we put down our sixteen year old dog, Paws. He was an SPCA alum, and one of the finest creatures. Positive, energetic. When he and I would go out in the morning, he would run the gutters when they were full of rain water. He would open his mouth wide and cut through the puddles like a

skier. He loved to ride in the pickup truck. He would put his front paws on the tire well, and put his face into the wind. He woke us one morning early. He was paralyzed from the hips down. If heaven for dogs is not a pickup truck,

God is going to have to explain why to Paws.

Growing up we had dogs, but I never had to put one down. In fact, I never saw one grow old. Our dogs as children all ran away or got run over. It was a new and difficult experience to watch such a good creature die. We agreed to mourn Paws until Thanksgiving. Told and retold stories. Dug out the old picture box. Found the snaps we took the day we brought him home.

Adopting a new dog is like having a child late in life. Paws knew us and we knew Paws. There were no surprises. We enjoyed each others good qualities, and suffered each others bad qualities gladly. Denver did not know us, and we did not know Denver. Fifteen minutes sitting in the get-acquainted area in the kennel tells you little. He chews things, buries his toys, and gets up in the middle of the night and whines. We are inconsistent, give verbal orders containing too many syllables, and frighten him.

Furthermore, the volunteer told us that we had to agree to keep the dog inside the house with us at least fifty percent of the time. We had inside cats, but never inside dogs. Nonetheless, we agreed. The volunteer also told us that exercise was a great destruction management technique. So, Denver and I set off together each morning, learning to enjoy each other=s pace and interest.

Today, another member of the exercise community came up behind me, and notices that as he approached, Denver kept turning back. He started talking to the dog, and then to me. Floyd is a teacher. Works at the Federal Prison. Loves his job. AAll I have to deal with is the students, not their parents, not a school board.@ We stood there on the canal for twenty minutes, enjoying the day, enjoying each other=s company. As we said goodbye and continued on our preferred routes, I thought: how much I have come to enjoy this new city where I have made my home.

Four years ago, I relocated to take a new job. The job did not work out but the city did. Nonetheless, I missed my old home. I had lived there over twenty-five years. I knew its streets. I could get to work on a clear day, and home during an ice storm or a hurricane. I knew its neighborhoods, where I could celebrate the Greek Festival or Dia de los Muertos. I knew its cafes and restaurants. Where to get a decent hamburger. Where the home-fries and eggs over easy done right. Where the frijoles are tender, and the sopa is moist. Where to eat barbeque. Where to pray.

My new home was foreign to me. Even though it was still in the top ten largest cities in the country, it was still the smallest city where I had lived. I complained a lot. The city was racist. The arts community was amateur.

Freeways were few. Too many Yankee tourists. Single party politics dominated public life.

I am a yellow dog Democrat. Run a yellow dog on the Democratic ticket, and he would get my voice, even if his name was not Paws or Denver. When I went to the polls on the first primary day in my new home, the Democratic party was in such shambles that there one contested office in the entire state. Every other office either had only one Democratic candidate, or no Democratic candidate. In the one contest, a supporter of the world view of economist, Lyndon LaRouche, also a perennial third-party candidate for the presidency, and according to his own website: A...the only presidential candidate to have been convicted in a Federal criminal case@ for mail fraud and conspiracy. I felt like I had moved out of the country. I was living in a one party state, and it was not my party.

As Floyd and I parted this morning, I realized that I am enjoying my new home more and more. Watching the sunrise in a clear blue sky is a remarkable pleasure.

Drop Out

Entering graduate school was a profound experience for me. It took me almost five years to put the money and time together, so the decision was an important decision for me.

I was still basking in the awe of those early weeks of class when I arrived for one of the three of the four hour seminars that were part of a first year student's curriculum. There were only ten or twelve students in the seminar. It was as quiet as a funeral when I walked into the classroom. I sat down silently and shrugged my shoulders in question to the student next to me. Without a word, he slid a photocopy of a handwritten flyer toward me. **"Book Sale! Parking Lot! Noon! Ten Cents for the Dollar!"**

Books are a major source of the poverty of graduate students. They are an even greater offender in fields which require books published in European and ancient languages. How to find the books graduate students need to read is a search for the Grail.

The flyers magically disappeared before our professor entered the room. He sensed nothing, and he asked nothing. He lectured without taking a breath until noon. Then, he recessed the seminar until 1 PM. We quietly left the room, but then broke into a run for the parking lot after our professor disappeared.

There at the back of a family station wagon was one of the senior graduate students selling his library. It was a feeding frenzy. I wondered why, but did not ask. When it was all over, I was even offering him my watch until I could find cash.

Over lunch I learned that his wife was working to support him and their children. He had repeatedly promised her that he would have finished his dissertation and found honest work. As each deadline came and went, he renewed his promise to finish. Eventually she delivered an ultimatum. Finish school, or get out of school. He did not finish so he dropped out. Selling his library was his ritual of separation from student life.

The professor teaching the seminar was the departing student's director – and he was mine. By the time the seminar re-convened, our mutual director was livid. The prodigal had departed without telling his director. Such an unannounced departure was a sin second only to departing itself.

Instead of resuming our study, our professor launched into a breathless warning describing what happens to students who do not complete their degrees. They lead lives of hopeless failures. They are shunned by those who know them. Then wander aimlessly without finding meaning, or without making a contribution to the world in which they live. Even dogs avoid their extended hands. I was convinced and chastened. I promised myself that I would get this degree. I would never sell my library.

Most graduate students studied at carrels in the library. Unprompted they all rose at noon and gathered, like the street kids in the David Copperfield of novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870), the on the porch of the library with the sack lunches.

I Have a Dream

On August 28, 1963, I was still in college. I did not hear the words which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Nonetheless, in the four years that followed, I would dream his dream. I arrived in Washington D.C. the following August, and the civil rights movement became as important in my formation as my theology classes.

Challenger

On February 1, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia broke up over East Texas on reentry killing all seven of it crew. On January 28, 1986 America was shocked by the destruction of the space shuttle Challenger, and the death of its seven crew members.

For me, the spring semester of 1986 included the exciting opportunity to teach as a visiting scholar at a neighboring university. I was honored by the invitation and was looking forward to the experience. My own school was small. The university I was visiting was large. My own school was private. The university I was visiting was public. I was looking forward to the experience.

Money

My parents were children of the Great Depression (1935-1945). They grew up in families that were often food-poor. There were days that they did not eat, or eat enough. There was never enough money in their growing up, not for simple pleasures but for food.

My mother told me how she, as the youngest of six children, used to wait for her father to come home on pay-day. He would cash his check at the grocery store, and buy food for the week. He would also, however, buy her a small bag of candy. It was an unthinkable luxury in a household as poor as their household, but she could not resist the anticipation, and the enjoyment of her father's excess.

My parents were good providers. We never went without of meal, or without clothes, or without healthcare. Nonetheless, they never had much confidence

in the security which they provided. Therefore, there was never fun money in our home, and in fact no cash at all.

They always complained about what things cost.

My parents' attitudes about money made me think of myself as an expense. I hated it. I got jobs – like throwing newspapers, and shagging golf balls at the driving range – to make money, but they made me put in the bank. I could not get real money jobs because, for them, my job was school. As an adult, I was always conscious of how much it cost for me to just be alive. It was a terrible self image.

When I met Patrice, one of the real gifts she brought me was her attitude toward money. When I talked about money with her, she would listen patiently, and then say to me: "It's only money!" We need it. We spend it, but it is not a personality profile. I tracked every cent earned, and every cent spent. I kept every bill in my wallet in numerical order, without folds or creases. She stuffed receipts into her purse at random, and folded her money into any spare pocket in her wallet. She did keep a penny-perfect checkbook, and always balanced her monthly statements, which I did not. But I could not understand her carelessness with money, earned and spent.

In due time, I learned not to think of myself as an expense. I learned that some receipts are best kept, but others are not. I no longer put the bills in my wallet in order of denomination. I still do not balance my checking account statement.

One day when I was riding with my mother, she was complaining to me about my sister's daughter. She had a full scholarship to college, but decided to party instead of study, so she lost the scholarship.

My mother, as she always did, say this one act of stupidity as a symptom of Jenn's entire life. "She never has known the value of a dollar! She always

spends money which she does not have on herself. She would never think of buying something affordable.” I listened, but then interrupted.

“You need to be careful about saying such things to Jenn. She will end up thinking of herself as an “expense”. I did.”

“Oh”, my mother struck back, “You must have had a terrible childhood.”

“I didn’t like that part of it!”

Red Dye #2 (not the band, the food color)

Near the end of his life, my father had aggressive diabetes. When he was first diagnosed, he, or more accurately, my mother tried to with diet. Her task was not easy.

She scrubbed the house of anything remotely good-to-eat. We teased her that if there were a natural disaster, and our family survived, we would starve to death on salt and pepper.

I really think mother forced dad into living five years longer than he wanted to by taking such good care of him. Nonetheless, regularly, and with uneven success, he ran the food blockade she built around him.

John Philip Souza

Today’s e-mail brought a notice from Michelle and Chris Munk announcing their temporary relocation from their home in Hampton Road VA to the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville AL. Michelle accepted the opportunity to work as a lead engineer for technology. I met Michelle and Chris at St. Paul Catholic Church in Houston when they were working at the Johnson Space Center.

Don Sr. retired from the Army at Huntsville in 1968. He had been recently transferred from Washington DC, and I had the sense that the assignment gave him the opportunity to retire as a commanding officer.

I flew to Huntsville from Washington D.C. The last leg of the trip was on an aircraft that looked to me like a DC3, something right out of a WW II movie. I sat near the window with my head tilted.

Traditionally, commanders review their troops as a last official act before retiring. Therefore, this review was the big event in Dad’s retirement. We stood on the parade ground next to the reviewing stand. The base commander invited Dad to come forward on the platform to review his troops. The review was carried out to the rhythm of John Philip Sousa music, flags, and salutes.

It brought back that rush of patriotic feeling I always had as a kid going to military parades on the bases where we lived around the country. I was proud of Dad, and I was proud of the career he had chosen, and which he had followed for thirty plus years.

A reception followed the review at the Officers' Club. I must have been expressing my enjoyment of the review to someone, who dismissed my enthusiasm with the comment that Dad's soldiers marched "...pretty well for pencil pushers." I assume his command was mostly clerical, and marching was not much of a priority for them. I wish the person had said something else. On the flight back to Washington, I remember going into the airport diner to eat breakfast. Wandering down memory lane of growing up in the south, I ordered grits and eggs. "Grits!" the waitress repeated with disdain. "If you want grits, go to Georgia." I settled for hashbrowns. There was no time for Georgia.

Mt. Sinai

Pope Shenouda III, 117 patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox church will visit Phoenix on August 31-September 1, 2002. He became the Bishop of Alexandria and the spiritual leader of some eight million Egyptian Christians in Egypt and throughout the world in 1971. About a month before he was assassinated in 1981, President Anwar Sadat deposed Shenouda, charging him with using his trips abroad to stir up anti-Sadat sentiment among Coptic expatriates. Shenouda returned to his monastery in the Wadi Natrun, until President Hosni Mubarak reinstated him a year later.

My first trip to Egypt was in 1984 with a six-week study tour from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. The director of the study tour had crossed from Israel into Egypt with two Israeli guides. When we arrived at the Monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai, the Egyptian police arrested the guides, and kept all of us sitting on the bus in the mid day sun for hours. By the time the police released the guides, and let us go on to the hotel it was 11 PM. We were scheduled to get up at 2 AM to climb Sinai.

I was furious. There was barely enough time to shower, nap and change clothes. I sat on the steps in front of the guesthouse at the monastery with the Egyptian guide who had come on the bus at the border, and who, I assume, was an Egyptian policeman. I don't speak Arabic, but he had gone to school in Spain, so we spoke in Spanish. I let him have my anger. I told him we were guests in Egypt, but were being treated like enemies of Egypt. I said that if the Egyptians were unable to be hospitable, they should tell us at the border to go home, not allow us to enter Egypt and then be rude to us. I also said that the wonders of Egypt were the wonders of the world. They were Egypt's to care for, but they belonged to us all.

When it was time to climb, I left the group from St. Mary's University who were going up Jebel Musa on camels, and started up the mountain alone and on foot. I was geared in the best REI had to offer: Vibram soles, night lamp, hiking shorts. I climbed for about an hour before I came upon a group of Coptic Christians. It was still dark. The moon was only beginning to rise. These men and women were dressed like they were going to the symphony. Men in suits and ties. Women in long skirts and heels. Not a flashlight in the group. Sheep without a shepherd. I started to go on, but the mother in me

forbade it. I walked with a small group for a while, and slowing began to collect the rest of the stragglers who were all over the mountain. My concern for these folks began to replace my anger at my own.

When we reached the summit some three hours later, the lay leader of the group was there with still other pilgrims. He spoke some English. As we huddled in the cold waiting for sunrise, he and I talked. He told me that they were Coptic Christians on pilgrimage to Jebel Musa. Such pilgrimages had been forbidden for some years, so this was a true joy for those in his group. For me the climb was physical exercise, and so I was dressed for it. For them the climb was a spiritual journey, and so they were dressed for church. Two such different world views. My education continued.

As we talked I asked if religious life for Copts was easier now that President Mubarak has reinstated Pope Shenouda. The lay leader looked at me, and I realized my question was inappropriate, but I did not know why. "Yes," he said haltingly, "...but," he went on, "... it says in the book – I do not know the English – if there is no cross, there is no life?" He did not understand how a fellow Christian could be concerned about avoiding suffering. For Copts, the way of the cross was a way of life. That Mubarak had made things easier for Copts in Egypt was not a help to their spiritual life but a hindrance. Amazing. We continued to talk until the sun appeared. In the Sinai, the sun does not rise slowly from the horizon, but pops up suddenly like toast through the haze covering the desert floor. As its light reached the summit, the lay leader and his pilgrims gathered and began morning prayer. I silently joined, and then came words I recognized: Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison. An ancient litany in Greek punctuated their prayers in Arabic. Suddenly I did not feel so distant from these fellow Christians with whom I had climbed the mountain, and from whom I had learned some simple, and yet profound, things about gospel.

Shot Record

I went to the Infusion Clinic at Scottsdale Healthcare for a vitamin K injection today. The 10 mg of Coumadin had thinned my blood to an INR of 7.9.

Normal is between 2-3, so the vitamin K would return my blood to a more normal clotting range.

Carol, the RN and a friend, took my vital signs, then said: "For patients in the hospital, I normally give this injection in the thigh, ...but don't drop your pants ...that's all one sentence!"

"Where do you think the injection would do the most good?" I asked.

She went to look up whether the body absorbed the vitamin K more efficiently when given in the leg, the stomach or the arm. "Nothing in the documentation," Carol reported. "I'll give it to you in the back of your arm. I have never had this injection, she continued, so I don't know if it burns or not."

Carol's gentleness reminded me of all those years growing up in a military family, where the prime directives were:

Never Loose Your Military Identification Card
Keep Your Shot Record current.

When my inoculations began to expire during my senior year of college, it felt like I was leaving the civilization and good sense and going where “...no man had gone before” into the worlds of Small Pox, Bubonic Plague and Yellow Fever. I kept that wilting three-fold cardstock Shot Record among my important papers for years. With the exception of a ten-year Tetanus injection, and my annual flu shot, I am, today, unarmed in the war against communicable diseases.

The military nurses at the clinics where military kids like me went to get their shots had none of Carol’s kindness. Pain was as important in their arsenal of weapons against disease as the medication. They enjoyed hurting kids like me. Making me cry made their day.

Dad was unmoved by petitions for exemptions from the inoculations. He would have no whining in his household. No pain, no gain.

Years later after his retirement, Dad came to stay with me in Houston, while Mother was recovering from surgery. At this point in his life he was a diabetic. While he was at my home, I walked past his bedroom where he had laid out all the paraphernalia he used to give himself his insulin injections. He was just sitting there staring at the needle. “Need help?” I asked.

“I had this God-damned stuff!” he answered angrily.

Violating every decent guideline for bedside manner, I shouted: “You’re afraid of giving yourself a shot? Have you always hated shots?”

He nodded.

“You mean all those sermons about taking it like a man were delivered by someone who was as frightened as I was about needles...?” I moved on with my day. Amazed. Why wasn’t Dad our ally as kids against the horrors of these inoculations? He didn’t like those nurses any more than I did...

Healing

My mother died suddenly in 2001. No warning. No illness. The day before she died, she mowed the lawn. The day she died she went to church. She felt bad for less than an hour. People said it was merciful. Perhaps, but the mourning was awful.

Of the four of us, my sister Chris was the only one to develop an adult relationship with our parents. I was always – even in my fifties – their son. Chris and mother were friends. They confided in one another. They argued with one another. They told each other the truth. They ate forbidden foods together. They went to the movies in the middle of the day with each other.

Mother’s death devastated Chris.

Chris went to Catholic school, and that did in her faith. She did not just stop going to church, she dumped the whole religion database. She was without the

least familiarity with the way in which religion teaches us to look at life. When death visited us my mother was not the only victim.

The Christmas following my mother's death, I got a call from Chris. "I want to go to mass with you on Christmas!"

I explained that although Patrice and I generally went to mass with mother at St. Frances de Sales Church, we were going to another parish this Christmas. I had heard it was a parish with creative liturgy and good preaching, but did not know anyone there. "I don't care" Chris told me, "I just want to go with you."

When I hung up the phone, I thought, what a chance she was taking. On the one hand, it would be wonderful if all we had heard about the congregation was true. On the other hand, we have walked out of church during the middle of services which were nightmares. A disaster would only deepen Chris' pain.

The day came, and mass was wonderful. The architecture of the church was simple and useful. The congregation was hospitable. The music was tasteful, and theologically sound. The preaching was relevant, and I was relieved.

On the way out the door, Chris turn and remarked: "All the years Mother asked me to go to mass with her, and I refused. Now here I am, and she is not here."

I was speechless, but with wonderful sensitivity, Patrice turned to Chris and said without a trace of doubt in her voice: "Oh, Chris, Edith is here."

"You really think so?"

"I know it!"

Even though I was consciously avoiding Edith's parish, I knew that the blessings of that Christmas morning at St. Pius Catholic Church were Edith's gift.

My sister lives on five acres east of the city and out in the desert. On the way home, suddenly there was a buck with a full rack racing the car alongside the road. Chris screamed: "Stop, stop!"

Almost before Patrice had completely braked the car, Chris had opened the passenger door and was moving carefully across the fifty yards of desert separating the deer from her. The animal paused, looked at her, and waited as if he were expecting her.

Chris could have been St. Francis. She loves animals, and animals love her. She feeds them in the wild. The javalina who cross her property come to her door. She calls them like pets. They bring her their litters to brag. Her own traveling partners are three huge Rottis, left over from the days when she used to breed and show these animals. Today they are retrained as therapy dogs, and go with her to the VA hospital.

Nonetheless, her moments with this antlered buck alongside the road were still breath-taking for me.

Chris did not speak to the animal. They simply looked into each others eyes, standing less than twenty feet apart. The meditation lasted only minutes.

Then Chris came back to the car, and the deer bolted into the mesquite and saguaros. She closed the door, and with the calmness of an announcement that we were going to have bacon and eggs for breakfast she said: "That was

Mom! She just wanted me to know that what Patrice said was true. She was there.”

I continued to be amazed at how Chris learned to process her grief without the least clue from organized religion. As she talked to me, again and again, I had to control my anxious desire to remind her of all the things she had forgotten – that the dead are at rest, that the dead go to heaven, that you can pray for the dead. If those lessons did not help her the first time around, I knew that bringing them up now was not a good idea. I also loved the field work of listening. She would tell me how she was understanding mother’s death, and I wanted to say: “...that is the way Hindus understand death...” But I managed to go on listening, and learning from her as she worked her way through the suffering.

Trick or Treat

In 1970 I read Future Shock by Alvin Toffler. In 1982 I read Megatrends, ten new directions for transforming our lives by John Naisbitt. I find the work of futurists like Toffler and Naisbitt more exciting to read than mystery novels, which I do not read.

One transformation which Naisbitt explored changed my life: the home office. I was intrigued – long before I owned a computer – by the possibility of working at home, rather than at the office. I never really rated any kind of quality space in the workplace anyway, so I was probably an easy sell.

I took the intellectual’s approach to the decision, and read widely and deeply how those who had tried to home-office found the experiment. Some observed that it was the informal meetings around the water-cooler which made the work-place and important place to be. Working at home may be efficient in some ways, but it also isolates you from the very people you need most for ideas, and for collaboration. Others observed that home-officing demanded discipline. Otherwise, it was too easy to play when you should be working, and to work when you should be playing.

I compensated for the lack of socialization by scheduling lunch meetings at least once the week with a colleague. I trained myself to work and play by installing fluorescent lights and incandescent lights in my home office. When it was work time, I turned on the fluorescent lights. When it was play time, I turned on the incandescent lights. For the first few years, I even dressed – tie and all—to go to my home office. Worked from 9-5, and then changed clothes in the evening to signal to myself that it was play time, not work time.

The greatest asset that the home-office brought me was ambiance! Now I have colleagues who have accepted carrel assignments in the library which would have reduced me to insanity. At a university a carrel in the library is a real prestige address. You get to work with all the books you need at hand. But typically carrels are no larger than a phone booth. Furthermore, they are transparent, which allows every library patron passing by to look in at you like you were a contestant on the \$64,000 Question quiz show of long ago. Typically, faculty paper the glass walls of their carrels with posters, creating an

isolation chamber fit for torture. All my objections notwithstanding, I have colleagues who had written articles and books in carrels, which I would die for. Put me in such a coffin and all I would do is scream. Some semesters when offices were re-assigned I would work my way through house-keeping carts, and un-emptied recycle bins to my “office” tucked cautiously under a stairway. After having surveyed the space, I have returned the key to the department coordinator with the comment. “The university could not afford the medical bills I would run up working in that space.”

Jerome in Bethlehem, Samuel at Shiloh

For some fifteen years, I taught study tours in Egypt, Jordan and Israel. The objective of these courses was to reconstruct for the students the magnificent world in which the Bible developed, and to demonstrate how that being there would radically change the way we listened to biblical traditions.

One of the things I would discuss with the students during the orientation classes was the convention of referring to the ancient Near East as the “Holy Land”.

Many travelers in the lands of the Bible expect to sense the holiness of the land at the sites where the great events of the Bible are recounted: Sinai and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In fact, visiting these ancient destinations of pilgrims is often more disturbing than inspiring. For example, clergy from six different traditions of Christianity staff the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

There are Catholic Franciscan friars; Armenian Orthodox monks, Greek Orthodox monks, Ethiopian Orthodox monks; Egyptian Coptic monks and Syrian monks. Each group has been carefully assigned different jurisdictions by a 120-year-old document called the “Status-quo in the Holy Places”. These cranky old men growl at each other and are alternately pleasant and scolding with visitors. Times of prayer throughout the day are often shouting matches in ancient languages with psalms and hymns belted by one group against the other. Visits to this center of Christian tradition remembering the death and resurrection of Jesus are predictably chaotic.

Bruce Feiler

Bruce Feiler is a journalist and author. A native of Savannah GA, he writes frequently for the New York Times, the Washington Post and National Public Radio. Abraham: a journey to the heart of the three faiths recounts his visits to key biblical sites, his conversations with some of the world’s leading religious thinkers, and his growing awareness of both the naiveté and necessity of the search for a unifying vision for humankind. Feiler is also the author of Walking the Bible: a journey by land through the five books of Moses.

This best selling author is remarkably naïve about the Bible and archaeology, even though they play a major role in his thinking and writing. For example, he sees Abraham as the unifying religion from which Judaism, Christianity and Islam – to whom half of the world’s population belong – develop. Nonetheless,

the figure of Abraham, and a “religion” of Abraham have little definition in biblical studies. One listener asked: “How can you build a religion around a myth?” Nonetheless, his commitment to the theology of Rodney King: “Why can’t we all just get along?” is as sincere, as it is contagious.

Monotheism, although popularly considered to be *the* unifying theology between Jews, Christian and Muslims is not, in academic circles, considered to be the religion of Abraham, and not to present in the biblical tradition until some five hundred years before the Common Era. The work of Mark Smith (NYU) and other in this area seems to be unknown to Feiler, a New Yorker. Finally, Feiler sees Abraham as an archetype of the collision of religion and conflict. He is told by his religion to kill his son. Here he follows in the footsteps of Freud and other great philosophers who have struggled with this tradition, but not biblical scholars.

Then why is Feiler famous?

First, he candidly journals the search for his soul, at the moment when millions around the world, following September 11, 2000, began a similar quest to understand religion in general, and their own religion. As a young man celebrating his bar mitzvah in Georgia, he was offered a faith. In Walking the Bible, he embraced that faith. The Bible is not a myth, it is history. He sits at the sites, and he reads his Tanak. He was the teacher who appeared when the students were ready.

As an individual he went to places in the work where common sense would have said that he should have died either by accident or intent. In place of violence, he was welcomed. There is a general belief that the violence in Iraq, Israel, New York, Washington and Pennsylvania is the work of governments, not individuals. The kind of one on one strategy of Feiler, and his I-have-got-to-see-for-myself courage strikes a cord in the individualism driven values of western democracies.

Feiler was a good first public speaker for the “Religion and Conflict; alternative visions” series sponsored by the Center for Religion and Conflict at ASU. He is a public thinker. The public knows him. The public are convinced that he is on to something. More serious and more academic discussions of the complexity of interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution must take place in other forums.

John Paul II

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland was elected Pope John Paul II on October 16, 1978 at 6:18 PM. He became the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. His papacy has lasted longer than all but three popes: Peter, Pius XI and Leo XIII. It was my first year at Rice University in Houston. I was backpacking with the Sierra Club on the 4-C trail in East Texas.

Two of the fine people I met on that trip were Betty, an architect from Louisiana who taught computer-aided design at the University of Houston, and Tadeusz

Skośkiewicz., an engineer from Poland who was doing research at the University of Houston in superconductivity.

At that time, the soon-to-be famous Paul C. W. Chu worked with Tadeusz as a lab assistant. In January 1987, Chu achieved stable superconductivity at 93 K (-180 °C), above the critical temperature of liquid nitrogen (-196 °C). Tadeusz returned to Communist Poland. I found him recently on the internet at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

Ratcliff State Park in the Davie Crocket Nat'l Forest. The trailhead is at the far end of the parking lot. The 4-C is a 21.5 (x2 = 43) mile point-to-point ride through the Davie Crocket Nat'l Forest.

Part of the trail follows an old narrow-gage train route, although you wouldn't know it. This part of the trail is like a wide singletrack, not quite fireroad. The rest of the trail is twisty singletrack with lots of mild elevation change and good flow. There must be 30 really narrow bridges along the route—one of them is about 200 ft long. The real challenge is to do the entire route. In 1998, it became easy to get lost due to logging so check with park rangers. There are a couple of 2 or 3 mile loops that depart from the same trailhead—THESE ARE CLOSED TO BIKES!!! It has been done in under 5 hours, but I recommend you plan on 6 hours. Swim in Ratcliff Lake after the ride and enjoy a frito-pie at the east-Texas style park cantina!

Fire
Sandwich
Scoliosis

Roland

I got the message yesterday that Roland had died. As difficult as it was to see him age, I am sure that it is not easy for you to lose your brother.

I owe the two of you a great deal. You may not remember, but you were the director of graduate studies who approved my beginning a PHD at Claremont so many years ago. I had applied any number of times, but Mal always said: NO!

The last time you came to LA was your last year in the job, and you had approved yourself for grad school, so I pleaded with you to throw me as a "presidential pardon" your last day in office. I told you that the half-life on my Semitic languages was short, and if I didn't go back to school in biblical studies that year, I would never go back. Whatever you did, it worked, and I began my academic career. I am still teaching, still writing, still loving the life you helped me start. Thank you.

Although Roland never quite got over that I did not come back to teach at the WTU, I always was grateful to him for his inspiration and his guidance. When I was at Niagara in college. I wrote him, and told him I wanted to be a biblical scholar. He wrote back. Small type. Margin to Margin. Detailed directions for reading, learning languages. It was a magnificent letter. I learned later from Roger Bonneau that at one point when one of the frats at the Hall wasn't

taking his biblical studies seriously enough, Roland lectured the whole class about this fifth year student at Niagara who was more serious about his studies than they. The did not know me from Lady Astor's mule, but they didn't like me.

In Roland's letter there was a flyer announcing a workshop he was giving in East Aurora to the priests of the Buffalo Diocese along with Jim McCool, SJ. I read it, but in those days, frats only went home for the funerals of parents, not to workshops. I did not even ask to go. Well, when Roland arrived, he evidently called Mal, and like a hostage being released, I was summoned, told to put on my suit, given exactly the \$25 I need to register and was driven across the bridge to the seminary. God it was great. I was the only seminarian at this conference with hundreds of priests—except for those waiting table. What motivation that kindness of his gave me to be my best at this business of being a scholar.

John XXIII

January 4, 1963

Pope John XXIII The Year of our Lord 1962 was a year of American resolve. Russian orbiting. European union. Chinese war. In a tense yet hope-filled time, these were the events that dominated conversation and invited history's scrutiny. But history has a long eye, and it is quite possible that in her vision 1962's most fateful rendezvous took place in the world's most famous church—having lived for years in men's hearts and minds.

That event was the beginning of a revolution in Christianity, the ancient faith whose 900 million adherents make it the world's largest religion. (Others: Islam, 430 million; Hinduism, 335 million; Confucianism, 300 million; Buddhism, 153 million.) It began on Oct. 11 in Rome and was the work of the man of the year, Pope John XXIII, who, by convening the Ecumenical Council called Vatican II, set in motion ideas and forces that will affect not merely Roman Catholics, not only Christians, but the whole world's ever-expanding population long after Cuba is once again libre and India is free of attack.

So rare are councils—there have been only 20 in the nearly 2,000 years of Christian history—that merely by summoning Vatican II to “renew” the Roman Catholic Church Pope John made the biggest individual imprint on the year. But revolutions in Christianity are even rarer (the Reformation was 400 years ago), and John's historic mission is fired by a desire to endow the Christian faith with “a new Pentecost,” a new spirit. It is aimed not only at bringing the mother church of Christendom into closer touch with the modern world, but at ending the division that has dissipated the Christian message for four centuries.

August 10, 2001

Today we are at the Hilton San Pedro in CA. It is beautiful. Right on the marina. I got up at 6AM to work on the patio.

Working on Batto. I really try to do too much in each class. I need three classes or at least two classes for each chapter of Batto alone. It also takes me three hours to prepare each class. One hour to read the chapter. One hour to outline its principal points, and One hour to create an assessment for the students.

Deanna called last night, and left a message. No interest in Mitchell. She is worried, and now I am worried. It is going to take time.

April 23, 2001

The day came up grand. Cool, clear. High in the mid 80's. I was frustrated by not being able to get the computer to recognize my laptop when it rebooted. Eventually I did get it to work. I still feel very fragile about the computer. Think I will see if Brent can read the back-up tape. I made an appointment at 1PM to get Keith Cunningham, M.D. to see if I hurt myself when I fell out of the attic yesterday at Mitchell. I need badly to loose weight. Most of the damage I did to myself was done by my weight falling against the cross tie.

I got a 1PM appointment with Keith Cunningham. I really like him as a doctor. He said I have nothing broken, but it is going to hurt for a while, meaning days. He gave me a VIOXX sample for muscle relaxing, and then a prescription for pain. Patrice wondered if he checked my spleen.

We did not talk about that.

I am working today on my presentations for the Circuit Riders. I am also working up presentations on Homosexuality in Sodom and Gomrrah, and Genocide in the Joshua. I think I will send some of them to the Houston Forum for Contemporary Spirituality to see if they would like to invite me to speak.

Anna had her baby last week. A little girl. Tina, her replacement, thinks she named her Nicole. Luke, Mark and Nicole. Frances would be proud.

April 12, 2001

It is Holy Thursday, and Patrice and I are getting married at 11:30 A.M. Wow!

Chef Alan Zeman of Fuego Restaurant eats breakfast at:

Bobo=s Restaurant, 2938 E. Grant, Tucson 85716, 520.326.6163

Brawley=s Restaurant, 6367 E. Broadway, Tucson 85710, 520.722.5571

Don and Patrice eat breakfast at::

Cottage Bakery and Café, Kolb and Speedway

Wedding stories

Michelle: you are not going to mention me with the dead!

Bo: marrying Irish you can still be happy and successful; I am concentrating on successful

Bo: if you wanted to turn AZ green, filling it with Irish and play sad music. They cry when they are happy, when they are sad, and in between.

Bo: Dianne and Patrice think they are different, but...

David: don=t you want a rehearsal? No, everyone has a speaking part.

Sean: My Bach concerto is going to make grown men weep.

Laurie: you must remember the couple with the tissue box

Patricia: I printed my prayers for the wedding on labels. Oh, well.

Michael: We were just in the neighborhood.

Patricia: Well it is about time.

Liz: Well, that=s what happens when friendship gets out of control.

7/9/2003 5:22 AM

Mitch Albom, Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson (1997) "Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live." (82)
Buddhism: "Is today the day? Am I ready? Am I doing all I need to do? Am I being the person I want to be?"

For me, survivors and people in recovery have this remarkable awareness that *now* is the only moment that matters. I want to live with a sense of awareness. I do not want to walk through the day unconscious. I do not want to waste my life by working for someone who abuses me. That is why I resigned from the Carmelites and from the priesthood. The ideals were, and still are, wonderful, but the people whom I needed to make those ideals real could have cared less about me. Patrice, on the other hand, cares. She lives with me, is growing old with me, cares about me, and will not let me waste a minute of our lives together.

Patrice and I have had some wonderful vacations together. A vacation is a time to just stop and look at the world we live in – to pay attention to how diverse, how colorful, to how filled with excitement this world really is. We travel one year in the USA, another abroad. This year California, next year Turkey. Planning these trips is as enjoying as making these trips together. We buy tapes. Music for singing. Novels and stories for listening and thinking.

6/8/2003 6:04 AM

Madeleine L'Engle, Walking on Water (1980) "To create a work of art, great or small, is work, hard work, and work requires discipline and order." (166)

Arthur Rubinstein: "If I don't practice the piano for one day I know it. If I don't practice it for two days my family knows it. If I don't practice it for three days, my public knows it."

Faithfulness is the soul of art. Being there. Sitting down to read. Starting to write. Walking into the classroom to teach. Setting a goal. Taking the first step of a journey of a thousand miles.

Beginning demands courage. Letting go of the known. Giving up the options. Loosing the first pound. Walking the first half mile. I cannot do something else. I can only do what is before me.

If I can see the blood clot of June, 2003 as the first step of a journey of a thousand miles, I will survive. If I see it only as the last step of a life too short, I will surely die.

5/26/2003 6:07 AM

The teachings of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab sought to simplify Islam to its purest form, rejecting the once prevalent worship of things like rocks and saints' tombs. It also supported a permanent jihad to spread the faith to other lands. Much of the current debate centers on whether violence should be part of that effort. (NYTimes, May 25, 2003, I:16)

Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian Authority's minister of finance, may be the region's quietest revolutionary (NYTimes Magazine, May 25, 2003)
I feel better today than I have felt since May 6. Much of the redness and much the soreness of my left shin are gone. I feel encouraged that my left leg will heal.

Today is Memorial Day. Mother used to ride on the bus with other military widows to attend the honors at the military cemetery in Ft. Huachuca today.

4/28/2003 9:20 AM

Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality: the way of the artist* (2001) "The Circle of Life" 139-

"Artists have been described, ...as the theologians of our time. ...their stories capture the public's imagination and their songs and images stir the soul in ways that often rival the teachings of religious leaders.... Their work ...raises profound questions about such issues as the character of the reality of evil, and what it means to be a responsible person.

"The theology in artists' work is seldom heavy-handed, more often being disclosed in carefully turned phrases and subtly crafted shapes or movement than in authoritative philosophical arguments. It nevertheless emanates from what artists frequently describe as agonized periods spent pondering the distinction between good and evil, the uncertainties of life, the nature of God, and familiar religious teachings on these subjects." (139)

I have never been a theologian. I have always been a biblical scholar – a storyteller. I have always been more an anthropologist, than a philosopher.

I remember sitting around the seminar table in the Religious Studies Department at Rice University listening to a visiting philosopher of religion during a colloquium. The faculty were all philosophers when I arrived – even Werner Kelber, my NT colleague was more of a philosopher than a biblical scholar.

I knew the language in which the guest was speaking. I had a BA in Scholastic Philosophy. I remembered the time in college when I was so grateful that someone like Thomas Aquinas had wrapped his magnificent mind around human experience, and had organized it into his Summa. It was such a gift for a young mind seeking order in the world – in my life.

The romance did not last. I moved to Washington D.C. to begin graduate school in the same summer when Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his sermon: "I Have a Dream" on the mall. The order which Aquinas sought in the 13th century was only a fantasy in the 20th. I need to learn to live with uncertainty.

Story replaced philosophy in my life, even while I was studying theology. Stories give their audiences permission to be human, to ask questions, to think outside the box. Stories admit that human life is not ordered. Stories name the pain, they do not try to explain it. Stories describe, they do not lecture.

They ask questions, they do not give answers.

In time the colloquium was over. I was grateful that I had not slept. There were only a dozen of us around the table, and I would have disgraced myself and the department. As I reflected on what the guest was trying to say, a still, small voice in my head said: "I know a story about that...."

Read:

Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time* (1963)

"My spiritual journey was largely at home ...My parents gave me a God of love, not a God of anger or retribution. Not God looking like Moses in a bad temper, but somebody who loved me the way my dog loves me....My journey was often through fiction, through the journeys of fictional characters, and it was always toward being more open, more inclusive. We did not think of heaven as a gated community, but a place for everybody." (149)

Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory*

"Living beyond border has become a metaphor for his writing as well. 'I am trying to violate borders. I'm very much an admirer of illegal immigrants. I like the idea of not staying put. I like the idea of violation. I like the idea if you're writing nonfiction, of trying to introduce fictional elements to it. I like the idea if you're writing prose to poeticize the prose. I like the idea of people not knowing exactly how to approach you, how to think about you. I like that kind of complication in ideas.'" (146)

The Cloud of Unknowing
Gus Carter!

4/27/2003 8:34 AM

Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality: the way of the artist* (2001) "Art as Spiritual Practice" 107-138

In the last chapter, art was a way of finding oneself, of returning home, even thought self-discovery often led the artist away from home. Then once self discovery had taken place, it was a new process of transformation, becoming who you want to be.

Growing up I felt that in my family of origin there was no interest in who I was, but only in what I was supposed to do for the family. I was to take care of Cyndy and Chris. I was supposed to keep house when Mother and Dad were away. Nothing was about me. I ran away from home by going to seminary.

Unfortunately, there was more of the same. What I could do for the Carmelites, not what I could do for myself.

I am an intellectual. I am a teacher. After Salpointe and Carmel LA, however, the Carmelites said to me, why don't you try another ministry. Just because I did not work well with two odd principles: Kurt Holdereid and Gus Carter!

Wow. Of all the people who know me today, most will say if asked for one thing they know about Don Benjamin: he is a great teacher. I could have been successful at many things, but what a loss if I had not taught.

Transformation: I am still a simple man. I want to live an uncluttered life. I still seek a community of faith or similar commitments. Hard to be a Democrat in a Republican state. I feel like I want to call Janet Napolitano and say: Put me to work.

Art as Spiritual Practice. Simply put, some regular habit of focusing or remembering, of committing what we do to a larger vision. Ann Biddle on spirituality: "...learning how to live your life creatively. That doesn't necessarily mean to produce in an art form. It's about reaching your fullest potential. It's about creating artistry in any area of your life, through your practice. It's about opening up your mind to the possibility of who you are and to see the uniqueness of who you are. It's about making an impact on the world in a creative innovative, forward-thinking way." (111) Curiously, I do not have a spiritual practice. I keep thinking. I want to exercise. I want to pray. But I do not have either as an unconditional part of my day. I keep looking for a schedule, a system.

Spiritual practice needs a mentor. The mentors in my life are all at a distance, or no longer familiar enough with me to be of help.

4/26/2003 7:34 AM

Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality: the way of the artist* (2001) "Making Sense of Oneself" 74-77

Art is the process of trying to make sense of who we are. It is a struggle with the unsettledness we face today. Who am I? I am a teacher, a writer, a carpenter. I am a man who explains things and who fixes things. I am settled, but I do not know if that my "settled-ness" will last. I expect to be unsettled in the near future.

Spirituality relates us—our whole being – to God. Therefore, spirituality integrates, and settles. It should allow us to know what we are doing. It should create a focus in our lives. It should tell us why we get up in the morning. I find my days full of too many choices. Yesterday, I wrote. All day. It was delicious. I would like to simply finish writing *Old Testament Story*, an introduction. But I have papers to grade. I have classes to prepare. I have to prune the patio before heavy trash makes a pickup.

Artists are storytellers, and the story they tell is their own journey. Why the contradictions? Artists are selective. They shop for meaning in their

experience, and the experience of others. They do not accept systems, denominations, theologies. My classes are full of the stories of my journey. I have thought of writing those stories. Students from past years say: I remember the stories... Even when they don't remember the content of the course.

Artists write in the language of therapy, because they are writing, talking, painting, singing about healing, awareness, recovery. I would say that I write to admit the wounds, to be able to say with honesty that life hurts, or that this part of my life hurt. It is not an exercise in self pity, but a need to name the pain, and to pardon those who hurt me.

4/6/2003 6:30 AM

Anne Lamott: Akela touched a dog! What am I afraid to touch? Patrice and I take lots of risks, or at least we are not afraid to risking. I do not want to ask people for money for a good project, like a really good web site. I do not want to ask people for grant money. I do not want to take time for myself. To write. At least a semester.

4/2/2003 7:37 AM

Nancy Chin, painter
Jennie Avila, musician
Jamel Gaines, dancer

Jon Davis, poet

Read Alan Watts, who argues that the rational mind is often a barrier to eing open to the deepest mysteries of life.

Amy Torchia, musician

Wendy Ellsworth, bead artist

Read Barbara Brenna, Hands of Light

Katie Agresta, singer, composer (Catholic)

Childhood trauma alienated her from her parents

Bob McGovern, woodcarver (Catholic)

Paralyzed by polio as a child. A mentor and teacher like many of these artists.

Read Thomas Merton, Seven Story Mountain, James Joyce, Portrait of the Artists as a Young Man. Belonged to a small Jesuit community in Philadelphia including Dan and Philip Berrigan. Andrew Greeley is one of his clients. Driven by a desire for a relationship with God.

3/4/2003 5:52 AM

Yesterday K.C. called from Fortress. He is so positive about publishing Old Testament Story, an introduction. How exciting for me to be working with someone who is so positive about my work. He lobbied to keep an escalator clause in my contract. If OTS sells more than 20,000 copies, my royalty

increases from 10% to 12.5%. Those kind of sales are unlikely, but the confidence which it reflects is wonderful.

I worked all day getting my classes lined up, my ppt prepared. These are long days for me, but I am so satisfied that my class presentations are more organized, more coherent, and the coming semesters will be so much less hectic.

3/7/2003 7:54 AM

Bush's press conference was remarkable. His handlers prepared him well to answer little, and to repeat often his convictions. Have we come to a time and place where everything is a matter of public relations. Is there no truly genuine dialogue between people seeking to do the right thing?

I would like to hike to the Supai Village in the Grand Canyon at some point.
Just for the grandeur of it.

Granular, ping, blogger, multislack, cracker, crash test dummy, dot snot, feature shock, internet, meatspace, mouse potato, screenager.

John Paul writes a Roman Tryptich – poetry of a dying man. "...mountain stream ... where ... do we meet? Do you meet me who is also passing – just like you"

Guantanamo Bay: 650 prisoners, 43 countries, 16 prisoners have made 20 suicide attempts as of today.

ASU annual tuition: -- \$3,593 in state, \$12,113 out of state

In 1857, Mormons massacred 120 non-Mormons from Arkansas in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Unclear whether Brigham Young ordered the massacre or whether it was done by Mormon vigilantes.

Gas is \$1.77 and now there are shortages due to winter formula requirements which AZ imposes on refiners.

Boredom. Word first appears in 1750. A clarifying and focusing experience. No distractions. Boredom make you front the essential facts of life, put you in touch with family, loved ones, your relationship with the cosmos. Life is suddenly simple, direct and meaningful. What we call "boredom" in the west, eastern cultures practice as meditation – zazen. To empty the mind of all distraction. To think of nothing.

The first theological task, Paul Tillich said... is to remove absurdities in interpretation.

Our lives come free; they're on the house to all comers.... God decants the universe of time in a stream, and out best hope is, by our own awareness, to step into the stream and serve, empty as flumes, to keep it moving. (Anne

Dillard, *For the Time Being* 1999: 175)

3/8/2003 7:52 AM

Manuel D. Moreno, Bishop of Tucson, resigned yesterday. Prostate and covering up sexual misconduct of his priests. Poor Manny. He was abused by McIntyre, who chose him to be his house Spic, so many years ago in LA.

Manny had so little talent for anything. O'Brien says he will miss him. O'Brien ought to follow him, and resign.

March 17 is the new deadline for war. What a St. Patrick's Day!

54 cases of sexual assault at the Air Force Academy. A culture of sexual abuse. How sad.

Hilary Clinton is moving quickly into leadership positions in the Senate, and an expected run for the presidency in 2008! She is involved in all the right issues.

Mahmoud Abbas will be new prime minister of PLO. Abu Mazen! He too is for all the right issues. Perhaps our prayers for new leadership are being answered.

Michael Clancy is the new Religion editor at the Arizona Republic. Who speaks out against the war.

Home values in 85032 rose from 104,000 to 142,500 between 1997-2002.

Home values in 85020 rose from 101,000 to 149,950.

Went to see About Schmidt with Jack Nicholson last night. A funny but terribly sad movie. Do people really lead lives of quite desperation, and anger, for 42 years, and find themselves totally without real friends, real interests? Do we really let ourselves be controlled by the wedding industry, the funeral industry, the retirement industry?

Had dinner at Claim Jumper. Should try the spare ribs the next time. BBQ sauce was good, but beef bones were bad.

Simon and Jude

Christians who remember Simon and Jude—two of Jesus' apostles named in the Gospel of Luke—on October 28 read a passage from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians at their celebration of the Eucharist. In part it reads: "Brothers and sisters: You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets (Eph 2:19-20)...."

Not much is known of the elusive Simon and Jude. Simon is not Simon Peter, who plays a significant role on the stage of Christian thinking. Likewise, Jude is not Judas who betrayed Jesus. How can two such elusive figures be the foundation of a Christian household? If Christians cannot remember what Simon and Jude did, or who they were – if their stories have disappeared, then they are just names, not apostles, not ancestors.

The household of my faith, nonetheless, is not my own. As perhaps the Letter to the Ephesians hoped to remind its congregations, faith is not an individual human accomplishment, it is a gift. I believe because others have believed.

My mother is among those apostles who are the foundation of my faith. I was always in awe of both the strength of both my mother's good faith and her good sense. Her faith was never blind. She saw clearly. She did not abide fools, even when they stood in pulpits. Yet she also never blamed God for the fools who speak in God's name. She spoke out critically, and she prayed daily. Her funeral brought together many who, like me were grateful for her faith and her good sense. When it was my turn to speak, I said: As embarrassing, and as

ignorant, and as heretical as the church can be, I was never embarrassed to say: “I am a Christian”. Inevitably, friends would ask: “How can you identify with a church? You are so intelligent. Churches are stupid. You are such a good man. Churches are full of hypocrites.” And I would answer: “I am her kind of Christian. I pray for good faith and good sense. As long as she stays, I am staying.”

In her later years, my mother belonged to a congregation that was chock full of goofy people. There were deacons who preached the pope, or a message from Mary, but never Jesus. There were laity who pestered early arrivals with appeals to sign their petitions for causes like “Nothing Sacred.”

Nothing Sacred first aired in September 1997. The series was cancelled in March 1998. It is an excellent drama that focuses on the life and times of the administration of St. Thomas’ church, a Roman Catholic parish in Chicago.

It is a realistic (if somewhat fast-paced) show that takes real issues facing people today and puts a religious spin on things. It deals with AIDS, abortion, and charity to the poor, among other things.

Perhaps the best aspect of the show is its unabashed belief in the existence of God. The main characters pray, and they talk about their faith. We see actual Roman Catholic liturgy in action. We hear homilies that drive the point home. While **Nothing Sacred** could perhaps be considered too liberal in some circles, it does a very good job of showing many sides of an issue... and the overwhelming message of the show is that we are to love and care for other people, just as Christ did when He was on Earth.

Aerobics and Anerobics

The two best friends any of us have are our bodies and our minds. My relationship with my mind has always been healthy, challenging, and friendly.

My relationship with body has not.

“Body Image” describes, not the actual condition of our bodies, but the way we think about our bodies. I have never thought about my body in a particularly healthy way. I have always been a fat kid. I used to say that I have weighed what I weigh today since I was in fifth grade, and I was not six feet, one inch tall in fifth grade.” Actual pictures of me, of course, show that I was an average size kid, but that is not the way I thought about myself.

As my body ages now, I am facing a whole new set of challenges in learning to live with the body, my friend.

I had always assumed my body and I had a contract to live out life together.

Suddenly, my body begins to quit, and I am not yet done. I am angry. My body had promised me, and now it has broken that promise.

Therefore, I have begun a courtship with my body. I need to get to know this part of me that has a life of its own. It is time to read the directions which came with my body.

And so it begins – slowly. Trying to visualize—to draw picture in my mind of what my body really looks like – is not easy for me. My body image has always been a collage assembled from everywhere but from the data in my own body.

So, I have begun to spend time with my body. Just the body and me. We work out together. I pay attention to how the body works, and what makes it work. I learn new words.

For example, today I learned the difference between “aerobic” and “anaerobic” workouts. Aerobic workouts eat the glycogen which carbohydrates store in the body. An-aerobic workouts eat fat. Workouts should begin with aerobic exercise like walking, and then, after the warm up, switch to an-aerobic exercise like jogging.

The word ‘aerobic’ literally means “breating”. Aerobic exercise uses large muscle groups, can be maintained continuously for a long period of time, and is rhythmic. Aerobic exercise trains the heart, lungs and cardiovascular system to process and deliver oxygen more quickly and efficiently to every part of the body. As the heart muscle becomes stronger and more efficient, a larger amount of blood can be pumped with each exercise stroke. Fewer strokes are then required to rapidly transport oxygen to all parts of the body. Aerobically fit individuals can work longer, more vigorously and achieve a quicker recovery at the end of the aerobic session.

An anaerobic workout burns fat and energy 70 percent faster than aerobic exercise. Anaerobic exercise exceeds ninety percent of the maximum heart. Consequently, it exhausts the body’s supply of glycogen faster and begins to use fat stores. Anaerobic exercise burns more calories because the intensity requires more calories.

Anaerobic exercise, however, cannot be sustained for very long because it quickly builds toxins. Furthermore, anaerobic exercise does not allow the body to re-fuel simply by breathing. Anaerobic exercise is done “out of breath”.

So tomorrow when I walk, I will remember the word “aerobic”. I can walk on air. And when I job, I will remember the word “anaerobic”. I cannot breathe.

The Halloween Reader

Home Movies, My Inner Tube –Built In

Martin Marty

The Menacing Faith of Strangers. (10.29.2003) How can we know who we are without knowing who we hate? Is self definition possible without violence? Hospitality.

We hate our own before we hate the stranger.

White Russians

I felt like I had a C-clamp on my temples.

California Wine at a Toasty 114 Degrees!

Meditation

Lectio Divina

I think preparing to preach everyday is an important spirituality for those called to preach, and an important discipline for learning to live the Word before preaching it. I still use the readings of the day to begin meditation, and thought you might find my way of applying the spirituality of lectio divina helpful in your own ministry.

Since I get up early to begin work at my desk, I begin at the computer. I keep the screen active throughout the day to return to the readings when I need to stop work and re-focus, and pray. To keep some record of my thoughts, questions, responses to these readings, I use the following system.

- Go to the USCC web site <http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/today.htm>.
- Copy and paste readings for the day into a Microsoft Word file.
- Save under the number assigned to the readings in the Lectionary for Mass. For example, Wednesday for the Thirty-first week in Ordinary Time is 487. Therefore, these readings would be saved in a file 487.doc.
- Use the Comment option under the Insert tab to keep a record of your thoughts, responses, questions.

To close my meditation I use the readings to write a prayer using the format in the presidential prayers from the Eucharist.

- I speak the name I use for God. For example: "Father of Jesus..."
- I recall something the Father of Jesus did in the past: "...your son inspired great crowds to be selfless, not selfish..." (Luke 14)
- I ask for help to change my life. For example: "...help me to count the cost and pay the price of this day, without complaint..." (Luke 14)
- I end by affirming my desire to live as Jesus lived. For example: "...I take my place beside Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

PAWS

Meeting other dogs.
Running with mouth open through the water.

Sunday

Trice and I remodel houses. We do it because we cannot afford to buy houses in good shape and because we cannot afford to pay contractors to do it for us. We also do it because we love old houses. For me an old house is what a 75 Chevy is to most car lovers. I can take apart a house built in the 1950's, even the 1960's, and put it back together with my eyes closed. We also remodel old houses because it gives us a chance to create. My own work as a writer is certainly creative, but it requires the staying power of the long-distance runner. Remodeling an old house is not just creative, it is also immediate gratification. Trice and I have said, for a long time, that we could finish our projects in half the time if we did not stop so often to admire our work.

One old house that came out way was rat infested. The asbestos around the outside of the house had been broken and gone un-repaired. So, during the winter, rats worked their way into the inside walls. They made eerie noises as the scratched their way through the insulation, wiring and 2x4 studs. Our uninvited guests were Norway rats. They thrived along the bayous which crisscrossed Harris County where we lived. Norway rats are native to China and Japan. They came to Europe by ship in 1330. Between 1347-1352 the fleas they brought with them had killed twenty-five million people from Bubonic Plague. Diseases carried by Norway rats—Bubonic Plague, Typhus, Salmonella, Rabies, Tularemia, and Trichinosis—have taken more lives than all the wars ever fought. Around the world today Norway rats still do billions of dollars in damage every year. Our concern, however, was not world health, but the damage and discomfort they were doing to our home.

Norway rats are creatures of routine. Once they move in, and you put obstacles in their way, they would rather deal with the obstacles than move out. Norway rats do not suffer change gracefully. We repaired the siding, and carefully resealed the exterior of the house, but they patiently gnawed through our repairs to find their winter nests. We baited them, and they crawled into our walls to die. The smell was God-awful. It was time for sterner measures.

We decided to get a cat!

During our first discussions, Trice said she did not want a cat killing and delivering dead rats.

Pet Therapy

The Colonel

Don Sr. served his country for four years in the United States Navy, and for thirty-one years in the United States Army. He entered the army as a private soldier, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. ¹⁸

He entered enlisted in the Navy to fulfill his compulsory service, and was stationed at the Great Lakes.

After Don Sr. was discharged from the Navy he went to work for the telephone company in Omaha. Herb¹⁹, a friend of his family, advised him that he could never make a real living "climbing poles" for Ma Bell. He told my father that he needed to go to college. Neither my father nor my mother went to college. Their families were too poor. They both needed to work.

With college out of the question, Herb advised Don Sr. to enlist in the army and volunteer for the Signal Corps. The army would train him, and Herb would guarantee him a job with the telephone company when his tour of duty was over. So Don Sr. enlisted, and he fell in love with the life. Herb tried until my father was a captain to get him to leave the Army and come and work for him in the telephone company.

During his thirty-five years of military service, and ten years of combat, my father was always a simple patriot. There was not an ounce of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chuck Norris or Sylvester Stallone in him. He served his country. He did not wage unconditional war against evil. I admired him for that virtue during his life, and on this Veterans' Day I admire him for his patriotism still.

I did not always understand my father's patriotism. The bragging rights of children raised in the military – "brats" – include your father's date of rank, and his record of military service. Taunts regularly include lines like: "My father was promoted to Major on fourteen June 1957." Similarly, Army brats brag: "My father fought the Chinese at the Chosen Reservoir! What was your father doing?"

¹⁸ 043070

¹⁹ Herb Shaw?

My father never told war stories. Hence when it came time to taunt, I was silent. Once I asked him why he never told me any war stories. "You live with your memories of war," he told me, "you don't tell stories about it." His memories of war covered ten long years in Africa, the Pacific, Korea and Viet Nam. The only stories he told were gold-on-green overseas service stripes on the sleeve of his dress uniform. Each hash mark represented six months service.

When I protested that fathers of other kids told them stories, my father said: "Occupation soldiers tell stories because they never saw war." Occupation soldiers were troops sent into combat zones when the fighting ended. Like the military police these soldiers were responsible for maintaining public order and rebuilding a civilian government. Because they arrived before the area had been declassified as a war zone, they were entitled to wear battle ribbons on their uniform, but, in general, their experiences were not the experiences of combat soldiers. They talked the talk, but they had never walked the walk. Combat soldiers told silent stories. They did not brag.

I heard one war story that involved my father at a cocktail party that I attended, as an adult, with my parents. I was listening to my father and several other officers, who did not know each other, visit. Reading the service ribbons on the uniform jackets of his brother officers, one asked: "Where did you serve in Korea?"

The conversation of the four officers moved quickly to a rescue operation in which – curiously enough – all the officers were involved. As a communications officer, my father has received a message from guerillas in North Korea that they had rescued an American pilot, and needed a helicopter to extract him from enemy territory. Another officer was in G-2 intelligence for the mission. He was charged with determining whether the guerillas were friendly, or was the rescue request a trap to capture Americans and their helicopter. A chaplain had been instrumental in contacting a Korean Christian congregation in the area where the guerillas were operating to determine if their request was bona-fide. The fourth officer piloted the rescue helicopter, and pulled the downed pilots out to safety. It was the first time that the other officers had learned the outcome of the mission in which they were all involved. War moves forward too quickly to follow up.

I heard another war story that involved my father from my cousin's husband. He served in Korea with the First Calvary. Jose²⁰

January 23, 2000

Patrice and I are at the Marriott Laguna Hills Resort in Dana Point. She is attending and ONS inservice on Neutropenia, I am here celebrating her birth week! Last night we went into Laguna Beach to Javier's Cantina and Restaurant, the popular Mexican food place. Margaritas were good, carnitas were good, and the the mariscos con mojo del ajo were good. Chips were tough, i.e. not good.

I got up about 5:30AM. Did not sleep well. The room is air conditioned and it goes from hot to cold. I had to go to the bath room twice, and I was having bad dreams. Don't know whether it is the alcohol -- I had two margaritas or my age. Went for a walk down the hill to the beach. It was still dark. No one -- or at least only two campers -- in Doheny State Park. All the time I was walking I kept thinking about Margaret, and about Teo. Why can't I just deal with them on the job, and not let them have space in my head?

When Patrice went to her meetings, I went down to Dana Point Harbor to have breakfast at Bloody Mary's. Right next to Sea and Wind which is the fine dining restaurant, and pretty close to Jon's Fish Market where we ate fish and chips and fish tacos for lunch yesterday. I had a health bowl of oatmeal and a glass of OJ. Already enjoyed two cups of coffee in the room.

²⁰ Jose Perez-Chiesa died March 2000. His daughter, KATHY PEREZ, graduated from John Jay HS in San Antonio, class of 1971. **Kathy L Perez**, (210) 697-9754, 10503 Huebner Rd, **San Antonio**, TX 78240

Spent the morning finishing *Day of the Death of Richardo Reis*, by Jose Saramago, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1998 or 1999. It was tedious read, but I really enjoyed it. Not a happy book, but a very melancholy read. Once I read and the day got underway I want not preoccupied with Kino, or with my melancholy about Kino. It is not that I am not doing good, but it is my resentment of working for the diocese or for the Carmelites, who do not care about my talents, and who have not loyalty to me. Neither knows who I am or what I can do. Neither would come to my assistance on their own, or at my request. I can work myself to death for them, or I can do nothing at all, and their reactions will be the same. Nothing. I need to work for someone whom I respect, and with people I respect. I do respect Gina, Pat, Kimber, Tricia and Mike (Diana?). Perhaps when Stan gets here, the team will take better shape.

Patrice is back and we are packing to leave for the airport. She flies from John Wayne in Orange County, I am driving back to San Diego. We both get back to Phoenix about 3PM. It has been a delightful and restful weekend.

December 25, 1999

I gave Jim and Laurie a copy of my itinerary for the study tour. Perhaps they can meet Patrice and me at the end of my tour for a family travel special.

I have to ask Jim to talk with me and Patrice about how to install an irrigation system at El Camino. I will need to run a line from the front yard under the patio wall into the back yard, because there is no way for me to get water from the back yard spigot unless I break up the slab again with the chip hammer.

The readings for the vigil of Christmas (Isa 62:1-5, Acts 13:16-25, Matt 1:1-25) decree that a new time is beginning. Human beings need to be conscious about when a time starts and when a time ends. The purpose of holidays is to celebrate the time which comes to an end, and to celebrate the time which begins. Isaiah announces a time of war has ended, and a time of peace has begun. Matthew announces the birth of a child.

The genealogy is a legal genre which establishes the right of a household to land and children. Here it defines that Jesus, the household of Joseph, has a legal right to a place in this human world. Jesus has not simply strayed into the divine plane, but has every right to be here, to live a human life.

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Each division of the genealogy contains fourteen households. Two times seven or six sevens. The first two sets contain the names of the households of

rulers. The last set are the names of ordinary households. What the rulers have been unable to do, the ordinary households achieve. Ordinary people protect and provide for the land and its people, rulers do not. The judges failed. The monarchs failed. The fathers of the households did not.

Note the women. Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary.

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The Barnum Kaleidoscope circus was one of the fine experiences of 1999. The interest and attention which the performers payed to those of us who watched. The frequency with which we as spectators became performers. What a delight.

Tomorrow I need to see if the paper has a coupon, and try and get some shirts at Macy=s.

Dad always pulled off I-10 at exit 203 to get gas at the Toltec Travel Center, whether he needed gas or not.

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Betty Bellinger told me that the community relations office from the Phoenix Police Department told her that people like her keep the police from getting cynical. All the bad guys they deal with day in and day out can easily make them think that everyone is a crook, or everyone is trying to do them harm. Guy and his girlfriend. Derringer under his shirt.

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Death is the Intersection where we all meet

Note the women. Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary. Jesus reaches out to human beings in the two places where we all pass: birth and death. Not all of us are rich. Not all of us are powerful. But all of us are born, and all of us die. And in birth and in death we meet Jesus, who, like us, was born and died. These are the most ecumenical moments in all human experience.

Circus, Circus

The Barnum Kaleidescope circus was one of the fine experiences of 1999. The interest and attention which the performers payed to those of us who watched. The frequency with which we as spectators became performers. What a delight.

It was the holiday season. We bought tickets to the circus. It was a gourmet circus. In the entry tent, performers wandered through the crowd talking with children and adults, posing for pictures, and

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October 18, 1999

Fall is here. I need to drive to Sedona and then up Oak Creek Canyon to celebrate the colors. To be up early to feel the cool fresh air, to be in the hot tub to watch the sun set.

Mario de la Fuente is re-opening the corridas in Nogales for the first time since the 1960's. I can understand hunting, but not the tormenting of animals.

Ludlow CA was a mining town. Now there are three houses, twenty-two mobile homes. Six businesses. All are owned by John Knoll and his brother. On October 16, 1999 at 2:46 AM a 7.0 earthquake had its epicenter at Ludlow.

Gen. Pervarz Musharraf led a military coup in Islamabad on October 12. He is 56 years old.

Navajo is now being taught in Phoenix North High School. Traditional Navajo people carry corn pollen as a blessing. Every action is begun with a prayer.

There is a prayer for protection:

Make my troubles vanish.
My troubles have vanished.
Turn my pain into morning dew,
My pain has turned into morning dew;
Turn my tears into corn pollen
My tears have turned into corn pollen.

And then a prayer for the road.

Lead me home safely on a trail of corn pollen.

October 11, 1999

Since 1989, Karen Spitzberg has been creating art for the blind. She teaches art history and Atranslates@ classic works of art into a medium which the blind can understand. The CBS Sunday Morning report on her work made me wish I was doing something as significant with my life, and something which was not so filled with controversy.

Margaret called and asked to Asee me.@ AJust you and me.@ I agreed, even though she had seen my schedule for the day and it is full. We are meeting at Gallagher's for lunch. I assume this is not good news.

Already the day is full, and the calendar is crowded, and I have not time to prepare my class, or correct my students papers. Ugh!

October 4, 1999

Random Hearts, by Warren Adler was published in 1984. Hollywood bought the rights from him to make it a movie and did not release it until 1999.

I drank coffee from my Amsterdam mug.

When you take the Silverton RR from Durango, forget the roundtrip. Have someone pick you up in Silverton, and take the highway back.

At 5:30 AM the water in the backyard woke me. It was still completely dark, and wonderfully cool.

I am ready to begin a new day, a new week, and a new life. Grateful to be here in AZ, and grateful to be at Kino.

Jim M.D.

November 11 is Jim's birthday. In 2003 he was 49! What seems like years ago, he and Laurie and their first baby, Erin, were in England. After medical school, Jim did a fellowship at the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Centre in Exeter, England.²¹ The physician with whom he had trained originally collaborated with a British physician. The two applied the same basic research differently in their clinical practice. Jim's teacher wanted him to have the experience of working with his former partner.

Jim was clearly homesick when we talked on the phone. So, I decided after attending the SBL annual meeting in Chicago. I took an over-the-pole flight.

Jim had sent me a tape – a guide from the moment I left the plane and headed for customs, until I got off the double-decker bus and bought my first tweed hat. I put on my headphones and started the tape as I left the jet-way.

As I approached customs I was a bit nervous. I had gone to Goode Company BBQ in Houston and bought Jim a sacco del torro as a Christmas gift. It was the scrotum of a bull which had been tanned stiff and the top edge laced with a leather thong. It also had a tidy little leather handle for carrying! I was not sure what the customs officer would think it was. I was not sure what I would tell the officer if asked what it was. There were no questions. First step completed.

As I moved from customs to the Currency Exchange, Jim's voice said: "Don't shop exchange rates. You're just here for a vacation, not to open a business!"

Jim and Laurie had reserved a room for me at a small hotel on the edge of Hyde Park. Hyde Park became a Royal Park in 1536 when the land, which was excellent for hunting, was acquired by King Henry VIII. Over the years, Hyde Park has developed a tradition of hosting both local and national events, celebrations and performances. There are links with the military through the presence of Knightsbridge barracks on its boundary and the continuing practice of firing Gun Salutes from the Parade Ground. The two most famous features of the Park are the Serpentine, a lake used for boating and swimming, and Rotten Row, the world famous riding track, which was the first public road to be lit at night in England. There are almost four miles of horse rides as well as cycle and roller-blading routes. There are also areas planted and managed as meadowland to encourage a wide range of insect life and the ecological chains they support. There is an education center used by schools from all over London.

I got to the hotel, and the desk told me the reservation was for the previous day, so even though Jim and Laurie had paid for the room, and I did not use it, they still collected the money. Nonetheless, I paid for a second day. The room was a tiny. I had to sleep in the bunk curled into the fetal position.

²¹ Barrack Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 5DW, Telephone: 01392 411611

Pubs

Surgery.

Chips.

Children of the Depression

Both Edith and Don Sr. were children of the depression. Edith grew up in a food-poor home. There were days when she did not eat.

She painfully – and with answer still in her aging voice – remembers a time in Leavenworth KS when there was no food in the house. She was a teen, and was doing something in the kitchen, when her mother answered the back door, and men from the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the church came in with large wash tubs full of groceries. As they set them down on the kitchen floor, my mother was furious. So furious, I could still hear the anger in her aging voice as she told me the story. “It was awful to be hungry, but I could not believe my mother went out and told people that we did not have any food. I was ashamed.”

Years later working in South Central Los Angeles, I saw the shame of hunger which my mother had described. Hers was the hunger of poor whites in the days of the depression. Mine was the hunger of new immigrants from rural Mexico.

Working in a Los Angeles neighborhood where the “rich” carried mail for the United States Postal Service, hunger was common. My first encounters with hunger were awkward, and my attempts to respond only shamed the hungry. I was like those volunteers from the St Vincent de Paul Society coming into my mother’s kitchen with wash tubs full of food.

The first time I visited a family without food, they tried to feed me. I refused to eat. I was there to feed them. If they had food, then they should eat it, or give it to their children. How ignorant of me. To be hungry is one thing, to be unable to feed a guest is another. Hunger is a private suffering. Being inhospitable is a public shame.

Fortunately, for me, someone told me. “Whenever you go to anyone’s house, eat. Even if you are not hungry, eat. Even if the family does not eat with you, eat. Eating blesses the family who feeds you. Refusing to eat curses the family who offers to feed.”

So, I began to eat. Even when I ate alone, I ate. Even when I ate the last food in the house, I ate. I enjoyed those last suppers. I learned to take my time and visit with the families who fed me. We never talked about food. We talked about life, about good times. The conversations fed their dignity, because they remembered good times. They had not always been hungry. The conversations also took me on wonderful journeys into the lives of people, who though unlike me in many ways, were no different than I in so many others.

When I returned later with food, I also learned not to come to the door. Strangers carrying food into the house also shamed those who lived there. The strategy I developed was to pick up neighborhood children for a ride in the back of my pickup truck. Riding in the bed of a pickup truck is a rural thing, and a particularly Mexican thing. It is not safe, but it is a celebration. Children knew my truck. It was the invitation to ride to the beach for a swim, to come over to my house for a hot shower, a fresh pair of Pooh-Bear pajamas, for an evening treat of Peanut Butter and Crackers, and watching re-runs of the Rookies on a color TV.

Once I had enough 10-12 year olds to lift 50 lb bags of beans and rice, I would end the ride by pulling into the alley. “Take the bags with you” I would shout though the split window. There was no shame in children carrying food into the house. The kids loved the game of it, and the promise of a real meal. Santa had to learn to come down the chimney in the middle of the night, so as not to shame the poor, who could not feed their families on the night when Jesus was born.

John Baker

Can't come to the Thanksgiving holidays without remembering two of my favorite John Baker stories.

First, remember when I talked you into coming to DC and interview for teaching jobs? As I dutifully transcribing notes from my last interview, I looked up and there you stood with one of those 3x5 contact cards on the back of which you had printed: HELP! WILL TEACH FOR FOOD. GOD BLESS. You didn't get a job – and neither did I – but what a wonderful story.

Second, remember the Thanksgiving when you and Candy joined her/your relatives? Instead of setting the oven to bake the turkey, someone put it on clean. Then the blowhard relative you did not like anyway had to spend the day disassembling the oven to rescue the bird!

Werner Kelber

"If I accept your invitation, it will delay my critical review of Now I am 61 and trying to decide how much time I have left to do what projects... As the world turns.

Sofball in Japan

My own mother....

I've Never Done That

I overheard a colleague decline an invitation by saying: "I have never done that before...

Running

I started running so that I would not kill Rolf...

Smoking

I smoked cigarettes because it was social. I smoked a pipe because it was professional...

My First Marathon

"Mr. Benjamin, just what did you come in to have an EKG?

Whataburger

I ate breakfast at a Whataburger on my trip up from Tucson to Kino...I called Patrice from a Whataburger during my interviews...

Electric Blanket

3/27/2005 9:42:29 AM (Easter Sunday)

From Meditations of Ratzinger's Way of the Cross (2005)

Jesus is condemned to death...

...justice is trampled underfoot by weakness, cowardice and fear of the diktat of the ruling mindset. The quiet voice of conscience is drowned out by the cries of the crowd. Evil draws its power from indecision and concern for what other people think.

Jesus takes up his cross...

... How often are the symbols of power, borne by the great ones of this world, an affront to truth, to justice.... Jesus ...does not reign through violence, but through a love which suffers for us and with us.

Jesus falls...

...Let us allow Jesus to life us up. Let us strip away our sense of self-sufficiency, our false illusions of independence, and learn from him....

Jesus meets his mother...

...The disciples fled, yet she did not flee....

Simon helps Jesus...

...From this chance encounter, faith was born... The witness of Jesus, silent and suffering, touched his heart.... Whenever we show kindness to the suffering, the persecuted and defenseless, and share in their sufferings, we help to carry that same Cross of Jesus.

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus....

...amid turmoil and dismay, Veronica shows the courage born of goodness and does not allow her heart to be bewildered.

Jesus is taken down from the cross and laid in the arms of his Mother...

...Even in the Sanhedrin, which decreed is death, there is a believer, someone who knows and recognizes Jesus after his death.

12/12/2004 6:09 AM

I was ordained a deacon in 1966. A new directive for deacons expected that they have some pastoral experience before ordination as priests. Consequently, my best friend, Bob Colaresi, and I were sent to the Retreat House at Hamilton MA to work with Lambert Yore on a family retreat.

Lambert was an unbelievably creative priest. He designed and conducted “family retreats” in the days when “retreats” in the Catholic world were given “for men only”, “for women only” or “for high school seniors only.” He was also a progressive liturgist. He joyfully involved the congregations in planning and in the celebration in the days when laypeople still prayed their rosaries or read their missals. He was truly a pastor in contrast to the intellectuals on the faculty at the seminary, and the gentry in the Carmelite parishes in Bergen County NJ. I entered the seminary because of the pastors who had cared for my family, and yet Lambert was the only truly pastoral Carmelite I met during my ten years in the seminary.

Lambert treated Bob and me like colleagues – fellow pastors doing the best for the families who had come. What a change that was. At the seminary we were housekeepers. At the Jersey parishes we were hirelings.

At some point Lambert asked us if we would bake bread for the Eucharist. How exciting. We had never baked bread for the Eucharist before, but enthusiasm filled in for experience. This first opportunity would become a liturgical specialty. Later we learned to always bake two breads. One to taste before Mass, to be sure it was edible. But I digress..

Our first loaf was a giant thing. Round, deep, foreboding. Nonetheless, we were proud of it. It was displayed, presented, consecrated to great singing. When the time came for the Breaking of the Bread, however, the center was still gooey. Undeterred, Lambert gave communion to the families from the crispy outside edge of our loaf, and Bob and I reverently returned the rest to the tabernacle.

After Eucharist there was supper, fellowship, and an evening session with the adults after the children had gone to bed. It was late into the night when Bob and I had time to meet to decide what to do.

We retrieved the loaf from the tabernacle, and stood there at the altar to brainstorm. Could we eat that much unbaked dough without dying? Could we put it back in the oven and finish baking it? Should we bury it with a gold shovel?

Suddenly Lambert appeared. Not because he was checking up on us, but because it was his custom to end his long days with some quiet time in the chapel. He joined us at the altar, and without even asking said: "Bury it in the garden outside the chapel." What a dispensation from all the guilt, failure, fear; and what an appropriate resolution.

How much we learned from that good man about ministry and about community. I never understood why the Carmelites at the Hall never invited Lambert to teach us what it meant to minister to families. No one in Washington seemed to have any respect for him.

Years later I was at a meeting in Washington, and went by the Hall just to see the place. The Carmelites were polite, but preoccupied. I was wandering around collecting memories when I found Lambert in the kitchen – not the refectory – having a cup of coffee.

On that day Lambert was old, depressed. He told me he was there for a "sabbatical" – which sounded like the worst thing in the world. I wanted to tell him how much he meant to me, but I did not. I just sat. We drank coffee, talked about Hamilton. He shared how "awful" Humphrey Connors – the rector of the seminary on top of the hill – thought what was going on in the retreat house at the bottom of the hill was, and that eventually when Humphrey became the novice master, Lambert was moved from his creative place at Hamilton to some limbo in New Jersey.

I was sad when I hear he had died in 2004, although I felt he was already dead when we talked so many years before. I pray that Lambert now knows what good he did – ever for those like Bob and me, who were supposed to be sheltered from such radical, inspiring, holy men.

12/11/2004 8:32 AM

Yesterday, "La Dolce Vita" (1961) – the "Good Life" by Federico Fellini was re-released. As Patrice and I watched the film in uncomfortable seats in a small theater with the sound set loud enough for a rock concert, I thought about the last time I had seen this odd view of life.

I was reared in a military family. War movies were the myth that described the ritual of my daily life. I went to the seminary where watching movies with women was forbidden, so there were more war movies. I saw everything from the "Charge of the Light Brigade" to "Pork Chop Hill". I watched the tradition of war movies go from raw and selfless courage to dark and anxious questioning. I had never seen real cinema.

In 1965 I went to Washington D.C. to begin graduate school. I was interested in theology and Semitic languages. I had two classmates who were interested in theology and cinema. As monks we did not have real vacations. Instead in the inclement days before the fall semester began, we retreated to a now-vacant summer camp for high school kids in rural Maryland.

One of my vacation favorites was movies every night. During the school year movies were infrequent, and the seminary only had one projector, so I never learned to sit through an entire film uninterrupted. At camp someone had salvaged two 35mm projectors from a US Navy destroyer. We go to watch real full length films in real size every night.

The film committee included Ashley Harrington and Bill O'Malley – both film students and film buffs. Among the musicals, westerns and war movies -- the standard seminary fare – were La Dolce Vita, Clockwork Orange. I had no idea what I was watching, but Ashley and Bill were missionary. They passed out reviews. They sat with us after the screening trying to teach us the difference between movies and cinema. And on many nights we went back at midnight to look at the films a second time.

It was as painful as learning Aramaic, but I was an Eagle Scout – so I persevered. I can remember the day the lights went on. It was back in school during the fall semester – I say a flying for 8 ½ -- I went, I watched, I enjoyed. Ashley and Bill had helped me learn. A quiet revolution took place in my head, and I changed. Like Father Frances – not a giant step, but one step – and there was hope.

8/29/2004 7:45 AM

Too often I find myself focused, not on what I am doing, but rather on what I “need” to be doing. The better choice would be to focus on what I am doing – Now is the time to read the paper. Now is the time to drink coffee. Now is the time to walk. Now is the time to write in this journal.

Casting my attention to what I am not doing is a distraction. It deprives me of the joy of what I am doing.

I was so angry when Eugene Clay did not assign me a TA – especially after I contacted him a week or so earlier to ask if he had made the assignments, and he said nothing about no offering me one. He asked about Teresa May. Then he asked me why I needed a TA. Explained that only the large lecture courses were assigned TA’s – which does not apply to Charles Emerson! He is a fool.

Now, however, I am working with two non-traditional students – Karen Haynie and M.J. Harris who have worked with me before – and there are going to TA for me. What a better arrangement.

I was also angry when Pat reassigned my office ECA 338 to Agnes Kefeli Clay (!) and dumped me into a pool office with six other people. I was even more angry when Pat assigned office then took office hours, so that we are all holding office hours at the same time.

Now I am back to holding office hours outside class – at a table at the MU – which I enjoy more, and like better. What a better choice. Now if I can just forget about it – let go of the anger, and embrace the semester.

Diarmuid O'Murchu, "Creation is a Place Called Home" (125-?) argues that there is something essential about the big vision – seeing the Grand Canyon, climbing Piastewa Peak, watching the sunset from Enchantment Lodge. Seeing the cosmos in its essential oneness evokes a sense of wonder, mystery, divinity. (125) It makes us realize that everything is related. Life is not a battle. (126) Life is a relationship.

Relationships are not a human quality which humans share with others, but a cosmic quality which most humans ignore. Relationships do not begin with humans. (126) This is O'Murchu's original and most controversial claim! Relationships are built into the fabric of cosmic creation itself, and from the cosmos humans inherit the capacity to relate.

The only model of relationship that a patriarchal culture can tolerate is the dominator-dominated type. It is the father to all other relationships – itself validated by the supreme God on high. (135) What would it sound like to pray: "Our Dictator..." What became insufferable for me working at the Diocese of Phoenix was the extreme to which this dominating and dominated model was in place. Nothing mattered – not Jesus, not the Gospel, not the people, not the ministry – only who dominated whom! Dolorette Farias was the worst.

Theology, on the one hand, is patriarchal – it is dividing and dominating. Science, on the other hand, is relational. Therefore, O'Murchu creates a theology from science – quantum physics, etc. In quantum physics, both the nature of being as a dynamic wave-particle dualism and the notion of transformation as a process through which things like electrons and photons are spread out all over space and time carry enormous implications for the kinds of relationships found between quantum systems. (135)

Science, however, can become as patriarchal as theology. It seeks to divide the cosmos into its building blocks. Curiously, quarks have yet to be "split" and tenaciously remain related to one another in triads and dyads.

The cosmos is God's greatest work, not humans, which is precisely the Semitic world view of ancient Israel. This world does not divide and

²² Alternative titles:

Memories from Yesterday for Living Today
The Way Don Tells It

conquer like humans, but relates. “Conversion” takes place when humans recognize the interconnectedness of all creation, where no one part can long exist without the other, and that no one part is intrinsically higher or lower. (139)

Relationships create a dynamic of critique and compassion. (139)
Patriarchy forbids questions. Compassion promotes sustainability – the conditions for all to survive and to thrive. Sustainability is not merely ecology or economics, it is the way the cosmos was created. God did not create things to be destroyed, but to live together. (141)

7/16/2004 8:08 AM

“The Homeward Journey: from separation to connection” (105-124)

-- the second chapter in Part Two – which proposes a remedy for alienation and exile.

O'Murchu is both, unapologetically, a romantic and a pantheist. He believes that humans are most at home in nature, and that the earth is divine. Personal gods are monotheistic and domineering. The earth – the black or fertile loam Madonna – is the Godmother of all humans prior to 3, 000 BCE.

Humans create God in their own image to divide and conquer the earth. So human theology describes a male god at war with the world, the flesh and the devil. Humans who believe in such a god, also fills the earth and subdue it.

The god of O'Murchu is relational – Trinitarian. He finds three to be the basic triad in which relationships are possible in the universe. “Three” is not a theological belief, but a structural quality of the universe.

Triads, nonetheless, are common in religions: one god brings unity; one brings diversity; one relationship.

Exile or alienation is an unwillingness to see the connections – to work to restore the connections.

Redemption is the struggle to restore relationships and to nurture them.

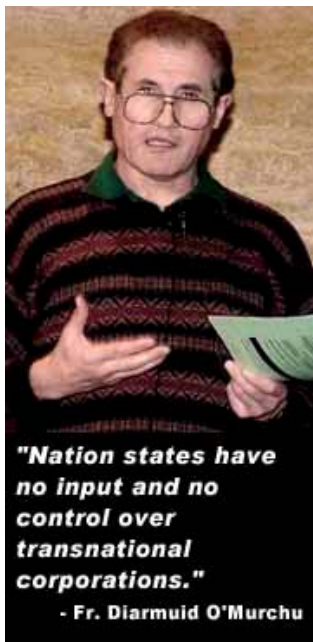
Jesus preached and served the “Kingdom or Reign of God” – which was not a new religion, and not a renewal of Judaism, but an alternative to religion. Jesus was opposed to religion which took life, and, instead, preached a renewal of relationships that was the “fullness of life” (John 10:10)

7/15/2004 10:54 AM



Diarmuid O'Murchu is a priest and social psychologist with a special interest in paradigm shifts in the fields of theology and spirituality. He divides his time between working with the homeless in London's East End, facilitating workshops, and writing very provocative books from a multi-disciplinary point of view. His works include: *Quantum Theology* (1997), *Our World in*

Transition: Making Sense of a Changing World (1992), *Evolutionary Faith: Rediscovering God In Our Great Story* (2002).



As a conference speaker, Diarmuid excels at eliciting and stimulating thought in his audience. He asserts that we live in an age of transition, where the old ways of relating to the world and each other are now outmoded. He suggests that the coming together of ecological concerns, scientific exploration, human seeking, and spiritual consciousness is the only way forward if we are to continue living on this planet. "So what do we mean when we claim that the universe is alive? We don't need to make that claim; the universe itself, in its own evolutionary narrative, makes the claim more cogently and convincingly than we humans ever could. We need to listen and

be receptive to the evolutionary story itself. When we choose to listen, we begin to glimpse the deeper meaning, as it is manifested to us in that aspect of creation to which we humans are most closely connected, namely, Planet Earth itself." (*Quantum Theology*)

Despite the decline in religious practice and influence, O'Murchu contends that spirituality evokes a widespread interest in our time. People, within and outside the formal religions, search for new spiritual

meaning within this age of transition. He asserts that we need to retrieve and draw upon the long-lost subverted tradition of spirituality and re-establish its primary significance in the human search for meaning and purpose in life. This emerging spirituality will be a new paradigm that encompasses a multi-disciplinary point of view.

7/14/2004 10:08 AM

Maria!

Therese of Lisieux and Eva Peron.

Peter C. Hinde, O. Carm.²³

Can you believe that Eva Peron (born Maria Eva Ibarquen Duarte), the Argentine celebrity, and Therese of Lisieux could have anything in common? Indeed, most Argentines believed that Evita, as they endearingly called her, was a Saint. Upperclass enemies, besides underlining her birth out of wedlock, called her a prostitute-pretender, a power-hungry climber.

The Hollywood version starring Madonna in the role of Eva Peron distorted her image in the direction of Eva as a celebrity...a movie-star, cinderella made first lady. In Mexico City some years ago I saw both the Hollywood version one day and the very next day the Argentine production with an Argentine cast. The Argentine version, if not the 100% authentic Eva, portrayed an Argentine woman on fire with the cause of the oppressed working class...a characteristic admitted even by her worst enemies.

One of her most thorough biographers (Alicia Dujovne Ortiz) depicts her both as an idealistic militant yet a narcissistic manipulator given to vanity and self-aggrandizement. Dujovne collected an amazing amount of detail of Eva's life and the people surrounding her for which we are indebted, yet, it seems to me, she shows a bias toward the opinions of the upper class. Joseph Page, another authority on Eva, gives, I think, a briefer but more accurate appraisal.

Eva's autobiography *Razon de Mi Vida* (My Mission in Life), while remarkably frank about her hates and her loves, is as frank about her faults. At the same time the story she tells could serve well as a gospel-inspired charter for how to govern a people in her day. Is it possible

²³ Peter, this is a very clear and well written piece. The thesis is unique, and captures the attention of your readers. Furthermore, it is a sympathetic profile of Eva Peron. What it lacks is more development of the links between Therese and Eva. You cite their early deaths – and the parallel between love and justice, the humble origins of both, but you need to work on more relationships. For example, how is the “love” of Therese the “justice” of Eva?

How are the public life of Eva and the cloistered life of Therese parallel?

Therese was born poor and remained poor; Eva was born poor and became powerful. Therese became a magnet for the working poor of the US – St Cyril and St Clara's in Chicago – Eva became a magnet for the working poor in Argentina

Eva is a feminist model, but is Therese?

that the same Spirit that moved Therese of Lisieux moved also this woman who climbed to the top of political life in Argentina? Stick with me as I put together pieces of my own experience that may give clues to those questions.

One piece occurred recently when I was reading one of the many articles I receive from NAC&POP (National Network of Alternative news) of Argentina. This 5-page article, "*Cristo en Evita*," by Eduardo A. Gonzalez on Eva Peron caught my attention...especially the surprise information in the second paragraph of Eva's devotion to Therese. That convinced me to download and study that article.

A much earlier experience was way back in January, 1973. I had just left the Carmelite mission of the Prelature of Sicuani in the high south-sierra of Peru and had decided that the next step would be to set up the Tabor House reverse-mission ministry in the USA. My eight years experience in Peru with our Quechua missionary catechists, combined with studies with the regional *Instituto de Pastoral Andina (IPA)*, and the progressive Peruvian clergy of the *Organizacion Nacional de Informacion Social (ONIS)*...had opened my eyes to the need for a New Evangelization in the United States.

After consultations in Lima with brother Carmelites and friends, Padres Gustavo Gutierrez and Jorge Alvarez Calderon, I decided that first I should make contact with the activist clergy in other countries in Latin America, beginning with Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and Carmelite Carlos Mesters in Brazil. Mercy Sister Betty Campbell, who with others had decided to join in the Tabor project, was busy still at IPA in Cusco writing her *Qhali Khaninchis*, a Quechua-Spanish course in health she had developed.

I travelled by bus the whole route stopping for some days in each country. On leaving Chile, I arrived in Mendoza, Argentina just over the Andes Mountains. I stayed with Jesuits in a poor marginated barrio for two days to see their work and sound them out about a Tabor project. At one point I asked them to explain to me the dominant Argentine political movement called Peronism ...a movement initiated by Juan Domingo Peron, President in the late '40s in Argentina.

The Jesuit lay brother in the community said that if I wanted to understand Peronism I should read Eva Peron's *Razon de Mi Vida*. He lent me his copy but would not part with it. When I arrived in Buenos Aires I lived and consulted with clergy of the *Tercer Mundista* (Third Worlders) Movement. None of them had an extra copy of *Razon de Mi Vida*. As I circulated around B.A. visiting also the centers of the

principal labor unions, I stopped in several book-stores to ask for this book. Everywhere the answer: "Not available...sold out...not in print."

Finally at one book store I showed my frustration. I was running out of time in Argentina and was desperate to get that book, key to understanding Argentina's principle political movement. The manager standing at the counter pulled out from under the counter a worn copy of *Razon de Mi Vida* and handed it to me: "Here, it's yours." I was already reading it as I left the store and kept reading it walking to other appointments around town.

In Eva's *Razon*, I had the distinct impression that I was reading an Argentine version of the Story of A Soul by a Therese of Lisieux. All you had to do was substitute the emphasis on "justice" for that of "love"...or rather put the one alongside the other. The spirit was the same. Eva professed her love of Christ in *los descamisados*, (literally: the shirtless workers)...*los pobres*...of the steel mills and factories of Argentina. She demonstrated what Paul VI would later say to an assembly of politicians, "The maximum of love is to seek justice for others", i.e. in political life and work.

Eva confessed that from childhood she was possessed by indignation at injustice. Her indignation at times bordered on rage, but this can be understood by anyone who sees structural injustice as clearly and upclose as she did in its damage to the massive numbers of the poor and innocent. [Brazilian educator, Pablo Freire, whose mid-'60s "*Pedagogia Liberadora*" became in large part the basis for the development of Theology of Liberation all over Latin America, in the '90s wrote a kind of last testament: "*Pedagogia de Indignacion*" (Apparently still in manuscript.)]

Maria Eva Duarte had quit her work in theater and radio to take a job in the government Department of Labor and Welfare. She was attracted to the military officer in charge, Col. Juan Domingo Peron, because of his commitment to the poor and the workers. She later came to see Peron as a Christ-figure precisely for his tireless, unselfish labor on behalf of workers and the poor, despite pressures on him from powerful people who ran the country.

Seeing the hatred of the oligarchy for Col. Peron whom they persecuted for his refusal to play their traditional game to the detriment of the rights of workers, Eva made up her mind she "would be the shield to cover his back against his enemies".

In October, 1945 when his enemies succeeded in jailing him on trumped up charges, the labor unions led the way to mobilize the people to demand his release...Eva, recovering from her initial despair, helped in the last of those “terrible eight days.” Over a million Argentines jamming the huge Plaza...demanded and achieved, Peron’s release. Eva Duarte and Juan Domingo Peron married. A few months later “in the fairest of elections to that date in Argentina” they elected him as their President.

Of course the oligarchy hated Eva...had only the most disparaging remarks about this women who was their enemy. They mocked Peron for marrying a woman of the working class, as she would appear at his side. As he became President Peron had her take over his job heading the Secretariate of Labor and Welfare. She first set up office at the *Palacio del Correo* and invited the *descamisados* and poor to put their concerns to her. She tirelessly listened to workers and poor for long hours of the day. She most often responded to their complaints with concrete help.

Eva shortly moved her office into the Department of Labor and Welfare, directed and expanded the social programs on their behalf: orphanages for poor children in the interior of the country, set up hospitals and sanitariums, initiated housing programs, a library and new center for the Labor Unions ...all later to be supported by her *Fundacion de Ayuda Social*(Foundation of Social Welfare). She had little time for the traditional power brokers expecting access to the president.

Those who resented her public figure and that she made references to the gospel...called her a “pharisee. ..a power-hungry prostitute.” Eva’s powerful enemies owned the major press media and smeared her with vicious attacks. Peron must be given great credit in that he saw a different Evita and stuck by her. She was no liability when it came to garnering votes at the polls. She in time even eclipsed him in terms of popularity with the poor and the working classes.

Eva explains in *Razon* how she kept Peron in touch with workers and their unions setting up weekly Thursday meetings with different delegations in the Presidential Palace where he dialogued, first listening to their suggestions, which at times he took up as his own, and always explaining larger affairs of state. At other times he persuaded them to recognize the untimeliness or short-sightedness of their demands. Eva and Peron made a great team.

So convinced was Eva of Peron’s committment to justice and compassion that she confessed “I am fanatically Peronista.” She says

that Peron one time complained to her, 'If I hear anything more from you about Peron and his doctrine, I'll begin to hate him.' Eva confessed that she idolized Peron. However, at one point she said that if ever Peron should abandon the working class, she would divorce him. As I said at the outset, her role with Peron is one great lesson in the art of government in the light of the Gospel. No wonder the Jesuit brother recommended *Razon de Mi Vida* to find the key to Peronism.

Their programs for the workers and the poor quickly raised the living standard, greatly reduced poverty, and opened the political scene to a movement of the working class and their unions beyond anything even conceivable before. Thus began the Peronist Movement in Argentina with Eva very much the heart and soul of the movement, for she not only headed up the Labor and Welfare Ministry of the Peron government, but also her *Fundacion* with centers around the country for social attention...each with its chapel attached.

Eva Peron did a tour through Europe in 1947...a *tour de force* not only as representative of Peron's Argentina, or for her personally, touted as "the most powerful women in the world," but for her vindication of the role of the working class. She played the role of the cream of the upper class in her dress. She seems to delight in creating some consternation in folks of that class with her frank, outspoken manner. She charmed the heads of state.

In Rome she had an audience with Pope Pius XII who gave her a rosary. In Paris she met with Papal Nuncio Angelo Roncalli (future John XXIII). Padre Benitez who accompanied Eva recalls (as reported by Dujovne, p 197) "The meeting was long enough for these two people who were so different to understand each other. Like Eva, Roncalli came from humble origins, the son of peasants.

"Eva and Roncali talked about charity projects, which Evita insisted on calling social aid, if not justice. She explained her ideas in detail. She thought constantly of the foundation that she would establish on her return. Roncalli gave her two pieces of advice that she was to follow word for word. The first: do not burden yourself with official paperwork but preserve the flexibility of a nonbureau-cratic organization. The second, and more important devote yourself without limits. He understood Eva's soul and advised her to go only as far as she could in herself, no matter what."

Gonzalez quotes from an article Eva wrote for the French weekly "*La Tribuna des Nations*" on a theme treated that year in the UN Assembly: The Rights of The Elderly. "Evita says it contains all the

elements of a new and elevated doctrine in which are joined harmoniously the rigorous principles of social justice and Christian sentiment.” She also explains in that article the differences and necessary escalation from alms...to social help...to social justice...culminating in “*Caridad*.”

Caridad, she explains, must enter the context of political struggle as exemplified by the program initiated by Peron’s *El Movimiento Justicialista*. She repeats Peron: “We not only see God in Christ, but have also admired the man in Christ. We love Christ not only because he is God; we love him because he left in the world something eternal: love among humankind.”

Eva became head of the Argentine feminist movement already under way and took it to new heights. They soon got their right to vote and by the next election...wherein Peron was elected to a second term...gained some 10 positions in the Congress. Gonzalez points out characteristics and sayings of Eva that could well serve a christian feminism.

Eduardo Gonzales of NAC&POP writes, “Evita had a great devotion to Theresa of Lisieux. Bishop Nicolas De Carlo of Chaco, with whom she frequently consulted, had given Evita as a gift on the 26th of October, 1947 a relic of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus and from that time on Evita became a faithful devotee of the *Doctora* of the Little Way.” Bishop Nicolas, Gonzalez says, taught her the social doctrine of the Church. Earlier a Jesuit, Hernan Benitez, had become her confessor and remained in that role till her death.

Therese and Eva, it seems to me, are soul-sisters in their life as also in their early, painful, sacrificial deaths. Therese anticipated later movements in Scripture Theology and Mariology, Evita anticipates the social teachings of Vatican II. E. Gonzalez cites theologian Gustavo Gutierrez in a talk in Quilmes, Argentina in 1986: “Could you not say that 40 years ago there was an irruption of the poor in Argentina with the *descamisado*?...an irruption of the poor in the political and social life and also a possibility of a different theological reflection?”

Eva anticipates and calls for the Church’s preferential option for the poor. Gonzalez quotes Bishop Romero in one of his homilies practically quoting Eva Peron; “The church has prestige not for getting along with the powerful. This is the prestige of the Church: to sense that the poor feel it is their own, to know that the Church calls all, yes, also the rich, to conversion and to save themselves in the world of the poor, for they alone are blessed.”

For her strong class analysis and option she was called by some a Marxist, but she sought change by education and mobilization of public opinion. Others said she was a Nazi because of her devotion to Peron whom they thought acted like a dictator. He was a friend of Franco as he had been earlier of Germany, yet he refused to take sides in World War II until only five weeks before the surrender of Germany. Despite his fear of U.S. imperialism he struck a deal with Rockefeller: his backing the Allies in exchange for recognition of his government at the coming institution of the United Nations .

Peron over the years had received many escaping German military and business officials...sent thousands of visas, a hundred thousand Argentine identification cards. He did this independent of, but also at times thru the overtures of the Vatican and by requests from the U.S. He was as anxious to reap the harvest of German scientific expertise as was the U.S. which also wanted and used the German intelligence personnel for their knowledge and data on Russia..

Eva died of cancer July 26, 1952 when only 33 years old and in the midst of her heroic political struggle for the poor. The people of Argentina held her up as *Santa Evita*. She, however, admitted her weakness and faults...it runs thru her *Razon*. "In the end I want all to know that if I have made mistakes, I did them for love and I hope that God, who has always seen my heart, will not judge me for my mistakes, my faults which are many, but for the love that consumed my life."

Eva died even before Peron was put out of power in a coup by the rightist wing of the military backed by the oligarchy. Thus Peron did not survive his second term in office. Eva was helped to write her *Razon de Mi Vida* by a Spanish journalist Manuel Penella da Silva, who from his innumerable interviews with her wrote the text and then read it back to her. Another friend, Raul Mende, did the final editing. When the printed version was shown to her she exclaimed, "Thank you...Here is the child I never had!"

Some have accused the nationalism of Peron and Eva as an exaggeration, as fascist. But these detractors were principally the rich, the harbingers of the liberal economic philosophy who wanted to make deals with foreign investors that traditionally had robbed Argentina's resources. Peron denounced the "imperialism of money" as also the *vendepatrias* (willing to sell out their country)... labels most relevant today re the terribly unjust neoliberal economic system that oppresses, marginates and excludes half the world's workers and poor.

Eva's desire for eternal life was precisely to be with her *descamisados*: "God forgive me that I prefer to remain with them, for He also is with the little ones, and I have always seen in each worker a little of God who asked of me a bit of love that I never refused."

Like Therese she was driven by the intensity of her love of God...though hers was evident in her passion for the workers and the poor. Therese, in the dark night of Faith in her last days of illness, offered her suffering for priest missionaries as she clung steadfastly to her God. Eva too died an early death and suffered heroically in her approaching death.

Eva refused the surgery that may have saved her life from the slow-developing, painful uterine cancer. She seemed however to be loath to give cause that her enemies mock her "the mother of Argentina's poor" for having had an hysterectomy. She suffered greatly, but yet rose out of her sick-bed only three weeks before she died to accompany Peron in a motor calvacade. Most painful for her was to hear voices of the oligarchy demanding Peron's fall. She made her peace with God in a last confession to Father Benitez.

Peron seemed to collapse as a leader and as a person with Eva's death. He was forced to step down by a military coup, that was tried but couldn't succeed while Eva was alive. He seemed no longer the principled and noble character so passionately supported by Eva. Author Dujovne explained that Peron had an expert embalmer stand by for the moment of her death to so preserve her body that it survived the saga: state funeral, then sequestered to successive hiding places, shipped to Italy, buried in Milan, disinterred and taken to Peron in Spain in 1971.

Peron, not able to stand the thought of Eva dead, had originally entrusted her body to others. Somewhere Eva's enemies had managed to mutilate her body, a fact discovered only when the casket was opened before Peron in Spain. "Those bastards!" he exclaimed. Her body was finally returned to Argentina in 1974 to her original family vault.

From exile in Spain Peron had played an ambiguous role in Argentine politics, finally to be returned to Argentina in '73 to be president again for the last year of his life. His second wife, Isabel (really Maria Estela) Martinez succeeded him. Her presidency set the stage for the disaster of the fascistoid military rule in Argentina from 1976 to 1984 in which time the military disappeared over 30,000 people they identified as political opposition.

Eva before she died wrote-dictated *Mi Mensaje* (My Message) which is a rich mine for an insightful critique of religious practice and ecclesiastics who side with or accommodate the wealthy. In these works of Eva Peron: *Razon de Mi Vida*, *Mi Mensaje*, her letters and speeches preserved, just like with those of Therese, I'm sure scholars can find much gold to mine for people of today's world desperate to see examples of sacrificial love that brings God's justice...God's reign.

“Therese of Liseux and Eva Peron” is a very clear and well written piece. The thesis is unique, and captures the attention of your readers. Furthermore, it is a sympathetic, yet balanced, profile of Eva Peron.

What it lacks is more development of the links between Therese and Eva. You cite their early deaths – and the parallel between love and justice, the humble origins of both, but you need to work on more relationships.

For example, how is the “love” of Therese parallel to the “justice” of Eva? Therese's love is accepting, forgiving; Eva's justice demands change, reform.

How are the public life of Eva and the cloistered life of Therese parallel?

Therese was born poor and remained poor; Eva was born poor and became powerful. How are the powerful woman and the powerless woman sisters?

Therese became a magnet for the working poor of the US – St Cyril and St Clara's in Chicago – Eva became a magnet for the working poor in Argentina. Therese is an international figure, Eva more a national figure.

Eva is a feminist hero, but is Therese?

“We not only see God in Christ, but have also admired the man in Christ.” What a powerful statement!

Charles David, Charles Kimball and Diarmuid O'Murchu all offer critiques of organized religion.

Dr. Charles Kimball is professor of religion and chair of the Department of Religion at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC. Dr. Kimball is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and holds the M.Div. degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. An ordained Baptist minister, he received his Th.D. from Harvard University in comparative religion with specialization in Islamic studies.

Dr. Kimball's courses at Wake Forest include "Introduction to Religion," "Religions of the World," "Conceptions of the Afterlife," and "Islam." He is a frequent lecturer in universities and church-related settings as well as an expert analyst on issues related to the Middle East, Islam, Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations, and the intersection of religion and politics in the United States.

When Religion Becomes Evil "Whatever religious people may say about their love of God or the mandates of their religion, when their behavior toward others is violent and destructive, when it causes suffering among their neighbors, you can be sure the religion has been corrupted and reform is desperately needed. When religion becomes evil these five corruptions are always present. Conversely, when religion remains true to its authentic sources, it is actively dismantling these corruptions ... "

Religious persuasions are indisputably central factors in the escalation of evil and violence on the global scene, and hence a growing subject of popular concern and debate. Many argue that religion is the chief source of problems in the world today. Central to this debate is the need to distinguish between "corrupt" forms of religious expression and the "authentic" forms that offer real correctives and solutions to this global threat.

Religion and mid-East politics expert Charles Kimball offers a timely examination of the nature and signs of religious evil, while

outlining the correctives to these corruptions within each of the major religious traditions. Grounded in his experience as a Christian working closely with Muslims and Jews at the intersections of politics and religion over the past twenty-five years, Kimball outlines a clear description of the five basic corruptions that manifest themselves in each of the major religious traditions. While no single tradition is exempt from these corruptions, each has the ability and means to identify and correct such tendencies within its own wisdom tradition. When Religion Becomes Evil offers a reliable guide to this urgent global issue, showing us that the ways in which people of faith understand and live out their deepest religious commitments will have profound consequences for the future of humanity.

In Religion in Exile, Diarmuid O'Murchu argues that to understand their encounters with the divine, human beings simply need to pay attention to the world around them. Observation, not revelation, is the spirituality of the twenty-first century.

For O'Murchu, from 5,000 B.C.E. to the present religions – and especially the biblical religions of Judaism and Christianity – have regarded both humans and the earth on which they live as flawed, if not evil. Religions have alienated – exiled – humans from themselves and from their Earth Mother, resulting in the near-death quality of both humanity and the earth today. He declares that religions are no longer useful, and that humans – for their own salvation – need to move beyond religion, and process their experience of the divine like those humans who populated the earth from 2,500,000 B.C.E. until 5,000 B.C.E. Until the dawn of “civilization”, humans considered themselves and their Earth Mother to be basically good. They trusted themselves, and they trusted the earth.

O'Murchu's condemnation of religion is unnecessarily sweeping. Certainly, the Christianity founded by Augustine (354-430) is suspicious of both Nature and human nature. They are temptations to be overcome, not mentors for understanding the divine. But despite the enduring impact of Augustine on both theology and culture, it is not the only tradition which religions have developed from understanding how humans should process their encounters with the divine.

The teachers Ptah-Hotep during Egypt's Old Kingdom (2575-2134 B.C.E.) and Amen-em-ope during the New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.E.) believed that humans could find their Creators by observing Creation. They trusted Nature, and they trusted the ability of humans to learn from Nature.

The spirituality of Ptah-Hotep and Amen-em-ope appears in the traditions preserved in the Book of Proverbs. This spirituality of observation, rather than revelation stands in stark contrast to the spirituality of revelation in the Bible. For the Book of Proverbs, Yahweh does not interrupt Nature or human history to teach the Hebrews. Yahweh is understood through creation.

Hellenism, the culture of Greece and Rome – and western European cultures like the United States today – was also a firm believer in the goodness of Nature and human goodness. Unlike Semitic cultures in the eastern Mediterranean, Hellenistic cultures in the western Mediterranean considered humans to be a divine masterpiece. Augustine's theology of original sin targeted what he considered to be an exaggerated self confidence.

Although the theology of Augustine dominated Christianity through the Dark Ages (500-1300), it did not go unchallenged. Pelagius (355-435) debated both Augustine and Jerome, the hermit and biblical scholar. He was such a firm believer in human goodness and the divine quality of Nature that he was condemned as a pantheist. Undaunted he returned to Ireland where the teachings of Pelagius supported an enduring alternative Christianity experiencing a revival today as Celtic spirituality – which, interestingly, is the culture of O'Murchu.

When Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275) led Western Europe into the Enlightenment, he did so by returning to the world view of Hellenism that Nature and human nature were good and could be trusted to search for God. The intellectual culture of the universities, and later the economic culture of the Industrial Revolution wholeheartedly embraced the theology of Aquinas, but, curiously, the pastoral practice of Christianity did not. Humans were still born wounded by sin, and Nature was a temptation, not a mentor.

O'Murchu offers a stimulating challenge to organized religion, but his challenge owes an debt to more predecessors that he admits.

7/13/2004 9:12 AM

The movie, "Beyond Borders: where hope survives" is set against the backdrop of the world's most dangerous hot spots, this thrilling romantic adventure stars Academy Award winner Angelina Jolie as Sarah Jordan, a sheltered American socialite living in London. When she meets Nick Callahan (Clive Owen) a renegade doctor, his commitment to humanitarian efforts in war-torn nations moves her deeply. Driven by her passion for Nick and his life's work, Sarah risks everything to embark on a perilous journey that leads to the volatile far corners of the earth.

How hard to tell the good from the bad. Does Nick's passion and recklessness lead to the death of Elliott, his friend, Jojo, the first patient he saved from death, and Sarah, the woman he loves and the mother of his daughter? Are the arms dealers like Steiger to blame for the barbaric violence against so many? Are humanitarian efforts themselves only an invitation to the powerful to manipulate the suffering and the idealists who care for them? Is the power struggle between nations just consciously played out against the lives of the poor? Are freedom fighters merely another form of dictatorship for the poor?

Only the suffering seem to be heroic. Nick delivers a monologue on Jojo when Sarah asks him why he never uses her name. He describes the courage he finds among refugees who face death and refuse to die. He tells how Jojo, dying from starvation, nonetheless found the strength to bury all the remaining members of his family.

What painful questions.

O'Murchu, "Words about the Word": "The time is ripe for a type of religious quantum leap – not into some vast unknown, but into the deep story, the well-spring of spiritual awakening which existed before, and will continue to flourish long after, every religion known to humankind will have faded into history." (55)

I do not understand the distinction between the word preaching and proclaimed (54) which alienates or exiles humans, and the word told or the words of a story which connects humans to their earth and their inner self.

7/12/2004 10:47 AM

Yesterday Patrice and I came back from a long weekend in Sedona with Frances. Frances loved it. What a lot of work, but what a good idea.

Today I got up with resolve to use the next month to get my website for OTS up and running, and to loose 20 pounds!

In a note from Christi Foist, she writes:
OK, sorry for shouting, but I could barely contain my delight at receiving this email from one of my favorite authors EVER. Who knew he would be so accessible?!! His website said he was still on a book tour... Besides, does one really expect a successful author to post a direct-to-him email address on his own site?!!

Of course, now the great question: to blog, or not to blog ... (just kidding)

-Christi

<http://homepage.mac.com/littlemissanna78/>

> From: "Alain de Botton" <adb@netcomuk.co.uk>
> To: "Christi A. Foist" <swing_lover@yahoo.com>
> Subject: Re: romantic mysticism
> Date: Thu, 8 Jul 2004 09:30:34 +0100
>
> Dear Christi

> Many thanks for sending me your very impressive essay - and for
> introducing me to the world of your blog, which is full of fascinating
> stuff. Obviously we see the world in very similar ways. I'm delighted
> that you enjoyed ON LOVE, and I share with you the sense of how
> difficult it is to exist in a world which is not quite academia, but
> not quite 'the rest of the world' either. With all good wishes,
> Alain

I was not familiar with Alain de Botton, who published Status Anxiety . Read some reviews, and find the work fascinating. He deals with how we deal with the opinions that others have of us.

Last week in Sedona, I began Diarmuid O'Murchu, Religion in Exile: a spiritual homecoming (Crossroads, 2000). O'Murchu is a member of the Sacred Heart Missionaries, and works as counselor and social psychologist in London, England. He is widely sought after internationally as a speaker and lecturer and has written extensively on spiritual issues of our time. Amongst the books that he has authored are Quantum Theology, Our World in Transition, Reclaiming Spirituality, Religion in Exile.

His title means that religion (and the university) – from 3,000 BCE to the present -- has exiled humanity from its Earth Mother, and, consequently, from itself and any hope of understanding what it means to be human. He invited readers to move beyond biblical religions, and set out for their spiritual home – on earth.

Beyond seminary, O'Murchu is – to his credit -- clearly self-educated. Not an academic, however, his work lacks the polish which dialoguing with academic colleagues would bring. He is a retreat master, not a professor.

Realizing that it is time to move on is good; considering the past entirely without merit is not good. For O'Murchu the last healthy influence that religion had on humanity was recorded in the Cave of Lascaux, France around 17,500 B.C.E. during the Paleolithic Age.

O'Murchu

PELAGIUS
c.355 - c.435
British Theologian

Pelagius was a monk from Britain. He went to Rome where he was distressed by the moral decay of many Roman Christians. He blamed Rome's moral laxity on the doctrine of divine grace promulgated by Augustine. Pelagius reasoned that if a man were not himself responsible for his good or evil deeds, there was nothing to restrain him from indulgence in sin. Pelagius held that the human will is free to do good or evil, and that divine grace only facilitates what the will can do itself. After the fall of Rome to the Visigoths Pelagius went first to Africa, and then to Palestine. After attacks from Augustine and Jerome, Pelagius was condemned as a heretic.

Pelagius, although little is known of him only he is thought to have come from Britain and personally played an important role in shaping the early character of the Celtic Christianity. Although a priest, Pelagius was a Celtic monk and a highly respected spiritual leader for both laymen and clergy. What is recorded of his behavior denotes his Celtic heritage. He firmly believed in the individual--his free will and his ability to better himself as a spiritual being.

These ideas pitted Pelagius directly against the Christian Church of the time. It was the time when the Church was trying to combat the heresy of the Donatists of North Africa. Simply stated the Donatists claimed the efficacy of the sacraments depended upon the spiritual state of the priest who dispensed them. Such a declaration caused a great dilemma for the Church. For, if agreed to, it meant "the entire ceremonial edifice of the Church would be dependent on the moral character of the clergy and no one could ever be sure that a given rite had been supernaturally effective." But, if the Donatists' declaration was declared false then "a sacrament could be effectively administered even by a heretic or heathen. "

The defense against the heresy was to save the structure of the Church. At the time many men of the Church including Augustine were speaking out against the heresy claiming "the Church (in the words of Augustine's predecessor, Optatus of Mileum) is an institution, 'whose sanctity is derived from the sacraments, and not estimated from the pride of persons. ... The sacraments are holy in themselves and not through men.'"

Needless to say, the Church's stand would prevail. But, all Celts failed to see it that way including Pelagius and his chief disciple Caelestius who were contemporaries of the churchman Patrick in Ireland. Pelagius and Caelestius held firmly to the Storic doctrine of free will. Neither did they hold to Augustine's doctrine of original sin which the Church adopted. Pelagius did not believe that man's nature was tainted by the sin of Adam; and therefore, by his own nature and efforts could only inherit hell or damnation. He dismissed Augustine's assumption that man could only gain salvation through the Church .

He declared the doctrine of original sin abdominal, detesting it completely. It is this doctrine which declares that all men are conceived in sin and can only be saved by the unmerited grace of God which is only received through Jesus Christ and His Church.

The view of Pelagius and his followers firmly held to the Storic doctrine of the free will of man and the innate goodness of nature, which they claimed, was not corrupted but only modified by sin. Such a stand put them in direct opposition to their great antagonist Augustine. However, their view served for the basis of [Pelagianism](#).

Pelagius' views was not the only source of his troubles with the Church. He visited Rome around 380. What he saw and heard was in direct opposition to the rigorous asceticism practiced by him and his followers. He was repelled by the grandeur of the Church hierarchy, especially the Papacy. He "blamed Rome's moral laxity on the doctrine of divine grace that he heard a bishop cite from the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, who in his prayer for continence beseeched God to grant whatever grace the divine will determined. Pelagius attacked this teaching on the grounds that it imperiled the entire moral law." He won a great following and met his closest friend and collaborator, a lawyer, Caelestius.

When returning to Ireland they continued to meet the criticism of Augustine, but Pelagius because of his life of asceticism and insistent preaching on "man's basically good moral nature and on man's own responsibility for choosing Christian asceticism for his spiritual advancement" continued to win a wider following.

Around 412 Pelagius went to Palestine where in 415 he appeared before the synod of Jerusalem accused of heresy. He succeeded in clearing himself to avoid being censured. To combat future attacks from Augustine and the Latin biblical scholar Jerome he wrote his *De libero arbitrio* ("On Free Will") in 416, which brought about his condemnation by two African councils. Both he and Caelestius were considered for condemnations and excommunication by Pope Innocent I, but Innocent's successor Zosimus first pronounced Pelagius innocent on the basis of his *Libellus fidei* ("Brief Statement of Faith"), but reconsidered after the investigation was renewed by the council of Carthage in 418. Zosimus confirmed the councils nine canons condemning Pelagius. There is no further information concerning Pelagius after this date.

However, Pelagius is remembered for trying to free mankind from the guilt of Adam. He and his followers remind us once again that in the early history of the Church there were dissenters. "The great German theologian Karl Barth a few years ago described British Christianity as "incurably Pelagian." The rugged individualism of the Celtic monk, his conviction that each person is free to choose between good and evil. And his insistence that faith must be practical as well as spiritual remain hallmarks of Christians in Britain. An the British imagination has remained rooted in nature, witnessed by the pastoral poetry and landscape painting in which Britain excels, indeed that peculiar British obsession with gardening is Celtic in origin. Visitors to the British Isles are often shocked at how few people attend church each Sunday. Yet to the Britons, church-goers as well as absentees, the primary test of faith is not religious observance, but daily behaviour towards our neighbours—and towards one's pets, livestock and plants." *A.G.H.*

This is also known as the Pelagian heresy which aroused in the fifth century. It was preached by [Pelagius](#) and his followers and stressed the essential goodness of human nature and the freedom of the human will. Such teaching pitted Pelagius directly against the Christian Church of the time. He was particularly opposed to the doctrine of original sin and the immorality which he saw within the Church of Rome.

The basis of Pelagian was strictly a Storic doctrine of free will and the innate goodness of nature. It stated the belief that the Sin of Adam did not permanently corrupt the nature of man, but only temporarily modified it. Such a modification was keen in the teaching, for it was firmly believed that man with the use of his free will alone could achieve spiritual advancement. This was to say, sin modified human nature, but never was the effect of sin inherited making human nature evil itself, as declared in the doctrine of original sin as put forth by Saint Augustine.

There was no denial of the works of Christ. "And Christ's works by his example, the sacraments functioning not as power but as teaching." Men were taught by Christ's works, but not saved. Pelagianism was a strict teaching of self-reliance. Pelagius phrased it as: *homo libero arbitrio emancipatus a deo*: "man, created free, is with his whole sphere independent of God and the Church, the Living Body of Christ—though Christ, Church, and sacraments mightily teach and help"

To Pelagius, his teaching was not only combating the doctrine of original sin but Augustine's older beliefs in [Manichaenism](#) as well. Up against these teachings he and his followers framed six doctrines for which they were forcibly condemned:

1. That Adam would have died even if he had not sin;
2. That the sin of Adam injured himself alone, not the human race;
3. That newborn children are in the same condition as Adam was before the Fall; corollary; that infants, though unbaptized, have eternal life;
4. That the whole human race does not die because of Adam's death or sin, nor will it rise again because of Christ's resurrection;
5. That the Old Testament Law, as well as the New Testament Gospel, gives entrance to heaven; and
6. That even before the coming of Christ there were men who were entirely without sin.

The controversy between the Church and the followers continued after 418 when Pelagius was excommunicated and there is no further information of him. Julian of Eclanum continued asserting the Pelagian ideals by engaging Augustine in literary polemic until the latter's death in 430. Eclanum and followers were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Later the heresy known as Semi-Pelagianism, flourished in southern Gaul until it was condemned by the second Council of Orange in 529. *A.G.H.*

A Question Of Conscience

By Charles Davis

278 pp. New York, Harper and Row, 1967. \$6.95.

Karl Barth flies to Rome to instruct the cardinals in the subtleties of the Vatican II documents and discovers that Paul himself (the Italian one) seems to have read the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Meanwhile, further west, Charles Davis, the Robert McAfee Brown of British Catholicism, quietly withdraws from the very community Barth is embracing in order that he may continue to think and live as a Christian. Meanwhile, even further west, Robert McAfee Brown, the Charles Davis of American Protestantism, writes about Davis' move in a lucid and sensitive article entitled, unaccountably, "A Loss for Us All."

It's all very strange. Charles Davis, his move, and his book have become a kind of Rorschach inkblot, testing us all. One is tempted to commend and to praise Davis' *A Question of Conscience* by suggesting that Christians today might well be most decisively classified by whether they feel closest to the world Davis left or to the world he entered. It is unimportant to state that the reviewer belongs to the second group, but it is not unimportant to state that his book is of great value to both worlds.

A Question of Conscience is not primarily a "why I left the church" book, a reverse Newman apologia, a sophisticated Kavanaugh. It is basically an important contribution to the Christian doctrine of the church. The simplest way to put Davis' project is this: it is a sustained attack on the traditional Christian doctrine of the *notae ecclesiae*, an attack that interestingly shows no interest in the sixteenth century Protestant alternative regarding one, holy, catholic, apostolic, as definitive marks. Davis proposes a new definition, equally post-Catholic and post-Protestant: that the church is to be found where Christian faith, love, and hope are both possible and actual (p. 62). The closest Protestant parallel to Davis' position is probably to be found in those pages of Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* where the true church is defined as the place where the form of Christ is being manifest in the world. Davis' language is moral, Bonhoeffer's Christological, but the two positions are very close.

It is important to emphasize the decisive theological role of the Christian community in Davis' thought, for a cursory reading of some of his chapters might otherwise beguile the Protestant reader into confusing Davis' position with a nineteenth century liberal-spiritual attack on institutionalization itself. He is too sophisticated for this move. His point is simply that the present structure of the Catholic Church cannot pass the test set by the new marks or notes he proposes, and thus a new structure must be shaped (p. 90). Incidentally, it is not at all clear to me why a Protestant who agrees with Davis on the Catholic Church at this



point, might not be obliged to consider the necessity of making his own parallel break with the denomination pattern he is in.

This is a book by a man *in via* (Davis clearly being *in via* and not having to be *in patria*), and it thus bears some marks of the world he has left. At times he falls into what might be called a kind of ghetto or handbook theological style. Perhaps his rather ponderous analysis of "credibility" (hopefully, now on this side of the Atlantic, he can be persuaded to jettison that horrid word!) and his too abstract, too Lonerganist discussion of human freedom fall into that basket. But these lapses or atavisms are infrequent, and not many pages go by that are not livened by beguiling phrases of real power and strikingly original ideas. I was delighted by his defense, in the opening pages, of the value of personal happiness, for you just don't run into that kind of thing in theological writing these days.

Is it possible to locate or define Charles Davis as a theologian today? I would be tempted to claim him as a radical theologian, for radical theology ought to be defined formally and not by specific doctrinal content. He is, in the first place, like the Protestant and Jewish radicals, a once and present moderate or conservative. Not progressive, not liberal really; just as Jewish radical theology has emerged out of conservative and Hasidic Judaism, and Protestant radical theology from the Reformation and Barth. Davis made the move he did precisely because the progressive or liberal option was not open to him.

I venture to call Davis a radical theologian because I am inclined to define a radical theologian as: (1) one who has perceived a hurt at the psychic center of his received religious tradition; (2) who has refused to heal that hurt lightly by re-interpretation or re-definition; and (3) who has therefore consented, with freedom and reluctance, to live apart from that center. Davis' conservatism emerges in that he accepts the right of scripture and tradition to define the proper meaning of that center, and he is deeply suspicious of the use, in theologians like Baum and Dewart, of the theory of dogmatic development to defend or to justify any change while still remaining in the visible institution. The Protestant's psychic center is God; Luther and Calvin made sure of that; thus, the content of Protestant radical theology is partly the elaboration of the experience of the death of God. The Catholic psychic center is church, and Davis' theology is a death-of-church theology.

The formal parallel between Davis and the Protestant radicals must not be allowed to go too far, for there is another fact that blurs it. In terms of the content of his theology, Davis is closer, surely, to the Protestant revisionists like J. A. T. Robinson, Harvey Cox, and Schubert Ogden who perceive the hurt, but who are able by reformulation to preserve it and to live with its traditional verbalizations. Yet note: when Catholics



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use the same techniques of redefinition on the doctrine of the church, Davis strenuously protests, and I think rightly. Similarly, Protestant radical theology is closer in content to Catholic revisionists like Fontinell, Dewart, and Novak whose reformulations of God (liberated, one suspects by the very theory of development Davis distrusts) move much closer to traditional atheism than do their Protestant revisionist counterparts. (Note how, on p. 52, Davis seriously misunderstands Dewart precisely where he is making one of his most radical proposals for a redefinition of God.)

On one important matter of content, Davis and the Protestant radicals share a common concern, the location of a fundamental problem for theology at the point of the community: Is there a possible community in the midst of which we can continue to live as Christians? For Davis, this problem of space or location is directly given by his act of disaffiliation from the old space. For Protestants, the problem of community is presented not so much by the experience of the deterioration of the old structures (of course they have deteriorated, but it is not as costly for a Protestant to believe that as for a Catholic) but by the demand to produce some new theological solutions to the problems once and rightly solved by the doctrine of God. When the Protestant radical turns to questions of forgiveness, salvation, judgment, grace, he raises the question about where, in what place, and with whom, can these abiding religious realities be received, when they cannot be received from God.

Charles Davis' new book is a brilliant, suggestive, and genuinely helpful contribution to the tasks lying at hand. "A Loss for Us All"? Hardly.

William Hamilton
New College
Sarasota, Florida

Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom offers an exploration of the secret universe we all carry inside us, the connections we forge with the worlds of our friends and loved ones, and the products of our worlds reflected in the things we create outside of ourselves. *Anam Cara*, Gaelic for "soul friend," is an ancient journey down a nearly forgotten path of wisdom into what it means to be human. Drawing on this age-old perspective, John O'Donohue helps us to see ourselves as the Celts did: we're more than just flesh, blood, and bone; we comprise individual worlds. The

comprehension of the sublime architecture of the worlds we are born with will engender a new appreciation for the outside world and the way we contribute to its evolution.

From [Booklist](#)

The Gaelic title refers to the "soul-friend," a lovingly stern companion to whom you can, in stringent honesty, unburden your heart as you move toward enlightenment. O'Donohue positions himself to be that soul's companion for readers who yearn for a spirituality that is accepting of bodily wisdom but does not deny the power of the Christian vision. The Celts--well, the Irish, anyway--grappled with that yearning more than a millennium ago. Irish traditional ways were never subjected to the kinds of discouragement--racks, skewers, lions, and the like--practiced on the continent and so were able to wed pagan sensuality to the ethical challenges of the new creed. Reperforming that marriage, O'Donohue is as much at ease with Heidegger as with Yeats, with Rilke as with Jung, as he discourses on solitude, work, love, and death and works snippets of ancient Irish poetry seamlessly into the fabric of his text. Eloquent and learned, O'Donohue is more than just another Paddy-come-lately cashing in on *River Dance*era Celtophilia. He is the real thing: a poetic priest with the soul of a pagan. Expect demand! (HarperCollins does, to the tune of a 150,000-copy first printing.) *Patricia Monaghan*

O'Murchu stands clearly in the Celtic tradition of Pelagianism. He truly believes in the goodness of humanity and the goodness of the earth where humans live. There are divine creatures. Working together they can find the God who created them. The Religion in Exile is the Church of Augustine.

Although, O'Murchu has not "left" the Church, he does want to move beyond the Church. Religion in Exile is, in many ways, the same kind of ecclesiology as that of Charles Davis in A Question of Conscience.

Remembering Yesterday, Living Today is not just a key to my personal identity, but a reflection on how the last half of the twentieth century changed the way we all live.

Remembering drives some of the most enjoyable, and most perceptive, work being written in the United States today. Authors like Pat Conroy, Annie Lamott, Bill Geiss, Amy Burfoot, Garrison Kieller, Barbara Kingsolver, Maya Angelou, Tom Bodet and Leon Hale are not writing autobiography, but remembering their lives in both fiction and non-fiction.

The contents of Remembering Yesterday, Living Today is neither logical, nor chronological. I tell the stories that come to mind each day when I write. I go where remembering leads.

Table of Contents²⁴

1. What is the first creative moment you remember?

When we were living on the main post at Ft. Bragg, I decided to make divinity fudge like my friend Henry in Georgia.

2. Was anyone there to witness or appreciate it?

The divinity did not turn out well. I think I had to substitute clear Karo Syrup for one ingredient. I put it in the freezer to try and force it to set.

Mother was furious. She told my father. He made me eat it all. I designed a strategy of twisting a table spoon into the blob, and everyday when I got home from school, I pried it free, and ate it like a taffy sucker.

3. What is the best idea you've ever had?

Marry Patrice.

4. What made it great in your mind?

I got control of my life, I was able to integrate my life with Patrice, and my work at the university, and my writing life.

5. What is the dumbest idea?

That I could work for Dolorette Farias, Thomas O'Brien and Leo McCarthy.

6. What made it stupid?

Intelligent and self-confident people threaten ignorant and insecure people. I was intelligent, competent and self-confident. Dolorette, O'Brien and Leo were ignorant, incompetent and insecure. I thought Dolorette could say – "I know Don is great. I hired him." She couldn't.

7. Can you connect the dots that led you to this idea?

I wanted to please my mother. I wanted to please the Carmelites. I wanted to please the Church. I never wanted to please myself. I want to make people like the perfect little models in my head. I have a perfect

²⁴ Twyla Tharp, The Creative Habit: learn it and use it for life, a practical guide (2003: 45-46)

supervisor. I have a perfect student. I have a perfect TA. In reality, my supervisor, my students and my TA are real people. Real people have both good and bad qualities. I need to accept people as they are, not as I want them to be.

8. What is your creative ambition?

I want to write and I want to teach. I want to live like Jesus lived.

9. What are the obstacles to this ambition?

A lack of focus. I am always doing other things. Laundry. Cooking. I think these are creative things to do in order to lead a balanced life, but then the day is gone. I have not written. I do not give myself the time to do these things. I am too responsible to the expectations of other – including my students – and I am not responsible to my own expectations. Writers need to write. To read. To think.

10. What are the vital steps to achieving this ambition?

Consistent application of myself to fewer tasks. Pray. Read. Write. Teach. Everyday.

11. How you begin your day?

I get up at 5AM. I have coffee. I pray (30 mins). I read a good book (30 mins). Feed the mind first. I run (60 mins). I write (60 mins). I work out (60 mins). I grade papers, edit manuscripts, write book reviews (60 mins). I meet a colleague for lunch (120 mins). I prepare class (120 mins). I listen to fiction on tape (120 mins). I teach (180 mins). I meet with students (60 mins). I cook supper (90 mins). I watch TV (60 mins)

12. What are your habits? What patterns do you repeat?

I am very consistent. I have lots of habits. See the above schedule.

13. Describe your first successful creative act.

My first book was Deuteronomy and City Life. I designed it from my dissertation. I wanted to show that the theology of ancient Israel was not exclusively a nomadic theology. It was an urban theology – a theology of justice at the gates.

14. Describe your second successful creative act.

My second book was Social World of Ancient Israel. I collaborated with Victor. We had the book done at least three times, and then decided to start over.

15. Compare them.

By the time I wrote Social World, I had a cleaner, more readable style.

16. What are your attitudes toward: money, power, praise, rivals, work, play?

Money: Growing up I thought of myself as “an expense” – I spent much of my adult life trying to avoid being an “expense”, trying not to spend money – which, of course, is impossible.

Power: Ability. Use it well.

Praise: Praise and criticism are the tools of friends – not critiques or the public. Choose carefully those from whom you seek praise or criticism.

Rivals: Life is not a race. I run, but I do not compete. I collaborate, but I do not want to destroy. I want into the conversation; I do not want to stop it.

Work: The creative part of my life. We spend too much time at work, not to enjoy it.

Play: The spice of life, the Sabbath during which we step back and enjoy the work of others, especially God.

Which artists do you admire most?

I admire Annie Lamott, Pat Conry, Garrison Kiellor, Van Gogh and the other impressionists,

18. Why are they your role models?

I treasure their skills in helping me see things in life I would have missed otherwise. Artists tune my senses.

19. What do you and your role models have in common?

I give my students ideas that will help them see things in life – in religion differently.

20. Does anyone in your life regularly inspire you?

Patrice. Her intelligence. Her commitment. Her selflessness. Her faith. Her love for me.

21. Who is your muse?

I want to say: Jesus, or Patrice. Authors I read. Leaders I admire.

22. Define “Muse”.

My muse is the person who inspires me, who motivates me to get up in the morning, to do what I do well, to grow, to change, to survive.

23. When confronted with superior intelligence or talent, how do you respond?

I am in good company, so I start learning.

24. When faced with stupidity, hostility, intransigence, laziness, or indifference in others, how do you respond?

Some few students – not a majority, thank God, by any means have a truly aggressive consumer mentality which I find distracting and discouraging. As a teacher, my work is, basically, quite simple. I am helping students develop a set of skills. I am not solving the problems of the world, nor am I solving life's problems for a particular student. Some students, however, see teachers as omnipotent. Everything, good and bad, in their lives is in the power of their teachers.

The “consumer mentality” in students is the attitude: “I paid for you, therefore, you will do what I tell you!” “You don’t know what you are doing. No other teacher does this.” “You are dead wrong.”

Students, in general, are not creative. Their behavior is modeled by the way in which teachers have dealt with them. Unfortunately, when teachers make bad judgments, students internalize the experience as the truth.

I get tremendous satisfaction from helping a student learn. I get not satisfaction from helping them avoid the consequences of their actions. Students with a consumer mentality have had too many teachers who get litter satisfaction from helping a student learn, and tremendous satisfaction in rescuing students from the consequences of their actions. I get the impression that some teachers set standards for their students, primarily for the satisfaction of dispensing them from the standards. I do not ask a student to do anything that I do not expect them to do. Do it, and I will help you. Don’t do it and you face the consequences of your actions alone. Students in the liberal arts and sciences need a study partner, just as students in the physical sciences have lab partners. I am not asking students to work with a partner just to have the opportunity to say: I will be your study partner.

Most students are not malicious. Some do lie, most poorly, some well. Most, however, are really convinced that they do not have to suffer the consequences of their actions. They don’t read directions. So what? They don’t meet deadlines. So what? Parents and teachers have raised far too many children to deny the reality of cause and effect.

Dealing with students with a consumer mentality distracts. I find it a waste of my time. I do not like the aggressive behavior of these students. I do not like being put on trial – You will have to prove to me that you cannot do what I am telling you to do. But these sessions become a nightmare for me. I think about them. I dream about them. I search for a better way to explain cause and effect to students. I want to be omnipotent, and I hate the experience of powerlessness. I wish I could tell a student that it does not make any difference whether or not they are passing a course. I wish I could tell a student that it does not make any difference that they need to add or drop courses by the deadline. Even though it is the student who has failed, I consider myself the failure.

I have not yet developed a workable way to unplug my attention, and to get back to work with the students who are working with me.

25. When faced with impending success or the threat of failure, how do you respond?

I try to get ready to move on. On the day of my ordination, I put a note on my door: “Out to be ordained. Back at 12PM!” I always need a mission. So, whether the last mission failed or succeeded I need a new one. I am waiting here today for FedEx to deliver my copy of Old Testament Story, an introduction. I am writing this book. Book Four is finished. Book Five is underway.

26. When you work, do you love the process or the result?

Both. Patrice and I say to one another that if we did not stop so often to admire our work, we would finish projects in half the time. I love the challenge of planning and problem solving. I also love the result, when the picture in my head is on the paper or on the wall.

27. At what moments do you feel that your reach extends your grasp?

At the end of the day, when, instead of a sense of satisfaction at having accomplished all that I have accomplished, I feel a sense of frustration that I still have so many things on the list for the day.

28. What is your ideal creative activity?

Teaching well. When the students understand. When they understand. When they laugh. When they ask good questions.

29. What is your greatest fear?

My greatest fear is that I will become cynical, that I will despair, that I will lose faith, that the best days of my life are behind me.

History and Story

In the world of the Bible, where I have spent my working lifetime, households listened to the story of how Yahweh freed the slaves in Egypt, and they told their own stories of how Yahweh set them free. Biblical faith – social identity – was created by hearing and telling. Israel was a people who listened, and a people who told.

I teach by listening to the biblical stories, and by telling my own stories. I try to model hearing-and-telling not only to teach, but also to define myself. Listening to stories and telling stories my spirituality. I live to tell stories, and am alive because of the stories I tell.

Hearing biblical stories tunes our ears—and our other senses—to recognize God in our lives. The stories we tell mark our sightings of God in our lives. A story says: “God was here!” The stories I tell my students about my life, and about my family, are all stories which re-tell, in some way, the biblical stories.

Not all stories carry theological tags like “Therefore, God is love!” Often stories are just stories, which mark God’s passing through our lives.

Perhaps at some later moment the meaning of the story – the morale of the story – will become clear, perhaps not. Nonetheless, picking up the pieces, in itself, is a way to live a more conscious life – a life connected, rather than separated, from what is going on around us. Humans are only human to the extent that they become actively aware of their interconnectedness on the human plane, and to the divine plane.

For Muslims, Christians and Jews, it is the Bible that gives significance to the stories we tell. What makes the Bible such an enduring part of the cultural landscape for these three world religions is the riveting stories it tells about how God passes through human life. Even though these biblical stories come to most Jews, Christians and Muslims once removed, they are, nonetheless, unforgettable. The Quran, the New Testament and the Talmud cannot obscure the power of the Bible they retell.

The defining story in the Bible is the Exodus. Yahweh is the God who sets slaves free. Muslims, Christians and Jews are people who identify themselves as slaves-set-free, and who free slaves.

Committees charged by congregations to evaluate how well they are living biblical values often struggle mightily to establish criteria for their study. I have never served on such a committee, but they could could simplify their work by asking a single question: Who are the slaves we are setting free? This is plot of every biblical story, and every story that we tell about our own lives. They are stories of where slaves are freed, the hungry fed, the naked clothed and prisoners visited. They are stories about where we found God.

Now I am trying to write my stories down, not to preserve them for eternity, but to tell them to a larger audience in a different way.

Robert Fulghum said he started to write [All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things](#) (1993) by simply taking the refrigerator notes which the members of his congregation stuck to the doors of their refrigerators to remember his better sermons. The classroom is Fulghum's refrigerator in my life.

2001

Scientists look forward to understand the present. Storytellers look backward. Scientists do research. Storytellers tell stories!

Scientists problem-solve by research – learning things that have never been known. For traditional cultures the key to problem-solving is storytelling. For traditional cultures problems are not caused by what humans do not know, but what humans have forgotten. When problems plague a traditional culture, they “read the directions” which came in the past. Traditional cultures do not try to read mail that has not yet been

delivered. Nostradamus is the hero of fortune tellers. Homer – or Moses—
is the hero of story-tellers.

Born in 1503 at St. Remi, Nostradamus was the first son of Jewish parents, forced by the Inquisition to convert to Catholicism. His grandfather taught him languages, math, astronomy, and astrology. Later he studied liberal arts at the University of Avignon and medicine at the University of Montpellier, where he specialized in treating plague.

Tragically, the plague took the lives of his wife and two children. Distraught and pursued by the Inquisition, Nostradamus wandered Italy and France, before settling in Salon where he and Anne Ponsart Gemelle raised six children. In 1564 Nostradamus became Royal Physician to King Charles IX.

At 52, Nostradamus began composing four-lined, rhymed poems in the most obscure language – Mabus, King of Terror, Third Anti-Christ, Crusade, Plague, Hollow Mountains, Hister. Devotees of Nostradamus claim his nine hundred quatrains prophesy the defining events of the last five hundred years—the French Revolution (1789), Napoleon (1769-1840), Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), Hitler (1889-1945), Neil Armstrong walking on the moon (July 20, 1969), the Challenger Shuttle explosion (January 28, 1986) and the attack on the World Trade Center (September 11, 2001). Nostradamus has become the guide for those who find the meaning of the present in prophecies about the future.

I am a storyteller, not a scientist. The key to living today for me is in remembering. Problems, for me, are solved by remembering what I have forgotten, not by trying to figure out what I never knew in the first place. The millennium, for me, did not begin at midnight, December 31, 1999.

It began at 3 PM on October 20, 2000. Until then I had told stories.

From that day on, I also began to write them down.

Searching for a starting place to write, I began by remembering Stanley Kubrik's movie: "2001: A Space Odyssey". I had seen the film on the same evening that NASA put Apollo 7 into earth orbit – October 11, 1968.²⁵

I was teaching High School.²⁶ It was my first real job, and it was painful.

Leo, the assistant principal, assigned me four preparations – Standard English, Honors English, Creative Writing and Religion—in a school where virtually no one taught more than two preparations. I had never taken a course in Creative Writing. I gave writing assignments I did not know how to grade. So, I just took them home and started stacking them against the wall.

Years later I was having dinner with Michael, a college friend, who had also gone into teaching. When I started telling the horror stories from my first year teaching, he laughed sincerely. "My assistant principal tried the same shit with me," he commented. "What did you do?" I

²⁵ I went to that film with David Engle. I had worked with Dave as a carpenter when I was in college. He was the business manager at the high school. We had both joined the Carmelites from Tucson.

²⁶ Salpointe High School or as it is now known Salpointe Catholic High School in Tucson AZ

asked. “I just prepared one class each day, and taught it four times.”

“But what did you do when the same students you had for Honors English came back into your classroom for Creative Writing?” “I told them that repetition is one of the most effective ways to learn.” For the price of a long distance phone call, I could have saved myself hours of scrutiny, guilt and frustration. Michael should have been my mentor.²⁷ The assistant principal—whom I later learned thought I was too smart for my own good, and was on a personal mission to teach me a lesson in humility—also assigned me seventy-five sophomores for personal counseling.²⁸ I had never taken a course in counseling. I learned to listen sympathetically, and then conclude with a standard admonition. “Do me a favor,” I would ask these fifteen year olds. “Keep a journal. It may seem impossible today, but you too will have a fifteen year old. If you don’t think seriously – in writing – about how to solve the problems your parents are creating for you, then we will never get better at parenting. The next time you will think about all the things you have talked with me about today will be when you hear your fifteen year old cutting through the family room and out the back door, and you hear yourself – in your mother’s voice – shout: “Where the hell do you think you’re going?”

The book store manager initiated me into my new professions by not ordering teacher-editions of the text books we were expected to use. I had no assignments and no answers to the discussion questions. There were no explanations of how the author of the textbook designed the chapter. Unfortunately, I took this sadistic behavior personally. It was not until much later that I learned he tortured every first-year teacher the way he tortured me.

I went to see a film about the universe because I needed to think big to keep the littleness of my suffering from overwhelming me. My decision to go to the movie became a personal celebration of a national achievement. I was not just being flogged to death in one small classroom, I was part of a grand, new era – the space millennium.

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I sat as close to the screen as an adult can without attracting attention.
The year was 1968. I was twenty-six years old.

²⁷ Michael Mulhall

²⁸ Leo McCarthy was the assistant principal. The first time I met the man was in the hall at the Carmelite Junior Seminary during a Vocation Camp. I was working with his friend: ??? When I passed them in the hall, I greeted ??? without calling him “Father”. Leo was furious with his friend for not correcting me. Leo was lace stocking Irish. His family were millionaires, and had property alongside the Kennedy’s. As fate would have it Leo was provincial when I went to Kino and later resigned.

When the real millennium arrived in my life, I sat in a hot tub in my backyard in Phoenix looking into a black and star filled night sky. There was not a plane landing or taking off from Sky Harbor airport.

I tried to resist all the doomsday warnings, but, on New Year's Eve, I had rushed off to Walmart to refresh my disaster supplies. I bought oil for my hurricane lamp and a flat rubber stopper so that I could fill the bath tub with water. I picked up several kinds of batteries for my flash lights. I also put enough bags of dry beans and cans of tuna in the cart for three months.

The adventure reminded me of my back-packing days in Sierra Nevada Mountains in Southern California.

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I did not have room in my kitchen cupboard for everything, so I just stacked it on the floor. all this extra The real 2001 has since come and gone. As it turned out, my own personal Y-2K crisis took place in 2001, not as 1999 became 2000, as the media and Nostradamus had predicted.

October 20, 2000: I was asked to resign from my job as the Executive Director of a School of Theology.

February 28, 2001: I ended a 45 year relationship with my religious order, and a 35 year vocation as a priest.

March 14, 2001: I turned fifty-nine.

April 12, 2001: I married for the first time.

June 2001: I finished a book I had been writing since 1978.

October 14: my mother died unexpectedly.

2001 seemed like a good time to ask: What=s an adult like me to do with the life we adults actually live, not with the life we plan in high school, and for some of us, in college to live. It is one thing to set goals, it is quite another to assess reality.

I never wrote one of those letters outling where I wanted to be at fifty. Never occured to me personally to write such a letter, and not one of my college instructors ever made the assignment. I now know that if I had written the letter, I would never have guessed who I would be in my fifties, and what the world where I was living would be like. Having made that disclosure, I also need to say that I am not the least bit unhappy that I was not my own travel agent. God has done well by me. I like who I am and where I am, not because I got here on my own five year plans, but because I have learned to enjoy what God is doing, and what others are doing, and what the world is doing more than what I am doing or want to do. Perhaps, by nature I am easily distracted. I am the kind of student who spends more time pulling books off the shelf in a library and reading snatches from one section of the other than I do surgically seeking those books I need for my own research. Nonetheless, peace

comes to my life more by enjoying the ride, than in being the driver. I still make five-year plans, because I have also learned that is part of me, but in all honesty, none of the important people, places and achievements to date, have been entered into my Franklin planner by me. And I would not have missed one of them for the world.

The Box

I am the oldest of four children. Not that being the oldest in our family came with any particular authority, or any money either. Even during the week of my mother=s funeral, nobody asked my permission. The standard opening line was: AUncle Don, I hope you won=t be angry.... A My sister, twelve years younger, was the child whose adult life was woven most intimately with the lives of my parents. Except for a short period when a soon to be failed marriage moved her from Arizona to Alvin, TX, she never lived more than five miles from Mother and Dad. Early in her adulthood, my sister needed them. Soon they needed each other. After my father died, she and my mother became inseparable. She called every day. They rode together as my sister called on her customers. They would take off in the middle of a work-day afternoon to see a movie. They bought each other forbidden foods. They fought like girlfriends.

They were a true sisterhood.

The day before she died, my mother=s good friend stopped by the house unannounced. The friends recalled that she was out running errands and, quite unplanned, got to thinking about mother. At first she planned to stop by the house, then changed her mind because she had work to do at her own home. Traffic forced her to miss the turn into her own neighborhood, and brought her to the intersection leading to my mother=s home. Instantly, these two aging women were celebrating their lives, past and present, over coffee at the breakfast bar. The talking, laughing, crying went on. My mother did not even excuse herself for mass, which was a ritual for her on Saturday evening. I always admired my mother=s ability to know a sacred moment, even when it had nothing to do with church.

At one point in the seredipty the night before my mother died, my sister appeared with a bag of cookies. She and her husband were having company, and she was making a final run to the grocery store. The cookies called her name, and as she often did, even in the midst of her own life, she bought them to deliver in secret to mother. A calorie heavy act of love. When she arrived, the three women laughed and hugged. My sister left for her company. The next day, after my mother=s death, my sister found the bag of cookies. It was almost empty. AI can=t believe

she ate all those cookies in one night@ I heard her say as much to herself as to me, as she started into my mother=s refrigerator. My mother=s death was simple, and quick. For her a grace. For those who loved her, and who needed her, the suffering was intense. My sister mourned by going to my mother=s house as regularly after her death as she did during her life. She cleaned. She watered. She arranged cut flowers. But more importantly, she patiently read the story of my parents lives in all the things they left behind on their walls, in their drawers, hanging in closets and stored in boxes. She posted reports with each of us like a journalist at the front. Thanksgiving morning, the first without mother, my sister called early. AI need you to come by mother=s house before we go to dinner. I=ve cleaned and decorated her house for Thanksgiving. I need you to see it.@ The day we returned from the cemetery, I promised myself as we backed out of the drive, that I would not come back to my mother=s house. I needed to preserve the memories of her home, as it was the day she died. I had captured those moments on my new digital camera the day before, and later posted on my computer screen saved. Nonetheless, I broke my promise to myself. I wanted to be there for my sister.

When I pulled into the drive, we started to cry. My sister and her husband walked the house with us. It was clean. Mother would have approved. Cut flowers from her own bougainvillea filled her cut glass pitcher on the dining room table. It was nice, but it was not the same. I noticed that the spindly legged table in my mother=s bathroom, which held her library of Reader=s Digest and Women=s Health was gone. The weight of her dead body had smashed it as she fell to the floor. The tour continued silently, room to room, closet to closet, drawer to drawer.

As we walked back to our cars, my sister popped the trunk of their vintage Cadillac. AI want you to take your box,@ she announced. AI put some of Mother and Dad=s things in them for you. A She handed me one box, and handed Patrice another. We each carried our portion like it was a larger version of the little stainless steel box containing my mother=s ashes which were had taken to the Post Cemetery at Fr.

Huachucha less than six weeks ago.

I wanted to rip through my box as soon as we backed out of the drive. The child in me could not wait for Christmas morning. I forced myself to choose two presents to open. The family tradition dictated one present, but, hell, I am a fifty year old man, and you half to make allowances. First, I carfully slide the cap off a metal tube. It was about the diameter of a nickel, and twice length of a good cigar. Tightly rolled inside were military discharge papers. At first, I thought they belonged to my father,

whose military career lasted more than thirty years. They were not. The papers belonged to my father's father. I knew he was a soldier.

Fought in the Spanish American War. I did not know that he had stayed in the Army for almost ten years as a carpenter. The papers called him an Artificer. My father had used that word whenever he was to affect sophistication, or answer but not answer some question we, as children, would ask. Dad, tell us what you did during the war? we would ask. I was an artificer, my father would answer. I never knew where he found that word.

Second, I opened my father's jewelry box which had spent its useful life on the top of my parents chest of drawers. As I lifted the lid I remembered how my mother had given me my father's two Masonic rings at his funeral. One my father had worn every day of his life. The compass and trowel symbols on the ring were worn almost smooth. The other ring was new, never worn. It was like a thin gold wedding band with the Hebrew letter, yod, incised on it. The first letter of Yahweh or YHWH, the name by which the Hebrews knew their divine patron in the Bible. I did not wear the rings, but placed them in a ceramic cup on the top of my dresser. I had them only a short while. When my house was robbed, the thieves took the rings. The insurance company paid me for them. I called the Masonic lodge to find out where to replace them, but I could not do it. Like my father they were gone....

Relocating

I try to time my daily three-mile run so that I make the turn east toward home just as the sun begins to appear over the mountains. Like the Egyptians in the days of the pharaohs I have this ancient commitment to help the sun rise. Today sunrise was 7:14AM. I left the house at 6:45AM.

Today is day two of working out with Denver, our new Australian shepherd. Denver is a Humane Society Alum. Weighs about 50 lbs. Has beautiful eyes, and a rich deep red and tan coat with a cut bobbed tail.

Australian shepherds were bred through collies, so they have similar a face and muzzle, but with shorter hair. Denver is still a child, just a year old.

In August we put down our sixteen year old dog, Paws. He was an SPCA alum, and one of the finest creatures. Positive, energetic. When he and I would go out in the morning, he would run the gutters when they were full of rain water. He would open his mouth wide and cut through the puddles like a skier. He loved to ride in the pickup truck. He would put his front paws on the tire well, and put his face into the wind. He woke us one morning early. He was paralyzed from the hips down. If

heaven for dogs is not a pickup truck, God is going to have to explain why to Paws.

Growing up we had dogs, but I never had to put one down. In fact, I never saw one grow old. Our dogs as children all ran away or got run over. It was a new and difficult experience to watch such a good creature die. We agreed to mourn Paws until Thanksgiving. Told and retold stories. Dug out the old picture box. Found the snaps we took the day we brought him home.

Adopting a new dog is like having a child late in life. Paws knew us and we knew Paws. There were no surprises. We enjoyed each others good qualities, and suffered each others bad qualities gladly. Denver did not know us, and we did not know Denver. Fifteen minutes sitting in the get-acquainted area in the kennel tells you little. He chews things, buries his toys, and gets up in the middle of the night and whines. We are inconsistent, give verbal orders containing too many syllables, and frighten him.

Furthermore, the volunteer told us that we had to agree to keep the dog inside the house with us at least fifty percent of the time. We had inside cats, but never inside dogs. Nonetheless, we agreed. The volunteer also told us that exercise was a great destruction management technique. So, Denver and I set off together each morning, learning to enjoy each other=s pace and interest.

Today, another member of the exercise community came up behind me, and notices that as he approached, Denver kept turning back. He started talking to the dog, and then to me. Floyd is a teacher. Works at the Federal Prison. Loves his job. AAll I have to deal with is the students, not their parents, not a school board.@ We stood there on the canal for twenty minutes, enjoying the day, enjoying each other=s company. As we said goodbye and continued on our preferred routes, I thought: how much I have come to enjoy this new city where I have made my home.

Four years ago, I relocated to take a new job. The job did not work out but the city did. Nonetheless, I missed my old home. I had lived there over twenty-five years. I knew its streets. I could get to work on a clear day, and home during an ice storm or a hurricane. I knew its neighborhoods, where I could celebrate the Greek Festival or Dia de los Muertos. I knew its cafes and restaurants. Where to get a decent hamburger. Where the home-fries and eggs over easy done right. Where the frijoles are tender, and the sopa is moist. Where to eat barbeque. Where to pray.

My new home was foreign to me. Even though it was still in the top ten largest cities in the country, it was still the smallest city where I had

lived. I complained a lot. The city was racist. The arts community was amateur. Freeways were few. Too many Yankee tourists. Single party politics dominated public life.

I am a yellow dog Democrat. Run a yellow dog on the Democratic ticket, and he would get my voice, even if his name was not Paws or Denver.

When I went to the polls on the first primary day in my new home, the Democratic party was in such shambles that there one contested office in the entire state. Every other office either had only one Democratic candidate, or no Democratic candidate. In the one contest, a supporter of the world view of economist, Lyndon LaRouche, also a perennial third-party candidate for the presidency, and according to his own website: A...the only presidential candidate to have been convicted in a Federal criminal case@ for mail fraud and conspiracy. I felt like I had moved out of the country. I was living in a one party state, and it was not my party.

As Floyd and I parted this morning, I realized that I am enjoying my new home more and more. Watching the sunrise in a clear blue sky is a remarkable pleasure.

Drop Out

Entering graduate school was a profound experience for me. It took me almost five years to put the money and time together, so the decision was an important decision for me.

I was still basking in the awe of those early weeks of class when I arrived for one of the three of the four hour seminars that were part of a first year student's curriculum. There were only ten or twelve students in the seminar. It was as quiet as a funeral when I walked into the classroom. I sat down silently and shrugged my shoulders in question to the student next to me. Without a word, he slid a photocopy of a handwritten flyer toward me. **"Book Sale! Parking Lot! Noon! Ten Cents for the Dollar!"**

Books are a major source of the poverty of graduate students. They are an even greater offender in fields which require books published in European and ancient languages. How to find the books graduate students need to read is a search for the Grail.

The flyers magically disappeared before our professor entered the room. He sensed nothing, and he asked nothing. He lectured without taking a breath until noon. Then, he recessed the seminar until 1 PM. We quietly left the room, but then broke into a run for the parking lot after our professor disappeared.

There at the back of a family station wagon was one of the senior graduate students selling his library. It was a feeding frenzy. I wondered why, but did not ask. When it was all over, I was even offering him my watch until I could find cash.

Over lunch I learned that his wife was working to support him and their children. He had repeatedly promised her that he would have finished his dissertation and found honest work. As each deadline came and went, he renewed his promise to finish. Eventually she delivered an ultimatum. Finish school, or get out of school. He did not finish so he dropped out. Selling his library was his ritual of separation from student life.

The professor teaching the seminar was the departing student's director – and he was mine. By the time the seminar re-convened, our mutual director was livid. The prodigal had departed without telling his director. Such an unannounced departure was a sin second only to departing itself.

Instead of resuming our study, our professor launched into a breathless warning describing what happens to students who do not complete their degrees. They lead lives of hopeless failures. They are shunned by those

who know them. Then wander aimlessly without finding meaning, or without making a contribution to the world in which they live. Even dogs avoid their extended hands. I was convinced and chastened. I promised myself that I would get this degree. I would never sell my library.

Most graduate students studied at carrels in the library. Unprompted they all rose at noon and gathered, like the street kids in the David Copperfield of novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870), the on the porch of the library with the sack lunches.

I Have a Dream

On August 28, 1963, I was still in college. I did not hear the words which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Nonetheless, in the four years that followed, I would dream his dream. I arrived in Washington D.C. the following August, and the civil rights movement became as important in my formation as my theology classes.

Challenger

On February 1, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia broke up over East Texas on reentry killing all seven of it crew. On January 28, 1986 America was shocked by the destruction of the space shuttle Challenger, and the death of its seven crew members.

For me, the spring semester of 1986 included the exciting opportunity to teach as a visiting scholar at a neighboring university. I was honored by the invitation and was looking forward to the experience. My own school was small. The university I was visiting was large. My own school was private. The university I was visiting was public. I was looking forward to the experience.

Why Tell A Story?

All the years I have taught the stories of ancient Israel, and the stories of the ancient Near East, I have also told my own stories.

There was purpose in my storytelling. I wanted to prime my students' love of stories with my own stories which were easier to understand and easier to relate to than the stories of ancient Israel. Once their appetite was whetted, I could then help them listen with greater interest and greater understanding to the stories in the Bible.

The half-life of stories is short. When I first started teaching, there were stories from the civil rights movement, from the anti-war movement, then

there were examples from the revolution in Iran and the [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini](#), then there were stories from the rich and colorful culture of Texas from all the years when that was my home. As I moved on in my life, and as my students became younger and younger, stories left my portfolio, and new stories took their place.

In the context of the classroom the stories could be told without a morale codicil. The context made the point.

When I wrote Old Testament Story, an introduction I wanted to tell the stories that went with the chapters, but it would have made the book unusable. Too much Benjamin, too little Bible.

I am always flattered when students come back into my life, and remember me, and hopefully something of what I have taught them. Invariably, however, what they remember is the stories I told.

Many of my stories are about my family – about my relationship with my parents and my siblings. I have a lifetime of amazement at how much time we all invest in relating to our families, and how consistently unsuccessful most of us are in attaining a happy balance with these people in our lives. Even those of use who are quite good at meeting others and forming working or personal relationships cannot easily translate those people skills we use so well with others to use with our own.

For many years I taught in California, and then in Texas. My family lived in Arizona. The miles insulated them from chance meetings with my students. But not altogether. On the occasion when my parents would visit, and I would introduce them to former students, many would try and flatter them by saying: “I love the story your son tells about his father’s biscuits...” My mother, who was long suffering, would not reject the compliment, but almost more to herself than to my student say: “I wish he would stop telling those stories.” When my wife and her mother and I were with friends, and I told a story about one of our adventures, they would often turn to Frances for corroboration. She was too gentile to say “Bullshit!”, and would simply smile and say: “That’s the way Don tells it.”

Stories process our experience. They teach us what we want to learn from what happens to us, and what we want to remember. In a world where “stories” are “lies”, it is important for students to learn that stories are really the only truth there is. We say to children: “Stop telling stories!” when we mean “Stop lying to me.” We say; “Stop making things up” when we mean “Get real!” How will students ever learn to listen to

the stories of ancient Israel if they cannot learn to listen to the stories which are told and retold in their own culture? The only true way to listen to stories is to listen to stories. Not the slick productions which fill the channels of television's popular culture, but the badly told and inaccurately remembered stories we tell each other over meals, around campfires and while drinking a cold beer.

Perhaps I should tell my stories as a way of explaining storytelling.

Money

My parents were children of the Great Depression (1935-1945). They grew up in families that were often food-poor. There were days that they did not eat, or eat enough. There was never enough money in their growing up, not for simple pleasures but for food.

My mother told me how she, as the youngest of six children, used to wait for her father to come home on pay-day. He would cash his check at the grocery store, and buy food for the week. He would also, however, buy her a small bag of candy. It was an unthinkable luxury in a household as poor as their household, but she could not resist the anticipation, and the enjoyment of her father's excess.

My parents were good providers. We never went without of meal, or without clothes, or without healthcare. Nonetheless, they never had much confidence in the security which they provided. Therefore, there was never fun money in our home, and in fact no cash at all.

They always complained about what things cost.

My parents' attitudes about money made me think of myself as an expense. I hated it. I got jobs – like throwing newspapers, and shagging golf balls at the driving range – to make money, but they made me put in the bank. I could not get real money jobs because, for them, my job was school. As an adult, I was always conscious of how much it cost for me to just be alive. It was a terrible self image.

When I met Patrice, one of the real gifts she brought me was her attitude toward money. When I talked about money with her, she would listen patiently, and then say to me: "It's only money!" We need it. We spend it, but it is not a personality profile. I tracked every cent earned, and every cent spent. I kept every bill in my wallet in numerical order, without folds or creases. She stuffed receipts into her purse at random, and folded her money into any spare pocket in her wallet. She did keep a penny-perfect checkbook, and always balanced her monthly

statements, which I did not. But I could not understand her carelessness with money, earned and spent.

In due time, I learned not to think of myself as an expense. I learned that some receipts are best kept, but others are not. I no longer put the bills in my wallet in order of denomination. I still do not balance my checking account statement.

One day when I was riding with my mother, she was complaining to me about my sister's daughter. She had a full scholarship to college, but decided to party instead of study, so she lost the scholarship.

My mother, as she always did, say this one act of stupidity as a symptom of Jenn's entire life. "She never has known the value of a dollar! She always spends money which she does not have on herself. She would never think of buying something affordable." I listened, but then interrupted.

"You need to be careful about saying such things to Jenn. She will end up thinking of herself as an "expense". I did."

"Oh", my mother struck back, "You must have had a terrible childhood."

"I didn't like that part of it!"

Red Dye #2 (not the band, the food color)

Near the end of his life, my father had aggressive diabetes. When he was first diagnosed, he, or more accurately, my mother tried to with diet. Her task was not easy.

She scrubbed the house of anything remotely good-to-eat. We teased her that if there were a natural disaster, and our family survived, we would starve to death on salt and pepper.

I really think mother forced dad into living five years longer than he wanted to by taking such good care of him. Nonetheless, regularly, and with uneven success, he ran the food blockade she built around him.

My father did not drink, and he did not smoke, but he craved twisted ropes of Brach, red-cherry licorice. Each twister was hollow and a little longer than a number 2 pencil. My father may have inherited his craving for the sweet and the red from his father, who was the only person I knew who drank strawberry Nehi.

One afternoon as my dad's car pulled into the drive, my mother went outside to greet him. I noticed, because she did not usually leave the house to meet him when he came home. Nonetheless, I felt she really wanted to give him a hug. So I watched.

My father got out of the car wearing a windbreaker. My mother went over to embrace him, and he crinkled!

In a nano second her loved turned to fury, as she unzipped his wind-breaker and confiscated his stash of cherry-red licorice.

Monk

My first real friend was not real at all. He was a stuffed animal. Monk was a giant monkey almost as big as I was, that was probably the reason I treated him like a playmate rather than as a toy.

I loved Monk so much, that like the Velveteen Rabbit in the children's story by Margery Williams Bianco, most of Monk's hair was loved off, and his eyes had dropped out. He was loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things didn't matter to me as all, because Monk was my friend. Monk was real.

As the Skin Horse told the Velveteen Rabbit: "Real isn't how you are made.... It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

I did not read the Velveteen Rabbit until I was in graduate school, but when I did I remembered Monk.

The big people in my life worried such an infested toy would soon infect me. When my mother and I moved to Japan to be with my father at the end of World War II, Monk disappeared – the victim, no doubt, of a conspiracy of adults who worried more about my health, than my feelings.

Life Savings

My parents taught me thriftiness from almost the day I was born. When I was growing up, adults gave children, like me, coins. Sometimes they gave me a penny, but often a nickel, a dime or a quarter. It was not my birthday, or Christmas. Giving a kid a coin was just what they did.

I was fascinated with the money, and I wanted to spend it, but my parents had other ideas. They bought me a huge piggy bank. No telling how large it actually was, but to a kid my size it seemed like a fifty gallon drum.

Every time an adult gave me a coin, I was told to say "thank you," and then go and drop it into the piggy bank. Spending the money was replaced by fantasies of spending the money. Actually, I got more enjoyment out of the fantasies than out of spending it. A kind of economic pornography!

The fantasies ended when my mother and I moved to Japan. I had watched the movers packed my piggy bank in real wooden barrel on a bed of wooden excelsior. I stayed in the room until the packer sealed the barrel with a lid.

Months later in Japan after all our household good were unpacked, and my piggy bank was missing, my parents told me an awful story. When the dock workers were unloading our barrels using a net on the end of a large crane, one net full of barrels broke, and the barrels fell into the water. My piggy bank, as far as I know, is still at the bottom of Osaka Bay.

Needless to say, I have never been a person committed to saving the money that comes into my life.

John Philip Souza

Today's e-mail brought a notice from Michelle and Chris Munk announcing their temporary relocation from their home in Hampton Road VA to the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville AL. Michelle accepted the opportunity to work as a lead engineer for technology. I met Michelle and Chris at St. Paul Catholic Church in Houston when they were working at the Johnson Space Center.

Don Sr. retired from the Army at Huntsville in 1968. He had been recently transferred from Washington DC, and I had the sense that the assignment gave him the opportunity to retire as a commanding officer. I flew to Huntsville from Washington D.C. The last leg of the trip was on an aircraft that looked to me like a DC3, something right out of a WW II movie. I sat near the window with my head tilted. Traditionally, commanders review their troops as a last official act before retiring. Therefore, this review was the big event in Dad's retirement.

We stood on the parade ground next to the reviewing stand. The base commander invited Dad to come forward on the platform to review his troops. The review was carried out to the rhythm of John Philip Sousa music, flags, and salutes. It brought back that rush of patriotic feeling I always had as a kid going to military parades on the bases where we lived around the country. I was proud of Dad, and I was proud of the career he had chosen, and which he had followed for thirty plus years. A reception followed the review at the Officers' Club. I must have been expressing my enjoyment of the review to someone, who dismissed my enthusiasm with the comment that Dad's soldiers marched "...pretty well for pencil pushers." I assume his command was mostly clerical, and marching was not much of a priority for them. I wish the person had said something else.

On the flight back to Washington, I remember going into the airport diner to eat breakfast. Wandering down memory lane of growing up in the south, I ordered grits and eggs. "Grits!" the waitress repeated with disdain. "If you want grits, go to Georgia." I settled for hashbrowns. There was no time for Georgia.

Mt. Sinai

Pope Shenouda III, 117 patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox church will visit Phoenix on August 31-September 1, 2002. He became the Bishop of Alexandria and the spiritual leader of some eight million Egyptian Christians in Egypt and throughout the world in 1971. About a month before he was assassinated in 1981, President Anwar Sadat deposed Shenouda, charging him with using his trips abroad to stir up anti-Sadat sentiment among Coptic expatriates. Shenouda returned to his monastery in the Wadi Natrun, until President Hosni Mubarak reinstated him a year later.

My first trip to Egypt was in 1984 with a six-week study tour from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. The director of the study tour had crossed from Israel into Egypt with two Israeli guides. When we arrived at the Monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai, the Egyptian police arrested the guides, and kept all of us sitting on the bus in the mid day sun for hours. By the time the police released the guides, and let us go on to the hotel it was 11 PM. We were scheduled to get up at 2 AM to climb Sinai.

I was furious. There was barely enough time to shower, nap and change clothes. I sat on the steps in front of the guesthouse at the monastery with the Egyptian guide who had come on the bus at the border, and who, I assume, was an Egyptian policeman. I don't speak Arabic, but he had gone to school in Spain, so we spoke in Spanish. I let him have my anger. I told him we were guests in Egypt, but were being treated like enemies of Egypt. I said that if the Egyptians were unable to be

hospitable, they should tell us at the border to go home, not allow us to enter Egypt and then be rude to us. I also said that the wonders of Egypt were the wonders of the world. They were Egypt's to care for, but they belonged to us all.

When it was time to climb, I left the group from St. Mary's University who were going up Jebel Musa on camels, and started up the mountain alone and on foot. I was geared in the best REI had to offer: Vibram soles, night lamp, hiking shorts. I climbed for about an hour before I came upon a group of Coptic Christians. It was still dark. The moon was only beginning to rise. These men and women were dressed like they were going to the symphony. Men in suits and ties. Women in long skirts and heels. Not a flashlight in the group. Sheep without a shepherd. I started to go on, but the mother in me forbade it. I walked with a small group for a while, and slowing began to collect the rest of the stragglers who were all over the mountain. My concern for these folks began to replace my anger at my own.

When we reached the summit some three hours later, the lay leader of the group was there with still other pilgrims. He spoke some English. As we huddled in the cold waiting for sunrise, he and I talked. He told me that they were Coptic Christians on pilgrimage to Jebel Musa. Such pilgrimages had been forbidden for some years, so this was a true joy for those in his group. For me the climb was physical exercise, and so I was dressed for it. For them the climb was a spiritual journey, and so they were dressed for church. Two such different world views. My education continued.

As we talked I asked if religious life for Copts was easier now that President Mubarak has reinstated Pope Shenouda. The lay leader looked at me, and I realized my question was inappropriate, but I did not know why. "Yes," he said haltingly, "...but," he went on, "... it says in the book – I do not know the English – if there is no cross, there is no life?" He did not understand how a fellow Christian could be concerned about avoiding suffering. For Copts, the way of the cross was a way of life. That Mubarak had made things easier for Copts in Egypt was not a help to their spiritual life but a hindrance. Amazing.

We continued to talk until the sun appeared. In the Sinai, the sun does not rise slowly from the horizon, but pops up suddenly like toast through the haze covering the desert floor. As its light reached the summit, the lay leader and his pilgrims gathered and began morning prayer. I silently joined, and then came words I recognized: Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison. An ancient litany in Greek punctuated their prayers in Arabic. Suddenly I did not feel so distant from these fellow Christians with whom I had climbed the mountain, and from whom I had learned some simple, and yet profound, things about gospel.

Shot Record

I went to the Infusion Clinic at Scottsdale Healthcare for a vitamin K injection today. The 10 mg of Coumadin had thinned my blood to an INR of 7.9. Normal is between 2-3, so the vitamin K would return my blood to a more normal clotting range.

Carol, the RN and a friend, took my vital signs, then said: "For patients in the hospital, I normally give this injection in the thigh, ...but don't drop your pants ...that's all one sentence! "

"Where do you think the injection would do the most good?" I asked.

She went to look up whether the body absorbed the vitamin K more efficiently when given in the leg, the stomach or the arm. "Nothing in the documentation," Carol reported. "I'll give it to you in the back of your arm. I have never had this injection, she continued, so I don't know if it burns or not."

Carol's gentleness reminded me of all those years growing up in a military family, where the prime directives were:

Never Loose Your Military Identification Card

Keep Your Shot Record current.

When my inoculations began to expire during my senior year of college, it felt like I was leaving the civilization and good sense and going where "...no man had gone before" into the worlds of Small Pox, Bubonic Plague and Yellow Fever. I kept that wilting three-fold cardstock Shot Record among my important papers for years. With the exception of a ten-year Tetanus injection, and my annual flu shot, I am, today, unarmed in the war against communicable diseases.

The military nurses at the clinics where military kids like me went to get their shots had none of Carol's kindness. Pain was as important in their arsenal of weapons against disease as the medication. They enjoyed hurting kids like me. Making me cry made their day.

Dad was unmoved by petitions for exemptions from the inoculations.

He would have no whining in his household. No pain, no gain. Years later after his retirement, Dad came to stay with me in Houston, while Mother was recovering from surgery. At this point in his life he was a diabetic. While he was at my home, I walked past his bedroom where he had laid out all the paraphernalia he used to give himself his insulin injections. He was just sitting there staring at the needle.

"Need help?" I asked.

"I had this God-damned stuff!" he answered angrily.

Violating every decent guideline for bedside manner, I shouted: "You're afraid of giving yourself a shot? Have you always hated shots?"

He nodded.

“You mean all those sermons about taking it like a man were delivered by someone who was as frightened as I was about needles...?” I moved on with my day. Amazed. Why wasn’t Dad our ally as kids against the horrors of these inoculations? He didn’t like those nurses any more than I did...

Healing

My mother died suddenly in 2001. No warning. No illness. The day before she died, she mowed the lawn. The day she died she went to church. She felt bad for less than an hour. People said it was merciful.

Perhaps, but the mourning was awful.

Of the four of us, my sister Chris was the only one to develop an adult relationship with our parents. I was always – even in my fifties – their son. Chris and mother were friends. They confided in one another. They argued with one another. They told each other the truth. They ate forbidden foods together. They went to the movies in the middle of the day with each other. Mother’s death devastated Chris.

Chris went to Catholic school, and that did in her faith. She did not just stop going to church, she dumped the whole religion database. She was without the least familiarity with the way in which religion teaches us to look at life. When death visited us my mother was not the only victim.

The Christmas following my mother’s death, I got a call from Chris. “I want to go to mass with you on Christmas!”

I explained that although Patrice and I generally went to mass with mother at St. Frances de Sales Church, we were going to another parish this Christmas. I had heard it was a parish with creative liturgy and good preaching, but did not know anyone there. “I don’t care” Chris told me, “I just want to go with you.”

When I hung up the phone, I thought, what a chance she was taking. On the one hand, it would be wonderful if all we had heard about the congregation was true. On the other hand, we have walked out of church during the middle of services which were nightmares. A disaster would only deepen Chris’ pain.

The day came, and mass was wonderful. The architecture of the church was simple and useful. The congregation was hospitable. The music was tasteful, and theologically sound. The preaching was relevant, and I was relieved.

On the way out the door, Chris turn and remarked: “All the years Mother asked me to go to mass with her, and I refused. Now here I am, and she is not here.”

I was speechless, but with wonderful sensitivity, Patrice turned to Chris and said without a trace of doubt in her voice: “Oh, Chris, Edith is here.”

“You really think so?”

“I know it!”

Even though I was consciously avoiding Edith's parish, I knew that the blessings of that Christmas morning at St. Pius Catholic Church were Edith's gift.

My sister lives on five acres east of the city and out in the desert. On the way home, suddenly there was a buck with a full rack racing the car alongside the road. Chris screamed: "Stop, stop!"

Almost before Patrice had completely braked the car, Chris had opened the passenger door and was moving carefully across the fifty yards of desert separating the deer from her. The animal paused, looked at her, and waited as if he were expecting her.

Chris could have been St. Francis. She loves animals, and animals love her. She feeds them in the wild. The javalina who cross her property come to her door. She calls them like pets. They bring her their litters to brag. Her own traveling partners are three huge Rottis, left over from the days when she used to breed and show these animals. Today they are retrained as therapy dogs, and go with her to the VA hospital.

Nonetheless, her moments with this antlered buck alongside the road were still breath-taking for me.

Chris did not speak to the animal. They simply looked into each others eyes, standing less than twenty feet apart. The meditation lasted only minutes. Then Chris came back to the car, and the deer bolted into the mesquite and saguaros. She closed the door, and with the calmness of an announcement that we were going to have bacon and eggs for breakfast she said: "That was Mom! She just wanted me to know that what Patrice said was true. She was there."

I continued to be amazed at how Chris learned to process her grief without the least clue from organized religion. As she talked to me, again and again, I had to control my anxious desire to remind her of all the things she had forgotten – that the dead are at rest, that the dead go to heaven, that you can pray for the dead. If those lessons did not help her the first time around, I knew that bringing them up now was not a good idea. I also loved the field work of listening. She would tell me how she was understanding mother's death, and I wanted to say: "...that is the way Hindus understand death..." But I managed to go on listening, and learning from her as she worked her way through the suffering.

Trick or Treat

In 1970 I read Future Shock by Alvin Toffler. In 1982 I read Megatrends, ten new directions for transforming our lives by John Naisbitt. I find the work of futurists like Toffler and Naisbitt more exciting to read than mystery novels, which I do not read.

One transformation which Naisbitt explored changed my life: the home office. I was intrigued – long before I owned a computer – by the

possibility of working at home, rather than at the office. I never really rated any kind of quality space in the workplace anyway, so I was probably an easy sell.

I took the intellectual's approach to the decision, and read widely and deeply how those who had tried to home-office found the experiment. Some observed that it was the informal meetings around the water-cooler which made the work-place and important place to be. Working at home may be efficient in some ways, but it also isolates you from the very people you need most for ideas, and for collaboration. Others observed that home-officing demanded discipline. Otherwise, it was too easy to play when you should be working, and to work when you should be playing.

I compensated for the lack of socialization by scheduling lunch meetings at least once the week with a colleague. I trained myself to work and play by installing fluorescent lights and incandescent lights in my home office. When it was work time, I turned on the fluorescent lights. When it was play time, I turned on the incandescent lights. For the first few years, I even dressed – tie and all—to go to my home office. Worked from 9-5, and then changed clothes in the evening to signal to myself that it was play time, not work time.

The greatest asset that the home-office brought me was ambiance! Now I have colleagues who have accepted carrel assignments in the library which would have reduced me to insanity. At a university a carrel in the library is a real prestige address. You get to work with all the books you need at hand. But typically carrels are no larger than a phone booth.

Furthermore, they are transparent, which allows every library patron passing by to look in at you like you were a contestant on the \$64,000 Question quiz show of long ago. Typically, faculty paper the glass walls of their carrels with posters, creating an isolation chamber fit for torture.

All my objections notwithstanding, I have colleagues who had written articles and books in carrels, which I would die for. Put me in such a coffin and all I would do is scream. Some semesters when offices were re-assigned I would work my way through house-keeping carts, and unemptied recycle bins to my "office" tucked cautiously under a stairway.

After having surveyed the space, I have returned the key to the department coordinator with the comment. "The university could not afford the medical bills I would run up working in that space."

Jerome in Bethlehem, Samuel at Shiloh

For some fifteen years, I taught study tours in Egypt, Jordan and Israel.

The objective of these courses was to reconstruct for the students the magnificent world in which the Bible developed, and to demonstrate how that being there would radically change the way we listened to biblical traditions.

One of the things I would discuss with the students during the orientation classes was the convention of referring to the ancient Near East as the “Holy Land”.

Many travelers in the lands of the Bible expect to sense the holiness of the land at the sites where the great events of the Bible are recounted:

Sinai and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In fact, visiting these ancient destinations of pilgrims is often more disturbing than inspiring. For example, clergy from six different traditions of Christianity staff the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre. There are Catholic Franciscan friars; Armenian Orthodox monks, Greek Orthodox monks, Ethiopian Orthodox monks; Egyptian Coptic monks and Syrian monks. Each group has been carefully assigned different jurisdictions by a 120-year-old document called the “Status-quo in the Holy Places”. These cranky old men growl at each other and are alternately pleasant and scolding with visitors.

Times of prayer throughout the day are often shouting matches in ancient languages with psalms and hymns belted by one group against the other. Visits to this center of Christian tradition remembering the death and resurrection of Jesus are predictably chaotic.

Bruce Feiler

Bruce Feiler is a journalist and author. A native of Savannah GA, he writes frequently for the New York Times, the Washington Post and National Public Radio. Abraham: a journey to the heart of the three faiths recounts his visits to key biblical sites, his conversations with some of the world’s leading religious thinkers, and his growing awareness of both the naiveté and necessity of the search for a unifying vision for humankind. Feiler is also the author of Walking the Bible: a journey by land through the five books of Moses.

This best selling author is remarkably naïve about the Bible and archaeology, even though they play a major role in his thinking and writing. For example, he sees Abraham as the unifying religion from which Judaism, Christianity and Islam – to whom half of the world’s population belong – develop. Nonetheless, the figure of Abraham, and a “religion” of Abraham have little definition in biblical studies. One listener asked: “How can you build a religion around a myth?”

Nonetheless, his commitment to the theology of Rodney King: “Why can’t we all just get along?” is as sincere, as it is contagious.

Monotheism, although popularly considered to be *the* unifying theology between Jews, Christian and Muslims is not, in academic circles, considered to be the religion of Abraham, and not to present in the biblical tradition until some five hundred years before the Common Era.

The work of Mark Smith (NYU) and other in this area seems to be unknown to Feiler, a New Yorker.

Finally, Feiler sees Abraham as an archetype of the collision of religion and conflict. He is told by his religion to kill his son. Here he follows in the footsteps of Freud and other great philosophers who have struggled with this tradition, but not biblical scholars.

Then why is Feiler famous?

First, he candidly journals the search for his soul, at the moment when millions around the world, following September 11, 2000, began a similar quest to understand religion in general, and their own religion. As a young man celebrating his bar mitzvah in Georgia, he was offered a faith. In Walking the Bible, he embraced that faith. The Bible is not a myth, it is history. He sits at the sites, and he reads his Tanak. He was the teacher who appeared when the students were ready.

As an individual he went to places in the work where common sense would have said that he should have died either by accident or intent. In place of violence, he was welcomed. There is a general belief that the violence in Iraq, Israel, New York, Washington and Pennsylvania is the work of governments, not individuals. The kind of one on one strategy of Feiler, and his I-have-got-to-see-for-myself courage strikes a cord in the individualism driver values of western democracies.

Feiler was a good first public speaker for the “Religion and Conflict; alternative visions” series sponsored by the Center for Religion and Conflict at ASU. He is a public thinker. The public knows him. The public are convinced that he is on to something. More serious and more academic discussions of the complexity of interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution must take place in other forums.

John Paul II

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland was elected Pope John Paul II on October 16, 1978 at 6:18 PM. He became the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. His papacy has lasted longer than all but three popes: Peter, Pius XI and Leo XIII. It was my first year at Rice University in Houston. I was backpacking with the Sierra Club on the 4-C trail in East Texas. Two of the fine people I met on that trip were Betty, an architect from Louisiana who taught computer-aided design at the University of Houston, and Tadeusz Skośkiewicz., an engineer from Poland who was doing research at the University of Houston in superconductivity. At that time, the soon-to-be famous Paul C. W. Chu worked with Tadeusz as a lab assistant. In January 1987, Chu achieved stable superconductivity at 93 K (-180 °C), above the critical temperature of liquid nitrogen (-196 °C). Tadeusz returned to Communist Poland. I found him recently on the internet at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

Ratcliff State Park in the Davie Crocket Nat'l Forest. The trailhead is at the far end of the parking lot. The 4-C is a 21.5 (x2 = 43) mile point-to-point ride through the Davie Crocket Nat'l Forest.

Part of the trail follows an old narrow-gage train route, although you wouldn't know it. This part of the trail is like a wide singletrack, not quite fireroad. The rest of the trail is twisty singletrack with lots of mild elevation change and good flow. There must be 30 really narrow bridges along the route—one of them is about 200 ft long. The real challenge is to do the entire route. In 1998, it became easy to get lost due to logging so check with park rangers. There are a couple of 2 or 3 mile loops that depart from the same trailhead—THESE ARE CLOSED TO BIKES!!! It has been done in under 5 hours, but I recommend you plan on 6 hours. Swim in Ratcliff Lake after the ride and enjoy a frito-pie at the east-Texas style park cantina!

Fire
Sandwich
Scoliosus

Roland

I got the message yesterday that Roland had died. As difficult as it was to see him age, I am sure that it is not easy for you to lose your brother. I owe the two of you a great deal. You may not remember, but you were the director of graduate studies who approved my beginning a PhD at Claremont so many years ago. I had applied any number of times, but Mal always said: NO! The last time you came to LA was your last year in the job, and you had approved yourself for grad school, so I pleaded with you to throw me as a "presidential pardon" your last day in office. I told you that the half-life on my Semitic languages was short, and if I didn't go back to school in biblical studies that year, I would never go back. Whatever you did, it worked, and I began my academic career. I am still teaching, still writing, still loving the life you helped me start. Thank you.

Although Roland never quite got over that I did not come back to teach at the WTU, I always was grateful to him for his inspiration and his guidance. When I was at Niagara in college, I wrote him, and told him I wanted to be a biblical scholar. He wrote back. Small type. Margin to Margin. Detailed directions for reading, learning languages. It was a magnificent letter. I learned later from Roger Bonneau that at one point when one of the frats at the Hall wasn't taking his biblical studies seriously enough, Roland lectured the whole class about this fifth year student at Niagara who was more serious about his studies than they. They did not know me from Lady Astor's mule, but they didn't like me.

In Roland's letter there was a flyer announcing a workshop he was giving in East Aurora to the priests of the Buffalo Diocese along with Jim McCool, SJ. I read it, but in those days, frats only went home for the funerals of parents, not to workshops. I did not even ask to go. Well, when Roland arrived, he evidently called Mal, and like a hostage being released, I was summoned, told to put on my suit, given exactly the \$25 I need to register and was driven across the bridge to the seminary. God it was great. I was the only seminarian at this conference with hundreds of priests—except for those waiting table. What motivation that kindness of his gave me to be my best at this business of being a scholar.

John XXIII

January 4, 1963

Pope John XXIII The Year of our Lord 1962 was a year of American resolve. Russian orbiting. European union. Chinese war. In a tense yet hope-filled time, these were the events that dominated conversation and invited history's scrutiny. But history has a long eye, and it is quite possible that in her vision 1962's most fateful rendezvous took place in the world's most famous church—having lived for years in men's hearts and minds.

That event was the beginning of a revolution in Christianity, the ancient faith whose 900 million adherents make it the world's largest religion. (Others: Islam, 430 million; Hinduism, 335 million; Confucianism, 300 million; Buddhism, 153 million.) It began on Oct. 11 in Rome and was the work of the man of the year, Pope John XXIII, who, by convening the Ecumenical Council called Vatican II, set in motion ideas and forces that will affect not merely Roman Catholics, not only Christians, but the whole world's ever-expanding population long after Cuba is once again libre and India is free of attack.

So rare are councils—there have been only 20 in the nearly 2,000 years of Christian history—that merely by summoning Vatican II to “renew” the Roman Catholic Church Pope John made the biggest individual imprint on the year. But revolutions in Christianity are even rarer (the Reformation was 400 years ago), and John's historic mission is fired by a desire to endow the Christian faith with “a new Pentecost,” a new spirit. It is aimed not only at bringing the mother church of Christendom into closer touch with the modern world, but at ending the division that has dissipated the Christian message for four centuries.

August 10, 2001

Today we are at the Hilton San Pedro in CA. It is beautiful. Right on the marina. I got up at 6AM to work on the patio.

Working on Batto. I really try to do too much in each class. I need three classes or at least two classes for each chapter of Batto alone. It also takes me three hours to prepare each class. One hour to read the chapter. One hour to outline its principal points, and One hour to create an assessment for the students.

Deanna called last night, and left a message. No interest in Mitchell. She is worried, and now I am worried. It is going to take time.

April 23, 2001

The day came up grand. Cool, clear. High in the mid 80's.

I was frustrated by not being able to get the computer to recognize my laptop when it rebooted. Eventually I did get it to work. I still feel very fragile about the computer. Think I will see if Brent can read the back-up tape.

I made an appointment at 1PM to get Keith Cunningham, M.D. to see if I hurt myself when I fell out of the attic yesterday at Mitchell.

I need badly to loose weight. Most of the damage I did to myself was done by my weight falling against the cross tie.

I got a 1PM appointment with Keith Cunningham. I really like him as a doctor. He said I have nothing broken, but it is going to hurt for a while, meaning days. He gave me a VIOXX sample for muscle relaxing, and then a prescription for pain. Patrice wondered if he checked my spleen.

We did not talk about that.

I am working today on my presentations for the Circuit Riders. I am also working up presentations on Homosexuality in Sodom and Gomrrah, and Genocide in the Joshua. I think I will send some of them to the Houston Forum for Contemporary Spirituality to see if they would like to invite me to speak.

Anna had her baby last week. A little girl. Tina, her replacement, thinks she named her Nicole. Luke, Mark and Nicole. Frances would be proud.

April 12, 2001

**It is Holy Thursday, and Patrice and I are getting married at 11:30 A.M.
Wow!**

Chef Alan Zeman of Fuego Restaurant eats breakfast at:
Bobo=s Restaurant, 2938 E. Grant, Tucson 85716, 520.326.6163
Brawley=s Restaurant, 6367 E. Broadway, Tucson 85710,
520.722.5571

Don and Patrice eat breakfast at::
Cottage Bakery and Café, Kolb and Speedway
Wedding stories

Michelle: you are not going to mention me with the dead!

Bo: marrying Irish you can still be happy and successful; I am
concentrating on successful

Bo: if you wanted to turn AZ green, filling it with Irish and play sad
music. They cry when they are happy, when they are sad, and in
between.

Bo: Dianne and Patrice think they are different, but...

David: don=t you want a rehearsal? No, everyone has a speaking part.

Sean: My Bach concerto is going to make grown men weep.

Laurie: you must remember the couple with the tissue box

Patricia: I printed my prayers for the wedding on labels. Oh, well.

Michael: We were just in the neighborhood.

Patricia: Well it is about time.

Liz: Well, that=s what happens when friendship gets out of control.

7/9/2003 5:22 AM

Mitch Albom, Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man, and life's
greatest lesson (1997) "Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live."
(82) Buddhism: "Is today the day? Am I ready? Am I doing all I need to
do? Am I being the person I want to be?"

For me, survivors and people in recovery have this remarkable awareness
that *now* is the only moment that matters. I want to live with a sense of
awareness. I do not want to walk through the day unconscious. I do not
want to waste my life by working for someone who abuses me. That is
why I resigned from the Carmelites and from the priesthood. The ideals
were, and still are, wonderful, but the people whom I needed to make
those ideals real could have cared less about me. Patrice, on the other
hand, cares. She lives with me, is growing old with me, cares about me,
and will not let me waste a minute of our lives together.

Patrice and I have had some wonderful vacations together. A vacation is
a time to just stop and look at the world we live in – to pay attention to
how diverse, how colorful, to how filled with excitement this world really
is. We travel one year in the USA, another abroad. This year
California, next year Turkey. Planning these trips is as enjoying as
making these trips together. We buy tapes. Music for singing. Novels
and stories for listening and thinking.

6/8/2003 6:04 AM

Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water* (1980) "To create a work of art,
great or small, is work, hard work, and work requires discipline and
order." (166)

Arthur Rubinstein: "If I don't practice the piano for one day I know it. If I
don't practice it for two days my family knows it. If I don't practice it for
three days, my public knows it."

Faithfulness is the soul of art. Being there. Sitting down to read. Starting to write. Walking into the classroom to teach. Setting a goal. Taking the first step of a journey of a thousand miles.

Beginning demands courage. Letting go of the known. Giving up the options. Loosing the first pound. Walking the first half mile. I cannot do something else. I can only do what is before me.

If I can see the blood clot of June, 2003 as the first step of a journey of a thousand miles, I will survive. If I see it only as the last step of a life too short, I will surely die.

5/26/2003 6:07 AM

The teachings of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab sought to simplify Islam to its purest form, rejecting the once prevalent worship of things like rocks and saints' tombs. It also supported a permanent jihad to spread the faith to other lands. Much of the current debate centers on whether violence should be part of that effort. (NYTimes, May 25, 2003, I:16)

Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian Authority's minister of finance, may be the region's quietest revolutionary (NYTimes Magazine, May 25, 2003)

I feel better today than I have felt since May 6. Much of the redness and much the soreness of my left shin are gone. I feel encouraged that my left leg will heal.

Today is Memorial Day. Mother used to ride on the bus with other military widows to attend the honors at the military cemetery in Ft. Huachuca today.

4/28/2003 9:20 AM

Robert Wuthnow, Creative Spirituality: the way of the artist (2001) "The Circle of Life" 139-

"Artists have been described, ...as the theologians of our time. ...their stories capture the public's imagination and their songs and images stir the soul in ways that often rival the teachings of religious leaders....

Their work ...raises profound questions about such issues as the character of the reality of evil, and what it means to be a responsible person.

"The theology in artists' work is seldom heavy-handed, more often being disclosed in carefully turned phrases and subtly crafted shapes or movement than in authoritative philosophical arguments. It nevertheless emanates from what artists frequently describe as agonized periods spent pondering the distinction between good and evil, the uncertainties of life, the nature of God, and familiar religious teachings on these subjects."

(139)

I have never been a theologian. I have always been a biblical scholar – a storyteller. I have always been more an anthropologist, than a philosopher.

I remember sitting around the seminar table in the Religious Studies Department at Rice University listening to a visiting philosopher of religion during a colloquium. The faculty were all philosophers when I arrived – even Werner Kelber, my NT colleague was more of a philosopher than a biblical scholar.

I knew the language in which the guest was speaking. I had a BA in Scholastic Philosophy. I remembered the time in college when I was so grateful that someone like Thomas Aquinas had wrapped his magnificent mind around human experience, and had organized it into his Summa. It was such a gift for a young mind seeking order in the world – in my life. The romance did not last. I moved to Washington D.C. to begin graduate school in the same summer when Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his sermon: “I Have a Dream” on the mall. The order which Aquinas sought in the 13th century was only a fantasy in the 20th. I need to learn to live with uncertainty.

Story replaced philosophy in my life, even while I was studying theology. Stories give their audiences permission to be human, to ask questions, to think outside the box. Stories admit that human life is not ordered. Stories name the pain, they do not try to explain it. Stories describe, they do not lecture. They ask questions, they do not give answers. In time the colloquium was over. I was grateful that I had not slept.

There were only a dozen of us around the table, and I would have disgraced myself and the department. As I reflected on what the guest was trying to say, a still, small voice in my head said: “I know a story about that....”

Read:

Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time* (1963)

“My spiritual journey was largely at home ...My parents gave me a God of love, not a God of anger or retribution. Not God looking like Moses in a bad temper, but somebody who loved me the way my dog loves me....My journey was often through fiction, through the journeys of fictional characters, and it was always toward being more open, more inclusive.

We did not think of heaven as a gated community, but a place for everybody.” (149)

Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory*

“Living beyond border has become a metaphor for his writing as well. ‘I am trying to violate borders. I’m very much an admirer of illegal immigrants. I like the idea of not staying put. I like the idea of violation. I like the idea if you’re writing nonfiction, of trying to introduce fictional elements to it. I like the idea if you’re writing prose to poeticize the prose. I like the idea of people not knowing exactly how to approach you, how to think about you. I like that kind of complication in ideas.” (146)

The Cloud of Unknowing
Gus Carter!

4/27/2003 8:34 AM

Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality: the way of the artist* (2001) "Art as Spiritual Practice" 107-138

In the last chapter, art was a way of finding oneself, of returning home, even though self-discovery often led the artist away from home. Then once self discovery had taken place, it was a new process of transformation, becoming who you want to be.

Growing up I felt that in my family of origin there was no interest in who I was, but only in what I was supposed to do for the family. I was to take care of Cyndy and Chris. I was supposed to keep house when Mother and Dad were away. Nothing was about me. I ran away from home by going to seminary. Unfortunately, there was more of the same.

What I could do for the Carmelites, not what I could do for myself.

I am an intellectual. I am a teacher. After Salpointe and Carmel LA, however, the Carmelites said to me, why don't you try another ministry. Just because I did not work well with two odd principles: Kurt Holdereid and Gus Carter! Wow. Of all the people who know me today, most will say if asked for one thing they know about Don Benjamin: he is a great teacher. I could have been successful at many things, but what a loss if I had not taught.

Transformation: I am still a simple man. I want to live an uncluttered life. I still seek a community of faith or similar commitments. Hard to be a Democrat in a Republican state. I feel like I want to call Janet Napolitano and say: Put me to work.

Art as Spiritual Practice. Simply put, some regular habit of focusing or remembering, of committing what we do to a larger vision. Ann Biddle on spirituality: "...learning how to live your life creatively. That doesn't necessarily mean to produce in an art form. It's about reaching your fullest potential. It's about creating artistry in any area of your life, through your practice. It's about opening up your mind to the possibility of who you are and to see the uniqueness of who you are. It's about making an impact on the world in a creative innovative, forward-thinking way." (111) Curiously, I do not have a spiritual practice. I keep thinking.

I want to exercise. I want to pray. But I do not have either as an unconditional part of my day. I keep looking for a schedule, a system. Spiritual practice needs a mentor. The mentors in my life are all at a distance, or no longer familiar enough with me to be of help.

4/26/2003 7:34 AM

Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality: the way of the artist* (2001)
“Making Sense of Oneself” 74-77

Art is the process of trying to make sense of who we are. It is a struggle with the unsettledness we face today. Who am I? I am a teacher, a writer, a carpenter. I am a man who explains things and who fixes things. I am settled, but I do not know if that my “settled-ness” will last. I expect to be unsettled in the near future.

Spirituality relates us—our whole being – to God. Therefore, spirituality integrates, and settles. It should allow us to know what we are doing. It should create a focus in our lives. It should tell us why we get up in the morning. I find my days full of too many choices. Yesterday, I wrote. All day. It was delicious. I would like to simply finish writing Old Testament Story, an introduction. But I have papers to grade. I have classes to prepare. I have to prune the patio before heavy trash makes a pickup. Artists are storytellers, and the story they tell is their own journey. Why the contradictions? Artists are selective. They shop for meaning in their experience, and the experience of others. They do not accept systems, denominations, theologies. My classes are full of the stories of my journey. I have thought of writing those stories. Students from past years say: I remember the stories... Even when they don’t remember the content of the course.

Artists write in the language of therapy, because they are writing, talking, painting, singing about healing, awareness, recovery. I would say that I write to admit the wounds, to be able to say with honesty that life hurts, or that this part of my life hurt. It is not an exercise in self pity, but a need to name the pain, and to pardon those who hurt me.

4/6/2003 6:30 AM

Anne Lamott: Akela touched a dog! What am I afraid to touch? Patrice and I take lots of risks, or at least we are not afraid to risking. I do not want to ask people for money for a good project, like a really good web site. I do not want to ask people for grant money. I do not want to take time for myself. To write. At least a semester.

4/2/2003 7:37 AM

Nancy Chin, painter
Jennie Avila, musician
Jamel Gaines, dancer

Jon Davis, poet

Read Alan Watts, who argues that the rational mind is often a barrier to
eing open to the deepest mysteries of life.

Amy Torchia, musician

Wendy Ellsworth, bead artist

Read Barbara Brenna, Hands of Light

Katie Agresta, singer, composer (Catholic)
Childhood trauma alienated her from her parents
Bob McGovern, woodcarver (Catholic)
Paralyzed by polio as a child. A mentor and teacher like many of these
artists.
Read Thomas Merton, Seven Storey Mountain, James Joyce, Portrait of
the Artist as a Young Man. Belonged to a small Jesuit community in
Philadelphia including Dan and Philip Berrigan. Andrew Greeley is one of
his clients. Driven by a desire for a relationship with God.

3/4/2003 5:52 AM

Yesterday K.C. called from Fortress. He is so positive about publishing
Old Testament Story, an introduction. How exciting for me to be working
with someone who is so positive about my work. He lobbied to keep an
escalator clause in my contract. If OTS sells more than 20,000 copies,
my royalty increases from 10% to 12.5%. Those kind of sales are
unlikely, but the confidence which it reflects is wonderful.
I worked all day getting my classes lined up, my ppt prepared. These are
long days for me, but I am so satisfied that my class presentations are
more organized, more coherent, and the coming semesters will be so
much less hectic.

3/7/2003 7:54 AM

Bush's press conference was remarkable. His handlers prepared him
well to answer little, and to repeat often his convictions. Have we come
to a time and place where everything is a matter of public relations. Is
there no truly genuine dialogue between people seeking to do the right
thing?

I would like to hike to the Supai Village in the Grand Canyon at some
point. Just for the grandeur of it.
Granular, ping, blogger, multislack, cracker, crash test dummy, dot
snot, feature shock, internet, meatspace, mouse potato, screenager.
John Paul writes a Roman Tryptich – poetry of a dying man. "...mountain
stream ... where ... do we meet? Do you meet me who is also passing –
just like you"

Guantanamo Bay: 650 prisoners, 43 countries, 16 prisoners have made
20 suicide attempts as of today.

ASU annual tuition: -- \$3,593 in state, \$12,113 out of state

In 1857, Mormons massacred 120 non-Mormons from Arkansas in the
Mountain Meadows Massacre. Unclear whether Brigham Young ordered
the massacre or whether it was done by Mormon vigilantes.

Gas is \$1.77 and now there are shortages due to winter formula
requirements which AZ imposes on refiners.

Boredom. Word first appears in 1750. A clarifying and focusing experience. No distractions. Boredom make you front the essential facts of life, put you in touch with family, loved ones, your relationship with the cosmos. Life is suddenly simple, direct and meaningful. What we call "boredom" in the west, eastern cultures practice as meditation – zazen. To empty the mind of all distraction. To think of nothing. The first theological task, Paul Tillich said... is to remove absurdities in interpretation.

Our lives come free; they're on the house to all comers.... God decants the universe of time in a stream, and our best hope is, by our own awareness, to step into the stream and surge, empty as flumes, to keep it moving. (Anne Dillard, *For the Time Being* 1999: 175)

3/8/2003 7:52 AM

Manuel D. Moreno, Bishop of Tucson, resigned yesterday. Prostate and Covering up sexual misconduct of his priests. Poor Manny. He was abused by McIntyre, who chose him to be his house Spic, so many years ago in LA. Manny had so little talent for anything. O'Brien says he will miss him. O'Brien ought to follow him, and resign.

March 17 is the new deadline for war. What a St. Patrick's Day!

54 cases of sexual assault at the Air Force Academy. A culture of sexual abuse. How sad.

Hilary Clinton is moving quickly into leadership positions in the Senate, and an expected run for the presidency in 2008! She is involved in all the right issues.

Mahmoud Abbas will be new prime minister of PLO. Abu Mazen! He too is for all the right issues. Perhaps our prayers for new leadership are being answered.

Michael Clancy is the new Religion editor at the Arizona Republic. Who speaks out against the war.

Home values in 85032 rose from 104,000 to 142,500 between 1997-2002.

Home values in 85020 rose from 101,000 to 149,950.

Went to see About Schmidt with Jack Nicholson last night. A funny but terribly sad movie. Do people really lead lives of quite desperation, and anger, for 42 years, and find themselves totally without real friends, real interests? Do we really let ourselves be controlled by the wedding industry, the funeral industry, the retirement industry?

Had dinner at Claim Jumper. Should try the spare ribs the next time. BBQ sauce was good, but beef bones were bad.

Simon and Jude

Christians who remember Simon and Jude—two of Jesus' apostles named in the Gospel of Luke—on October 28 read a passage from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians at their celebration of the Eucharist. In

part it reads: “Brothers and sisters: You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets (Eph 2:19-20)....”

Not much is known of the elusive Simon and Jude. Simon is not Simon Peter, who plays a significant role on the stage of Christian thinking.

Likewise, Jude is not Judas who betrayed Jesus. How can two such elusive figures be the foundation of a Christian household? If Christians cannot remember what Simon and Jude did, or who they were – if their stories have disappeared, then they are just names, not apostles, not ancestors.

The household of my faith, nonetheless, is not my own. As perhaps the Letter to the Ephesians hoped to remind its congregations, faith is not an individual human accomplishment, it is a gift. I believe because others have believed.

My mother is among those apostles who are the foundation of my faith. I was always in awe of both the strength of both my mother’s good faith and her good sense. Her faith was never blind. She saw clearly. She did not abide fools, even when they stood in pulpits. Yet she also never blamed God for the fools who speak in God’s name. She spoke out critically, and she prayed daily.

Her funeral brought together many who, like me were grateful for her faith and her good sense. When it was my turn to speak, I said: As embarrassing, and as ignorant, and as heretical as the church can be, I was never embarrassed to say: “I am a Christian”. Inevitably, friends would ask: “How can you identify with a church? You are so intelligent.

Churches are stupid. You are such a good man. Churches are full of hypocrites.” And I would answer: “I am her kind of Christian. I pray for good faith and good sense. As long as she stays, I am staying.”

In her later years, my mother belonged to a congregation that was chock full of goofy people. There were deacons who preached the pope, or a message from Mary, but never Jesus. There were laity who pestered early arrivals with appeals to sign their petitions for causes like “Nothing Sacred.”

Nothing Sacred first aired in September 1997. The series was cancelled in March 1998. It is an excellent drama that focuses on the life and times of the administration of St. Thomas’ church, a Roman Catholic parish in Chicago.

It is a realistic (if somewhat fast-paced) show that takes real issues facing people today and puts a religious spin on things. It deals with AIDS, abortion, and charity to the poor, among other things.

Perhaps the best aspect of the show is its unabashed belief in the existence of God. The main characters pray, and they talk about their faith. We see actual Roman Catholic liturgy in action. We hear homilies that drive the point home.

While **Nothing Sacred** could perhaps be considered too liberal in some circles, it does a very good job of showing many sides of an issue... and the overwhelming message of the show is that we are to love and care for other people, just as Christ did when He was on Earth.

Aerobics and Anerobics

The two best friends any of us have are our bodies and our minds. My relationship with my mind has always been healthy, challenging, and friendly. My relationship with body has not.

“Body Image” describes, not the actual condition of our bodies, but the way we think about our bodies. I have never thought about my body in a particularly healthy way. I have always been a fat kid. I used to say that I have weighed what I weigh today since I was in fifth grade, and I was not six feet, one inch tall in fifth grade.” Actual pictures of me, of course, show that I was an average size kid, but that is not the way I thought about myself.

As my body ages now, I am facing a whole new set of challenges in learning to live with the body, my friend.

I had always assumed my body and I had a contract to live out life together. Suddenly, my body begins to quite, and I am not yet done. I am angry. My body had promised me, and now it has broken that promise.

Therefore, I have begun a courtship with my body. I need to get to know this part of me that has a life of its own. It is time to read the directions which came with my body.

And so it begins – slowly. Trying to visualize—to draw picture in my mind of what my body really looks like – is not easy for me. My body image has always been a collage assembled from everywhere but from the data in my own body.

So, I have begun to spend time with my body. Just the body and me. We work out together. I pay attention to how the body works, and what makes it work. I learn new words.

For example, today I learned the difference between “aerobic” and “anaerobic” workouts. Aerobic workouts eat the glycogen which carbohydrates store in the body. An-aerobic workouts eat fat. Workouts should begin with aerobic exercise like walking, and then, after the warm up, switch to an-aerobic exercise like jogging.

The word ‘aerobic’ literally means “breathing”. Aerobic exercise uses large muscle groups, can be maintained continuously for a long period of time, and is rhythmic. Aerobic exercise trains the heart, lungs and cardiovascular system to process and deliver oxygen more quickly and efficiently to every part of the body. As the heart muscle becomes stronger and more efficient, a larger amount of blood can be pumped with each exercise stroke. Fewer strokes are then required to rapidly

transport oxygen to all parts of the body. Aerobically fit individuals can work longer, more vigorously and achieve a quicker recovery at the end of the aerobic session.

An anaerobic workout burns fat and energy 70 percent faster than aerobic exercise. Anaerobic exercise exceeds ninety percent of the maximum heart. Consequently, it exhausts the body's supply of glycogen faster and begins to use fat stores. Anaerobic exercise burns more calories because the intensity requires more calories.

Anaerobic exercise, however, cannot be sustained for very long because it quickly builds toxins. Furthermore, anaerobic exercise does not allow the body to re-fuel simply by breathing. Anaerobic exercise is done "out of breath".

So tomorrow when I walk, I will remember the word "aerobic". I can walk on air. And when I job, I will remember the word "anaerobic". I cannot breathe.

The Halloween Reader

Home Movies, My Inner Tube –Built In

Martin Marty

The Menacing Faith of Strangers. (10.29.2003) How can we know who we are without knowing who we hate? Is self definition possible without violence?

Hospitality.

We hate our own before we hate the stranger.

White Russians

I felt like I had a C-clamp on my temples.

California Wine at a Toasty 114 Degrees!

Meditation

Lectio Divina

I think preparing to preach everyday is an important spirituality for those called to preach, and an important discipline for learning to live the Word before preaching it. I still use the readings of the day to begin meditation, and thought you might find my way of applying the spirituality of lectio divina helpful in your own ministry.

Since I get up early to begin work at my desk, I begin at the computer. I keep the screen active throughout the day to return to the readings when I need to stop work and re-focus, and pray. To keep some record of my thoughts, questions, responses to these readings, I use the following system.

- Go to the USCC web site
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/today.htm>.
- Copy and paste readings for the day into a Microsoft Word file.

- Save under the number assigned to the readings in the Lectionary for Mass. For example, Wednesday for the Thirty-first week in Ordinary Time is 487. Therefore, these readings would be saved in a file 487.doc.
- Use the Comment option under the Insert tab to keep a record of your thoughts, responses, questions.

To close my meditation I use the readings to write a prayer using the format in the presidential prayers from the Eucharist.

- I speak the name I use for God. For example: "Father of Jesus..."
- I recall something the Father of Jesus did in the past: "...your son inspired great crowds to be selfless, not selfish..." (Luke 14)
- I ask for help to change my life. For example: "...help me to count the cost and pay the price of this day, without complaint..." (Luke 14)
- I end by affirming my desire to live as Jesus lived. For example: "...I take my place beside Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

PAWS

Meeting other dogs.
Running with mouth open through the water.

Sunday

Trice and I remodel houses. We do it because we cannot afford to buy houses in good shape and because we cannot afford to pay contractors to do it for us. We also do it because we love old houses. For me an old house is what a 75 Chevy is to most car lovers. I can take apart a house built in the 1950's, even the 1960's, and put it back together with my eyes closed. We also remodel old houses because it gives us a chance to create. My own work as a writer is certainly creative, but it requires the staying power of the long-distance runner. Remodeling an old house is not just creative, it is also immediate gratification. Trice and I have said, for a long time, that we could finish our projects in half the time if we did not stop so often to admire our work.

One old house that came out way was rat infested. The asbestos around the outside of the house had been broken and gone un-repaired. So, during the winter, rats worked their way into the inside walls. They made eerie noises as the scratched their way through the insulation, wiring and 2x4 studs.

Our uninvited guests were Norway rats. They thrived along the bayous which crisscrossed Harris County where we lived. Norway rats are native to China and Japan. They came to Europe by ship in 1330. Between 1347-1352 the fleas they brought with them had killed twenty-

five million people from Bubonic Plague. Diseases carried by Norway rats—Bubonic Plague, Typhus, Salmonella, Rabies, Tularemia, and Trichinosis—have taken more lives than all the wars ever fought. Around the world today Norway rats still do billions of dollars in damage every year. Our concern, however, was not world health, but the damage and discomfort they were doing to our home.

Norway rats are creatures of routine. Once they move in, and you put obstacles in their way, they would rather deal with the obstacles than move out. Norway rats do not suffer change gracefully. We repaired the siding, and carefully resealed the exterior of the house, but they patiently gnawed through our repairs to find their winter nests. We baited them, and they crawled into our walls to die. The smell was God-awful. It was time for sterner measures. We decided to get a cat! During our first discussions, Trice said she did not want a cat killing and delivering dead rats.

Pet Therapy

The Colonel

Don Sr. served his country for four years in the United States Navy, and for thirty-one years in the United States Army. He entered the army as a private soldier, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. ²⁹

He entered enlisted in the Navy to fulfill his compulsory service, and was stationed at the Great Lakes.

After Don Sr. was discharged from the Navy he went to work for the telephone company in Omaha. Herb³⁰, a friend of his family, advised him that he could never make a real living “climbing poles” for Ma Bell. He told my father that he needed to go to college. Neither my father nor my mother went to college. Their families were too poor. They both needed to work.

With college out of the question, Herb advised Don Sr. to enlist in the army and volunteer for the Signal Corps. The army would train him, and Herb would guarantee him a job with the telephone company when his tour of duty was over. So Don Sr. enlisted, and he fell in love with the life. Herb tried until my father was a captain to get him to leave the Army and come and work for him in the telephone company.

During his thirty-five years of military service, and ten years of combat, my father was always a simple patriot. There was not an ounce of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chuck Norris or Sylvester Stallone in him. He served his country. He did not wage unconditional war against evil. I admired him for that virtue during his life, and on this Veterans’ Day I admire him for his patriotism still.

I did not always understand my father’s patriotism. The bragging rights of children raised in the military – “brats” – include your father’s date of rank, and his record of military service. Taunts regularly include lines like: “My father was promoted to Major on fourteen June 1957.” Similarly, Army brats brag: “My father fought the Chinese at the Chosen Reservoir! What was your father doing?”

My father never told war stories. Hence when it came time to taunt, I was silent. Once I asked him why he never told me any war stories. “You live with your memories of war,” he told me, “you don’t tell stories about it.” His memories of war covered ten long years in Africa, the Pacific, Korea and Viet Nam. The only stories he told were gold-on-green overseas service stripes on the sleeve of his dress uniform. Each hash mark represented six months service.

When I protested that fathers of other kids told them stories, my father said: “Occupation soldiers tell stories because they never saw war.” Occupation soldiers were troops sent into combat zones when the fighting ended. Like the military police these soldiers were responsible for maintaining public order and rebuilding a civilian government. Because they arrived before the area had been declassified as a war zone, they were entitled to wear battle ribbons on their uniform, but, in

²⁹ 043070

³⁰ Herb Shaw?

general, their experiences were not the experiences of combat soldiers. They talked the talk, but they had never walked the walked. Combat soldiers told silent stories. They did not brag.

I heard one war story that involved my father at a cocktail party that I attended, as an adult, with my parents. I was listening to my father and several other officers, who did not know each other, visit. Reading the service ribbons on the uniform jackets of his brother officers, one asked: "Where did you serve in Korea?"

The conversation of the four officers moved quickly to a rescue operation in which – curiously enough – all the officers were involved. As a communications officer, my father has received a message from guerillas in North Korea that they had rescued an American pilot, and needed a helicopter to extract him from enemy territory. Another officer was in G-2 intelligence for the mission. He was charged with determining whether the guerillas were friendly, or was the rescue request a trap to capture Americans and their helicopter. A chaplain had been instrumental in contacting a Korean Christian congregation in the area where the guerillas were operating to determine if their request was bona-fide. The fourth officer piloted the rescue helicopter, and pulled the downed pilots out to safety. It was the first time that the other officers had learned the outcome of the mission in which they were all involved. War moves forward too quickly to follow up.

I heard another war story that involved my father from my cousin's husband. He served in Korea with the First Calvary. Jose³¹

January 23, 2000

Patrice and I are at the Marriott Laguna Hills Resort in Dana Point. She is attending and ONS inservice on Neutropenia, I am here celebrating her birth week! Last night we went into Laguna Beach to Javier=s Cantina and Restaurant, the popular Mexican food place. Margaritas were good, carnitas were good, and the the mariscos con mojo del ajo were good. Chips were tough, i.e. not good.

I got up about 5:30AM. Did not sleep well. The room is air conditioned and it goes from hot to cold. I had to go to the bath room twice, and I was having bad dreams. Don=t know whether it is the alcohol -- I had two margaritas or my age. Went for a walk done the hill to the beach. It was still dark. No one -- or at least only two campers -- in Doheny State Park. All the time I was walking I kept thinking about Margaret, and about Teo. Why can=t I just deal with them on the job, and not let them have space in my head?

When Patrice when to her meetings, I went down to Dana Point Harbor to have breakfast at Bloody Mary=s. Right next to Sea and Wind which is the fine dining restaurant, and pretty close to Jon=s Fish Market where we ate fish and chips and fish tacos for lunch yesterday. I had a health bowl of oatmeal and a glass of OJ. Already enjoyed two cups of coffee in the room.

Spent the morning finishing Day of the Death of Richardo Reis, by Jose Saramago, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1998 or 1999. It

³¹ Jose Perez-Chiesa died March 2000. His daughter, KATHY PEREZ, graduated from John Jay HS in San Antonio, class of 1971. **Kathy L Perez**, (210) 697-9754, 10503 Huebner Rd, **San Antonio**, TX 78240

was tedious read, but I really enjoyed it. Not a happy book, but a very melancholy read. Once I read and the day got underway I want not preoccupied with Kino, or with my melancholy about Kino. It is not that I am not doing good, but it is my resentment of working for the diocese or for the Carmelites, who do not care about my talents, and who have not loyalty to me. Neither knows who I am or what I can do. Neither would come to my assistance on their own, or at my request. I can work myself to death for them, or I can do nothing at all, and their reactions will be the same. Nothing. I need to work for someone whom I respect, and with people I respect. I do respect Gina, Pat, Kimber, Tricia and Mike (Diana?). Perhaps when Stan gets here, the team will take better shape.

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December 25, 1999

I gave Jim and Laurie a copy of my itinerary for the study tour. Perhaps they can meet Patrice and me at the end of my tour for a family travel special.

I have to ask Jim to talk with me and Patrice about how to install an irrigation system at El Camino. I will need to run a line from the front yard under the patio wall into the back yard, because there is no way for me to get water from the back yard spigot unless I break up the slab again with the chip hammer.

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The genealogy is a legal genre which establishes the right of a household to land and children. Here it defines that Jesus, the household of Joseph, has a legal right to a place in this human world. Jesus has not simply strayed into the divine plane, but has every right to be here, to live a human life.

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Note the women. Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary.

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The Barnum Kaleidoscope circus was one of the fine experiences of 1999. The interest and attention which the performers payed to those of us who watched. The frequency with which we as spectators became performers. What a delight.

Tomorrow I need to see if the paper has a coupon, and try and get some shirts at Macy=s.

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Death is the Intersection where we all meet

Note the women. Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary. Jesus reaches out to human beings in the two places where we all pass: birth and death. Not all of us are rich. Not all of us are powerful. But all of us are born, and all of us die. And in birth and in death we meet Jesus, who, like us, was born and died. These are the most ecumenical moments in all human experience.

Circus, Circus

The Barnum Kaleidoscope circus was one of the fine experiences of 1999. The interest and attention which the performers payed to those of us who watched. The frequency with which we as spectators became performers. What a delight.

It was the holiday season. We bought tickets to the circus. It was a gourmet circus. In the entry tent, performers wandered through the crowd talking with children and adults, posing for pictures, and

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October 18, 1999

Fall is here. I need to drive to Sedona and then up Oak Creek Canyon to celebrate the colors. To be up early to feel the cool fresh air, to be in the hot tub to watch the sun set.

Mario de la Fuente is re-opening the corridas in Nogales for the first time since the 1960's. I can understand hunting, but not the tormenting of animals.

Ludlow CA was a mining town. Now there are three houses, twenty-two mobile homes. Six businesses. All are owned by John Knoll and his brother. On October 16, 1999 at 2:46 AM a 7.0 earthquake had its epicenter at Ludlow.

Gen. Pervalz Musharraf led a military coup in Islamabad on October 12. He is 56 years old.

Navajo is now being taught in Phoenix North High School. Traditional Navajo people carry corn pollen as a blessing. Every action is begun with a prayer.

There is a prayer for protection:

Make my troubles vanish.
My troubles have vanished.
Turn my pain into morning dew,
My pain has turned into morning dew;
Turn my tears into corn pollen
My tears have turned into corn pollen.

And then a prayer for the road.

Lead me home safely on a trail of corn pollen.

October 11, 1999

Since 1989, Karen Spitzberg has been creating art for the blind. She teaches art history and Atranslates@ classic works of art into a medium which the blind can understand. The CBS Sunday Morning report on her work made me wish I was doing something as significant with my life, and something which was not so filled with controversy.

Margaret called and asked to Asee me.@ AJust you and me.@ I agreed, even though she had seen my schedule for the day and it is full. We are meeting at Gallagher's for lunch. I assume this is not good news.

Already the day is full, and the calendar is crowded, and I have not time to prepare my class, or correct my students papers. Ugh!

October 4, 1999

Random Hearts, by Warren Adler was published in 1984. Hollywood bought the rights from him to make it a movie and did not release it until 1999.

I drank coffee from my Amsterdam mug.

When you take the Silverton RR from Durango, forget the roundtrip. Have someone pick you up in Silverton, and take the highway back.

At 5:30 AM the water in the backyard woke me. It was still completely dark, and wonderfully cool.

I am ready to begin a new day, a new week, and a new life. Grateful to be here in AZ, and grateful to be at Kino.

Jim M.D.

November 11 is Jim’s birthday. In 2003 he was 49! What seems like years ago, he and Laurie and their first baby, Erin, were in England. After medical school, Jim did a fellowship at the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Centre in Exeter, England.³² The physician with whom he had trained originally collaborated with a British physician. The two applied the same basic research differently in their clinical practice. Jim’s teacher wanted him to have the experience of working with his former partner.

Jim was clearly homesick when we talked on the phone. So, I decided after attending the SBL annual meeting in Chicago. I took an over-the-pole flight.

Jim had sent me a tape – a guide from the moment I left the plane and headed for customs, until I got off the double-decker bus and bought my first tweed hat. I put on my headphones and started the tape as I left the jet-way.

As I approached customs I was a bit nervous. I had gone to Goode Company BBQ in Houston and bought Jim a sacco del torro as a Christmas gift. It was the scrotum of a bull which had been tanned stiff and the top edge laced with a leather thong. It also had a tidy little leather handle for carrying! I was not sure what the customs officer would think it was. I was not sure what I would tell the officer if asked what it was. There were no questions. First step completed.

As I moved from customs to the Currency Exchange, Jim’s voice said: “Don’t shop exchange rates. You’re just here for a vacation, not to open a business!”

Jim and Laurie had reserved a room for me at a small hotel on the edge of Hyde Park. Hyde Park became a Royal Park in 1536 when the land, which was excellent for hunting, was acquired by King Henry VIII. Over the years, Hyde Park has developed a tradition of hosting both local and national events, celebrations and performances. There are links with the military through the presence of Knightsbridge barracks on its boundary and the continuing practice of firing Gun Salutes from the Parade Ground. The two most famous features of the Park are the Serpentine, a lake used for boating and swimming, and Rotten Row, the world famous riding track, which was the first public road to be lit at night in England. There are almost four miles of horse rides as well as cycle and roller-blading routes. There are also areas planted and managed as meadowland to encourage a wide range of insect life and the ecological chains they support. There is an education center used by schools from all over London.

I got to the hotel, and the desk told me the reservation was for the previous day, so even though Jim and Laurie had paid for the room, and I did not use it, they still collected the money. Nonetheless, I paid for a second day. The room was a tiny. I had to sleep in the bunk curled into the fetal position.

Pubs

Surgery.

Chips.

Children of the Depression

Both Edith and Don Sr. were children of the depression. Edith grew up in a food-poor home. There were days when she did not eat.

She painfully – and with answer still in her aging voice – remembers a time in Leavenworth KS when there was no food in the house. She was a teen, and was doing something in the kitchen, when her mother answered the back door, and men from the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the church came in with large wash tubs full of groceries. As they set them down on the kitchen floor, my

³² Barrack Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 5DW, Telephone: 01392 411611

mother was furious. So furious, I could still hear the anger in her aging voice as she told me the story. “It was awful to be hungry, but I could not believe my mother went out and told people that we did not have any food. I was ashamed.”

Years later working in South Central Los Angeles, I saw the shame of hunger which my mother had described. Hers was the hunger of poor whites in the days of the depression. Mine was the hunger of new immigrants from rural Mexico.

Working in a Los Angeles neighborhood where the “rich” carried mail for the United States Postal Service, hunger was common. My first encounters with hunger were awkward, and my attempts to respond only shamed the hungry. I was like those volunteers from the St Vincent de Paul Society coming into my mother’s kitchen with wash tubs full of food.

The first time I visited a family without food, they tried to feed me. I refused to eat. I was there to feed them. If they had food, then they should eat it, or give it to their children. How ignorant of me. To be hungry is one thing, to be unable to feed a guest is another. Hunger is a private suffering. Being inhospitable is a public shame.

Fortunately, for me, someone told me. “Whenever you go to anyone’s house, eat. Even if you are not hungry, eat. Even if the family does not eat with you, eat. Eating blesses the family who feeds you. Refusing to eat curses the family who offers to feed.”

So, I began to eat. Even when I ate alone, I ate. Even when I ate the last food in the house, I ate. I enjoyed those last suppers. I learned to take my time and visit with the families who fed me. We never talked about food. We talked about life, about good times. The conversations fed their dignity, because they remembered good times. They had not always been hungry. The conversations also took me on wonderful journeys into the lives of people, who though unlike me in many ways, were no different than I in so many others.

When I returned later with food, I also learned not to come to the door. Strangers carrying food into the house also shamed those who lived there. The strategy I developed was to pick up neighborhood children for a ride in the back of my pickup truck. Riding in the bed of a pickup truck is a rural thing, and a particularly Mexican thing. It is not safe, but it is a celebration. Children knew my truck. It was the invitation to ride to the beach for a swim, to come over to my house for a hot shower, a fresh pair of Pooh-Bear pajamas, for an evening treat of Peanut Butter and Crackers, and watching re-runs of the Rookies on a color TV.

Once I had enough 10-12 year olds to lift 50 lb bags of beans and rice, I would end the ride by pulling into the alley. “Take the bags with you” I would shout through the split window. There was no shame in children carrying food into the house. The kids loved the game of it, and the promise of a real meal. Santa had to learn to come down the chimney in the middle of the night, so as not to shame the poor, who could not feed their families on the night when Jesus was born.

John Baker

Can’t come to the Thanksgiving holidays without remembering two of my favorite John Baker stories.

First, remember when I talked you into coming to DC and interview for teaching jobs? As I dutifully transcribing notes from my last interview, I looked up and there you stood with one of those 3x5 contact cards on the back of which you had printed: HELP! WILL TEACH FOR FOOD. GOD BLESS. You didn’t get a job – and neither did I – but what a wonderful story.

Second, remember the Thanksgiving when you and Candy joined her/your relatives? Instead of setting the oven to bake the turkey, someone put it on clean. Then the blowhard relative you did not like anyway had to spend the day disassembling the oven to rescue the bird!

Werner Kelber

“If I accept your invitation, it will delay my critical review of Now I am 61 and trying to decide how much time I have left to do what projects... As the world turns.

Sofball in Japan

My own mother....

I've Never Done That

I overheard a colleague decline an invitation by saying: “ I have never done that before...

Running

I started running so that I would not kill Rolf...

Smoking

I smoked cigarettes because it was social. I smoked a pipe because it was professional...

My First Marathon

“Mr. Benjamin, just what did you come in to have an EKG?

Whataburger

I ate breakfast at a Whataburger on my trip up from Tucson to Kino...I called Patrice from a Whataburger during my interviews...

Electric Blanket

Saturday, January 17, 2004

Marcia Ford, Memoir of a Misfit: finding my place in the family of God, 2003

Patrice and I are the most unusual Catholics.

On the one backpacking trip I took with the Sierra Club, I was the only non-Californian. The Lesbian activist asked me: How can a nice guy like you be involved with such an ugly group like the church?

It always surprised me when I realized how someone with whom I so much in common, looked at things so differently than I did. What was burning within their hearts on the road to Emmaus?

Mary Biediger’s ex – Nathan – has a sister who is an attorney. At a baptism reception in a room filled with friends, she came up to Patrice and me and asked: “Would you sign my petition to run as a candidate for judge?

I have never held God responsible for the bad people who work for him. Even when those people – novice masters and bishops – insist they are “god in my life” I am just fascinated that it is even hard for God to find good help.

Malachy Smith never could understand why I did not want to just shoot a few hoops, instead of leave the grounds and go for a walk. I never played golf. I never drank scotch, and that’s where the business of the church is conducted.

‘abba – Jesus did not fit the expectations of messiah when he lived, so they took his life. Help me to live like Jesus lived, not wanting to fit in, not anxious to be cast out – just living the life you created me to live. Give me a sense of belonging, not belonging to the establishment, but belonging to you, in the company of others who walked the road to Emmaus.

Sunday, January 18, 2004

7:59 AM

Marcia Ford is afraid that everyone else understands what it means to have faith, and she does not get it. That is what makes her a misfit. She does not understand the program – she does not believe that what others tell her is essential to faith practice is even necessary.

I have never believed that my kind of Catholic was in the majority. My father was not even Catholic, and I grew up in the non-Catholic south. No one in my family was a priest or a nun. We did not even have relatives in Ireland.

I did know that during the time of the Second Vatican Council, however, I met a lot more of my kind of Catholics, so I never thought I would be unable to find a place in the Church.

I grew familiar with life on the margins of Catholicism. I knew not everyone liked me, but it was not until I moved to Phoenix to work for the Diocese that I got my first experience of people who felt they were called by God to kill me.

I am a Will Rodgers type of person. Unlike Will I have met people I don’t like, but I am not paranoid. I am a feminist, but I don’t practice the hermeneutics of suspicion very well. For the first year I worked for the Diocese of Phoenix, I knew not everyone liked me, but even when I came home with an arrow in my hat, I just thought it was some child who missed the target. It took a while for me to realize that I was the target, and the shooters were getting more accurate.

That was when my instinct for self-preservation kicked in.

I was amazed – read “hurt” that—amid so much incompetence, my competence was unwelcome. I was frustrated not because I wanted every other Catholic to be like me, but that there was no room in the Church for a Catholic like me. I was on a never ending search for a posada, and the answer from within was always – Go Away. You do not belong here. Go away or we are going to kill you. Literally.

The Church is great at taking care of people they have destroyed – sex maniacs, drunks, drug users, power freaks. A little sense of self-satisfaction and achievement is all that stands between many of us who want to kill ourselves, and a fulfilling life.

‘Abba, give me the honesty to admit failure, without thinking that I am a failure. Jesus failed, but your raised him from the dead. Raise me.

Tuesday, January 20, 2004

5:47 AM

For Marcia, everyone else is saved – baptized – and she is not. They are all going to heaven. She is going to hell. Any no one cares. She really does not fit in. And then an English teacher who has nothing to do with the church, and is not teaching religion tells her that we do not have to be baptized “while” we are children, but “as” if we were a child! Problem solved, by an infidel!

How odd. Religion, which, ostensibly, is committed to the formation of community, in fact, does more to alienate and exile than it does to bond and connect.

Where do I belong? Probably more to Home Depot and Evergreen Hardware than to the Catholic Church. The folks at Home Depot help me understand and resolve the problems I face – the Catholic Church just makes me feel guilty about having problems.

‘Abba, remind me to help others belong, to fit in. Help me avoid alienating and exiling those who need a place to be, to belong. Your son said to all of us who were lost: “I am looking for you.” He made us feel that someone cared, that someone knew we were out of place, that we had a home. Let me do what Jesus did. Amen.

Wednesday, January 21, 2004

6:12 AM

For Marcia, she is responsible for all the bad things which happen in her family. She did not give Jesus her heart as a child, and three of her grandparents die – just like that.

Growing up with Edith was equally guilt-ridden for me. She would rage at Don Sr., and I felt it was my fault. She would yell that he never gave her flowers, so I saved my twenty-five cents a week and bought her flowers. Then she yelled that Don Sr. was still a bum because his son had to buy her flowers. There was no way to win, but I still felt it was my fault that Edith was fighting with Don Sr.

I am a problem solver. Something is broken. I want to fix it. Even when the something is a person. I don’t ask: Is it my job? I am here to make the clock of the world tick. Why? I do not feel messianic, I just feel responsible.

When I started teaching. I would bring matters the other faculty – not me – but others complained about during breaks – I would bring them to faculty meetings. Let’s drop the dress code so that our students won’t be jumped on the way to campus. I was shocked when no one would even second the motion so that we could discuss it. Not even the teacher who complained all the time about students from our private school being mugged by students from the public school.

Then one veteran teacher took me aside. People cling to their gripes, he told me. People work to get a gripe that is going to be with them for a long time. You come along and take away their gripe, and they just have to go out and find another.

‘Abba, help me to change the things I can change, not everything I see. Help me to accept a world in which there is stuff that is broken, even stuff I could fix. Jesus did not feed all the hungry, heal all the blind – and neither should I. Amen.

3/27/2005 9:42:29 AM (Easter Sunday)

From Meditations of Ratzinger's Way of the Cross (2005)

Jesus is condemned to death...

...justice is trampled underfoot by weakness, cowardice and fear of the diktat of the ruling mindset. The quiet voice of conscience is drowned out by the cries of the crowd. Evil draws its power from indecision and concern for what other people think.

Jesus takes up his cross...

... How often are the symbols of power, borne by the great ones of this world, an affront to truth, to justice.... Jesus ...does not reign through violence, but through a love which suffers for us and with us.

Jesus falls...

...Let us allow Jesus to lift us up. Let us strip away our sense of self-sufficiency, our false illusions of independence, and learn from him....

Jesus meets his mother...

...The disciples fled, yet she did not flee....

Simon helps Jesus...

...From this chance encounter, faith was born... The witness of Jesus, silent and suffering, touched his heart.... Whenever we show kindness to the suffering, the persecuted and defenseless, and share in their sufferings, we help to carry that same Cross of Jesus.

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus....

...amid turmoil and dismay, Veronica shows the courage born of goodness and does not allow her heart to be bewildered.

Jesus is taken down from the cross and laid in the arms of his Mother...

Telling Stories

an autobiography

11/9/2009 8:02 AM

As a kid I was never much good at lying. Of course I was the oldest of four, so I was always more responsible than ordinary children. Besides there was not much to be gained by lying to my mother and dad, who expected the truth from each of us and their discipline of us was never violent, nor unreasonable – which teaches children to lie.

So I came to storytelling not because of a childhood of lying, but rather because of a lifetime of teaching. I used the stories of my life to make my point.

I did not think that my life as a whole was an outstanding example of living or living well. Writers are encouraged to write what they know, and so I told what I knew – my experiences – good and bad, large and small.

When students come back years after our time together in high school or college has ended, I am always flattered when they say: “You were the first person who made me think about Eve – the biblical woman in the garden – as intelligent, moral and self-sacrificing. I had always thought everyone hated her!” More often, however, students come back and say: “I have never forgotten the story about your dad staying home to bake biscuits while the rest of the family went off to Mass.”

I was a sophomore in a Catholic High School in Tucson. The first day of religion class, the Carmelite priest asked: “Who in here would tell a lie to save the world.” Without hesitation I raised my hand, only to realize, almost immediately, that mine was the only hand in the air.

The Father glared at me and shouted: “Lying is a sin!”

“I know,” I replied, “but even if I go to hell, everyone else gets to heaven.” I could not help thinking that I had done what Jesus would do by laying down my life for the whole world.

Nonetheless, the Father would not give it up. He spent the entire period trying to break me. After the first couple minutes, I was no longer a theologian, I was just stubborn. I would not be moved.

The Father stormed out of the room at the end of class, and I resigned myself to a long, long year. But God was good. The next class a new Father appeared to teach us, and I never found out whether the first

10/28/2007 6:47 AM

I am up this AM full of resolve to loose weight. I still have the nagging and numb pain at the base of my skull on the left. I have switched pillows hoping that the stiffness was the result of sleeping in an uncomfortable position.

10/26/2007 1:16 PM

Hi Tifanie,

Thank you for your appreciation. It is a pleasure to work with you because you follow through. Keep it up. Your future is very important, and any time you put in to educating yourself about your choices will return many, many benefits.

For some choices for the spring, talk with:

Dr. Almira F. Poudrier (Almira.Poudrier@asu.edu)
School of International Letters and Cultures
SubCoordinator of Classics
Lecturer in Latin
Arizona State University

I have two reasons for encouraging you to join Barrett. First, you need to have the experience in working in smaller groups with gifted students, to see just how stimulating that can be. Second, ASU is not going to give you a

particularly strong transcript. So, for example, one of the things to talk with Lyn about is what you ought to do with the time you have left in college, and with the options you have at ASU. Being in an honors college and having honors credit on your transcript will strengthen your transcript, and get graduate schools to look at you.

Another thing that will strengthen your application process to graduate school are strong letters of recommendation. So, you need to go back and talk with Prof. Ken Morrison about getting your letters etc in order.

You are doing all the right stuff. Just keep it up.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Tifanie Rogers
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2007 6:44 PM
To: Don Benjamin
Subject: Osiek/Barrett Honors College

Hi Dr. Benjamin,

Thank you thank you thank you so much for all of your help, it seems like every time I turn around I am benefiting from your advice! I just got an e-mail from Carolyn asking me to have lunch with her on Sunday at the AAR/SBL meeting! I can't even describe how I feel right now!

Also, I am really considering Barrett and weighing all of the pro's and con's of joining. I have a meeting with an advisor tomorrow and I will let you know how it turns out. If you have any more opinion on the matter, I would really like to hear it, right now it is very up in the air with me. They are putting on a study abroad trip to Greece, Crete and Rome that sounds *AMAZING* so that is one plus.

The other problem I am having is finding a good class to take next semester. I will be taking your Women in the Bible class whether I am with Barrett or not, and I will be taking Greek 201, and a computer class :(, and after that I don't know. I want to take a history class, but I was hoping for a class that is about the history of Greece, or Rome, or Egypt, but so far, I have not been able to find

one. In your time at ASU have you heard of such a class?? Or, do you know of any other classes that may be of interest to me?

See you Monday,

Tifanie

10/23/2007 9:10 AM

Hi Vic,

Vic, your introduction is quite a nice piece. It well introduces readers to the anthology. Style flows well, and as always you are a master at finding bibliography.

Patrice is back to work, although yesterday during physical therapy she got very dizzy. Called me just as I was getting on the bus from campus, and so I jumped off one bus onto another to the hospital so that I could drive her home. She is still home this AM, hoping to feel well enough to be able to go in to work by noon.

Enjoyed looking at Sam's pics. Is Emily a musician? I really enjoyed his pics of the tomb display at Xian. Are you and Carol going to go to China for a visit?

Not doing houses. The real estate market is so far down that it will take several years for it to recover. Our rent house has been vacant since February. I was able to teach three courses this semester, and have two scheduled for the spring. I will keep teaching at ASU, but I think 3-5 courses a year, rather than 9 courses is about the best I will do. We are running up some serious credit card debt, which makes me nervous. My plan now is to begin doing Clinical Pastoral training in the spring, and work as a hospital chaplain while I am continuing to teach.

I am still working on the book. I have the chance to teach Archaeology and the Bible in the spring, so I can field test the material before sending it to Fortress. You can see where I am on my website.

I could not find a direct connection between Ave Maria radio and Ave Maria University, but the radio website looks Catholic right, and the name association is hardly just a coincidence. -- Correc that. Reading Al Kresta's bio on the Ave Maria website: "In 1997, Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monaghan recruited Al to launch the media apostolate, Ave Maria Communications."

Most of his guests are neocons -- just enough representation of the religious middle and left to make the program look balanced. No idea how he looks at you.

Here's how the university introduces itself:

"Ave Maria University [in FL] began as [Domino's Pizza millionaire] Thomas S. Monaghan's dream to build an institution of Catholic higher education that would be faithful to the Magisterium and could produce the future faithful educators, leaders, and mentors that our challenged society needs. Through his initial financial donation of \$250 million, in partnership with a generous donation of land from the Barron Collier Family in Southwest Florida, the dream began to take shape." <http://www.avemaria.edu/aboutus/>

When I was at Rice, Monaghan went off the deep end. Guilt-ridden that he had made so much money. Began locking himself in his executive office all day and saying the rosary. For a while he was giving \$10,000 to any Catholic priest teaching at a non-Catholic school. The chair at Rice wanted me to apply -- I demurred. I did not want to be the Domino Pizza Professor of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies! When he emerged from his retreat he began funding the university and other projects -- probably the radio -- as the Catholic equivalent of the religious right.

Peace.

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Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

-----Original Message-----

From: Matthews, Victor H [mailto:VictorMatthews@MissouriState.edu]
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2007 1:25 PM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: Good News

Don,

First let me say I hope that Patrice is now fully recovered and back to doing what she loves. If she is anything like Carol, I know she was an impatient patient wanting to get going as soon as possible.

Next, I wanted to let you know that Sam has gotten married. He met a

girl in Shanghai about 9 months ago and they made it official a couple of weeks ago in a civil ceremony that involved a fair amount of paperwork (both U.S. and Chinese).

Here is a link where he is putting up pictures of Emily and he:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/CelloSam/WeddingPics>

You can also check out the various parts of his life in China at:

<http://www.cellosam.com>

I have also attached an introductory article I have written for a Symposium Series volume on "Reading and Writing About War." It is co-edited by Brad Kelle and Frank Ames. I will probably be the last bit of writing I get done for awhile since my Dean is having surgery on Monday and I will be acting Dean for the next month. We are also in the process of a complete computer system transition to "Banner" that takes three days out of my week three weeks a month for training. I am at the point already after just two weeks of this of living for Monday and Friday when I am not in training.

Carol has her last course segment in Memphis in December and then the next time we go there in May will be for her graduation. Needless to say we are both looking forward to it, although Office Depot and Staples may go out of business without Carol's continual need to go buy notebooks and other supplies.

Have you returned to refurbishing houses? Will you be teaching more in the spring semester? How is your book project coming? Write and let me know.

P.S. -- I will be doing a radio interview on the Ave Maria network with the Al Kresta in the Afternoon show. Do you know anything about this outfit or him?

Peace and Best Wishes -- Vic

Hi Anny,

You will like Bird by Bird. It is Annie Lamott's writing class -- very direct, very practical. As you remember from the directed writing project, I think the most important part of writing is getting your proposal clear in your head, and on paper. Use that as a guide to getting started. 1) Describe some observation

you have made about yourself, about the people or the world around you. 2) Ask one clear, question about what you have observed, and explain that question briefly. 3) Give two possible answers to your question – and show how one answer would have a positive impact on you or on your world; show how the other would have a negative impact.

Once you have that done, then just start to write. Some writers write when they are inspired. I would never get anything written if I waited for inspiration. I belong to the perspiration school. I get up at 5AM every morning and write. Even I just sit here, I don't leave my desk until the time is up.

Don't edit when you write, just write. I using edit the previous day's writing before starting today.

Go ahead and send me your material. I would enjoy reading it for you.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Anny Ortiz [mailto:anny_ortiz@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2007 9:36 AM
To: Don Benjamin; dcben@asu.edu
Subject: Thank you

Dr. Benjamin,

How are you? What a lovely morning we are having huh? It is warm and windy here in Hermosillo. I went to the Bahia de Kino this weekend to go to birthday party and then i camped on the beach under the stars, i saw many shooting stars, it was beautiful.

I finished reading Traveling Mercies (I think its the second book i actually finish reading since i graduated from college!!!!) That is not to say i havent read at all, i just either dont finish the books i start or i just read online.

But, this book moved and inspired me so that i have actually started writing myself. I love writing, although i have no sense of organization or i should i dont know what is the proper way to get started. Just go with the flow or device

an outline and use it as a guide? How do you write? How do you organize your ideas into a coherent system that enables you to both convey your message to the readers in a concise way and yet make sure you include all your thoughts?

I would love to share what i have written so far with you and get your thoughts on it, not so much on content, but on organization. Could i go ahead and send it your way? I only have about 3 -4 pages.

Let me know! As soon as i go back to the US im going to get another book by Annie Lammott: Bird by Bird. Have you read that one?

Anyway, hope all is well with you, say hi to Patrice for me and we'll be in touch.

Peace,

Anny :)

Hi Gaby,

Good to see you again, even briefly yesterday.

The Tempe class has finished, and I am reading final papers. It was a good experience, and a wonderful use of tax dollars -- in my opinion.

Now that I can leave campus by 5 PM, and I riding the bus -- along with my bike. It is working remarkably well. Yesterday during her physical therapy, Patrice got an dizzy and nauseous, so she called me just as I was about to board the bus on College. Remarkably, I was able to switch buses to get to Shea and Scottsdale, and then bike over to the hospital to drive her home in her car. She is still feeling a little off this AM, but I think she is planning to go to work.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies <http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

-----Original Message-----

From: Gabriela Traxler

Sent: Monday, October 22, 2007 9:13 AM

To: Don Benjamin

Subject: RE: Chapter Two

Hi Dr. Benjamin,

I actually have to get to the law school by 2:30 on Wednesday because I'm doing an interview with their marketing director about Project Excellence, the Honors program that allows Barrett students to take law courses as undergrads.

I'll stop by West Hall today before your class and leave another copy of the law school letter with Harriet. I can probably try to get to the Brickyard before your 1:40 class on Wednesday to pick up the Hispanic letter.

You're all over the place, huh! How's your class for the city going?

Gabriela Traxler
IACURH 2007 Conference Chair
Residence Hall Association
CLAS Ambassador
Arizona State University
Gabriela.Traxler@asu.edu
(630)400-5420

10/22/2007 8:17 AM

Hi John,

Makes you wish you were an atheist so you could spend Sunday morning at Starbucks reading the NYTimes, doesn't it?

Your last line is the right line – into Christ, not into a Church. Even the Catholic Church no longer re-baptizes people that are becoming Catholics, but have already been baptized in another Christian tradition. They are simply asked to make a profession of faith to live out their baptismal commitment in the Catholic tradition.

My mother worried about “seeing” dad (died 1988) after she died (2001). When my brother asked her why she was such an observant Catholic – mass, prayers, confession etc. Her answer: she wanted to see Don Sr. again! Now Don Sr was baptized as a Presbyterian, but was not a church go-er. So as a Catholic she had to be good to see a Presbyterian in the afterlife when the Catholic Church in my Mother’s day considered Presbyterians to be heretics or apostates? Present Presbyterians, now Episcopalians excluded, of course.

Likewise when my mother died, my sister, Chris, who “left” the church when she left Catholic school, was worried if Mother was “alright”. Chris was

fascinating to me. Most people, in my experience, who leave know more about the church they leave than those who stay. Chris just hit control-alt-delete. She didn't remember anything. At one point she and a friend set out for a fellow who channeled the dead -- \$300 to join an intimate group of 500 people! It was like Price is Right. Act high energy, wear outrageous clothes and sit on the aisle, and the channel fellow might call on you for a freebie. When Chris was going through the plan with me, I asked: Why do you need to channel Mother? That's when she said: I need to know that she is alright. Now most folks think the dead are more alright than the living. I gave her two pieces of advice. First, Mother and Dad had been apart a long time -- this was the first quality time they had had -- without being someone's parents, etc. If Mother is not all that excited to see you or hear from you -- I advised -- don't be offended. Second, Mother was a church going woman. If she found out that Chris channeled her way into the afterlife she might think she was working with the devil. I advised her to be a bit vague about how she placed the call. The channel fellow did call on her, and Chris felt quite satisfied that Mother was alright.

I try to emphasize that religion is about this life, not the afterlife. I am with Marx who indicted the church for failing to fulfill its responsibility to build a better world, and preaching that God will do in heaven, what the church has failed to do -- like comfort this woman -- on earth. For me, it is important to trust that whatever the afterlife is, or is about, that is in God's hands. Even if it is not what we expect, it will be satisfying. It is truly a blessing that the widow loves her husband enough to want to be with him again in the afterlife. Not all survivors are so devoted. If her eternal happiness includes him, I would be surprised if he won't be part of her afterlife. Finally, Churches, even the Catholic Church, serve God, they don't control God. God does not need permission from the church to do anything, and God does not need to follow the rules of any churches. Churches, to give them the benefit of the doubt, try to give us the best possible advice -- like financial planners. Like financial planners the church is not out to mislead us, but again like financial planners the church is not always right. She knows her husband, and if he was a good man to her, it is likely that he was a good man in the eyes of God, no matter what she read.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
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<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, October 21, 2007 11:45 AM
To: Don Benjamin
Subject: Re: got soul?

Looks like a great chapter. I'm just getting into it. Next week is Egypt. Thanks.

Had a good first class. A number of people are truly interested in knowing about the soul.

Let me get your pastoral advice on one, a recent widow. She is a visitor and says she

is interested in the subject because she wants "to find out where my husband is." LOL.

Seriously, here is the deal. Husband died a year ago. He was RC and she and the kids

cradle Episcopalians. Husband stuck with the RC church for years, then one day asked if he

could come to church with her, and then never looked back. Now, however she has read

somewhere (Razinger?) that if one is once baptized "in" the RC church, there's no escape.

Kinda like Hotel California Theology? So, this poor lady is worried her late husband

is stuck in Purgatory or worse trying to get out. The idea is that he is still under the

old rules? I told her that her husband was with God and that the Bible says that nothing

in heaven or earth can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, which seemed to

help. What I would like is some word from a rational Catholic that this whole issue is BS,

that one is not baptized "into" a denomination but "into" Christ, etc. Help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Don Benjamin

To: John W. Baker

Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2007 6:01 PM

Subject: RE: got soul?

Why, yes – Chapter 16 in Stones & Stories, of course.

Actually, John, I have a hard time keeping Egyptian psychology straight. So if in your reading, you find material that contradicts my reconstruction here, send it along. The problem right along in understanding Egypt's psychology is that it has consistently been view through the lens of Graeco-Roman culture, and its psychology.

Peace.

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From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2007 2:33 PM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: got soul?

I'm starting a five week Sunday School class on the soul. We will look at Jewish and Christian texts. Also the Man and His Ba. Got any other interesting things to suggest? I'm even doing Hasidic transmigration of the souls.

When my fave prof Sam Iwry was a young man in Lithuania he was living away from home as a student in a yeshiva in Vilnius. He decided to sneak away on a Friday night and have a date to a movie. He got caught. The problem was this involved buying a ticket on the Sabbath. The principal berated him. This would never have happened if you had not come from a secular home, etc. And the principal also accused him of cheating the theater owner. According to the Hasidic tradition, every Jew receives a second soul on the Sabbath. That meant Sam had bought only two tickets for three "people." So he had cheated the theater owner according to this guy! Ha ha ha ha.

jjwbaker@earthlink.net

10/16/2007 3:10 PM

Hi John,

You and Candy were on our minds Friday evening. We went to the Greek festival at Holy Trinity Cathedral here in Phoenix. Our neighbor's dad "Bedouin" BBQ's the lamb and it is exquisite – not tomatoes, just a blend of great herbs. We also tried a little souvlaki and some calamari. Brought home

a box of pastry, a loaf of bread, some fresh Greek sausage and a jar of dill weed seasoning. Yum!

We had the sausage for breakfast with some scrambled eggs seasoned with the dill and a little feta – Greek toast.

Remembered being together with the two of you in Houston last year.

Peace.

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<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University


From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Friday, October 12, 2007 6:27 PM
To: Don Benjamin
Subject: Re: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Yep, that's the one! Thanks.

----- Original Message -----

From: Don Benjamin
To: jjwbaker@earthlink.net
Sent: Friday, October 12, 2007 7:16 PM
Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Enjoy!

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Department of Religious Studies

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Friday, October 12, 2007 2:18 PM
To: Don Benjamin
Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Which one did the four of us eat at?

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Benjamin [mailto:don.benjamin@asu.edu]
Sent: Friday, October 12, 2007 9:33 AM
To: jjwbaker@earthlink.net
Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Hi John,

The family has two restaurants: Frenchie's and Villa Capri. We fantasize regularly!

Peace.

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<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2007 2:40 PM
To: Don Benjamin
Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

OK. Will do.

What was the name of the fantastic Italian restaurant in Clear Lake?
I believe the proprietors were from Capri???

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Benjamin [mailto:don.benjamin@asu.edu]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2007 11:51 AM
To: jjwbaker@earthlink.net
Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Hi John,

Thanks for the observation about the PSD section. I think I will try to expand the section with something on CAD, and smooth the transition. Now that you have raised the issue, I would like you to look at Chapter 1 where I Segway from pilgrimage to biblical geography. See if that is equally jarring.

Peace.

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Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2007 4:58 PM
To: Don Benjamin
Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Jolly good stuff. I have attached my edited version which tracks the changes. I hope I did it right. Not used to the process. I think this is very good, Don.
Let me know if you have questions about my changes!

I did feel quite a jump at the end going from Rawlinson (I thought he worked with “squeezes” rather than pencil and paper?) to the PSD and felt you got off-focus there. I’d try to keep it reigned in to the languages of the biblical world and maybe talk about the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary before the Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, though both of them leap over about a hundred years of the development of Assyriology as an academic endeavor. To me, the PSD just seemed an odd thing to leap to and focus on. It kind of works in terms of TV documentary style editing cut-aways, but somehow in a book it’s jarring?

I know nothing about Persian cuneiform, so I can’t vouch for the accuracy of that, but I think you’ve got everything else down (as edited). Fun.

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Benjamin [mailto:don.benjamin@asu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2007 1:32 PM
To: John W. Baker
Subject: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

Hi John,

Am revising the opening chapters of Stones & Stories today. Would you read chapter two for me, and be sure I have the language stuff straight?

You can download the file onto your computer, then open it in Windows 2003, turn on Track Changes (Tools) and use the Insert comment features and just have at it. How ever you do it, just return the file to me with your suggestions.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
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Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

Just realized I already got something screwed up for you. I am not all that reliable I'm afraid.

Hebrew and Aramaic are not sister-dialects of Canaanite, as I said. Hebrew and Phoenician are sister-dialects of Canaanite. Aramaic belongs to a separate division within Northwest Semitic. And Ugaritic is a third branch.

Northwest Semitic (I think) looks like this:

- I. Aramaic
- II. Canaanite
 - A. Phoenician
 - B. Hebrew
- III. Ugaritic

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Benjamin [mailto:don.benjamin@asu.edu]

Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2007 11:51 AM

To: jjwbaker@earthlink.net

Subject: RE: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible

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Peace.

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<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

Hi John (Baker),

Just working my way through your comments and suggestions. Thank you for your time. It is truly helpful.

I ordered both Gelb and Daniels through interlibrary loan.

Also, apropos of your observation that one Assyriologist will not talk to one another. Daniels says in his introduction to The World's Writing Systems:

"...writing systems per se, the marks that record the languages of the documents produced by the civilization, have absorbed the attention of only a very few linguists. No name for this field of study has even become widely accepted; "grammatology," proposed in the mid twentieth century, is better than most."

Ignace Gelb coined the term in: A Study of Writing (1952 University of Chicago). So "few" scholars, and he does not even name Gelb!

Also apropos of just how unreliable Wikipedia is. The only bio on Gelb is there, and it says:

"Gelb's work in Assyriology focused on publishing editions of [Akkadian](#) texts and a grammar and dictionary of Old Akkadian. He began the Chicago [Assyrian](#) Dictionary project in 1947 and remained as the editor of the project until his death."

Gelb wrote the unpublished Manual of Style for CAD, but Breasted was the founder and editor during Gelb's tenure at the Oriental Institute.

Keep the good suggestions coming.

10/12/2007 8:01 AM

Hi Leah (Iverson),

How wonderful to spend time with you and Carey. Thank you for making time for me during a very busy visit for you. I was flattered.

Since we talked I have been thinking about what you should do after Peace Corps. You have such energy, such intelligence, and now such wonderful experience. I want you to use all of that making a difference. The options we discussed as all possibilities: Foreign Service, the ambassador's staff, state department, etc.

Another idea I had was working with Janet Napolitano. As you know she is currently governor of AZ, but I think she will follow John McCain into the Senate. Immigration is a big issue for states like AZ now that Congress has defaulted in its responsibilities to reform our present laws. In fact, Napolitano is at the University of Notre Dame this week for a conference investigating what states can do, since the federal government is doing nothing. I think you ought to consider finding a way to work with her on immigration and follow her into the Congress. When you get a chance read about her on the internet, and see if you find her the kind of inspiring person with whom you would like to work. I have only met her personally once, but may be able to come up with a convincing letter of introduction for you if you want to pursue it.

Basically, I think you will do better finding a person, rather than just an organization, to partner with after Peace Corps. I give the same advice about graduate school. It is not the program, but the professor. So start looking in these other organizations we discussed for good people.

Enjoy these days.

10/9/2007 11:44 AM

Hi Gabby,

I would be happy to write letter for you. I will use the attached PDF for the Hispanic Convocation, and you can send me the law school forms.

I am revising the opening chapters of Stones & Stories today. Chapter 2 is attached so you can see what it looks like. When you get a chance to read it, send me any comments you have, especially about sections that are unclear.

Patrice and I cut brush over the weekend -- lots of stuff that the freeze killed during the winter. We have an SUV size at the curb for Heavy Trash pickup. When Patrice went for physical therapy on her knee yesterday, the therapist told her that the knee was a little tight. I am not surprised. She's going to the spa at the hospital today for a massage to see if they can relax the tension in the leg.

I am so proud of all who you are, and all you are doing.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

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Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

-----Original Message-----

From: Gabriela Traxler

Sent: Friday, October 05, 2007 4:30 PM

To: Don Benjamin

Subject: Website and Award Recommendation

Hi Dr. Benjamin,

I hope you are doing well! How's the book? Is Patrice up and running again?

I've been busy around campus. The registration deadline for the leadership conference closes tonight, and we received a mass influx yesterday and today - we're up to 275! Which is great because the breakeven point for the budget is 235. I've written the introduction and Catholic chapter of my thesis, but I'm working on revisions, and I've been writing the Jewish chapter this week. I think that I may have bitten off more than I can chew with my topic, because I don't feel like the argument is coming through the large quantities of information. My director, Susan Gray, has been helpful and encouraging though. My other classes are ok, no major crises yet. I'm ready for Thanksgiving so I can get a break from school!

I'm working on my applications for TFA and law school; if you are open to it, I would love to have you write a letter of recommendation for those packets. If you do not mind, please let me know and I will send along my resume and personal statement, along with any guidelines. The LSAC website is

confusing, I have to enter recommender's information before I can print off a letterhead that it supposed to be used. It's very bureaucratic.

Here is a link to a blog that is run by my friend in TFA. She puts quotes up on the board each day for her junior and senior level English students to respond to, some are funny, others are a reality check.

<http://bellwork.wordpress.com/>

I also wanted to ask you if you would please write a letter of recommendation for an award that I have been nominated for; I will be participating in the Hispanic Convocation during graduation week, and an advisor has nominated me for their undergraduate achievement award. He will be writing a letter for me, but the award application requires two letters. If you are interested, please let me know; I will attach the form so that you can look it over. My advisor will be filling out the forms and one letter, so I would just need a letter from you, no paperwork.

I realize that you are very busy and already write quite a bit on your own, so if you cannot write any of the above letters I completely understand. Shoot me an email when you get the chance and let me know how life is treating you!

Gabriela Traxler
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10/4/2007 9:18 AM

Good morning, Tom (Kraft)

vd<qoß-tm;d>a; (*‘adamat qodes* -- Exod 3:5; Lev 27:30; Deut 26:15; Dan 4:23; Acts 7:33; 2 Macc 9:14) refers to a sanctuary of Yahweh. Pilgrims travel to the sanctuary to stand “on holy ground” or “in the presence of Yahweh”. *Qados* or “holy” is the divine quality of Yahweh that distinguishes Yahweh from humans, hence “Holy, holy, holy” as a hymn acknowledging “You are divine, not human.”

Holiness in the world of the Bible is comparable to radioactivity today. Those who stand on holy ground are radically changed. They also become a danger to others. So Moses who has stood on holy ground before Yahweh while negotiating a covenant between Yahweh and Israel wears a veil – not horns – when he returns to the base of the mountain to report to the Hebrews. The veil prevents his holiness from harming them. Similarly today people who exercise power – like priests and police officers -- are uniformed. For example, police cannot approach your car without putting on their hats – a symbol of their power.

Peace.

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Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Tom Kraft [<mailto:tkraft@houstontech.org>]
Sent: Monday, August 20, 2007 7:51 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: meaning of "holy ground"

Hi Don,

Just a question on how the people in the world of the Bible would have “heard” the term or expression of “holy ground”. It seems in the burning bush story, one could interpret holy ground as meaning the “Manifest Presence of Yahweh”. The term “holy” sees to have been hijacked by the priesthood to mean that what ever they say is holy – is holy. And they suggest holiness is an attribute of varying magnitude. But my questions deals with the sense of the term holy when the OT stories would have been told. What would you say?
Tom

Tom Kraft, PhD
Director of Client Services
Houston Technology Center

832-498-4222 (Cell)
tkraft@houstontech.org

10/3/2007 10:53 AM

Hi Neil (Elliott),

Work on *Stones & Stories* is going well, but since I now have the opportunity to teach *The Bible & Archaeological Discoveries* (REL 384) in the Spring 2008 semester, I am not going to be ready to give you the manuscript until summer 2008. I want to use the draft as a text in that class, and work out some of the rough spots.

I previewed a couple chapters at the CBA meeting in August; one in the Feminist Hermeneutics group, and one as a research report. The response was good, even from some folks who do not give compliments freely. The most important result of talking the book, as you know, is to be sure people know what I am writing, so two of us do not end up writing the same book. I will do another chapter at the regional ASOR meeting in Pasadena CA March 2008.

Thanks for following up with Neal Bierling. I got a short message last spring after I sent him some chapters of *Stones & Stories*. He simply said he was off to Israel to dig. I have not heard from him since. He and his son do good work, so having professionals work on the illustrations is a good idea. Nonetheless, Neal may not be the person.

I regularly post drafts of *Stones & Stories* on my website, so you can see where things are when you need to look.

Thanks for your continuing help with this project.

From: Bob [mailto:bobmcnair2@socal.rr.com]

Sent: Monday, October 01, 2007 3:53 PM

To: Don Benjamin

Cc: Loretta Dorsett

Subject: MCNAIR MY HEALTH

SENDING THIS MESSAGE TO BOTH OF YOU SINCE I HAVE KNOWN YOU BOTH SO LONG AND HAVE BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE . IT APPEARS I HAVE PARKINSON DIS. THIS WEEKEND WE WERE AT A WEEDING AND MY PRESENT HIKING BUDDY SAID ARE WE GOING TO SEQUOIAS IN OCTOBER . NOT UNLESS I GET 100 % BETTER . TRYING TO GET BACK TO NEUROLOGIST TO GET BETTER MED. LOTS OF MEDS ARE AVAILABLE . JUST PRAY FOR ME . LIFE WITHOUT THE SIERRA'S IS HARD ON ME BOB . JEFF HAD TO HELP ME SO I DIDN'T FALL

Hi Bob (McNair),

What heavy news! And what a lot you have to deal with. You have our prayers. I wish I could send you patience, memories of all those wonderful days in the high country, the sound of glacier water crossing the trail, the satellites crossing from one side to the other of the Kern Canyon as we lay in our bags, “hot tubbing” along the Kern River, How much I owe you... how much I wish I could give you.

Peace.

9/25/2007 9:44 AM

Hi Dan (Smith-Christopher),

While I was at the CBA meeting in August at Santa Clara University, I treated myself to your Jonah, Jesus and other Good Coyotes. What a nice piece. Good solid biblical studies; clear strong commitment to social justice. Thank you for writing it.

I soldiered in the civil right movement in DC from the March on Washington to the assassinations and the building of Resurrection City on the Mall. Then I moved to LA and worked in South Central for ten years while I was working on my PHD at Claremont. The link between biblical studies and social justice has always been important to me.

Recently here at ASU we interviews Susanna Heschel for the chair of Jewish Studies. I told her that although I had never met her father, he was an important influence in my life. When I was doing an MA in Semitic languages at the Catholic University of America, and the civil right movement was raging, I was torn between making a commitment to the intellectual life, or to the civil rights movement. The faculty was strongly opposed to any student’s involvement is anything outside school. When Abraham Heschel went to Selma it gave me permission to combine my work as a scholar with my commitment to social justice. I have always been grateful to that great man for the inspiration her provided to me at the bridge.

Peace.

Hi Don.

What a nice note, thank you so much.

You have seen some real history, brother!

Did you ever know my teacher, Rabbi Steven Scharzschild (of blessed memory?). He's been gone many years now, but he was my Rebbe on learning about the world of left-wing Judaism.

Susanna Heschel would be quite a coup for you!! I have admired her work for some time...and of course, she is Civil Rights royalty, as you indicate.

My late brother, who was a UCC Minister, was a Freedom Rider in the mid-60s who bussed from Luther Seminary in Chicago to Columbia, Miss. To register voters. I wish I had a photo of him! I have often thought of taking my son, aged 14 now, to Chicago, and riding a bus down to Miss to reproduce my late brother's journey. It would be a good trip.

I have also appreciated your good work, so your kind note is even more appreciated.

Take care,

Daniel

9/18/2007 8:07 AM

Hi Barbara (Reid),

Hope the semester has started well for you. I was fortunate enough to get three classes this semester. The university has been seriously reducing funds for the department. Three isn't four – my usual load – but I continue to enjoy the classroom greatly. I have somewhat over 100 students in all: Intro to Hebrew Bible (The Old Testament Story, an introduction); Ritual, Symbol and Myth (an intro to religious studies using social sciences), and Religion in America. In the spring I have two classes scheduled: Archaeology and the Bible, and Women in the Bible. Hope to have Stones and Stories ready by class time. Thanks again for letting me preview it at the CBA.

Shawn Carruth and I were talking at SCU about how she uses Eleanor Ferris Beach, The Jezebel Letters: religion and politics in Ninth-Century Israel (2005) to introduce her students to feminist hermeneutics. I know that there was interest in devoting the entire 2008 meeting to the NT project, but I also think it would be exciting to have Shawn and Ellie discuss their mutual projects with us. Ellie and I were in graduate school together at the Claremont Graduate University, and I would be happy to work with you on arrangements.

The Jezebel Letters is part of an on-going study that Ellie has done with the Samaria ivories – delicately carved ivory furniture inlays – which represent,

among other interesting designs – the “woman at the window” motif. In her book Jezebel writes her father, her daughters –the letters are fictional, but based on solid scholarship; the letters are mixed with ancient Near Eastern texts and biblical passages. The result is a fascinating window, and I think quite reliable reconstruction, into a significant period through the eyes of a powerful woman

9/9/10/2007 5:46:58 AM

Hi Jeff (Proctor-Murphy),

Hope the islands were good to you.

Patrice got her release from the surgeon to go back to work next Monday. So we took the weekend off and went to Flag for a little outdoors time, and cooler weather. It was wonderful. It was our first time at the Arboretum which works with native plants and habitats, and some really fascinating presentations by volunteers who rehabilitate Arizona’s raptors -- owls, hawks, falcons. There was also a classic car show in town. Some three hundred cars! Not that I would spend two years of my life and \$80, 000 restoring a car, but it is certainly interesting to talk with people who do. I am sure they are scandalized at people like me who barely manages to get his truck to the car wash once a month.

Just finished reading Daniel Smith-Christopher’s Jonah, Jesus, and Other Good Coyotes (2007). I picked up my copy at the Catholic Biblical Association annual meeting in Santa Clara last month. Dan is a friend. He gave me a nice blurb for OTS (I was sorry that Brueggemann’s foreword to this book was not stronger.) He argues that “...peacemaking begins with risking borders and crossing them (177).” Sounds like a mission statement for Asbury! Put it on your list and when you get to reading it, I would enjoy talking with you about it.

Peace.

7/2007 6:33 AM

“Paul and Crossing Borders: the Christian mandate to the nations” (Smith-Christopher 2007: 137-150)

The two central arguments of Paul: mission and dialogue (138).

9/3/2007

Hi Tex (Sample),

Thanks for Isaiah, yesterday! Love that part of the book.

Your sermon on remembering gratefully the folks who made the world where you live has stayed with me all day. Your meditation about “Who made these things?” was wonderful. One of my strategies during bad sermons is to study the inside of the sanctuary – thinking about the carpenters, masons, dry wall hangers, carpet layers, upholsterers who build this place where I have come to pray.

I also enjoyed your Johnny Paycheck notice. Years ago I was the homilist on Ash Wednesday. The reading is from Joel 2:12-18: “...return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning”. I started by playing Johnny’s “Outlaw’s Prayer”:

The Outlaw's Prayer

Written by Billy Sherrill and Glenn Sutton.

(© Peer Music / Sherrill Music.)

From "Armed and Crazy", © 1979, Epic.

You know, I worked the Big Packet show in Fort Worth, Saturday night,
We had all day Sunday to rest and relax, before I caught another flight.
So I decided to walk down town an' get myself a little fresh air.
Before long, I found myself in front of a big church on the corner of the square.
Boy, I could hear that singin' way out in the street, sure was a beautiful sound.
So I just walked up the steps an' opened the door an' started to go inside an' sit down.
But before I could, a young man walked over to me an said: "Excuse me, Sir,
"But I can't let you in with that big black hat, those jeans, that beard an' long hair.
So I just left, went back outside, sat down on that kerbing, an I thought to myself:
That's the house of the Lord. That guy's got the hell of a nerve.
Tellin' me I can't worship anywhere I please.
So right there, in front of that Church, I just knelt down on my knees.
I said: "Lord, I know I don't look like much, but I didn't think you'd mind.
"I just wanted to be with your people, Lord: it's been a long time.
"A while ago, a saw a wino over there in the alley, all bent over in tears,
"An' I thought how one stained glass window, from this Church, would feed his family for
years."
"Then there's those fine cars parked outside: too many for me to count.
"Made me think how people walked for days to hear your sermon on the mount.
"Then there's those fine ladies in the choir, Lord, singin' like they really love it.
"Hell, last night, they were dancin' on the front row of my show: drinkin' beer, screamin: 'Sing
Shove It.'
"You know, even John the Baptist wouldn't be welcome in this place,
"With his coat made of Camel hair an' sandals on his feet an' a long beard on his face.
"You know, Lord, when you come back to get your children, an' take 'em beyond the clouds,
"To live forever in Heaven with you: well, I'd sure hate to be in this crowd.
"You know, Lord, I'm not perfect; some even call me no count.
"But I'll tell you: I believe a man is judged by what's in his heart, not what's in his bank
account.
"So if this is what religion is: a big car, a suit an' a tie,
"Then I might as well forget it Lord, 'cause I can't qualify.

"Oh, by the way, Lord, right before they kicked me out, didn't I see a picture of you?
"With sandals an' a beard. Believe you had long hair too."
"Well, this is Paycheck, signing off.
"I'll be seein' you Lord, I hope."

I played on the concept of being a hypocrite – Christians, in fact, try to be something that they are not, especially during Lent. There is no sin in trying to be something we are not; the sin is thinking that we are who we are trying to be.

I did not notice until I sat down that on a huge screen behind me was a full head shot of the bishop! At the beginning of mass there was a recorded message from him that the media operator linked to his picture and then left his excellency there as I played Johnny! Ah.... Sweet coincidence.

8/18/2007 5:28 AM

Born into Brothels (2004) is an Oscar-winning documentary is a portrait of several unforgettable children who live in Calcutta's red-light district, where their mothers work as prostitutes. Spurred by the kids' fascination with her camera, [Zana Briski](#), a photographer documenting life in the brothels, decides to teach them photography. As they begin to look at and record their world through new eyes, the kids awaken to their own talents and sense of worth.

8/16/2007 10:22 AM

When I say Paul is thinking of Psalm 8, I mean the LXX of Psalm 8, of course. And I left out that Psalm 8 states the status of humans in the created order:

[You] make them a little less than the heavenly beings?
You grant mankind **honor** and **majesty**; [LXX doxê kai timê estephanosas auton = you've crowned him...]
you appoint them to rule over your creation;
you have placed everything under their **authority**, [LXX katestêsas auton epi ta erga...= set him above
including all the sheep and cattle, as well as the wild animals, and MT has *tamshilehu* = made to rule over]
the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea and everything that moves through the currents of the seas.

The bolded words esp. in the LXX are I think what he has in mind when he says a woman should (or maybe deserves!) to have **exousia**

on her head on account of (when dealing with)
the angels / heavenly beings.

----- Original Message -----

From: John W. Baker

To: Don C. Benjamin

Sent: Thursday, August 16, 2007 8:49 AM

Subject: bareheadedness

I think I've gotten closer to understanding I Corinthians 11:10, the verse about the need for women to have their heads covered in church:

For this reason a woman should have authority [exousia] on her head because of the angels [dia tous aggelous].

Feminist objections aside, the weird part to me is "because of the angels."

The key, I think, is to see it against the background of Psalms 8. The MT has *elohim* in verse 6:

For you have made him little less than elohim

The RSV translates *elohim* as "God."

For you have made him little less than God.

But the LXX reads *aggelous*:

For you have made him little less than the angels / divine messengers

Back to Corinthians. The context of 10:11 is that Paul is talking about the natural order in which men rank above women, I suppose in an ontological sense,

i.e., by creation. Yet, women are on a par with men in relation to the rest of the created order, and they have the same relation as men vis-a-vis angels. This is where Paul is thinking of Psalms 8, I believe.

Psalms 8 is in the voice of the angels, who are complaining to God about humans.

Why do you care about humans? Why have you given them such an exalted status?

I believe in Jewish tradition the angels did not know how to reproduce but are immortal, and this difference is the basis of some jealousy on the part of the angels.

Humans know how to reproduce but are not immortal, so we are less than angels. In the Quran, the fallen angel Iblis is cast down because of his refusal to acknowledge man.

The bottom line is that because women were created in a different manner than men, it is important when dealing with the angels in prayer (angels are prayer-carriers in Jewish thought) that women wear a sign indicating that they are equal to men in terms of their authority (exousia) or status.

So why a head-covering or veil? This is the difference between the Eastern and Western perspectives. As Michael Prokurat once taught me, in the East what is holy is covered or hidden, and it is understood that this is the way things are in this world. Paul even explains that a woman's long hair is her "glory." By being covered, it is especially marked as holy. So, covering her hair emphasizes her glory / holiness / status, rather than detracting from it. And this is done so (status-conscious) angels will acknowledge her authority and cooperate by carrying her prayers to God. [I believe many Jewish women now wear wigs in the synagogue although some are now taking to the tallis with objection from conservative rabbis]

Does this make sense to you?

Hi John,

Here's what I do with Paul.

I consider the verse a reflection of a shaman world view. This world view assumes that both human and spirits share space on the human plane. Spirits who travel from the divine plane through the human plane are given an assigned channel. Spirits cannot deviate from the channel, so if a human inadvertently intersects a spirit, the spirit gets trapped inside the human. In their struggle to free themselves from the humans, spirits cause humans to miscarry, to have migraines, loose appetite, etc. Spirits are also lured out of their channels by a good meal and a good looking woman. When spirits stop to eat or make love, they raise a "Star Trek" shield around themselves. Any human trying to penetrate the shield dies. So the spirit drinking from the well of Jericho or eating from the prophets' stew in the Stories of Elisha, and the

spirit making love to Sarah in the Stories of Tobit kill humans who interrupt them. Even the legal husbands of Sarah cannot make love with her while a spirit is making love with her.

Shamans generally coax the spirits out. For example, in the stories of Elisha coaxes the spirit with salt or with pastry. The spirit in the pot would rather have a pastry than stew, so it leaves the stew and enjoys the pastry, and the prophets can sit down to their meal.

In my opinion the “angels” in Paul are spirits channeling the human plane. Paul suggests camouflaging childbearing women under veils so that these spirits will not be tempted to leave their channels and make love to these women, putting them and their husbands at risk.

Now Paul is no shaman, and would find my explanation outrageous. His world view is Hellenistic. Nonetheless, I think he is using this shaman tradition like a church going Christian would carry a rabbit’s foot.

On the veils. Vic Matthews and I in Social World of Ancient Israel deal with the veil in the Story of Tamar and Judah. In Mesopotamia the veil is the uniform of a woman of a household, a woman of honor. Liminal women in Mesopotamia – like sex workers – are forbidden under penalty of death from wearing a veil. They cannot disguise themselves as women of honor. I think that same tradition applies in Syria-Palestine; Vic does not. I think Tamar wears a veil because she is functioning as a priest; Vic thinks the tradition in Syria-Palestine is the opposite of Mesopotamia, so prostitutes wear veils, mothers of households heads are bare. I think he is wrong – the woman in the Song of Solomon, for example, is arrested and tortured for roaming the streets without a veil. Curiously the Inca had a similar system of identification. Each province of the empire wore a specific kind of hat – like the derby still worn by indigenous women in Peru today. Anyone out without their identifying hat was put to death.

Certainly the veil came into Judaism – the wigs -- Christianity – nuns --, and Islam – the burka – originally as the uniform of a woman of honor, not as a sign of subjugation.

Enjoy!

8/12/2007 7:14 AM

The 37-Year-Old Version

Joel Schwartzberg

To my naive 37-year-old eyes, my parents' condominium was just a place to

sleep while my wife and I, separated after 10 years of marriage, "figured things out." I had my own room, which was cluttered with a museum's worth of cheaply framed photos. Wherever I turned, I saw myself - at my bar mitzvah, my senior prom, my high-school graduation. It was hard to resist the feeling that on some level I belonged there.

But to my parents, my presence endowed their home with an exciting purpose: to foster a child who hadn't needed fostering since 1986, the last year I lived in their house. I'd been a traditionally nerdy Jewish kid, programmed to please and vastly unschooled in the language of emotion. Bypassing any made-for-TV teenage rebellions, I sailed through my adolescence like a Stepford Son.

Twenty years later, as I dressed for work each weekday morning, my mother interrogated me. She asked when I needed to leave, what I wanted for breakfast, if I wanted one of my dad's multivitamins, when I would return and what effect all this would have on the chicken dinner she was planning to prepare in her new pressure cooker. And then she would ask, "What's going on with ... you know?" She couldn't come right out and say the word "separation," because talking about feelings in my family is like talking about extraterrestrial life - entirely hypothetical.

"Are you two getting back together?" she asked.

"I don't know," I said. This was not an answer she understood.

To their credit, my parents valiantly found solutions to their interpretation of my problems. When I talked about the high price of lunch, they eagerly bought me a pound of turkey. When they saw my clothes strewn about, they got me a wicker hamper. They washed my whites and colors - together - and dropped my work shirts off at the cleaners. They cleared space on shelves and collected my spare change in a cup. They gave me the guest bathroom and half the medicine cabinet. Within a few weeks, the meat went bad, my toothbrush disappeared and my dad was wearing my white socks, now somewhat pink.

On the evenings I couldn't invent a reason to stay out late, my mother would ask hopefully if I wanted to watch something "on tape." In my family, we share an addiction to other people's drama, perhaps to compensate for burying our own, and my mom has no fewer than three VCRs working day and night to support her habit. She and I would sit and stare at cop-and-lawyer shows until I couldn't tell one perp from another. One evening, halfway through "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit," she hinted about my dad's coming birthday.

"Your point being?" I teased her.

"Be nice," she said. But her awkward way of laughing it off made me regret my remark. I could see that I was returning their assertive caretaking with outright

resentment, but somehow I couldn't help myself.

A week later, I stayed out late for an after-work party and took the last train home, sneaking back into their condo like a burglar. I had already rationalized going to work late and turned off the alarm. Around 7 the next morning, my dad knocked.

"Do you need to get up?" he mumbled through the door. "No, it's O.K.," I said, my voice muffled by the pillow.

Less than 15 minutes later, my mother threw open the door. "Oh my Gah-ahd!" she exclaimed. "You're going to be late!" "I told Dad it's O.K.! Didn't he tell you? It's O.K. - what's wrong with you?!"

She paused while I dug my face farther into the pillow, clutching for every last moment of sleep in the most dramatic manner.

"So ... ," she asked. "What time do you have to be there?" A few long seconds passed before I heard the door finally shut.

We were all stuck in the same bad sitcom together, re-enacting old roles that we'd never explored to full potential. I was the defiant teenager I'd never been. They became the intrusive parents they'd never been. To make matters worse, the bedroom was feeling smaller by the hour, and the photos would not shut up.

Two months after I moved into their condo, I packed while they slept and left with as much as I could jam into my Sentra. But I realize now that it wasn't their fault; they did the best they could. It was just time for me to grow up, take some responsibility and leave home for good ([NYTimes Magazine](#) August 12, 2007)

Joel Schwartzberg is senior new-media producer for the television program "NOW" on PBS. He also writes a blog about New Jersey life for [The New Jersey Star Ledger](#).

Moe Fishman died August 6, 2007. He was 92. He fought and was wounded in the war against Franco with the Lincoln Brigade.

During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), 2,800 American volunteers took up arms to defend the Spanish Republic against a military rebellion led by General Franco and aided by Hitler and Mussolini. To the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, which fought from 1937 through 1938, the defense of the Republic represented

the last hope of stopping the spread of international fascism. The Lincolns fought alongside approximately 35,000 anti-fascists from fifty-two countries who, like themselves, were organized under the aegis of the Comintern, and who also sought to "make Madrid the tomb of fascism." In keeping with Popular Front culture, the Americans named their units the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, the George Washington Battalion, and the John Brown Battery. Together with the British, Irish, Canadian, and other nationals they formed the Fifteenth International Brigade. ("Lincoln Brigade" is a misnomer originating with an American support organization, Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.) One hundred twenty-five American men and women also served with the American Medical Bureau as nurses, doctors, technicians, and ambulance drivers.

The conviction that made volunteering for a war against fascism possible was born from the economic calamity and political turmoil of the 1930s. Like many during the Great Depression, the young volunteers had an experience of deprivation and injustice that led them to join the burgeoning student, unemployed, union, and cultural movements that were influenced by the Communist Party (CP) and other Left organizations. Involvement in these groups exposed them to a Marxist and internationalist perspective and, with their successes in galvanizing people to conscious, political action, gave rise to a revolutionary élan.

American radicalism was spurred by the appearance of pro-fascist groups like the Liberty League, and the expansion of fascism abroad. With Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Hitler's ascendance in 1933, and Italy's assault on Ethiopia in 1934--all accomplished without hindrance from the governments of the West--the CP responded with the coalition-building strategy of the Popular Front, attracting thousands of aroused citizens directly into its ranks or into "front" organizations. When four right-wing Spanish generals, with German and Italian support, attacked the legally elected government on July 19, 1936, a desire to confront fascism in Spain swept through the progressive communities in Europe and the Americas. Within weeks, militant German, French, and Italian anti-fascists were fighting in Madrid. By January 1937, despite a State Department prohibition against travel to Spain, Americans were crossing the Pyrenees.

The Lincolns came from all walks of life, all regions of the country, and included seamen, students, the unemployed, miners, fur workers, lumberjacks, teachers, salesmen, athletes, dancers, and artists. They established the first racially integrated military unit in U.S. history and were the first to be led by a black commander. At least 60 percent were members of the Young Communist League or CP. "Wobblies" (members of the Industrial Workers of the World or "IWW"), socialists, and the unaffiliated also joined. The Socialists formed their

own [Eugene] Debs Column for Spain, but open recruitment brought on government suppression.

The reaction of Western governments to the war was ambivalent and duplicitous. They agreed to a nonintervention pact and the United States embargoed aid to the Spanish belligerents, policies intended to de-escalate the war but whose selective enforcement undermined the Republic. While Germany and Italy supplied Franco with troops, tanks, submarines, and a modernized air force (the first to bomb open cities, most notably Guernica), the nonintervention policy only prevented arms from reaching the Republic. General Motors, Texaco, and other American corporations further assisted Franco with trucks and fuel. The Soviet Union and Mexico were the only governments to sell armaments to the Republic, although much of them were impounded at the French border. Throughout the war, a vociferous political and cultural movement in America rallied to the Republic by raising money for medical aid and demanding an end to the embargo. Such participants as Albert Einstein, Dorothy Parker, Gene Kelly, Paul Robeson, Helen Keller, A. Philip Randolph, and Gypsy Rose Lee reflected the wide base of support for the Republican cause.

Self-motivated and ideological, the Lincolns attempted to create an egalitarian "people's army"; officers were distinguished only by small bars on their berets and in some cases rank-and-file soldiers elected their own officers. Traditional military protocol was shunned, although not always successfully. A political commissar explained the politics of the war to the volunteers and tended to their needs and morale. The Lincoln Brigade helped ease the pressure on Madrid, giving the Republic time to train and organize its own popular army. The subject of respectful news reports by such writers as Ernest Hemingway, Herbert Matthews, [Martha Gellhorn](#), and Lillian Hellman, the brigade helped strengthen anti-fascist opinion in the United States. Yet the Lincolns and the Republican military, fighting with inadequate weaponry, could not withstand the forces allied against them. By the end, the Lincolns had lost nearly 750 men and sustained a casualty rate higher than that suffered by Americans in World War II. Few escaped injury. In November 1938, as a last attempt to pressure Hitler and Mussolini into repatriating their troops, Spanish prime minister Juan Negrin ordered the withdrawal of the International Brigades. The Axis coalition refused to follow suit and Madrid fell in March 1939.

The Lincolns returned home as heroes of the anti-fascist cause but enjoyed no official recognition of their deed. Many Lincolns soon aroused bitterness within sectors of the Left when, with the signing of the Hitler-Stalin nonaggression pact in 1939, they supported the CP's call for the United States to stay out of

WWII. Once the United States and the Soviet Union entered the war, however, many of the veterans enlisted in the armed forces or served with the merchant marine. In a foreshadowing of the McCarthy period, the armed forces designated the Lincolns "premature antifascists" and confined them to their bases. Many successfully protested and were allowed to see action. Among the core agents of the Office of Strategic Services were Lincoln veterans whose contacts with the European partisans, forged in Spain, were key to OSS missions.

In the 1950s most veterans, whether Communist or not, were harassed or forced out of their jobs by the FBI. Communist Lincolns in particular were hit hard by the repressive Subversive Activities Control Board, the Smith Act, and state sedition laws, although over time all but a few convictions were overturned. In the 1950s and 1960s the majority of Lincoln veterans quit the CP but continued to be active on the Left. Notwithstanding its exclusion from American textbooks, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade commands attention as a unique example of prescient, radical, and selfless action in the cause of international freedom.

--written by Sam Sills

Tsotsi

This Oscar-winning Best Foreign Language film shows that no soul is too far gone from being reformed. After shooting a woman and driving off in her car, Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae), a ruthless thug, is surprised to discover he isn't alone, kept company by a crying infant in the backseat. He grudgingly takes the child home, and through his efforts to care for the tyke, Tsotsi slowly rediscovers his compassion, self-respect and capacity to love.

8/10/2007 8:17 AM

Hi Vic,

What a pleasant surprise to receive your mail, and to see where you are with Kino Hermasillo.

I know talking with Jack Welsh may seem like the right thing to do, but as I said at Easter, I think you need to let your attorneys do the talking with the Carmelites and when those issues are resolved, then you can sit down with them again.

Also, I would not be in a hurry to incardinate. You need concrete commitments from the bishop to the center, and you need to work with him for a few years before you join. What you need from him is faculties and money.

I think the project needs sites on both side of the border. El Centro de Kino por Sonora y Arizona!

8/9/2007 5:03 PM

Hi Tatha (Wiley),

Thank you for your copy of Paul and Empire. Really a nice and helpful piece.

A question I frequently ask my students in my Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament classes is: "How does the Christian New Testament tell these stories?" The Book of Daniel, for me, is the inspiration for both the Book of Revelation and Paul. Paul achieves the integration of Semitic Christianity into a Hellenistic world, which the Book of Daniel attempts, but fails to achieve.

In Old Testament Story, an introduction in my chapter on the book of Daniel, I describe Hellenism and compare it with the Semitic worldview of ancient Israel and first century Judaism. Some of the components that link to your work are, for example, the importance of the bath. For Hellenists God's most perfect creation is the male body. Hence grooming that body in the bath is a religious obligation for the Roman elite. The baths are a retreat center in the Hellenistic world.

Another aspect of the pax Romana was the use of crucifixion as a civics lesson. The crucified die of asphyxiation, and the death takes time and is noisy. The crucified were everywhere – along the roads, in the markets. It was a grim reminder that colonials had only two choices – obedience or death.

I also assumed that the Romans spoke koine Greek in public throughout the provinces, and that Latin was used only in Roman households.

Also, as I understand the tradition history of the passion stories, it is not clear that the Romans executed Jesus. The stories preserve a mix of accusations – 1) one of his disciples betrayed Jesus; 2) the Judean elders handed Jesus over

to the Romans, and 3) Pontius Pilate even overruled his wife's advice and condemned Jesus to death.

I found your difference in how Paul is remembered helpful. Yet from reading Carolyn Osiek's work on first century households, Paul's success is, in great part, due to the leadership of women, who invite Paul there to preach. Therefore, Paul as a subordinator of women is not an uncontested NT tradition.

Finally, the work that Matthias Klinghardt and others have done on fellowship meals in Hellenic culture is in contrast to your argument that Paul supports a structured worldview. Hellenistic men dined with their social group. Women did not dine with men. Slaves did not dine with their masters. Jesus, and subsequently Paul, challenged that social institution of the segregated meal by establishing the Eucharist as an open meal.

Just thoughts that your piece inspired. Good luck as you continue to work on it, and thanks again for all you contribute every year to the Feminist Hermeneutics Task Force.

Don,

Good to hear from you. So, you're at ASU. We were there in 1962 when Dan was finishing his MS. That's the same year that Albright delivered his lecture, "Archaeology, Historical Analogy, and Biblical Tradition." Since that was way before my time here at Rice, I haven't a clue about Nielsen's relationship with him.

I occasionally see NCN walking around the Village and on campus but not lately. My guess is that they still spend the summers in Austria. I've corresponded with him via email. You can reach him at niels@rice.edu. His phone number remains the same.

Our eldest son, Scott, relocated to Las Vegas last year because of his job. So, Dan and I spend a lot of air time going to see them and the 2 granddaughters (3.5 yrs. and 10.5 mos.).

Religious Studies finally relocated to a new building about 6 years ago. We share it with History, Philosophy, and the Dean's office. We're on the second floor and no longer trucking up 4 flights of stairs in Lovett Hall. We share the floor with Philosophy.

Hi Sylvia,

Yes, I moved to Phoenix in 1997 to work for the Catholic Diocese as the dean of the Kino Institute of Theology for the laity. It was exciting work. About 25 full time faculty, programs in theology, biblical studies, spirituality and church leadership. We taught in both English and Spanish in Phoenix and all the major cities north -- Prescott, Kingman, Lake Havasu, Flagstaff, Sedona. I worked there almost five years.

Joel Gereboff who chairs religious studies at ASU had come by the school to welcome me to AZ, and we so enjoyed each others company that when he got up to leave he said: "If you ever miss teaching undergraduates, I would love to have you teach a course for us." I told him: "I'll start tomorrow."

Once I left Kino, I have been teaching for ASU, and enjoying it.

I talked with Niels this AM. He and Erika did not go to Austria for the first year ever. They have two grandbabies, and one has health issues, so he and Erika are trying to nurse him to good health. It was wonderful to hear his voice.

He and Erika visited Patrice and me in 2001, but I really have not talked with him since.

His word on Albright was that he knew he was an important scholar. Worked hard to get him to commit to the Rockwell Lectures. The great man was not good at returning calls. Although Albright was the son of Methodist missionary parents, his wife was Catholic, or as Niels put it "...prickly Catholic." She went straight to the Catholic Student Center to get a "read" on the department....

Enjoy these last days of summer.

Peace.

7/29/2007 5:45 PM

"Blessed to be a Blessing" Rev. Jeff Procter-Murphy.

7/27/2007 12:50 PM

Hi Vic (Matthews)

I did not congratulate you on getting your mss to Eerdmans. You are so wonderfully productive. What's the next project?

I just finished Brian's piece on the Taanak stand. What good work he does. I hope you encouraged him to present this paper or to submit it for publication. It is quality. I was happy to see that he acknowledge Lemoyne's work on these stands. How is he doing physically?

Patrice is having a hard day. Perhaps the physical therapy yesterday was too aggressive. He ankle is swollen today. We are going to do session one of PT in about an hour.

Our love to you and Carol.

Hi Dave and Mitzi (Shinen) – a couple who have worked for 50 years with the Wycliff foundation translating the Bible into an Inuit language in Alaska – we met in Honolulu at the Royal Chapel,

You are home now in beautiful Alaska!

Patrice had knee replacement surgery on Monday, but she is home now and we are working together on the physical therapy.

I am finishing a paper to present at the Catholic Biblical Association annual meeting at the University of Santa Clara next week. It is an excerpt from my work in progress: Stone & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible.

Classes resume for me on August 20.

7/24/2007 12:06 PM

Hi John (Baker),

Glad you enjoyed the time away. We have moved into the monsoon season here in the desert – dew point 50+! So it is now humid, and we have storms every afternoon – sometimes rain, but in Phoenix more often dust.

When Hans Kung was teaching at Rice he said that the most common mistake that Americans make in interfaith dialogue is to say things like: We are all children of the same God. Most cultures are not so sanguine. They consider their divine patrons to be unique. Therefore, they are shocked that Americans

have so little respect for their God. For Kung the approach that works is to say, “ Tell me about your God, and I will tell you about my God.”

Peace.

Hi Tom (Kraft),

I would agree that the title: “first born” identifies the heir of the household, not the first in birth order, and, as heir, would have the responsibilities that you describe.

You concerns about Yahweh killing these Egyptians however is inconsistent with the biblical view of Yahweh as the defender of the Hebrews – as the divine patron who kills their enemies. As I argue in OTS the plagues are credible – they reflect things that actually happen in Egypt. What is artistic about them is that they are telescoped into a rapid series of attacks on Egypt, and that they are summoned and dismissed. Widespread death of the newborn is common enough, and the Plagues Stories describes it as an act of Yahweh. The biblical world view is one of primary causality. If it happens, good or bad, Yahweh makes it happen. We are a culture of second causality. We want to know that these children perished because of an epidemic, SIDS, etc. The biblical world view is also committed to protecting the power of Yahweh. If it happened, Yahweh and only Yahweh makes it happen. We, in contrast, protect the goodness of God. To keep God from killing humans we create a devil. That works for us, but for the Hebrews the devil would mean that there are parts of creation that are not in the control of Yahweh, and there are events that take place that Yahweh does not cause, which is completely unacceptable.

Hope this helps.

7/23/2007 8:21 AM

Patrice went into surgery promptly at 8 AM; Stearns is her anesthesiologist; Firestone is her surgeon.

Chris just called. She is so thoughtful. She wanted to know if Patrice was scared. I said “No”. She has such pain in the knee that she is ready to have it replaced.

Chris also told me an interesting story. She kept Mom’s rosary, keeps it on her night stand. She holds it when she is falling asleep. It makes her feel like Mom is there.

Last night as Patrice was packing for the hospital, she came out with tears in her eyes. When she opened her sock drawer, there was one of Frances' little white socks that she used to wear to keep her feet warm at night. Just a sign that she was with us.

Firestone came out about 9:10AM. The surgery went well, and he felt she would be fine in a week or two. She is now in recovery.

Calls:

Dianne
Kim & Michael

Hen to Chuck for an knee replacement: Chuck: Having trouble with your knee? Hen: Yep, all three. Three? Yep. My left knee, my right knee, and my wee-nee!

Paul
Chris
Carol
Gayle
Maria

Did not even think of the iPod until Maria mentioned it.
Jim and Laurie
Erin
Burak and Leah
Bob & Marie Vano

Patrice is in 5306.

Very uncomfortable. Itching from spinal. First oral benedril, then IV (3:30PM). Nausia. Returning blood from leaking wound returned to her through IV.

O²= 94+
150
100
96

Harry Potter and the Deadly Hallows ...offers a happy ending that feels well earned and based in the central values of the series: courage, loyalty, sacrifice.

Dumbledore doesn't come back to life. But as Harry learns some troubling facts about his mentor's past, he also learns more about himself and is guided to his destiny by a relationship that outlasts death itself.

This becomes the most powerful theme of all in a series that, though imperfect, bridges the gap between childlike wonder and the wounds and grief of maturity.

7/22/2007 8:44 AM

Call Instruction Support and ask them to sync my fall courses.

“Mostly Martha” by German director Sandra Nettelbeck whips up this tragicomic tale about an uptight professional chef who finds her world turned upside down when she takes in her newly orphaned niece, Lina (Maxime Foerste). Martina Gedeck stars as Martha, whose obsession with precision gourmet cooking extends to discussing recipes with her bewildered therapist (August Zirner) and verbally attacking anyone at the restaurant who attempts to send her food back. Great flick.

7/20/2007 4:21 PM

Posted Rate of Pay \$15,250-\$19,830/annually

20 hours a week Duties and Responsibilities The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Political Science department seeks a Specialist. Provides and interprets program procedures and policies for students; directs students to appropriate personnel for further program guidance; ensures websites and other program information publications are updated and correct; serves as a liaison between the students and the internship coordinator in answering

routine questions and resolving routine problems; initiates, develops and sustains strong positive relations with department administrators and ASU faculty screening committee and staff from the Arizona Legislature, Governor's Office, Supreme Court and other State agencies; reviews student internship/program applications for eligibility; assists students in registering for appropriate internship credit; answers inquiries concerning admission, registration and graduation issues; develops and maintains tracking system (database or spreadsheet) for applicants and interns; assists in development of recruitment and informational materials for programs; reviews program policies and procedures and makes recommendations for revisions; plans and schedules multiple meetings, events and interviews with students, faculty, legislative and government staff; creates and provides reports as needed.

DAYS AND SCHEDULE: Monday-Friday 8:00AM-12:00PM preferred but negotiable Minimum Qualifications Bachelor's degree in a field appropriate to the area of assignment and three (3) years of related experience; OR, Seven (7) years of related experience; OR, Any equivalent combination of experience and/or education from which comparable knowledge, skills and abilities have been achieved. Desired Qualifications Demonstrated experience in: organizing and prioritizing work activities; use of personal computers and related software; establishing and maintaining effective working relationships. Demonstrated knowledge of: organizational practices. Effective verbal and written communication.

7/17/2007 9:39 AM

Hi John (Baker),

Sounds good to me. Michael's wife, Edith, joined the department during my time at Rice. Both are truly wonderful people, and intense scholars.

I am working on some material for Stones & Stories on Albright. He certainly assumed that Israel was the door through which all the wisdom of the ancient Near East informed Western civilization. In that sense Israel was chosen or elected as the most perfect culture in the Mediterranean world. This legacy of election was passed on to Christianity and in time to Byzantine Christianity.

My take on election has been that the Hebrews were fascinated that Yahweh – a great divine patron – would choose Israel – a little people. Throughout the Bible there are anti-heroes – women like Deborah and Jael, fools like Samson – who do divine work. Again my take is that Yahweh chooses the meek so that they will not cast a shadow on the divine. When some clearly inferior human does something divine, audiences are absolutely certain that the work is not that of a fool, but of Yahweh. Hence Yahweh choose a people that should have vanished more than once in antiquity and modernity to raise the question:

What are the Jews still here? The only answer is not that they are a great culture, but that their divine patron is great. Allah Akhbar! This is the missionary, evangelical, "light to the nations" election of Israel.

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]

Sent: Friday, July 13, 2007 6:53 AM

To: Don C. Benjamin

Subject: Re: bizarre late-night thoughts

Some thoughts on promise-election:

Notice that the promise is both land and offspring, the two quintessential elements of survival / wealth (classic Benjamin).

The patriarchal narratives uniformly have the theme of the election of the unexpected heir (the heir presumptive over the heir apparent). This is the story of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim.

The patriarchal election narratives are not tribal narratives but inter-tribal, i.e., they explain the relationship between one tribe and another tribe or tribes, probably vis-à-vis land distribution. My guess is they explain why one tribe has all the good land and the others don't.

The patriarchal election narratives describe generation-skipping election. The tribe or tribes who are not the favored by the "father" eponym are included in the election of the "grandfather" eponym to whom they may look as their "piece of the rock."

In this way, it appears the patriarchal narratives which were probably parallel and belonged to single tribes are stacked on top of each other to encompass more and more tribes and lands, finally going back to the largest land division, that between Isaac and Ishmael or between Abraham and his contemporaries.

Now, how do you make theology out of election if understood in this way? I think I would say to Wyschogrod that an election tradition is always a meta-narrative rather than a strictly tribal tradition, i.e., it always involves one tribe in relation to another. And it is in the Bible anyway always part of a generation-skipping narrative (complex) which involves incorporation of the "chosen" and the "not-chosen" under the same eponymous "grandfather." This means that in Genesis you cannot speak of "the election of Israel" without also speaking of "the election" of Esau and Ishmael. More classic Benjamin to this point: Isaac and Ishmael are both heirs, which shows that the redactors of Genesis

were sensitive to the point that these election traditions were uniting-stories, probably even reflecting treaties and informal alliances and so forth; not

exclusivist in nature. So Michael is right when he says Israel was chosen that the world might be redeemed through Israel, because election in the biblical sense is always presented in the context of an encompassing, incorporating, inclusive narrative. Ephraim is chosen so that Ephraim and Manasseh can live together. Joseph is chosen so that Joseph can live together with the other eleven. Jacob and Isaac are chosen so that Jacob can live with Esau and Isaac can live with Ishmael. And because of the generation-skipping narratives ALL are chosen by the "grandfathers" even the ones not chose by the "fathers"!

----- Original Message -----

From: John W. Baker

To: Don C. Benjamin

Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2007 11:41 PM

Subject: bizarre late-night thoughts

I once chatted with Michael Wyschogrod on the way to a conference as we waited for the plane. Here is a paper in Christian Century written about some of his ideas, which I find rather extraordinary. You may or may not be interested. I have of late been thinking about Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue" or better discourse and what to make of the fact that all three religions sprang from the faith of our common patriarch Abraham. Michael talks about what it means that Israel is elect, chosen, esp. as this relates to Jewish-Christian relations:

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_15_121/ai_n8702380/print

I have the idea -thinking of the **three** religions - that we all need each other somehow to become complete in the sense that **the whole is greater than the sum of the parts**. To be more specific, I think the three religions are supposed to exist in a kind of triad, and that what happens ideally is that each one makes the other two "better" or enriched maybe. For example, I understand much more about Christianity from knowing about Judaism and Islam. Etc. Etc.

Now in that light, here's the **totally** bizarre thought. Maybe the always-weird concept of the Trinity is a means for understanding this triad.

Judaism the religion which especially knows and is centered on the Father.
Christianity the religion which especially knows and is centered on the Son.
Islam the religion which especially knows and is centered on the Holy Spirit*

* A bit of a stretch but note that in the Hebrew Bible the Holy Spirit is associated mostly with prophecy. Doesn't fit the Christian understanding of the HS as God known in the *communio sanctorum*, and I don't think Muslims see God that way either. I'll have to think about this some more! BTW, Hans Küng has a new huge tome out on Islam which I've asked for for Christmas.

Michael of course is only thinking in Jewish-Christian terms. I doubt Islam enters his theological thought-frame.

Hi John,

Just finished reading the rest of your e-mail, and Michael's article. Also this review of Soulen's edit:

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Front_Page/GB08Aa01.html

I think I heard a door slam at Nicea when I read your comparison of Judaism, Christianity and Islam to the Trinity. I don't really find the doctrine of the Trinity helpful for me in Christian living. How often, for example, have you heard someone say: "I would never have survived my divorce if it wasn't for the doctrine of the Trinity!"?

I do agree that understanding the tradition of biblical faith is incomplete without listening to the traditions of these three great understandings. Today most Christians carry the entire Bible, but in the days of just the NT and the psalms, I used to say trying to understand the NT without understanding the Bible is like trying to make sense of someone's else's class notes. Nothing but icons that lead nowhere.

I had not read Michael's essays on election, but I would share his observations that election is not something that Israel deserves, but something that God does. I would also agree that election is mission. Israel has been sent to reveal its divine patron to the nations – not by preaching in the Christian style of mission, but by its very existence on the brink of existence. That any Jews survived the Holocaust is exhibit A of the witness to a God who preserves a people continuous persecuted, and often persecuting themselves. Jews endure to help non-Jews look beyond human accomplishment to divine action.

Peace.

7/16/2007 9:31 AM

Accept the fact that where I am now is where God wants me to be. Stop complaining about not being where I want to be. “Play Ball” Kahu Curt P. Kekuna (Kawaiaha’o Church, July 8, 2007)

Timing! Take time to acknowledge all that God is doing in my life, for me. Indulge the Mary! Control the Martha! “Timing” Rev. Tim.....Asbury United Methodist Church, July 15, 2007)

Are Martha and Mary parallel to Naomi and Ruth? Is Mary in a male role learning like the young Jesus?

7/15/2007 12:24 PM

Sunday, July 15, 2007

Dear Don Erjavec,

What a pleasure to return from vacation and find your letter in the tower of undelivered mail. All bills, magazines, flyers except you. What a joy. On Father’s Day we bring pictures of our fathers and grandfathers to mass, and place them on tables in the sanctuary. As I was going through all the prints from the days before digital, I found a picture of the three of us standing in front of the altar at St. Raphael. What wonderful memories. Thank you for keeping in touch all these years.

I also appreciate your enthusiasm for retirement. I am now 65. I continue to enjoy the classroom and writing. My academic career is all contract, not tenure track, so when the university took a chunk of the budget out of religious studies last year, I dropped from teaching nine courses a year to three courses a year. I decided to give myself a sabbatical and finish Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology and the Bible (<http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>). If more opportunities for teaching don’t develop, I will go back to restoring and reselling vintage homes which I also enjoy.

I try not to think of myself as a workaholic, but I do enjoy my work, and financially, I do need to work. Last Sunday the sermon was on accepting that where we are in life is where God wants us to be, and on not complaining that we are not where we want to be. I am working on that.

Patrice and I just returned from two weeks vacation on Hawaii and Oahu. What a beautiful part of the world. The ocean, the mountains, the volcanoes – being in Asia – creates an exhilarating experience for me. Here in Arizona I certainly do not travel weekly much beyond what would constitute the geography of either island. Yet when I am on an island, I notice that there are only cars with plates from Hawaii – and I am aware that I would have to fly to get off the island. Surely some sort of claustrophobia.

What wonderful opportunities you continue to have to make music. What I remember most about working with you on your wedding, and at the get together afterward at your home was the music. You and your fellow musicians “spoke” the meaning of the day in music.

You have my prayers that you will continue to be well, and continue to make and teach beautiful music.

Love,

6/27/2007

Hi Jerry (Maloney),

Thanks again for your call on Sunday. I so enjoy talking with you.

As I told you, when I started getting all the x-Carm reunion mail, I began to wonder about how different my memories of the sem are from the organizers. Your suggestion that because they left the sem early on, their memories are more romantic than people like me who spent 1957-2001 as a Carmelite.

I went back to re-read Lords of Discipline by Pat Conroy (1980). His alter-ego Will McLane remembers his days as a cadet at the Citadel in Charleston much like I remember the sem. Now I was reared in a military family, and I am a southerner, so there is a good deal of overlap and identification between me and Conroy; nonetheless I still find his memoirs reveals. Read a few pages and let me know what you think.

http://www.amazon.com/Lords-Discipline-Pat-Conroy/dp/0553381563/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/002-1901558-3941651?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1182958338&sr=1-1

Am finishing up my on-line course today and tomorrow, and then Patrice and I leave for a couple weeks vacation in Hawaii. I have been ready to go for days.

6/25/2007 8:36 AM

Hi Marie,

Reform in the Catholic Church is historically bottom-up, not top-down, so the bishops are not much hope. Francis of Assisi, for example, is an example of a bottom-up reformer who changed Catholic life. He resisted even being ordained a deacon to maintain the lay basis of his spirituality. But no, I do not think we will see a Catholic Church with the kind of energy and the kind of inspiration that was alive during the days of the Second Vatican Council, whose documents reflect not what the bishops were thinking, but what the laity were doing.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Bob&Marie Vano [mailto:rgvmev1@cox.net]
Sent: Sunday, June 24, 2007 5:04 PM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: Re: My lovely wife

Wow! I, in my small safe world, never realized anything like this was going on. I accept what I am told and go on. Do you suppose that we will have this important issue resolved in our lifetime, Don?
----- Original Message -----

From: [Don C. Benjamin](#)
To: ['Bob&Marie Vano'](#)
Sent: Sunday, June 24, 2007 3:39 PM
Subject: My lovely wife

Hi Marie,

Jane Via and Patrice were graduate school classmates at Marquette. And you think my lovely wife is radical!

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

6/19/2007 8:27 AM

Jim, Laurie and Sean rafted the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Here is Jim's journal.

6/07

Colorado River Rafting
7 Days
Arizona River Rafter

We drove up late Saturday to Lee's Ferry since Sean had a final exam in the afternoon. What kind of teacher would do that? We made good time and arrived at the Glenn Canyon Lodge at 11PM - \$63 a night for a double. Not exactly the Westin but the price was right.

Craig and Lindsey flew in the next morning from Vegas and the group had the orientation meeting given by Tom and Erica (significant others, river guides, boatmen). We learned about all of the bad stuff that could possibly await us on the mighty Colorado - hanta virus, Norwalk virus, Africanized killer bees, scorpions, rattlesnakes, drowning, etc, etc. We were also introduced to "river magic". This is a phenomenon where you consume much more ETOH when you are on vacation than you anticipate. A shocking concept. Despite no one admitting they needed more booze, most scrambled across the street to the quicky mart as soon as the meeting was over to buy additional quantities of beer. Since it was Sunday we had to wait until 10 AM.

We all re-packed our gear into waterproof bags and bussed up to Lee's ferry landing. Lee was the guy who took the powder (i.e. executed) for the Mountain Meadows massacre orchestrated by Brigham Young. Mormon militia who didn't want non-Mormon settlers in the Promised Land killed over 100 men, women and children in the attack. Our rafts were huge baby blue inflatables powered by 20 HP Honda outboards. Tom and Erica were not happy about this, as was a step down from last year's 30 HP engines.

We made about 20 miles our first day after a lunch on the beach. The water is wicked cold - 50° and getting in to pee is painful. Apparently that is the temperature at the bottom of lake Powell where it is released 15 miles upstream. The lake is named for John Wesley Powell - the first white dude to explore the river and canyon. He led an expedition down the river in 1869. The early rapids were pretty tame but if you were sitting in front you still got wet, and cold. By dumb luck we had graciously given up the front of the raft after lunch so others got to do most of the suffering. Our first night we camped near North canyon. It was a beautiful location with steep red walls. The night was warm and although most people set up tents I think it was mostly for the experience. I doubt if we will ever sleep in one. The first night was interesting - hot and windy at first - I woke up and the stars were amazing. The next time I

woke the stars were gone and the sky was light from the Blue moon. The blue moon is the second full moon in a month. It is pretty rare, occurring every 33 months – hence the name. The third time I woke it was cold and the sleeping bag felt very nice.

Our second day on the river was great. I actually rode on Toms raft since there was some reshuffling of personnel. He is the “senior” boatman and is a wealth of historical, geological and conservationist information. He started the day reading us all a poem about materialism versus the simple pleasures of the outdoors. It was endearing but I am not sure who he thinks can afford these trips. Besides, I like my Lexus. The morning was the beginning of the “Roaring 20’s” – a 4-5 mile stretch of mild rapids. Just enough to get you plenty wet and justify the purchase of the rain suit.

We ate lunch at Redwall Cavern – a natural amphitheater with a sand beach. Powell stated in his journal that it could seat 50,000 people. They must have been a lot smaller back then. The afternoon had amazing canyon walls that were sculpted by wind and rain into canyons, arches and caves. There were a lot of springs pouring out of the limestone walls with surrounding lush vegetation. Our crew is rounded out by a cute 19 yo gal from Mammoth named Riley and a roofer from Flagstaff named Richard. It is Richard’s first trip down the Colorado – He is a friend of Tom and Erica’s. Riley grew up on the river, having been down it numerous times. This is her first trip as a professional rafter. They all do a great job and are amazing with the cooking. As nice as it would be in the evening there are no fires allowed in the canyon and as a result all of the campsites are pristine. Considering that 20-30,000 people raft down the river every year it is amazing at how clean the canyon is. It is a real tribute to the guides and park service.

Tonight we camped at Point Hansbrough (43 miles downstream)– a large peninsula of rock outcropping. Riley made Laurie a birthday cake at dinner tonight and it was death. We ate it – still warm out of the Dutch oven. We camped at President Harding rapids – named because the geologic survey team was camped here when they heard about his death in 1923. We are still in Marble canyon, which is technically not the Grand Canyon. Apparently we enter the gorge on day 4 and some serious water awaits.

Craig alerted us at 4 bells with a double report and we woke to find the water level up about 5 feet. The river level varies by the amount of water released through the Glen Canyon Dam and this is determined by the electrical demands. The river moves 4-5 miles per hour so the water level varies by time of day and your location on the river. Sean and I lost a heartbreaker at horseshoes as darkness descended on the camp last night. The stake through the heart was a ringer come from behind victory by our evil opponents.

We were on the river at around 8AM and ran a short distance downstream before taking a side hike into Saddle Canyon. It was about 2 miles up to a narrow cleft with a small pool and a trickle of water. The vegetation was nice and it provided a welcomed diversion. Later, we drifted by Nankoweap Canyon. It is a large delta where the Anasazi farmed seasonally. There is still a

storage granary up on the cliff face that is at least 900 years old. Today was mercifully cloudy and pleasant and we saw a huge mule deer in velvet and a blue heron. We camped at the junction of the Little Colorado (61 miles) and spent the afternoon slipping down the turquoise river in some waterslides. Today we went by one of the major geologic faults in the canyon that made it traversable on foot. Apparently the Anasazi could hike down from the south rim and get across the river at low water. The trail continued up the North rim on an impossible vertical face. An ancient bridge was till visible about 500' up the rock wall. Apparently the timbers had been carbon dated almost 1000 years old. It was truly amazing to think that they could build a trail up the face of the sheer wall. The only bummer was the wind that really picked up in the afternoon blowing sand like a mother.

To say that last night was the worst night ever would be an understatement of epic proportions. The wind picked up, as did the blowing sand. The stuff in the air is not really sand. Its consistency is somewhere between sand and dust - very nice to walk in but it ends up absolutely everywhere. When driven by wind it ends up in places you don't even want to talk about and jams up everything. Watch bezels don't turn, flashlight switches jam and tent poles don't come apart. Not to mention the hell it plays on mucus membranes. There was no consensus - even after the fact - as to what was the right sleeping decision. The tent dwellers were hot and the sand came in through the netting. We elected to go tent-less and tried to fashion a windbreak with out bags and gear. We lay on top of our sleeping bags and shrouded ourselves in the sheet to give the appearance of residents at the LA county coroners office. It kind of worked but breaks in technique were costly. Needless to say no one was in a good mood this morning. Todd was especially pathetic - acting like an old lady and threatening to call in a helicopter air evacuation.

Despite the dire condition of the crew the drill remains the same- Roll out between 5:00-5:30 and get a hot mug of cowboy coffee (mug provided by rafting company). Depending on lower GI status - either immediate or delayed queuing in the groover line. The groover is the toilet - a 2'x2' aluminum box with a toilet seat on the top. It is usually located in a somewhat secluded location but always has great views of the canyon. The key to the groover is the seat cushion - if it is there then the groover is available- if the cushion is missing the groover is occupado. The first 2 days one employee could transport the groover back to the raft - single-handed. Thereafter it was a two-man job with some serious intermittent shaking to settle the pyramid contained within. The groover got its name from the original crapper, which was an ammo can with a plastic bag. After use there were grooves in your ass that weren't there before.

Today we transitioned from Marble canyon to the "Grand Canyon" proper. They are very different in appearance. Marble canyon is composed of sedimentary limestone walls with vertical sides and discrete horizontal strata. Most of the rocks - formed by inland oceans - were formed around 600 million years ago. The gorge is made up of igneous rock, a combination of limestone converted to marble by heat and pressure (and hot liquid magma), and schist

(Vishnu schist) formed by the actual hot liquid magma forced between the seams of limestone. The walls here are steep and jagged but they slope in at 60-70° to a 'V' at the bottom of the canyon. The rock layers are oriented vertically due to the geologic upheaval. These layers were formed around 1.6 billion years ago. They are the oldest rock formations on earth that are exposed for viewing. Both Marble and the gorge are beautiful in their own way, but marble canyon makes a lasting impression. We also passed by the Unkar Delta – a large, relatively flat spot that was more or less permanently occupied by the Anasazi as a winter farming site over a thousand years ago. It is the largest known prehistoric settlement along the river.

The wind persisted most of the day but has died down this evening. We spent most of the day in our rain gear, and the rapids were some of the biggest to date. Tonight we camped above Crystal rapids (98 miles) – one of the biggest runs of the trip. Today we did Granite rapids – which were short but ran against a big wall that generated some serious side waves. Hermit rapids were the best – a roller coaster with huge holes. It was wet and wild. As I mentioned, Erica is such a good driver she takes the rock and roll out of running the rapids. We have to beg her to be sloppier so we feel we get our money's worth. Tonight after a bath in the river and a cocktail and without the wind blowing, life is good. Camp at Crystal was great – cool and without wind. There were some unconfirmed reports of low flying bats. The crew apparently set a record in filling the groover as it was reported to be heavier than ever.

Since we camped immediately above Crystal rapids, that was our first chore of the morning. Crystal was followed by the 20 jewels – a series of rapids that included sapphire, ruby and turquoise. The canyon has changed again in that the sides are now more stepped and terraced and the limestone walls have re-appeared. At its maximum depth the canyon is over a mile deep.

We have had some tremendous side hikes, the first being Shinumo creek at mile 108. It was a short hike to a small pool and waterfall – cool and beautiful. Our second and most impressive hike to date was Elves Chasm at mile 116. As we tied up the rafts there were 5 bighorn sheep – ewes – on the rocks about 30-40 meters above us that watched us with interest but not concern. We had a short, steep hike up to a beautiful waterfall in a chasm tiered with three huge boulders. There was moss and ferns growing out of the rock. As we arrived I noticed Riley, who led this and most of the hikes in flip-flops, was missing. She appeared half way up the waterfall and after giving us all instructions on how to get there and how to deploy she jumped into the pool. The trick involved swimming under the waterfall and climbing up a cave behind it and out to a platform half way up the falls – fantastic! It was one of the coolest things ever and provoked a serious cannon ball and gainer splash competition.

We ran a great rapid today – Specter – and Erica dumped us into a huge hole that swamped the whole boat. Our camp tonight is just upstream from Galloway canyon (Mile 131) – not the most hospitable spot and hot as hell. Luckily a short hike up Galloway canyon gave some welcomed shade and a waterfall that proved to be an outstanding shower. Craig was all jacked up –

wanting to get up on the plateau to see what was above us. Lindsey called us over to look up and I thought it was another bighorn sheep but it was Craig- about 50 feet up this cliff wall. Sean made the comment that is always harder climbing down and he was right. It is a miracle that we didn't lose the big guy on the descent. He ended up hiking around the other side up to the next plateau. When asked what the hell got into him, he blamed it on the peanut M&M's that were passed around on the boat earlier in the afternoon. We decided it was the blue ones that got him all jacked up. I am thinking of selling the M&M defense to some trial attorneys. As we go downriver the primo campsites become somewhat of a poker game. Getting ahead of the other rafting groups to get the good campsites, when to push on and when to park. The Hatch rafts are doing a college geology trip complete with the bearded professor who dictates the pace of the trip and stops. As a result we have seen them pushing downriver as the sun is going down to get to a camp area. No thank you.

A word about our crew. The boatman is the driver or the captain of the ship. Our team leader is Tom who is pretty bohemian. He is an ex limo driver, pro golfer and who knows what else. He is a real child of the earth – a rabid environmentalist even at the exclusion of realizing he wouldn't have a job if it weren't for the bastards who built Glen Canyon Dam or all of the rich people who pay for the trips. He has a great soul, however, and reads us poetry most mornings before we cast off that was written by river rats like him. We even got one of his originals on the last morning. Having been on both boats, Erica is actually the better boat driver. She turns most of the rapids into mundane bumps in the road and we actually have to ask her to screw up the line so we get a little more rock and roll for our money. She is an artist and the birthday card they gave Laurie was from one of her paintings. She also designs web sites. The swamper is the 1st mate, handyman, scutworker. Our swampers are Riley – a cute 19 year old whose divorced mother drives a cab in Mammoth and Richard who is on his first river trip. He is a friend of Erica and Tom's who is a roofer in Flagstaff.

The wildlife we see in the canyon seems to be mostly big stuff. I admit this is a conclusion of a novice who doesn't have the time or attention span to notice the details – similar to what happens with scuba diving. We have seen mule deer, big horn sheep, blue herons, ravens, peregrine falcons and turkey vultures. The only little things have been lizards (amazing how freaked some people are by them), frogs and bats. There were very few, if any rats or squirrels. Maybe only the big mammals and birds can get into and out of the canyon. Other than gnats there weren't many bugs although it may just be the right time of year.

This morning we went over Dubendorff rapids for a short way down to Deer Creek. It was a 30-minute hike up to the plateau and down a very narrow canyon with a rock gorge about 10 meters wide and 100 meters deep. There were painted petroglyphs on the wall of sprayed hands similar to the ones the aborigines in Australia do. The hands were tiny and it wasn't clear if the people were just smaller or children did them. The upper level of the canyon is called

the Patio and it was supposedly a birthing place for the Anasazi. The view from the top of the plateau back to the river was spectacular and the waterfall at the bottom (river end) of the canyon was huge. The rest of the day we had to cover ground – around 50 miles total to get to the helicopter pick up point that is around 180 miles downstream. The big news in camp is that Sean and Riley have launched the love boat and the male tribal council has brought Laurie up on charges of cock blocking – a charge that she adamantly denies.

Because the river water is so cold the drink cans are put in mesh bags and thrown over the side of the boat during the day to keep cool. This works well but there is always a bit of river mud on the rim, so that you have to tip one for your homies before you drink. The silt also rubs off the paint on the cans so if drinks stay in the bag for more than one day they are all silver bullets. The last day on the river the wild boys reached new highs consuming 3 bags of beer by 3 pm (roughly 10-12 beers per man). In a alcohol induced manic state JT led a round of college fight songs at one of the pee breaks and then while jumping back on the boat his foot went between the side pontoon and the boat and it took him a long time to dislodge it. Not that any of the boys would help him – an event that led to the quote of the day. “This would be funny if it was happening to someone else.” JT’s other classic moment came when he had to ride in front through some big rapids and didn’t have croakies on his glasses (after already losing a pair) The first wave took his shades and before we even hit the second he was asking if anyone had seen his most recently lost pair. “ Excuse me, I am still hanging on for dear life. They may have been washed up my rectum by that last big wave. ”

The canyon today was different yet again – towering sandstone cliffs early and then black volcanic rock that is the remnant of Vulcan’s throne, which is an extinct volcano that once blocked the river with lava flow. In many places the lava crystallized into hexagonal columns 6-12” in diameter that are pushed up vertically into twisted arrays. Vulcan’s anvil is a huge black rock in the middle of the river that heralds Lava falls – the biggest baldest rapids navigable by boat in North America. It was a toad floater.

Our last night in camp was bitter sweet. We had a great dinner – steak, mashed potatoes, corn and warm brownies for dessert. We presented the crew with our tip this evening – a decent wad of cash – and lingered around camp talking as long as we could hold out. We had a one-mile float down to the helicopter pick up on the side of the river. Two choppers ferry us up and a new group down from the Bar 10 ranch on the North Rim. They get a 1 1/2 day trip downriver to get picked up by a jet boat that delivers them to lake Meade. The bad news is that they get to sleep in our old sleeping bags. The boat crews have 2 long days to get the boats to the ramp on Meade, deflate and store the side pontoons and load them onto trucks to be taken back to Flagstaff to be cleaned and re-outfitted. I feel sorry for the guy who has to deal with all of the groovers.

This really was the trip of a lifetime and it is hard to believe that only 150 years ago no one but the Anasazi knew anything about the Grand Canyon and the mighty Colorado River.

For anyone going on a trip I would like to reinforce some absolute must have gear.
Broad brimmed hat with chinstrap
Croakies for your glasses
Sunscreen
Keen water sandals – the perfect shoe for the trip
Belknaps Grand Canyon river guide – a wonderful concise summary of everything you need to know about the canyon (and it is waterproof)
A fanny pack or very small backpack for the day hikes
Synthetic towel (REI has some good ones)
Lotion – it is amazing how dry your hands get
Wet wipes in a foil or soft plastic pouch
Zip lock bags
Headlamp flashlight – really helps when you are digging around in your bag at night
Chapstick

6/16/2007 11:36 AM

Hi John,

Thank you for your kind words. I do think that is a good reading of the three traditions. It is hard to read against the grain of all the meditations on the Binding of Isaac – a truly powerful tradition as all those who have mulled it over testify. The place where I always get nervous is during the liturgy of the word for the Easter vigil. Many congregations try to keep people's attention by acting out the readings, and the skits for the Binding are always a bit gruesome. Given the amount of child abuse by parents today, I would think that good sense would prevail, and actors would not be holding knives in the air over their sleeping son in a church... but.

It's a toasty 111 degrees here in the desert today. A blessing on the inventor of air conditioning.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Saturday, June 16, 2007 6:25 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: Re: ordeal and binding

Found it!

Yes, you have it all worked out. I actually have highlighted some of those pages. That's the great thing about Alzheimer's. You constantly learn new things that you already knew. Anyway, you have it completely right in my opinion. Those stories are all parallel. It really is a wonderful interpretation because it makes the Binding of Isaac so understandable. And the ordeal/trial nature of the stories as relating to the family inheritance dispute makes the whole Abraham-Sarah-Isaac-Ishmael cycle such a marvelous thing. What a story!

I believe the Muslim tradition that Ishmael was bound for sacrifice on the mountain really shows the parallel nature of the stories of the two ordeals.

----- Original Message -----

From: John W. Baker
To: Don C. Benjamin
Sent: Saturday, June 16, 2007 7:42 AM
Subject: ordeal and binding

It just hit me that the Binding of Isaac is a parallel to the Ordeal of Hagar and Ishmael. Probably you said this in your book. I used it extensively a few weeks ago, but that was before school was out, and now our house is a maze of piles of books. It's in there somewhere! Did you see both stories as Let-YHWH-decide which should live, both connected in other words to the inheritance dispute between Sarah and Hagar?

jjwbaker@earthlink.net

6/13/2007 9:12 AM

Hi Peter (Hinde),

How is Betty doing with her arm?

I was reading about Choquequirao in the NYTimes this week. Do you know the site? It is an Inca holy place – same concept as Machu Pichu. The first part of our journey to Choquequirao is to Cachora, the nearest town. It has no direct bus service, so it is necessary to travel from Cuzco by cab along 100 miles of poorly paved road. From Cachora, the trek to Choquequirao is 20 difficult miles in the mountains either on foot or by mule or horseback.

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2007/06/03/travel/03inca.html>

I was also reading a review of the movie: “The Other Conquest” which opens in May 1520 when Topiltzin (Damián Delgado), a skillful Aztec scribe who is one of Moctezuma's illegitimate sons, survives the Massacre of the Great Temple by hiding under a corpse. After the Spaniards leave the sacred site, he finds his people dead, including his mother. <http://www.theotherconquest.com/> By 1526 Topiltzin is still striving to preserve the cult of Tonantzin, the Aztec Mother Goddess. When a squadron commanded by Captain Cristóbal (Honorato Magaloni) and Friar Diego (José Carlos Rodríguez) discover the clandestine human sacrifice of a beautiful Aztec princess, two incompatible ways of life come face to face... - and violence erupts. Topiltzin manages to escape by making Friar Diego believe he is drawn to the statue of the Virgin Mary that accompanies the Spaniards wherever they go. He is eventually captured and presented to Hernando Cortés (Iñaki Aierra), who has just returned from an ill-fated campaign to Honduras. In an attempt to create a hybrid empire, Cortés has taken Emperor Moctezuma's daughter and heiress, the notorious Tecuichpo (Elpidia Carrillo), as his new mistress and interpreter. She reveals that Topiltzin is her half-brother, and a skeptical Cortés spares the young man's life, but in turn decides to convert him to the new Spanish ways with the aid of Tecuichpo (from now on, Doña Isabel) and Friar Diego. After being subject to a brutal ritual of conversion, Topiltzin (now called Tomás) is confined in the Franciscan Monastery of Our Lady of Light.

It always saddens me to think of all the world views that have been destroyed by Christianity. Christianity is not a bad way to understand human experience, but I always feel that we would have so much richer a life, and more humane a planet if there were greater diversity in world views.

Peace.

6/12/2007 8:08 AM

Hi Marie (Vano),

Just wonderful pix. Thanks.

It was good to see you at the Casa on Sunday. It helped me let go of my disappointment that the Franciscans let the bishop bully them into uninviting Edwina Gately who was scheduled to give a retreat. As a “Conventual” church the Casa is supposed to be protected against such interference from the local bishop. I have to concentrate on real people like you – not unreal people like the bishop – or I will lose it.

Peace.

Hi Matthias,

Wonderful. I will be at ASOR 11-14-17, so come early. My work in progress is Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible, so I need to smooze with the archaeologists. You can see where I am in the project at <http://doncbenjamin.com>

I think one of the musts is that you drive to Phoenix and spend Thanksgiving (11.22) with us. We would love to give you our winter tour of the Grand Canyon.

We spent spring break in San Diego this year. Balboa Park has a wonderful zoo (take the tour), and some remarkable museums – plan to spend one day there. The gaslight district is a fun venue in the evening – the see and be seen site. I would go over to Coronado Island, wander around the Del Mar Hotel. It is a classic. Buy a beer, sit out and look back toward San Diego as the sun sets.

About 35 miles north are the Carlsbad Flower fields – a German immigrant enterprise that was gorgeous when we were there. In November the working on Christmas poinsettias. We also found Tip Top Meats in Carlsbad. It is the most remarkable German meat market, deli, grocery and restaurant.

Let’s keep working on this – our love to everyone.

More San Diego:

Marine Room Restaurant (Great view ; right on the ocean)
www.marineroom.com
2000 Spindrift Dr
La Jolla, CA 92037
(858) 459-7222

Belmont Amusement Park (Great people watching)

(Great people watching)
3146 Mission Blvd
San Diego, CA 92109

Crystal Pier (Old time summer entertainment)
4500 Ocean Blvd
Pacific Beach (San Diego, California, 92109)

Coaster RR (Commuter north from San Diego)
http://www.sdcommute.com/Rider_Information/coaster/index.asp

Trolley to Tia Juana (East Mexico)

Trolley. The preferred method. You can hop on the trolley from many locations in San Diego - downtown, Old Town, La Mesa, even Santee. You want the blue line trolley that goes to San Ysidro. The East line of the trolley connects with the south-bound trolley (blue line) going to San Ysidro at 12th and Market Streets in downtown San Diego, requiring you to transfer. It takes nearly an hour to ride the trolley to San Ysidro from Old Town.

Trolleys run 7 days a week. Weekdays, they start running about 5 a.m., the last trolley leaves San Ysidro to return to San Diego at 12:41 a.m. Saturdays, the last trolley leaves San Ysidro at 1:41 a.m. Weekdays, the trolley runs every 15 mins. (or less) and weekends they run anywhere from every hour to every 15 mins., depending on the day and time of day. The complete schedule and map are located on the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System website, [trolley section](#).

Birch Aquarium

<http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/>

Patrice and I spent a wonderful afternoon at the Birch Aquarium (<http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/>). A remarkable exhibit of salt water critters, and if you can time it to be there for sunset, the view is just stunning. Californians go to the beach to watch the sun set like monks say evening prayer.—except they bring wine!

6/11/2007 12:50 PM

Don Gale called yesterday. Sent the following list today. I am re-reading Pat Conroy, Lords of Discipline. It is my story.

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“BEFORE AND AFTERS” (1960); AND THOSE WHO EITHER ATTENDED ONE
OR MORE OF THE REUNIONS AND/OR EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SAME
AND WANTED TO REMAIN ON OUR “ROSTER”.

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THE FOLLOWING WERE CONTACTED BY (SNALE-MAIL) MEMO
AND WE ARE STILL AWAITING THEIR RESPONSE BY THE ENCLOSED SELF-
ADDRESSED, POSTAGE-PAID POSTCARD:

John Comerford, O.Carm., St. Elias Priory, Joliet, IL

Quinn Connors, O.Carm., Brandsma Priory, Middletown, NY

Ray Clennon, O.Carm., St. Paul the Apostle Priory, Gurnee, IL

Tom Jordan, O.Carm., Casa del Carmen, Mexico City, Mexico

Vicente Lopez, Tucson, AZ

THE FOLLOWING WERE UNABLE TO BE CONTACTED THEREFORE
“MIA”. IF YOU HAVE ANY CURRENT INFORMATION ON HOW TO LOCATE
THEM, PLEASE ADVISE,

Jim Ryan (originally from Chicago)

Tom Curtin (originally from Chicago)

Ed Bryant (originally from Boston area?)

Jim Gatwood

John Hynes (originally from Chicago)

Jim Eilert (originally from NJ; possibly now in CA)

Al Wormke

Ralph Rosenbach (last known: N. Augusta, SC)

Dave Innocenti

Elliott Egan (last known: New Orleans, LA)

Don Geary (last known: Chicago, IL)

Joe McNamara (last known: Chicago, IL)

Mike Harrington (last known: N. Olmsted, OH)

NECROLOGY. (SINCE OUR LAST CONTACT, THE FOLLOWING HAVE GONE TO THEIR ETERNAL REWARD. LIST NOT NECESSARILY COMPLETE OR IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.) THEREFORE, "R.I.P." TO:

Fergus Lickteig, O.Carm.

Lambert Yore, O.Carm.

Murray Phelan, O.Carm.

John (Columba) Fogarty, O.Carm.

Myles Colgan, O.Carm.

Kevin Shanley, O.Carm.

George O'Keefe, O.Carm.

Patrick Gleeson, O.Carm.

Robert Flaherty, O.Carm.

Peter Thomas Sherry, O.Carm.

Allen Crowley, O.Carm.

Dan Otremba

Robert Dubick

Harry Houle

Jim Guttendorf

Robert Lohrentz

Pat Corcoran

(6/11/07)

6/9/2007 6:44 AM

Hi Dusti, (Dusti Wilson)

Thought you might enjoy this state of classical archaeology essay: James D. Muhly, "Archaeology in the Eastern Mediterranean: where we went wrong in the twentieth century and how we can do better in the twenty-first" In One Hundred Years of American Archaeology in the Middle East. Edited by Douglas Clark and Victor H. Matthews. From the Hayden catalog you can link to an on-line version of the article.

Also, the on-going excavations at Caesarea-Maritima would be a good place to talk with folks about classical archaeology. Herod was absolutely infatuated with Greek and Roman Culture. Talk with Ken Holum (University of Maryland). He is a friend. His King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea is a great introduction to the site.

If you have not already left for Israel and would like to have lunch next week, e-mail me.

Peace.

Hi Bob,

Thanks for the notes on our trips.

With all that was going on in my life in those days, the days in the Sierras were my life line. It took two days for the phones in my head to stop ringing, and all I wanted was a level and dry place to sleep next to the sound of running water. When we stopped hiking, I really thought I was going to die.

I remember fantasizing about reading the hot springs after crossing Franklin Pass. The first trip those hot spring brought me back to life. Despite your efforts to get me to bring back packing equipment, I brought all the army gear my dad had raised me on. I even wore jump boots. Of course the poncho alone weighed two pounds, the metal canteen, the utility belt! Half way up Franklin Pass, the jump boots had rubbed the flesh off both my heels. By the time I got to camp that night I was ready to die, so I drank my entire ration of 100 proof rum – Thalmar may have left his money, but I was not going to leave my rum.

At any rate on a subsequent trip I day dreamed all the way to the hot springs. When we got there forest service notice that the spring were "closed" for repairs. I thought God had died! We were sitting there in a funk, when a couple more hikers showed up, saw the sign, and went up the slope about 50 yards and found a soft spot near a boulder and jumped in the water. I was saved!

What wonderful memories.

I AM SENDING TRIPS AS I HAVE MENTIONED . I DON'T KNOW ALL PEOPLE ON ALL TRIPS ' I KNOW TOM' BROTHER WENT AND DON 'S BROTHER ONCE NO IDEA WHEN. MY BROTHER JIM WENT TWICE BUT LATER IN LIFE BECAME A RESPIRATOR DEPENDENT QUAD LIVE THAT WAY 22 YEARS . BOB DICK AND BILL --- ALL BROTHERS HAD THE PLUG PULLED AFTER 8 WEEKS IN HOSPITAL . PLUS --IT WAS JIM' DESIRE .

I AM NOW WORKING ON GIVING ELEVATIONS TO TRIPS, PASSES WE WENT OVER APPROX. DISTANCED WE TRAVELED TOM AND I ARRANGED THE TRIPS . EACH PERSON TAUGHT THE GROUP OUTDOOR SKILLS

----- Original Message -----

From: [Bob](#)

To: [Bob](#)

Sent: Sunday, May 27, 2007 1:58 PM

Subject: MY HIKING TRIPS

MY HIKING TRIPS 1960 UP MT WHITNEY 14,495 FT BEEN UP TWICE BUT DON'T KNOW OTHER YEAR REMEMBER TOM DORSET TAKING PHOTO OF MAN WHO SAID HE WAS 90 YEARS OLD

1966 DEER TRIP INTO REDS MEADOW TO GRANT LAKE TOM AND MYSELF.

1967 FROM ST MARY'S TO LAKE DUCK LAKES OVER DUCK PASS TO PURPLE LAKE DOWN INTO LOST LAKES VALLEY, DOWN INTO CASCADE VALLEY UP TO MCGEE PASS AND OUT TRIP WAS WITH TOM DORSETT AND DAVE THALIMAR. TOM HAD A PHD AND THALIMAR MAY HAVE BEEN SMARTEST MAN I EVER MET FOR ALL TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

1968 OVER BAXTER PASS TOUGHEST UP WE EVER ENCOUNTERED UP SAND ONE STEP UP AND SLIDE BACK UNTIL WE REACHED HIGH ALTITUDE AND BAXTER LAKES , GREAT FISHING DOWN TO RAE LAKES OVER GLEN PASS TO KEARSARGE PASS TO HART LAKES TO ONION VALLEY AND ONION VALLEY AND OUT

1969 KEARSARGE PASS TO CHARLOTTE PASS TO GARDINER PASS INTO GARDINER. FORM GARDINER TO SIXTY LAKE BASIN LAKES ONTO JOHN MUIR TRAIL TO WOODS CREEK UP TO WOODS LAKE OUT OVER SAWMILL PASS

1969 KEARSARGE PASS TO CHARLOTTE TO GARDINER LAKES TO SIXTY LAKE BASIN , SIXTY LAKES TO JOHN MUIR TRAIL TO WOODS CREEK UP TO WOODS LAKE OUT OVER SAW MILL PASS AND OUT

----- Original Message -----

From: [Bob](#)

To: [Bob](#)

Sent: Sunday, May 27, 2007 3:20 PM

Subject: PAGE 2 HIKING TRIPS NUMBER 2

1970 UP KINGS CANYON OVER FRANKLIN PASS DOWN RATTLESNAKE CREEK TO KERN RIVER UP KERN RIVER OVER TO HOT SPRINGS , BACK 1 MILE UP ARROYO TO LOST CANYON UP TO BIG FIVE LAKES -- RESCUE 2 STUPID HIKERS OUT OF FOOD NO SLEEPING BAGS NO MAPS -- BIG FIVE LAKES ONE OF MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOTS, OUT OVER BLACK ROCK PASS TO CLIFF CREEK OUT OVER TURNER GAP TRIP 54 MILES ONE WEEK UP AND DOWN 25,000 FEET OF MOUNTAINS VERY HARD TRIP NONE WERE EASY

1971 THIS IS ONLY TRIP JIM MCNAIR AND BILL TOMLINSON WENT WITH ME BILL WAS

15 OVER BAXTER PASS VERY DIFFICULT TO BAXTER LAKES DOWN TO JOHN MUIR TRAIL UP WOODS CREEK TO WOODS LAKE OUT OVER PASS .
1972 WENT IN OVER MCGEE PASS UP RED AND MOUNTAINS DOWN TO WHITE TO LAUREL LAKES GRINNELL LAKES DOWN TO FISH CREEK TO 4 RECESS OVER MONO PASS TO CHICKEN FOOT LAKES OUT OVER MORGAN PASS
1974 WENT IN OVER COTTON PASS WENT DOWN TO GOLDEN TROUT LAKES WENT DOWN TO KERN RIVER CAMPED AT KERN LAKE TO NATURAL BRIDGE TRIP WASN'T PRETTY
1974 TOOK PAT AND JOHN TO GARNETT LAKE VIA SHADOW LAKE ALL IN ONE DAY TO MUCH BOYS CAUGHT FISH EASY OUT ALL DOWNHILL

----- Original Message -----

From: [Bob](#)

To: [Bob](#)

Sent: Sunday, May 27, 2007 5:41 PM

Subject: HIKING TRIPS

1975 UNIQUE TRIP FR LOU, FR LEN ,FR DON ALL JOINED ME IN OVER PINE CREEK ROAD TO END THEN STARTED UP TO ITALY PASS -- VERY TOUGH- DOWN TO PINE UP TRAIL TO PINE CREEK TO TOP OF ITALY PASS DOWN TO PINE CREEK LAKE DOWN FRENCH CANYON DOWN TO PINE CREEK TO -- HARDLY ANY WATER TO A HOT SPRINGS PIUTE LAKE TO HOT SPRINGS TO SALLY LAKES TO BEAR TRAIL LAKES UP TO JUMBLE LAKES AND OUT OVER ITALY PASS 12 3000 FT A BITCH UP AND DOWN 12 MILES TO CAR
1976 TOOK PAT JOHN AND KEVIN WITH DR. GIFFORD AND HIS KIDS TO GARNET LAKES . RATHER SHORT TRIP BOYS DID VERY WELL
1978 KINGS CANYON TO GRANITE LAKES OVER COOPER PASS - DOWN 12 MILES TO DOUGHERTY MEADOWS TRAIL DOWN CALLED RATTLESNAKE TRAIL TO KERN RIVER UP THE TRAIL TO HOT TUBS BUILT BY FOREST DEPT KERN RIVER WAS VERY FAST AND DON BROUGHT A FRIEND MIKE MORTEL AND HE JUMPED IN KERN AND I THOUGHT HE WOULD BE MISSING BUT BY GRACE OF GOD HE MADE IT TO SIDE OF RIVER . LEFT HOT TUBES AND WENT UP PINCHOT PASS AND STAYED AT LAKE MARJORIE OUT ON JOHN MUIR TRAIL DON SPRAINED HIS ANKLE , THALIMAR CUT A TREE DOWN AND MADE A CRUTCH FOR HIM . MY INSTRUCTIONS WERE DON'T TAKE YOUR BOOT OFF AND SOAK ANY TIME YOU NEED IN COLD CREEK WATER IT WAS 17 MILE HIKE OUT . .SENT HIM TO VINCE CARTER WHEN WE GOT BACK TO LA. IT WAS ONLY A BAD SPRAIN I WAS THE MEDICINE MAN ON ALL TRIPS WE HAD A NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVITED ON TRIPS NOT MENTIONED
I DON'T HAVE YEAR WRITTEN DOWN BUT I KNOW I TOOK PAT , JOHN EDWARD AND KEVIN AND DR HONSHIRO HIS DAUGHTER AND SON UP TO 1000 ISLAND LAKE ON THE RIVER TRAIL. 1000 ISLAND LAKE IS MY FAVORITE. IT SITS IN MIDDLE OF 5 PEAKS OVER 12000 FT,.

MY hiking trip 1960.

1970 UP KINGS CANYON AND OVER

1975 UNIQUE TRIP

IF YOU DIDN'T GET LET ME KNOW MISSING ONE THANKS

Tom AND HIS SON WERE FLYING BACK FROM A SMALL AIRCRAFT CONVENTION IN THE MIDWEST AND GOING OVER THE ROCKIES OF MONTANA THEY HIT AN UPDRAFT OR DOWN DRAFT AND THE PLANE CRASHED. LORETTA CALLED OUT OF THE BLUE ASKED WAS MY HEART GOOD ETC . I KNEW GOOD NEWS WAS NOT FORTH COMING . WHAT I

NEVER TOLD LORETTA TOM AND OUR GROUP SAW JUST SUCH A PLANE CRASH IN OUR HIKES YEARS AGO . MARY LOU AND I MET HER IN COLORADO SPRING NOT TO LONG AFTER THE ACCIDENT . SHE WAS still in deep morning . I tried to keep in touch but no luck . ABOUT 5 MONTHS AGO SHE CALLED AND WE EMAIL EACH OTHER ALL THE TIME . SHE IS GOOD FOR LOSING A HUSBAND AND SON
THALIMAR HAD 2 CANCERS. TOM HAD KEEP VERY CLOSE TO HIM AND WAS AT IS FUNERAL AND HE CALLED ME FROM SAND DIEGO TO TELL ME DAVE DIED . IT WAS LAST TIME I SPOKE WITH TOM . DAVE HAD LOTS OF MONEY AND HIS SO-CALLED GIRL FRIEND GOT IT ALL PROBABLY MORE THAN YOU WANTED TO KNOW BOB

END OF LIFE INSURANCE LESS THAN 20% people need.I told our pastor I want my ashes in the sierra's . he said against church law to wish I SAID if god makes miracles he can bring gather my ashes we own no plots either . Loretta DORSETT SISTER IS IN SAME ORDER AS PATRICE'S. LORETTA SISTER IS 95

----- Original Message -----

From: [Don C. Benjamin](#)

To: ['Bob'](#)

Sent: Saturday, June 02, 2007 7:15 AM

Subject: RE: ADDRESS, ETC.DON WE WERE ALL HIS BROTHERS IN THE MOUNTAINS , DAVE HAD LOTS OF MONEY. WHOLE MESAGE IS A SHI---TO READ

Hi Bob,

Our culture so values individualism and then when we need someone to drive us to the airport, or take us to the hospital and we realize that community we fled, we need. Just think of where your family would be if you and Mary Lou did not baby sit.

Not that children are always the best care-givers for their parents, but because Patrice and I have no children – and not very good end of life insurance -- we have talked about how our lives might end.

Her mother Frances, for example, lived with us for more than ten years, and died here in our home. She had a wonderful life and a beautiful death.

Her sister, Patricia, was a Sister of Loretto. The end of her life was unnecessarily lonely and painful. She had suffered for ten years with heart disease. When she began to die the community used her Medicare for three weeks to put her in a rehab center. We visited her there, Patrice worked with her doctor to establish a pain regimen, and I smuggled Guinness into her room for a long and laugh filled evening. Then the nuns took her to KY – and put her in the infirmary. We made three trips to try and manage her care, but with only modest success. The nuns are kind but know surprisingly little about end of life issues. Their medical support – as I found during my days with the Carmelites – is usually from doctors who are economical but incompetent.

We all wish good deaths for ourselves, but there is very little we can control.

Patrice had organized a seminar on financing the end of life for her patients. She called me as I left campus and said she needed more people, so I filled an empty chair. It brought up some good questions like extended care insurance, etc. I followed up with our insurance broker, and realized that we are far too old to afford the payments. The plan now is to stay in this house which I remodeled to make accessible when Frances had her first hip replacement. Plan to hire some good person – probably undocumented – to hose us down once the week. We own this house and a comparable rental house outright, and carry little or no debt – so when the time comes to leave our home, we will start selling these for expenses. But realistically who knows how the end will come.

On a visit to Denver where some twenty members of Patrice's family are buried, we did look into buying plots. That was an experience. First of all it was also exorbitantly expensive, even for a mausoleum niche for an urn. So we are still plot free.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Bob [mailto:bobmcnair2@socal.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2007 5:39 PM
To: Loretta Dorsett
Cc: DON BENJAMIN
Subject: Re: ADDRESS, ETC.DON WE WERE ALL HIS BROTHERS IN THE MOUNTAINS , DAVE HAD LOTS OF MONEY. WHOLE MESSAGE IS A SHI---TO READ

A BITCH OF A LETTER TO READ ABOUT END OF TALIMAR'S LIFE ---- Original Message - ----

From: [Loretta Dorsett](#)
To: [Bob and Mary Lou McNair](#)
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2007 7:57 PM
Subject: ADDRESS, ETC.

MY HOME ADDRESS; 5925 NE RODNEY AVENUE, PORTLAND OR 97211

TOO BAD DAVE AND DON DIDN'T HAVE THAT DISCUSSION, ISN'T IT?
YES, HE LEFT THE BULK TO HIS GIRLFRIEND. HE ASKED HER TO TAKE CARE OF HIM UNTIL THE END. SHE DIDN'T DO MUCH. WOULD GO TO HIS PLACE ON HER WAY TO WORK, LEAVE AN UNOPENED CAN OF CAMPBELL'S SOUP AND AN APPLE AND BE ON HER WAY. . THIS IS WHAT HE TOLD TOM. HE WAS NEAR THE END AND COULDN'T STAND UP TO FIX ANY MEALS AND

WAS IN V. BAD SHAPE. HAD MEGA PHYSICAL AND INTESTINAL PROBLEMS.
HE WAS FOUND BY OUR MUTUAL FRIENDS WHO CARED FOR HIM, TOOK HIM
TO THE HOSPITAL WHERE HE WAS TO DIE OF CANCER A FEW DAYS LATER.
WHAT A MAN. SO SMART, SO VERY SMART. HE TOLD TOM HE FELT LIKE HE,
TOM, WAS HIS BROTHER HE NEVER HAD.
ALL FOR NOW. LORETTA

Hi Matthias,

Wonderful. I will at ASOR 11-14-17, so come early. My work in progress is Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible, so I need to smooze with the archaeologists. You can see where I am in the project at <http://doncbenjamin.com>

I think one of the musts is that you drive to Phoenix and spend Thanksgiving (11.22) with us. We would love to give you our winter tour of the Grand Canyon.

We spent spring break in San Diego this year. Balboa Park has a wonderful zoo (take the tour), and some remarkable museums – plan to spend one day there. The gaslight district is a fun venue in the evening – the see and be seen site. I would go over to Coronado Island, wander around the Del Mar Hotel. It is a classic. Buy a beer, sit out and look back toward San Diego as the sun sets.

About 35 miles north are the Carlsbad Flower fields – a German immigrant enterprise that was gorgeous when we were there. In November the working on Christmas poinsettias. We also found Tip Top Meats in Carlsbad. It is the most remarkable German meat market, deli, grocery and restaurant.

Let's keep working on this – our love to everyone.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Matthias Klinghardt [mailto:matthias.klinghardt@tu-dresden.de]
Sent: Friday, June 08, 2007 6:17 AM
To: 'Don C. Benjamin'
Subject: San Diego

Hi Don:

I am thinking of the SBL meeting this year: Will you attend? My planning is ahead of time this year, because I will be on sabbatical from September on. This gives me the opportunity to do a (very) little bit of travelling after the San Diego meeting in November. I thought you might have one idea or another what could be done within a week or 10 days (and limited money). What are, in your opinion, the "musts" in southern California?

I hope that you and Patrice are doing fine? (Well, we do!)

Greetings,

Matthias

Prof. Dr. Matthias Klinghardt

Institut für Evangelische Theologie

Philosophische Fakultät

TU Dresden

01062 Dresden

Tel. (0351) 463-34919

Fax (0351) 463-37239

matthias.klinghardt@tu-dresden.de

6/4/2007 4:46 PM

Hi Mike,

As I mentioned, Chris and Don retired from Tucson to a very small town NE of Tulsa on the MO border. They have a boat on a beautiful lake, and some really salt of the earth neighbors. They've joined a evangelical community church -- Chris went to Catholic school, and that did her faith in; Don was never baptized. We went to church with them -- was not clear how they fit in. They seem to have a strong personal relationship with the pastor. Chris started a mobile grooming business -- Zoom Groom -- and Don's works with her. Really seems like a good decision -- otherwise life would be very boring for them. Chris is a really successful business woman -- I have always admired that in her, because no one in our extended family is in business.

The last time I saw my sister Cynthia was at Mother's funeral in October 2001. She has had a consistently painful life, a great deal of it -- in my opinion self inflicted. She really tormented mother - who felt responsible for Cynthia's unhappiness. Cynthia was in the process of moving in on my mother when she died. Then Cynthia spent the next year suing the three of us for mother's house. She won! My folks will was always just divide things four ways. Cynthia decided that they meant that she should have half their estate, and the rest of us divide the remaining half. The court agreed. None of us really needed anything, but this case defied any common sense.

Jim and his family still live in Tucson. He left the University of Arizona where he was chief of orthopedics about four years ago to go into private practice. Jim is an internationally recognized orthopedist, big grant earner etc., but the university took his lab time, his research time, his teaching time.. so he moved. He is such a wonderful teacher, and I don't think he has really found his stride in private practice. He and Laurie have two children. Sean is at the U of A; Erin just graduated with a graduate degree in public health and is starting a Physicians' Assistant program her in Phoenix next week.

Peace

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

-----Original Message-----

From: Jan and Mike Rooney [mailto:jandmrooney@sunflower.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 03, 2007 2:51 PM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: A name from your deep, dark past

We're heading to Jackson Hole on Wednesday; will be there a week. On our way home, we'll head for Des Moines to celebrate with my brother and his wife their 50th wedding anniversary. [Those are a real rarity these days.]

How is/are your sister[s] doing? And what about your brother?

=====

----- Original Message -----

From: "Don C. Benjamin" <dcben@asu.edu>
To: "Jan and Mike Rooney" <jandmrooney@sunflower.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2007 12:04 PM
Subject: RE: A name from your deep, dark past

> Hi Mike,
>
> Feel like I should remember Bill Schwaller, but I don't among the names
> only
> Terry Cyr and Jay Commerford have faces.
>

> Hope you had a good Memorial Day. We flew in to Tulsa, and then out to
 > Grove OK on Grand Lake where my sister, Chris, and her husband retired a
 > few
 > years back. Very, very small town. Was good to see them.
 >
 > Peace.
 >
 > Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
 > Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
 >
 > Department of Religious Studies
 > Arizona State University
 > -----Original Message-----
 > From: Jan and Mike Rooney [mailto:jandmrooney@sunflower.com]
 > Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2007 9:17 AM
 > To: Don C. Benjamin
 > Subject: A name from your deep, dark past
 >
 >
 >
 > At my brother's funeral, Bill Schwaller showed up! He was a freshman
 > and/or
 >
 > sophomore at Niagara when you and I were prefects. Then, when he was at
 > Hamilton, my brother taught him and his classmates for one or two years.
 >
 > Apparently, Jack had a strong influence on that class, as many of those
 > fellows sent cards, letters and e-mails.
 >
 > Bill is very successful ... lives in D.C. He flew in for the funeral --
 > quite a tribute, I believe. We had a great visit. After 40+ years, that
 > is
 > something very, very strange!
 >
 > Other names from that class of some who wrote about Jack:
 >
 > - Blas Gibler
 > - Bill Dorgan
 > - Leo Strickland
 >
 > Bill Anzelc, Jay Comerford, Rick Sarkozy and Terence Cyr were other
 > members
 > of that class, I think.
 >
 >
 >

6/3/2007 5:50 AM

Hi MJ,

Thank you for making time to have lunch with me this week, and thank you for truly lovely book on Tutankhamun. You are both thoughtful and generous.

What I enjoyed most was hearing you talk about your students – you teach them math, you get them ready for exams, you counsel them about what it is like to be an ordinary woman in the work place, and about not having sex with their 16 year old girlfriends. Teaching is what you need to do, and I am confident that you will continue to do it.

Some of my favorite movies about teachers:

Dead Poets' Society (1989)

Good Will Hunting (1998)

Finding Forrester (2000)

6/2/2007 8:16 AM

Hi Bob,

Our culture so values individualism and then when we need someone to drive us to the airport, or take us to the hospital and we realize that community we fled, we need. Just think of where your family would be if you and Mary Lou did not baby sit.

Not that children are always the best care-givers for their parents, but because Patrice and I have no children – and not very good end of life insurance -- we have talked about how our lives might end.

Her mother Frances, for example, lived with us for more than ten years, and died here in our home. She had a wonderful life and a beautiful death.

Frances' sister, Patricia, was a Sister of Loretto. The end of her life was unnecessarily lonely and painful. She had suffered for ten years with heart disease. When she began to die the community used her Medicare for three weeks to put her in a rehab center. We visited her there, Patrice worked with

her doctor to establish a pain regimen, and I smuggled Guinness into her room for a long and laugh filled evening. Then the nuns took her to KY – and put her in the infirmary. We made three trips to try and manage her care, but with only modest success. The nuns are kind but know surprisingly little about end of life issues. Their medical support – as I found during my days with the Carmelites – is usually from doctors who are economical but incompetent.

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Patrice had organized a seminar on financing the end of life for her patients. She called me as I left campus and said she needed more people, so I filled an empty chair. It brought up some good questions like extended care insurance, etc. I followed up with our insurance broker, and realized that we are far too old to afford the payments. The plan now is to stay in this house which I remodeled to make accessible when Frances had her first hip replacement. Plan to hire some good person – probably undocumented – to hose us down once the week. We own this house and a comparable rental house outright, and carry little or no debt – so when the time comes to leave our home, we will start selling these for expenses. But realistically who knows how the end will come.

On a visit to Denver where some twenty members of Patrice's family are buried, we did look into buying plots. That was an experience. First of all it was also exorbitantly expensive, even for a mausoleum niche for an urn. So we are still plot free.

You1-22

From: Bob [mailto:bobmcnair2@socal.rr.com]

Sent: Friday, June 01, 2007 5:39 PM

To: Loretta Dorsett

Cc: DON BENJAMIN

Subject: Re: ADDRESS, ETC.DON WE WERE ALL HIS BROTHERS IN THE MOUNTAINS , DAVE HAD LOTS OF MONEY. WHOLE MESSAGE IS A SHI---TO READ

A BITCH OF A LETTER TO READ ABOUT END OF TALIMAR'S LIFE ----

Original Message -----

From: [Loretta Dorsett](#)

To: [Bob and Mary Lou McNair](#)

Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2007 7:57 PM

Subject: ADDRESS, ETC.

MY HOME ADDRESS; 5925 NE RODNEY AVENUE, PORTLAND OR 97211

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LATER.
WHAT A MAN. SO SMART, SO VERY SMART. HE TOLD TOM HE FELT LIKE
HE,
TOM, WAS HIS BROTHER HE NEVER HAD.
ALL FOR NOW. LORETTA

5/31/2007 11:05 AM

Hi Bob,

Of course I want a copy. What wonderful memories.

Patrice and I went to Grove OK over the Memorial Day weekend to visit my
sister Chris, and her husband Don. Grove is about 90 miles north and east of
Tulsa – on the MO border. They have a cottage on Grand Lake – huge
reservoir. What a snapshot into both small town living and
retirement. Patrice and I have decided that we are going to retire here in
Phoenix – we are not small town people. So we put double pane windows in
the house. We talked about how to spend retirement, and I think we will
probably do some kind of service work for a school or other non-profit if we are
physically able.

Chris and Don seem good. Chris lived her adult life in Tucson, so I have
admired her ability to move and root somewhere else. It was good to meet the
new people in their lives. They have even a neighborhood evangelical church –
Chris went to Catholic school and that pretty much did her faith in – Don had
never been baptized... Again it was interesting to be with them in the
congregation – but as hard as it is to be Catholic these days, I could not do that
little church either.

Hope the two of you are well. Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: Bob [mailto:bobmcnair2@socal.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2007 7:14 PM
To: DON BENJAMIN
Subject: Fw: problem anyalsis DON, DO YOU WANT A COPY

----- Original Message -----

From: [Bob](#)
To: [Loretta Dorsett](#)
Cc: [jkelly3@elp.rr.com](#)
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2007 6:11 PM
Subject: Re: problem anyalsis

LORETTA , LAST WEEKEND I TYPED A LOG OF OUR PACKING TRIPS .
AND WHO WENT FOR MOST PART, WHERE WE WENT INTO MOUNTAINS
AND WITH WHOM AND WHAT PASS WE CAME OUT. . IT WAS A SAD
TASK. TOM AND THALIMAR WENT TO HEAVEN I AM ACCURATE ON
TRIPS JOURNEY AND CAN GIVE AN ESTIMATE ON TIME IN MOUNTAINS . ,
LOU MCCABE SJ LEN MCCABE SJ AND FR DON WERE ON ONE TRIP.LEN
AND DON HAVE LEFT THE PRIESTHOOD . LOU HAS BEEN IN COLORADO
FOR 8 YEARS RUNNING A RETREAT HOUSE . AS OF AUG. I HE MOVES
BACK TO ST. LOUIS TO RECRUIT CANDIDATES FOR JESUITS IN MID WEST I
AM NOT A TYPIST BUT IT GOOD . TOM GOT HIS PHD. DON GOT A PH D
AND THALIMAR PROBABLY WAS THE SMARTEST IN OVERALL KNOWLEDGE.
I CAN ESTIMATE DAYS FOR EACH TRIP . TOM AND I WERE ON ALL TRIPS
AS WE ORGANIZED AND PLANNED DON USUALLY COOK . HE WAS
UNBELIEVABLE OUT DOOR COOK . MY COUSIN JIM KELLEY WAS ON 90 %
OF TRIPS AND HE WAS MARINE RUGGED DO EITHER OF YOU WANT A
COPY . ONLY VERY,VERY GOOD MEMORIES WHEN WE WERE YOUNG AND
TOUGH . BOB

5/25/2007 6:32 AM

The Only Child

Family size is never predictable. Nonetheless, as a child I expected my
parent's families to be larger than our family.

My theory or at least my observation worked – sort of -- for my mother’s family. There were three adults and four children in our family. There were five children and two adults in my mother’s family.

In our family there were my mother and father, my mother’s mother, my two sisters and my brother. My mother was the youngest of five children. Her father was German American so they all had lyrical old world German names: Edith, Elizabeth, Walter, Willis and Guellema. We called Guellema “Aunt Peg.”

My father, however, was an only child. There were only three in his family. Blanche was his mother. James was his father, and he was Don. I realized that some parents in our generation had only one child, but I was puzzled why my grandparents had only one child.

There may be some reason for my grandparents having only one child in their family histories. I think my grandmother – Nana – was an only child. She had country cousins in Iowa, but no brothers and sisters. My grandfather was a twin. My parents had met his brother, but I never did. Of course, I wondered if I could tell the two of them apart.

The historical precedent was never a satisfying answer to my question about why my father was an only child. As I grew into adulthood and watched the painful dynamics in his family, I decided there was another reason. I have no proof. I never tested my theory by asking my grandparents. It remains one of those sad, lingering possibilities for me, even today.

While my grandfather was alive, we called him “Dad.” We called my father “Daddy.” Nana called him “Dadda” which may be where we got the name.

Nana was twenty years younger than Dad. She adored him. She waited on him hand and foot. Cooked his meals. Mended and washed his clothes. Waited on him hand and foot. And I never heard him say “thank you” or “I love you.” Dad was a grouchy old man.

Nana also adored my Dad. She called him “Sonny”. She waited on him hand and foot, and that drove my mother – who was not a doting wife – crazy.

My theory as to why Nana and Dad never had another child is that my grandfather was insanely jealous, even of his own son. I think after my father was born, and my grandfather saw his wife so in love with their son that he never made love with her again.

5/24/2007 10:14 AM

Traveling with Frances

Patrice's mother lived with us for about ten years. She was just two weeks shy of her 99th birthday – January 1, 2004 – when she died. What a wonderful woman.

Frances loved to travel, and she loved to travel with us. In fact one of the hardest adjustments after her death was getting back in line with all the real folks. I had enjoyed my life as a VIP pushing her wheelchair to the front of the line; getting priority boarding. It was worth taking Frances along just for those perks.

We never sat with her on the plane. She far too social to enjoy our company. We read and took naps on flights. Frances made new friends.

On one three hour trip from Houston to Phoenix we boarded and set Frances up in a center seat. She was a tiny thing. Never weighed much over 100 pounds. We sat across the aisle. The first seat mate to join her was a twenty something female. You would think a ninety something female and a twenty something female would not have much to say to one another. Wrong. Frances introduced herself, and she and within minutes she learned the young woman was on her way to San Diego to start a new life. She learned that the young woman did not have any friends in San Diego and was going to work as a waitress. The sisterhood was in motion. Frances was counseling her about "men"! She had a way of saying that word that reflected a lifetime – not of cynicism, but of experience. She knew men, and she did not mind passing on what she knew.

Frances's second seat mate was a twenty-something male carrying a basketball. Frances was an avid fan of many sports – baseball, football and basketball – college and professional. She struck up a conversation with the young man and learned he was on his way to Portland where he had an opportunity to play semi-pro ball. Frances asked about his high school and college coaches, team averages.

We were on the ground in Phoenix and the three of them were still talking. "Get their addresses" I counseled. We need to get off the plane.

Few people I know are such masters at surfing the generations as Frances. She had a mind that embraced not only her own time, but other times as well.

She was also genuinely interested in the people she met. Most of us listen just out of courtesy, waiting for our chance to talk. She actually listened to what people said, asked real questions. People trusted her immediately, because she cared. I always teased her that she should have worked for the FBI or the CIA. She could talk with someone for less than half an hour, and they were telling her about their personal lives, showing her their 1040, and explaining to

her things they had always wanted to do with their lives. She blessed everyone she met, and he never forgot their names.

5/22/2007 2:00 PM

Don,

I enjoyed our time talking and reflecting. It was good for my soul to do both with a colleague who has in many ways been there and done that and come out alive.

Thanks for the books. I am always looking to expand my range of awareness to encompass other people's journeys. It helps to know that we are not alone. And thanks for the chapter of your book, your work and life have inspired me to be more proactive.

Maxie

Hi Maxie,

Thanks for your time today. Some of the books I am enjoying:

Anne Lamott

Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith (2000)

Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith (2006)

Grace (Eventually): Thoughts on Faith (2007)

Jon Katz

Running to the Mountain: A Midlife Adventure (2000)

A Good Dog: The Story of Orson, Who Changed My Life (2007)

Peace.

Hi Maxie,

You are going to come through this time in your life, and you will come through it well. Your greatest resource, at this point, is your respect for the importance of spirituality. Your times of prayer and meditation and journaling need to work on how to make your life reflect gratitude. What we do needs to say Thanks, not Please. As intellectuals it is hard for us to leave our lives in God's hands. We profess that creed, but then want to know what God is going to do

with us. Most of the time God is doing with us what God wants to do with us – problem is that we don't like God's choice.

I'm a five year planner. Always have been. Still am. Yet at my age when I think about the two or three really significant events in my life – none have been on my plan, or at least not near the top of the list. The only thing I can say on my behalf is that I had the good sense to look up from the plan, and the courage to say yes to something the value of which I would only see much later than at the time I had to make the choice. I still plan, but I am also less frustrated when at the end of the planning period, I am doing something I did not plan.

Peace.

Carlos

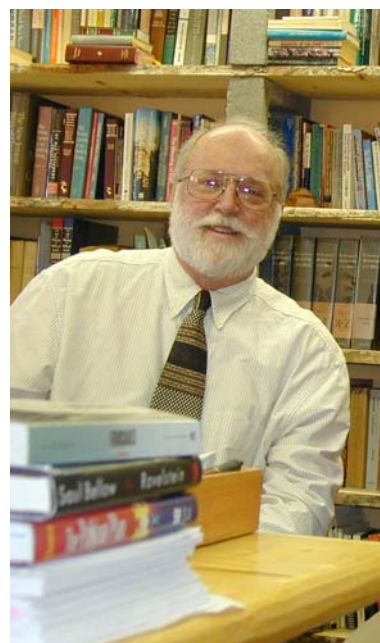
I have always loved my name: "Don Carlos Benjamin." Not: "Donald Benjamin," but "Don Carlos." "Donald" is a nice name, but it is not my name.

Other people always wanted to change my name to "Donald." For example, I went to Catholic school, and the Sisters said: "We do not use nick names here, Donald! Your patron saint is Donald, not Don."

To find St Don I launched my academic career by studying the lives of the saints. Eureka, I discovered. St. Don Bosco (1815-1888). He not only had a great name – my name, but he was the patron saint of little boys like me. In fact he founded a order dedicated to caring for boys that society had discarded. Here was my patron saint – and the one who would change me from "Donald" to "Don."

Needless to say Sister was not impressed. It was my first experience that research or evidence seldom changes institutions. So every report card and every sacrament certificate I received was beautifully labeled in calligraphy: "Donald Benjamin." Ugh! I would take the report cards and sacrament certificates home for my parents to see, and then I would burn them.

When Jimmy Carter became president, I thought that the rest of the country would realize that southerners like me could have a nick name like Jimmy, and still as good and do as much good as people named "James Earl."



Didn't work for Carter, and it didn't work for Clinton either, who reneged at the last minute and signed his oath of office: William Jefferson Clinton. Coward.

Leaving Catholic school did little to end my name harassment. Even though, throughout my adult life, I have always signed my name: "Don C. Benjamin," folks I do not even know will keystroke their way into a database and change my mailing label from "Don C. Benjamin" to "Donald C. Benjamin." Even when they realize that "Donald C. Benjamin" is too many characters for the label, they would rather see: "Donald C. Benja" on the label than leave my name alone.

My love affair with my name has a lot to do with the story that goes with it. My people have always been soldiers. My father's father fought in the Spanish American War (1898). His best friend was Hispanic. My grandfather did not speak Spanish, but he called his friend: "Don Carlos."

Spanish speakers use "Don" with someone's first name the way southerners use "Ms." or "Mr." with someone's first name. It the polite way to address someone special and yet someone with whom you have a intimate relationship. So Jimmy Carter's mother was known as "Ms Lillian". It stands between the formal: "El Senor Benjamin" and the completely informal: "Memo." Spanish speakers call their uncles, their *padrinos* or any older male: "Don Carlos."

In Spanish "Don" is not a name; it is a title of respect. So my grandfather's army buddy was "Carlos," not "Don Carlos." Nonetheless, when the war was over and my grandfather came home, he and my grandmother named their son: "Don Carlos" in memory of my grandfather's friend. Eventually my mother and father named me for my father.

When I learned to speak Spanish, I always introduced myself as Benjamin. It was easier for me to recognize and respond to my family name than to Carlos, which I had never used as a first name.

Together with our family name Don Carlos Benjamin has the ring of wealth or royalty. It is *un titulo grande*, but in the case of our family, *sin un centavo*!

At one point in my father's own military career, the name came to his rescue when my family was stationed in Canal Zone in Panama. Route 1 ran east from the Gulf west to the Pacific Ocean. For most of the trip the highway was in the Canal Zone controlled by the United States. For a short distance, however, the highway cut away from the Canal Zone into the Republic of Panama.

Panamanian police regularly set up speed traps to catch Americans and remind them that although they controlled the Canal Zone, Panama still belonged to the Panamanians. Trapped Americans were typically taken to jail overnight

until the American embassy opened the next morning and could send someone over to bail them out. It was an exercise in honor and shame.

My mother and father lived in Quarry Heights on the west side of the Zone. They were in Panama City on the east side of the Zone for some event. On the way home my mother kept reminding my dad to slow down before they crossed out of the Zone and into Panama.

In grand male style my father kept up his speed and boom a motorcycle officer slowed him to the side of the road. My father did not speak Spanish, but simply gave the officer his identification card.

The officer took the card back to his bike and returned almost immediately – not to guide them to jail, but to ask my father in heavily accented English: “Last name Benjamin?”

“Yes, Yes,” my dad replied: “Benjamin.”

“First name Don Carlos?”

“Yes, Yes: Don Carlos.”

“Very, very sorry,” the officer replied, and then repeated: “Very, very sorry.” He returned his bike, puzzled how a red haired, freckled faced gringo like my dad could belong to the wealthiest family in Panama. I am sure he expected to be transferred deep into the territory of the narcotraffickers on the Columbian border for his mistake. Little did he know that the only Benjamin relatives in my family lived in Nebraska.

5/20/2007 7:39 AM

Hi John,

Although my seminary teacher, Roland Murphy, would jump through hoops to avoid identifying the Wise Woman with Yahweh, I have always said that when the Hebrews imagined Yahweh teaching, Yahweh was the mother of a household. Vic and I developed that idea in the chapter on mothers of the household in Social World of Ancient Israel (22-36).

Mediterranean cultures, like many African cultures, were fascinated by pairs or dyads. The wise and the fools. The clean and the unclean. The honored and the shamed. I explain wisdom as learning that there is no free lunch; foolishness is clinging to the fantasy that we can all get something for

nothing. Wisdom is a four year college that takes six years to complete; foolishness is a nine month program at ITT.

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]

Sent: Saturday, May 19, 2007 5:55 PM

To: Don C. Benjamin

Subject: last one

Last lesson tomorrow. Also last week of school.

I'm doing Women as Teachers, looking at Proverbs
and also some Hasidic stories as teaching devices.

Do you have a good translation for "wisdom" (hkmt)?

Am I right in thinking you see Wisdom (she) in Proverbs at least
as a reification of the woman-as-teacher in early Israel?

I was doing a think at school on Aesop's fables a couple of
years ago and learned they derive from a traditional collection
of Indian fables called the Panchatantra. It was collected by
palace teachers from much older oral traditions and was used to
instruct young princes on human nature, types of people
(vain, jealous, lazy, crafty, etc.) through the stories of
animals.

Hi Peter (Hinde),

Thanks for the update on Betty. I am glad that she had been seen, and that her
surgery is scheduled. Let us know how it goes.

Patrice is going to have a knee replacement this summer. She has a
remarkably high pain threshold, but her knee is hurting her balance, which is
equally dangerous. It will mean she will be off work for almost ten weeks,
which in today's world may mean that she will lose her job. Hopefully that

will not happen. I have been encouraging her to get the knee worked on for some time, so we both are hopeful that it will give her a new lease on mobility.

We went to the symphony last night. Beethoven and Shostakovich.

The Beethoven piece was interesting. Goethe had written a idealistic poem celebrating the revolt of the people of Flanders against Spain. Goethe and Beethoven embrace the belief that oppression must be resisted even when victory is impossible and death is inevitable. Curiously when Beethoven actually met Goethe, the two were political opposites which discouraged Beethoven. Some of my wandering thoughts during the concert. Who remembers was a world power like the US is today? All tyrants fall. You just need to wait until Jerry Falwell dies, and Bush goes out of office. Also how dangerous it can me to meet your heroes.

The Shostakovich tenth symphony was premiered just months after Stalin died. Twice Shostakovich was silenced by Stalin, but the Stalin dies, Shostakovich performs, and it is the man of music and not muscle whom we remember.

Peace.

5/14/2007 9:42 AM

Hi Bob,

Thanks for your invitation, but Patrice and I will not be coming to the class reunion at Darien this summer.

Thanks also for your kind words, Bob. I look back on my years with the Carmelites with great satisfaction, not with anger.

At the time I left the Carmelites I was, and still am, scandalized by the behavior of Stan Makacinas and Leo McCarthy, but that is not an indictment of the Carmelites. Like many others here in Phoenix I was struggling to deal with a bishop whose lack of moral judgment eventually led to his civil trial. Unfortunately for me, Leo was his personal friend, and privileged that relationship over his responsibilities to me as the provincial. Leo had lied to me about John Long when I started my work at Kino, and then when I realized he was lying to me about Bishop O'Brien I made the decision to stop doing good work for bad people. Kino was a visionary concept – not because of Leo – but because of Ernie. Ernie and the first bishop of Phoenix thought the council had it right – and they founded Kino to empower the laity to play their rightful role

in the church. I was energized by being part of such a vision. Kino now is also gone. The present bishop fired both the Carmelites and the Jesuits from the University of San Francisco who partnered with Kino to offer an MA in theology for over twenty years.

In the wake of my resignation I made a concerted effort to mentor the people I hired – with the exception of Stan – into new jobs in new places. Two are still stranded, but the rest have survived and are continuing to do the kind of wonderful work I hired them to do at Kino. The director of the biblical studies program was hired as the director of the office of peace and justice for Catholic Charities, and is now beginning a PhD in NT at Brite Divinity school in Ft. Worth. She hired the woman who was the coordinator of the USF program to be her assistant when the USF program ended. My assistant is now working as an information technology specialist for one of the school districts here. She and her husband are expecting their fifth child. The dean of students is now a program designer and special events coordinator for a local hospital system. The director of the spirituality and spiritual direction program moved to the Franciscan Retreat Center to head their spirituality program.

Thank you for your concern. Let's hope there will be other times and places for us to renew our friendship.

Peace.

From: robco@robco.org [mailto:robco@robco.org]
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2007 9:46 AM
To: dcben@asu.edu
Subject: July Reunion

Don Benjamin.

Dear Don,

I hope all is well with you and Patrice - and that your life is going well.

In early March, in the name of Michael Mulhall, Mike Rooney, and myself, you received an invitation to a ***Celebration of Carmelite Fraternity*** at the Carmelite Spiritual Center in Darien, Illinois, July 29 – 31, 2007.

As of yet, I have not heard from you – we are hoping that you will consider joining classmates who crisscrossed our lives, for all or part of the reunion experience.

Possibly you misplaced the invitation – I also learned that my e-mail was wrong

in the invitation – it is actually robco@robco.org.

Don, I'd love to see you again - I always thought of you as a friend - and that our relationship was bigger than any feeling about the Carmelites.

I hope to hear from you soon and sincerely hope that you will join us at Darien, July 29 -31.

Fraternally,

Bob Colaresi

John Baker writes:

I am a complete skeptic on the existence of ritual intercourse or sacred prostitution or whatever, whether in Mesopotamia or Canaan. There are representations in the art, but it is equivocal.

According to what I knew, the nadîtus and so forth were cloistered nuns, i.e., chaste. Unfortunately, I don't have Bernie Batto's book. They were cult functionaries / priests dedicated to serve by mostly wealthy fathers who wanted to preserve their estates while waiting for very young sons to grow up. The nadîtu was a kind of tax shelter and dowry-in-trust so the daughter wouldn't marry and her husband inherit part of the wealth before her little brother could assume the duties of the head of the household. (based on Hammurapi) They didn't have children but were at least temporarily "fallow" women (nadû is also used of a field that is lying fallow temporarily). Only works in a surplus economy.

And as far as I know, there was no definite textual evidence of ritual intercourse at Ugarit.

Maybe "something was going on" and I am just naive. Or texts may have come to light since I've been out of the field that I'm unaware of.

When the Deuteronomists putdown the qdshot as znhot ("whores"), it just seems all too slick. In their own culture, qdshot were high-status women, while znhot were looked down upon universally, even by the Canaanites I imagine.

I agree with your assessment of the theological objections to the Canaanite cults as *do ut des* religions vs. Yahwism as celebrating what God has already done and is doing (and the need to keep to his side rather than enticing him to be on our side). And I think that was the basis of the objections to the

Canaanite religion rather than sexual practices in the cultus. And I agree with Meyers on the issues of surplus economies and the impossibility of qhshot in Israel as long as it was comprised of subsistence economies.

My impression was that most of what we "know" about ritual intercourse is speculation based on projected fantasies of male scholars in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, but that objective evidence for it in texts is lacking, apart from the polemical language of the Deuteronomistic writings.

I dunno

5/13/2007 6:38 AM

Hi John Baker,

Somehow I thought I have sent you vintage Benjamin on ritual intercourse, but I could not find the e-mail, so if this is repetitious, just chalk it up to the amnesia of the aging.

The two common ingredients to all worship are learning to have a harvest and learning to have a child. When people go to the omphalos sanctuary priests instruct them in how their culture plants and how their culture conceives. The origin of ritual intercourse – my replacement for sacred prostitution – is the physical instruction which a male or female priest gives a pilgrim. They have intercourse at the sanctuary.

H.W. Wolff in his commentary on Hosea (1974: 1-23) describes how this initiation works in marriage preparation. Typically both the man and the woman would make a retreat at a sanctuary during which a priest would have intercourse with them.

Carol Meyers in Discovering Eve (1988: 157-164 + 189-196) addresses the question of why Israel prohibited female priests and ritual intercourse. In a subsistence community like early Israel every woman of childbearing age needed to bear children. Women simply could not be spared for the priesthood, where they – like the Naditu women in Mesopotamia – would have intercourse, but not bear children. Once Israel transitioned from a subsistence village economy to a surplus state economy there was not longer a practical reason for women not to be priests, but a male only tradition had been established, and David preserved it.

Herodotus was responsible for describing women about to marry sitting in front of the sanctuary gates waiting for a random male to “throw a coin in their laps.” Although celebrated by some as the “father of anthropology” he really had little understanding of what he saw, which was women learning through sympathetic ritual how men and women had intercourse in their culture. To help my students understand this, I usually talk with them about the phrase “missionary position”. Africans were completely unfamiliar with the man on top position until their European missionaries appeared in their villages.

Another aspect of the prohibition of sacred prostitution in the Bible has to do with the prophetic and Deuteronomistic commitment to primary causality. Yahweh was the prime mover. In their theology if you asked: Where do babies come from? – the answer was: Yahweh! Where do harvests come from? Yahweh! Land and children were divine gifts, not human accomplishments. Therefore, humans needed to live lives that said “thank you” for these divine gifts, and not “please” give me a harvest or a child. The prophets and the Deuteronomistic traditions indicted ritual intercourse because it overemphasized the human role in conceiving a child.

When the Hebrews entered the sanctuary of Yahweh they took their shoes off and kept their pants on. The reason was not liturgical modesty, but the need to emphasize that Yahweh, not the fathers of Hebrew households, owned the land; and that Yahweh, not the fathers of Hebrew households conceived the child. Men “uncovered their nakedness” only when preparing to have intercourse. To do so in the presence of Yahweh proclaimed: I’m the man! -- when the prophets and the Deuteronomists wanted the Hebrews to say: Yahweh is the man! Similarly only land owners wore sandals. Everyone else went barefoot. The sandals were the moveable title to the land. So when Amos laments that the poor are sold for a pair of sandals, the issue is that the poor have mortgaged their land, and their creditors have taken their sandals in collateral. Instead of allowing the poor to pay of the debt and recover their nahalah, the powerful sell the land for a quick profit. The fathers of Hebrew households come into the sanctuary of Yahweh barefoot – as slaves, to make it clear that “Only Yahweh is lord” in the land.

Hope this is helpful.

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, May 13, 2007 6:32 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: qdsh/qdsht

So, what do you think. There is absolutely no evidence in cuneiform texts including in Ugaritic of "cultic prostitution" (or whatever you want to

call it). In fact, all the evidence from Mesopotamia (with the possible exception of the entu-woman) was that these functionaries were to be chaste and even had to stay clear of taverns (Hammurapi).

But in the Dt books and in Hosea there are condemnations of qdsh/qdst and qds/qdsm in Canaanite religion. What do you make of that? Unfair characterization and nationalistic putdown, dismissing them as znh/znt?

I suspect "playing the harlot" and "going after harlotry" in Hosea may just be a very derogatory term for simple religious apostasy and has nothing to do with sex at all.

Good morning, Dianne!

Jim has a meeting in Sienna later in the summer, and he and Laurie are going to spend some time in Venice, Florence, and Rome. Patrice and I thought you might be able to send them some restaurant recommendations. His e-mail address is in cc: We told him about the cooking school and how well Bo did, but they were really just interested in something a little less intense.

The evening at the Terra Cotta Restaurant last night was truly nice. Jim is a gracious – and generous -- host. I had duck which was wonderful. Patrice had scallops. The scallops were fine, but the pasta turned out to be a kind of “Mac and Cheese”. Then we made the mistake of ordering Tierra Misu expecting it to be like Frenchie’s. Instead it came in a soda glass –

The museum yesterday was interesting, especially an exhibit of photos of Tucson’s biker community. They seem to keep their bikes in the living room, so we will have to put a line in the rental contract... There was one Matisse – Icarus...

Enjoy your Mother’s Day.

5/8/2007 12:45 PM

From: John W. Baker

I have a question about Genesis 38.

When Judah sends the goat for Tamar, whom he thinks was a (cult?) prostitute,

and finds that she is gone and that no ZNH had been in that place, he says

"Let her keep what she has (i.e., the tokens I gave to her in pledge). Otherwise, we will be shamed. I sent her this goat but you weren't able to find her." 38:24

Why would he be shamed if he did not allow her to keep the token items?
Because it shows good faith on his part since she can always return them and claim the livestock she was owed?

Good question.

I have always assumed that if Judah pursues the issue of his staff and seal, then it will become obvious to the other heads of households just what a fool he is. The motif in this story is that Tamar is wise, Judah is foolish. He cannot feed his household, and he cannot protect it. In fact, he twice tries to kill the one woman who can save his household. The only saving grace for Judah is that he eventually admits that he was a fool – very 21st century kind of guy.

By giving Tamar his seal and his staff he has nothing to prove that he is legitimately the head of the household. He could have given her a lot of other collateral. It was foolish to give her these two items.

If someone stole his seal and staff, he could appeal to the other households in his tribe for help. But since he was personally responsible for putting his household at risk, he would be shamed by asking for help. In fact the tribe would have cause to remove him as father of the household.

5/1/2007 9:55 AM

Hi John,

Absolutely. Bulldozing houses in Palestinian neighborhoods is not only physically cruel, but it also shames the father of the household who cannot even defend the house where they live. FYI it was the British who developed the strategy when Palestine was their protectorate.

For those of us who live in surplus economies protection of the weak is a social ideal. A common sermon motif is that the only just society is one where the poor, the powerless are not at risk. In subsistence economies, however, the weak threaten the survival of the entire community. Allowing the weak to remain in the community is leaving the community open to destruction from either nature or the enemy (Matt 25:1-13). The life-boat ethics developed by

Garrett Hardin "Lifeboat Ethics: the Case Against Helping the Poor" Psychology Today (September 1974) continues to be hotly debated (<http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/oct1978/v35-3-article2.htm>). In a world where – as Harvey Cox (Harvard Divinity School) observed in the 1960s – where for the first time since the Sermon on the Mount was preached it is physically possible for people of faith to care for the powerless, life boat ethics may be a sin. In the apocalyptic world after the bomb – "Jericho" (CBS) or "Mad Max: beyond Thunderdome" (1985) – allowing the weak to survive is social suicide.

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2007 11:46 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: houses

So if you were old or enfeebled or crippled and you lived in a pretty ruthless town like Sodom, the other farmers might decide you could no longer cut it and one would have his son rape one of "your women." If you were too feeble to respond, they would run you off your land for lack of viability. The challenge leads to excommunication from the town, though you might get to stay as a sharecropper.

This is exactly why the Israeli practice of bulldozing Palestinian homes and olive orchards is so devilish. They know damned well what they are doing: humiliating the householders by demonstrating they cannot protect those under their rooves nor even the rooves themselves, rendering the family non-viable, and destroying their standing.

<http://www.icahd.org/eng/news.asp?menu=5&submenu=1&item=218>

Hi John,

I would suggest they read Anita Diamant, The Red Tent (1997). It's a novel, but it does a wonderful job of describing how the sisterhood among women in a man's world works.

Carol Meyers (Duke University) does a great job – from the academic side of reconstructing the safety net that women in the world of the Bible used not just to survive, but to thrive in a man's world.

Meyers, Carol L.

1988 Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context New York : Oxford University.
1997 "The Family in Ancient Israel." In Families in Ancient Israel: 1-47. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
2002 "Having their Space and Eating There Too: bread production and female power in ancient Israelite households." Nashim 5: 14-44
2003 "Where the Girls Are: archaeology and women's lives in ancient Israel." In Between Text and Artifact: ineaing archaeology in biblical studies teaching: 31-51. Edited by Milton C. Moreland. Atlanta: SBL.
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From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2007 9:40 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: support system?

The question was asked - today we discussed rape, etc. - what support system was there for women, i.e. how did they endure being treated as pawns by men in this society, their bodies used as tablets for writing male-to-male power messages upon... even after they are dead?

I said that next week - we will discuss widows, Ruth and Tamar - we would see some of the safety net for women.

But what comes to your mind in this regard? Is there anything outside of a male-led household, or is it all within male-led households?

As Groucho Marx (almost) said, "Outside of her home a book is a woman's best friend. Inside her home it's too dark to read."

Hi John,

Yes, beena marriage. I have always thought the word was Arabic, though perhaps not. I am sending you an interesting article, and if you have J. Cheryl Exum, Fragmented Women (1993: 61-93) there is more discussion of alternative ways to understand this tradition.

I think Texas, whether redneck of VN, is a hard culture for your marrieds. I used to talk with the couples I prepared about how important it was for them to develop personal family customs, and not simply allow their extended families to use all their discretionary time. Holidays are especially

tough. I knew couples who got their children up at 6 AM on Christmas to exchange gifts, because they needed to be with one set of grandparents for church, then breakfast and gifts, before they rushed off to the other set of grandparents for supper and gifts. To endure, relationships need their own rituals. For example, Patrice and I always go to midnight mass on Christmas, and then come home drink champagne and eat green corn chicken tamales. Nothing profound, but it is ours.

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2007 9:21 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: Re: patrilocal / virilocal

I found it. It's called "beena marriage." I don't know the language. In her article in Bach, Prof Bal decides to make a distinction between patrilocal and virilocal, which as you say are the same. But Bal uses patrilocal as a term for this beena marriage, and virilocal for the other.

Funny how these terms describe John and Kim's marriage. VN society is strongly virilocal. The bride's parents do not even hear from her for a full year. However, the Trans seem pushing in the other direction. John and Kim lived in their house for six months while he and Kim were looking for jobs in Austin. And the mother at least knows that Kim was living in our old townhouse before they were married. Now they are married but they "must" visit her father every other week. They drive to Austin for the weekend which they love to do, but it's also kind of a pain in the neck in that they feel somewhat obligated to do it. Patrilocal!

----- Original Message -----

From: Don C. Benjamin
To: 'John W. Baker'
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2007 9:52 AM
Subject: RE: patrilocal / virilocal

Hello from Las Vegas.....

Patrice was here for the Oncology Nursing Society meeting, and I came up TH after school for a long weekend. We went to see Monty Python's Spamalot 1st night. What great fun.

Tonight is the Cirque de Soleil's Mystere.

Tomorrow is back to work.

Patrilocal and virilocal are the same; the wife lives with her husband's household.

There is a term for the woman continuing to live with her parents after marriage. I can't find it right now, but the woman of Timnah in the Samson Saga lives with her parents, and most commentaries mention the technical term for this locality.

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Saturday, April 28, 2007 2:27 PM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: patrilocal / virilocal

Are patrilocal and virilocal the same thing?
(the bride, after marriage, lives in her husband's house)

What do you call the situation where the husband does not have a stable home (herdsman) and the bride stays in her father's home and the husband visits?

I am confused.

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4/29/2007 10:19 PM

I came up to Las Vegas on TH (4.26-29). Patrice was here all week (.23-26) for the annual Oncology Nursing Society annual meeting. One of the keynote speakers was Jose Caruso, The Power of Losing Control (2003). We started reading it last night, to help us think about aging, about work changes, about being liberals in a now too conservative church. Try it. I think you will find it as helpful as we are. Bring all you are to all you do; that's all you need.

Mara Morganson-Flaherty Lecture on "Presence".

OCN Breakfast. Take care of yourself so you don't resent caring for patients.

Survivorship.

Palliative care tapes.

GI lecture; procedural slides for testing.

Sharks' Reef. Sea Turtles; Thai golden alligators; jellys; petting pool – rays! Spamalot. Bright side of life; bring out your dead; coconuts; who made you king? Wooden badger; its not the kind of thing you want to mention to a heavily armed Christian; I'm all alone; Great puns: Not dead yet! Not wed yet! Grail; Male; Knight who say "Knee";
Mystiere. Fat baby clown; drummers; two male gymnasts; trapeze acts; trampoline acts;
Titanic artifacts. Patrice survived; I did not. How many people were transferred because of a coal workers strike to the Titanic; steel hull will be completely eaten by marine bacteria in less than 100 years; delicate items survived; five compartments flooded; four and the ship could have survived; card sharps; tilt sinks to empty water;

Pool and hot tub at HGV. Marco Polo biker family.
Taco Salad at HGV; Chicken, couscous, asparagus w/Red Bicylette PN at HGV;
Oatmeal w/bananas at HGV.
Red HHR.
Sky High Cornbeef/Chicken at NY/NY w/potato salad & pickle. Iced tea
Working on long program. Great naps. ☺
Wynn had great tile/carpet floors; otherwise disappointing.
Lucky Lemmings; Wheel of Fortune; Texas Tea machines. Chris tutoring us on slots.

MGM three female lions sleeping in a huddle; two young cubs with their toys;
Dianne and Bo in Tahoe w/Marriott time share
Bellagio water ballet; how beautiful to walk through. Glass flower ceilings;
gardens.
Free Wifi in room. Nice.
Mercifully brief mass w/o music at UNLV.

4/28/2007 5:47 AM

Good morning!

I hope you have had time to read some of Henri Nouwen, The Wounded Healer (1972). Nouwen journals his own life, his own struggles, his own faith. He is candid and he is clear. I think you will find him a good companion.

I came up to Las Vegas this weekend. Patrice was here all week for the annual Oncology Nursing Society annual meeting. One of the keynote speakers was Jose Caruso, The Power of Losing Control (2003). We started reading it last night, to help us think about aging, about work changes, about being liberals in a now too conservative church. Try it. I think you will find it as helpful as we are.

You are on my mind this Sunday morning. Be well.

The Power of Losing Control

Joe Caruso
(2003)

Introduction

We do not think that the institutions like the church or the government are on our side. We try to do everything ourselves. We should look at institutions as neutral. As a result when we get to old to do everything ourselves, nothing, i.e. no institution is there to continue our work.

We think that our abilities are visible, and so we stand around waiting for others to choose us. The reality is that we do not sell ourselves and so much of what we could do is not done.

We do not think that there are people like us out there. So we do not network. Our best years are now behind us.

The church has had a strong impact – for good and bad – on us. We expect others – the hierarchy – to make decisions that we should make. We overlook other sources of inspiration.

4/25/2007 7:47 AM

Good Questions from a good friend.

Stories of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:4—4:2)

I'm sort of coming up with a Plan A vs. Plan B understanding.

Plan A was immortality without fertility.

Plan B is fertility but with mortality.

But...

- 1) Was Plan A supposed to be "God's first choice" i.e., better?
Probably no more so than his Plan A on finding a helper for Adam!
Yes, Yahweh really would have preferred that Adam be happy with Ol' Bossy and settle down to raising calves with her. But he wasn't so God had to go to Plan B, which was Woman??? So, I think the point is just that Yahweh was trying to see what would work.
- 2) Did Havva's conversation with self-as-Hivya lead her through self-deception?
...to a lesser moral choice? Not really, but it is hard to see it.
I would say the serpent represents not "the evil impulse" but the tendency to think and choose for oneself, willfully, independently.
The "tree of knowledge" is going to be the thinking person's tree.
They'll go for it every time. So, once she started "talking to the snake" it was inevitable. Not evil. Not a mistake. Just different. She did it her own way instead of what Yahweh had commanded. This happens with kids, btw. Not your father's Oldsmobile, as they say.

- 3) The above means that in addition to fertility at the cost of immortality, the story also says that we think for ourselves, have free will, and deal with consequences of making our own choices.

This point of interpretation I have not convinced myself of yet. I see that it has to be the way it is because of the way we are as children of Adam and Havva.

I don't yet see that the stories are trying to convince us that this is a good thing...or at least not as good as the fantasy.

But maybe that's a cultural difference. I guess it must be the case with an ancient etiological story, that once it gets things to the way they are it stops, because it doesn't really need to make the point that this is good. It is assumed that the way things are is good. What was needed was only a story about how they got this way, for everything must have a traditional explanation. And the tradition is ready to provide answers, answers that link us to the ancestors.

As I've thought a little bit more about the first paragraph, I think probably the Farmer and His Wife simply overlook the Tree of Life. For one thing, Adam seems thick as a brick, maybe a kind of Homer Simpson. He pays no attention to either tree, just eats his fill from all the others. And the Missus (pushy? too clever by half?) also overlooks the Tree of Life because she is focusing on the forbidden tree, thinking too much about what she can't have. So immortality, which was right there for the taking, eludes them.

The truly remarkable thing about the Hebrew story compared to Atra-hasis or whatever is how much space Genesis gives to the woman, to the creation of woman. Atra-hasis does apparently have a section where the birth-goddess gives a discourse on midwifery, marriage, and birth. The mention of the classes of female priests who do not bear children suggests that they had figured out the secret of "infertility" so to speak, some form of birth control / abortion.

If the intent of the teller was to say that Adam (Mr. Clod!) overlooked / ignored the tree of life then *pace* Augustine you have a symmetry in what went into making life the way it is:

Adam ignored the Tree of Life. Eve was preoccupied with the Tree of Fertility

We are not immortal thanks to Adam. We are fertile thanks to Eve.

Life has always been the way it is, because men and women have always been the way they are!

In the beginning of the story, do you see Adam and Eve partaking with God's blessing of the tree of life? It seems not to have been explicitly forbidden but included in "all the trees of the garden" from which they may eat.

Then in the epilogue this tree is guarded from them.

What Eve chose was the tree of "knowing" which is in divine terms knowing how to create, and in human terms knowing how to procreate, i.e. the secrets of fertility, broadly-speaking.

God's concern is that they not eat the fruit of BOTH trees at the same time, as that would make them divine, having both immortality and the power to create. I guess the implication is that if they start breeding and also live forever they will quickly overrun the place.

God's original intention was that they enjoy immortality but not fertility, i.e., the competence to support their own lives through working the land and bearing children.

The farmer and his wife willfully chose the latter instead and so God took back the immortality. You can't have both. And can't put the cat back in the bag. So, the only thing to do is block access to the tree of immortal life. And so this seems to be what God meant when he said, "...in the day that you partake of it (fertility) you will surely die," i.e., you will become mortal.

Do you see in the stories a nostalgia for the semi-pastoral way of life, as perhaps easier than the settled, agricultural life? I don't know if you've ever read *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolpho Anaya. He is considered the father or god-father of chicano literature. In that book, there runs a tension between the free life of the vacaro and the settled life of the farmer. The tension is exemplified by a tension between the families of the protagonist's mother (farmers) and his father (vacaros). The family now lives in a pueblo but the father considers it a real come-down from his early years living on horseback on the llano as a wild and free vacaro. Now he works on the highway and has little respect for his wife's brothers who are all quiet, thoughtful farmers.

Then in the epilogue this tree is guarded from them.

What Eve chose was the tree of "knowing" which is in divine terms knowing how to create, and in human terms knowing how to procreate, i.e. the secrets of fertility, broadly-speaking.

Stories of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel (Gen 25:20—37:2)

Just going over my (your) notes before class and had a question about how the role of the male was conceived (sorry!) in fertility. When Jacob is scolding Rachel for demanding a child of him, he seems clearly to say that that her fertility is not his department. And in all the stories of the childless female ancestor, the grief over the situation is all hers; not his. Presumably, if the man is fertile, he has children by a surrogate wife, otherwise he wouldn't be an ancestor!

So, what exactly does it mean then when the head of the household goes into the temple prostitute? Is he renewing only his household's fertility impersonally in terms of fields and children? Or does his "performance" demonstrate male virility but not fertility? In other words, if fertility is purely the woman's department, how did these folks understand the male role, particularly in the temple prostitute ritual? Why is not the woman involved in some kind of fertility ritual? Is there such a thing as male fertility in their thought? Was it thought of metaphorically like seed to be scattered on either fertile or barren soil?

Hi John Baker,

Just going over your e-mails again this AM.

"We are mortal thanks to Adam. We are fertile thanks to Eve!" I wish I had said that, but that is what I wanted to say was the intention of these creation stories. Be grateful to Adam. Be grateful to Eve. Embrace your mortality and embrace your fertility. Lay down your life for another.

I also like the observation that the Stories of Adam and Eve give rather generous attention to the woman. It would be interesting to actually see how other creation stories do. I am just finishing my Women in the Bible course, and that would have been a great research project.

Choice certainly is part of the stories, although, unlike Augustine who focuses on freewill, I see the stories as teaching that humans – the woman and the man – chose to be fertile and immortal. Fertility and immortality is not a shortcoming or failure in the world that Yahweh created. Fertility and mortality were the human contribution to the divine-human collaboration that built the world we have.

The stories endorse the choice of fertility and mortality as good by the way they characterize the woman. The woman chose, on the behalf of all humans, to be mortal and fertile. She was not ignorant, sinful or selfish; she was heroically intelligent, moral and selfless. She was good; therefore, her choice was good.

Certainly in the Utnapishtim episodes in the Stories of Atrahasis and in the Stories of Adapa the divine assembly offers a mortal the chance to become immortal. In the Stories of Adam and Eve, however, the man and the woman are immortal and infertile when the stories begin. The trees emphasize that the key to success in human life is choice, and that every choice involves both a yes and a no. Most

I am a Military Brat

 of

a yes and a no. Most of us recognize the yes portion of every choice and know what we want. However, regularly, we ignore the no portion of every choice – what we are denying ourselves. We all want to say yes to losing weight; we ignore the no we are saying to our favorite comfort foods.

I wish we were having
conversation at Star
Pizza!

4/21/2007 9:32 AM

Two events in early life contributed my love for anthropology and archaeology. I was an army brat, and I read every issue of *Nation*

I am a Military Brat

Anonymous

My hometown is nowhere, my friends are everywhere.
I grew up with the knowledge that home is where the heart is
and the family....

Mobility is my way of life.
Some would wonder about roots, yet they are as deep and strong
as the mighty oak. I sink them quickly, absorbing all an area offers
and hopefully, giving enrichment in return.

Travel has taught me to be open.
Shaking hands with the universe, I find brotherhood in all men.
Farewells are never easy.
Yet, even in sorrow comes strength and ability to face tomorrow
with anticipation....if when we leave one place,
I feel that half my world is left behind. I also know that
the other half is waiting to be met.

Friendships are formed in hours and kept for decades.
I will never grow up with someone, but I will mature with many.
Be it inevitable that paths part, there is constant hope
that they will meet again.

Love of country, respect and pride
fill my being when Old Glory passes in review.
When I stand to honor that flag, so also do I stand in honor of all

I was born in Louisiana, and before I left high school I had lived in Florida, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Japan, New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, California and Massachusetts. I went to seven schools in twelve years.

³³ “Military Brats Registry” <http://www.military-brats.com/>

My family's itinerant lifestyle taught me just how different people are, and how differently they live. I was a social scientist in training. If I was going to survive, I needed to pay attention to the people around me in each place, so that I could understand how to do what they did, and to appreciate why they did what they did.

To understand others is an intellectual activity. To appreciate others is an emotional activity. I not only wanted to know what was going on, I also wanted to feel how those around me felt about what they did. .

Accent is a good example. Before my father was transferred to Georgia, I went to kindergarten in New Jersey. I am sure that my accent was vintage New Jersey. In Georgia I had to ride a city bus to school. A couple stops after I got on the bus a group of Southern high school girls would get on the bus. They knew I was an outsider. For weeks they tormented me: "Come on, Yankee boy, talk!" For weeks I clutched my Lone Ranger lunch box and said nothing, but I listened carefully to how they sounded.

Eventually I was ready. The girls boarded. They started. I looked up at them and cooed with all the grits I could find in my first-grade voice: "Y'all hush!" They never bothered me again. I had paid attention to the people around me, and learned how to sound like they sounded.

National Geographic was my window on the world.³⁴ The pictures were stunning. They made me want to grow up and travel to far away places and to live with exotic people. I wanted to be like the anthropologists or archaeologists in National Geographic. I wanted to introduce the people of one time and place to the people of another.

When I finished college, however, I did not become an anthropologist or an archeologist. I became a biblical scholar. I traveled to far away place and lived with exotic people, but only through the words of the laws and stories in the Bible. Yet the way I was taught to study texts would eventually lead me back to anthropology and archaeology.

In graduate school I studied the Bible using what biblical scholars call "form criticism" and anthropologists call "folklore studies". Form criticism developed in Europe. The work of Axel Olrik (1864-1917) on *The Heroic Legends of Denmark* (1919) was particularly influential in developing the method of folklore studies, and consequently of biblical form criticism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars such as Hermann Gunkel (1862-

³⁴ National Geographic <http://nationalgeographic.com/>

1932)³⁵ and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918)³⁶ were learning how to use the folklore studies of Olrik and other anthropologists to better understand the biblical traditions in Genesis and Psalms, for example.³⁷

Form criticism studies three aspects of a biblical tradition: form, setting and intention. “Form” is the basic genre from which biblical traditions develop. “Setting” is the social institution (German: Sitz im Leben) where the genre develops. “Intention” is the purpose for which the genre was used. Until the last twenty or twenty-five years of the twentieth century biblical form critics concentrated on the form and the intention of biblical traditions. They identified stories like creation stories, ancestor stories, hero stories and parable stories. And they identified laws like case law, apodictic law, covenant law, trials and appeals. They also determined that the intention of creation stories, for example, was to describe how the powerful expected a culture to work. Similarly, the intention of laws was to solve problems when a particular part of a culture did not work properly. Form critics did not pay much attention to the settings – the social institutions where these biblical traditions developed. A regular answer to the question: “Where did this biblical tradition develop?” was liturgy.

Near the end of my work on my Ph.D. dissertation I happened to read: “The Understanding of “Sitz im Leben” in Form Criticism” by Douglas Knight. Knight asked a series of provocative questions.

“What do we mean by ‘liturgy’ in the world of the Bible?”

“Is liturgy drafted by a committee in ancient Israel working like the committee that drafted the Book of Common Prayer in 1928 for the Episcopal Church?”

“Is ‘liturgy’ something that classroom parents create for the celebration of mothers’ day?”

“Is ‘liturgy’ something created by the Library of Congress deciding what authors to feature in an exhibit on colonial Virginia?”

Liturgy in the world of the Bible, and liturgy in the worlds of Judaism, Christianity and Islam today are not the same. In fact the world where the Bible developed was very different from worlds of Judaism, Christianity and Islam today. Therefore, it is impossible to understand the Bible without first understanding the world of the Bible because the meaning of any tradition is

³⁵ The Legends of Genesis. 1901.

³⁶ Prolegomena to the history of Israel. With a reprint of the article, Israel, from the Encyclopedia Britannica.

³⁷ The Heroic Legends of Denmark. 1919.

determined by the social institution where that tradition developed.³⁸ To understand the Bible it is essential to use anthropology and archaeology to understand the worlds where that Bible developed.

Biblical scholars who reconstruct the worlds of the Bible in order to better understand the Bible itself are called: “social scientific critics.”³⁹ To reconstruct the worlds of the Bible social scientific criticism uses sociology, anthropology, ethnography and archaeology.⁴⁰ Sometimes social scientific critics study the big picture sometimes they study the little picture.

How do theories of state formation influence the interpretation of the Stories of Saul, the Stories of Jonathan and the Stories of David in the Bible?

How does the lack of a destruction layer during the Late Bronze period at Jericho influence the Stories of Joshua?

How does architectural style of the pillared house in Syria-Palestine influence the interpretation of household laws in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers?

How do reconstructions of institutions like purity-impurity regulations...

Kinship patterns...

Prophecy...

Tribes ruled by chiefs...

Please describe your experience working with computerized student information systems and computer applications.

My 300 level courses at ASU were writing courses (L). Each semester my teaching assistants and I worked patiently and consistently with the students to help them improve their writing skills, and their classroom communication skills. They learned to formulate research proposals. They learned to use databases to locate articles and books for their research. They learned to use the on-line library catalogue, to download on-line journal

³⁸ Catherine Murphy, Dept of Religious Studies, Santa Clara University. <http://www-relg-studies.scu.edu/facstaff/murphy/courses/exegesis/social-scientific.htm>

³⁹ Paula McNutt, Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel. http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/mcnutt_ancientIsrael.htm

⁴⁰ Carol Newsome, “Probing Scripture: the new biblical critics”. (2004) <http://www.forministry.com>

articles, and to order materials not available in campus libraries through interlibrary loan. They learned to read articles and book chapters carefully, so that they could, in their own words, summarize an author’s argument, and apply what they have learned from the author to their research. Prof. Joel Gereboff, chair of Religious Studies, and Prof. Linell Cady, director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict would be happy to serve as professional references for my work in the department.

Frequently I was the first instructor to require many students to use the tools that Blackboard provides. Therefore, they often needed help accessing Blackboard, downloading assignment directions and PowerPoint presentations to prepare for class; submitting and retrieving their research reports, displaying and reading their Microsoft Word documents once they were edited using the Insert-Comment and Track-Changes features.

I am a Military Brat
Anonymous

My hometown is nowhere, my friends are everywhere.
I grew up with the knowledge that home is where the heart is
and the family....

Mobility is my way of life.
Some would wonder about roots, yet they are as deep and strong
as the mighty oak. I sink them quickly, absorbing all an area offers
and hopefully, giving enrichment in return.

Travel has taught me to be open.
Shaking hands with the universe, I find brotherhood in all men.
Farewells are never easy.
Yet, even in sorrow comes strength and ability to face tomorrow
with anticipation....if when we leave one place,
I feel that half my world is left behind. I also know that
the other half is waiting to be met.

Friendships are formed in hours and kept for decades.
I will never grow up with someone, but I will mature with many.
Be it inevitable that paths part, there is constant hope
that they will meet again.

Love of country, respect and pride

4/19/2007 5:54 AM

Tom Donovan

Don:

How do you want to be listed by Catholic Charities for this event: Don Benjamin, Don C. Benjamin, Dr. Don C. Benjamin, Don Benjamin, Ph.D.

I may have more but so far at my table are: Janet Valder, Bill Myers, Don Fausel, Graham Johnson, yourself, Ann McCarthy, Ed and Rosalie Favilla, Jack Ryan, Tom Donovan, and possibly two more. Ed is a former Jesuit from Spokane province, who teaches in the NAU extension program and University of Phoenix. Don Fausel is a former priest, Sulpician from Maryland, and former head of ASU School of Social Work.

Don,

Nice to hear from you. I am currently serving in a staff position at North Phoenix Baptist Church and am grateful that God has provided a place of service and means of supporting my family but honestly I am still waiting for an opportunity to reenter academics in some way. I still feel so called to that world but it has been three years of looking, applying and waiting and still nothing so I wonder what God is saying. If you have any clues I am all ears.

Hope that things are well with you. I miss our conversations in the seminar room at ASU.

Blessings,
Maxie

From: Don C. Benjamin [mailto:dcben@asu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 18, 2007 9:08 AM
To: Maxie Burch
Subject: Life?
Hi Maxie,

How are you doing?

Peace.

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Barrett, the Honors College

4/17/2007 9:01 AM

Hi John,

I was in the arms of the IRS over the weekend so am just getting to your e-mail.

From the way that I read Hans Walter Wolff, "The Sex Cult." In Hosea: a commentary on the book of the prophet Hosea 1974: 14-23 the fertility of both men and women preparing for marriage had to be verified by a priest. To be eligible for marriage both the man and the woman had to have intercourse with a priest until a child was conceived. Paternity in traditional cultures is determined by adoption at birth, not by conception. Therefore, who conceives the child is not as important as who adopts the child. Wolff is explaining that Gomer is not guilty of adultery. The tradition does not assume that Hosea rescues wayward women. Both Hosea and Gomer prepared for marriage by demonstrating their fertility, but despite all this conscientious preparation their marriage failed. Their experience is parallel to all the preparations the rulers of Israel took by making covenants with neighboring states for food and protection in the event of famine or war. The sin is not sexual; it is a sin of humans trying to do what YHWH has promised to do. That kind of arrogance in either marriage or politics basically says that YHWH lies or that YHWH is weak. YHWH will not feed and protect the Hebrews as YHWH promised; or that YHWH cannot feed and protect the Hebrews.

The barren wife motif emphasizes that all children are a divine gift, not a human accomplishment. "The man" is always YHWH, and not the human father. When Jacob demures Rachel, he is saying that YHWH decides who has a child and who does not. The fertility of women is a matter of divine gift.

In the Story of Tamar and Judah (Gen 38:1-30), Judah has intercourse with a priest while shearing his sheep not just because boys will be boys, or what goes on during conventions stays at the convention. The harvest and the shearing were like menstruation. Each was the end of a season of fertility. To begin the new season, Judah negotiates covenants for breed stock, for pastureland, for herders, etc. To both bless and to finance these covenants goes to the sanctuary. Tamar, acting as a priest, negotiates the loan – notice she will receive a percentage and she takes collateral. Their covenant is then sealed by intercourse. Notice that she conceives, and the sheep multiply. Fertility is always a matter of both land and children.

Finally, infertility is always a “female problem” in the world of the Bible. Men are never considered impotent. They can fail to fulfill their responsibilities like Onan who “withdraws”, but they are not even indicted for too few swimmers.

Enjoy your class!

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Department of Religious Studies
Barrett, the Honors College
Arizona State University, Tempe AZ 85287-3104

From: John W. Baker [mailto:jjwbaker@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 15, 2007 4:52 AM
To: Don C. Benjamin
Subject: male fertility?

Just going over my (your) notes before class and had a question about how the role of the male was conceived (sorry!) in fertility. When Jacob is scolding Rachel for demanding a child of him, he seems clearly to say that that her fertility is not his department. And in all the stories of the childless female ancestor, the grief over the situation is all hers; not his. Presumably, if the man is fertile, he has children by a surrogate wife, otherwise he wouldn't be an ancestor!

So, what exactly does it mean then when the head of the household goes into the temple prostitute? Is he renewing only his household's fertility impersonally in terms of fields and children? Or does his "performance" demonstrate male virility but not fertility? In other words, if fertility is purely the woman's department, how did these folks understand the male role, particularly in the temple prostitute ritual? Why is not the woman involved in some kind of fertility ritual? Is there such a thing as male fertility in their thought? Was it thought of metaphorically like seed to be scattered on either fertile or barren

soil?

I guess what I'm asking Don, is where do babies come from?

:o)

jjwbaker@earthlink.net

2/9/2007 11:22 AM

Talked with Judy Grace

Judy Grace, Ph.D.

Interim Director

Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence
Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona 85287-0101
judy.grace@asu.edu
480-965-2495

Judy is an Instructional Professional and Interim Director of the Center for learning and Teaching Excellence. She has taught Higher Education Administration at the Pennsylvania State University, Iowa State University, and the George Washington University. She also taught English at Norfolk State University, Tidewater Community College, and Prince George's Community College. In addition to her faculty duties, she served in Student Services and Continuing Education at Tidewater Community College, as Director and Associate Academic Officer for Curriculum Development at Western Governors University, as the Research Officer at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in Washington, DC, and as a Policy Analyst for the University of Maryland System.

While at ASU, she has been co-PI on several grants related to assessment of learning. She also was co-director of the federally-funded National Center for Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. At ASU, she is a faculty associate in the Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, in the Writing Programs. She has consulted with two-year and four-year institutions on curriculum and assessment issues, and with Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.

Her governance work includes membership on the Committee on Academic Professional Status, the Commission on the Status of Women, New Faculty Orientation Committee, and the Senate's Committee on Committees.

Her workshops here cover a broad range of topics related to the assessment of student learning outcomes.

Talked with Chris in Grove

Talked with Neal Bierling today about using his photo archives in Stories & Stones.

Neal Bierling, Archaeological and Educational Projects Director

A 1969 graduate of Calvin College (<http://www.calvin.edu/about/history.htm>), Neal Bierling has a special connection to Petra: he served a short stint on the team that helped unearth a marble Byzantine pulpit at Petra. Bierling, a local educator, photographer and businessman, has been working on middle east digs for 32 years. After graduating from Calvin he earned his master's degree in near eastern studies and archaeology from the University of Michigan. For the last 15 years, Bierling has designed and set up outdoor, hands-on archaeological dig sites for local schools and now trains educators nationwide in the development of such sites. In 1995 Neal and son Joel (also a Calvin graduate) formed PhoenixDataSystems.com, a company dedicated to developing educational materials on middle eastern archaeology. Their present project includes the production of a PanoReality Tour DVD of Petra, to be used at the Petra exhibit and for educational purposes in school districts throughout the Great Lakes region.

Hi Nicholas (Wenham),

I think the support group is a great idea. I also think you ought to include Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying (1997 edition) in the mix. It is still the best and simplest analysis of loss. Two important things to remember about her description. First, we do not all suffer loss in the same order. So not everyone starts out angry and then move to depression. Second, once we have been through one phase, there is no guarantee that we will not go through that phase again with the same loss at another time. So we can bargain with God, and then bargain with God again. Good luck on your project.

http://www.amazon.com/Death-Dying-Elisabeth-Kubler-Ross/dp/0684839385/sr=1-1/qid=1171044218/ref=pd_bbs_1/002-9305555-0303233?ie=UTF8&s=books

Will be anxious to hear about your first preaching experience.

Patrice and I are going back to Hawaii on vacation this summer. Several years ago we visited Kawaii and Oahu. This time we are going to visit Hawaii and Oahu. The following year we are going to spend vacation in the Rockies in Colorado. Denver is Patrice's home. I am trying to arrange for us to do some time in Ecuador and Turkey. I want to see the Galapagos Islands. One of my students did his LDS mission in Ecuador. We have friends from Turkey, and there are some wonderful excavation sites there that I would like to see. So that's on tap for 2009, 2010.

I am still teaching at ASU, although the department downsized drastically this semester, so I am only teaching one course instead of four courses. Have been trying to develop something in the Honors College. I have one class there. I really need an academic address at least until I finish work on: Stones & Stories: an introduction to archaeology & the Bible. If I still don't have more teaching income by spring 2008, then I will go back to restoring and reselling houses.

We are still going to mass at the Casa. I feel a strong debt of gratitude to those folks for all the years they supported Frances – Patrice's mom – and us. The continue to be welcoming and to be concerned about us. Bill Cieslak is the only celebrant and homilist who really prays and preaches helpfully. He still comes once the month. The changes that Olmstead imposed – bread recipes, metal cups and bowls, announcements at the end of mass, peace only at communion, etc. – still are a real distraction for me. We now go every other week, and try to do something inspiring on the alternative weekends. Last week was the CDA appeal, so we spent the weekend at the Grand Canyon. Managing our community identity really should not be this demanding.

12/13/2006 6:35 AM

From Nicholas Wenham [nwenham@gmail.com]:

My Mother, Barbara Ann Wenham, entered into eternal life this morning at about 6:15 a.m. She just celebrated her 60th birthday last Monday. She had gone into a non-responsive state during the night and was brought to the emergency room early this morning. Her breathing was shallow and she remained non-responsive. My brother Brian was with her at the hospital and notified my brother Steve and I as her condition progressed.

Information about her Funeral Mass will be forthcoming. Please keep our family in prayer.

Grant her eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.

*May angels guide her and bring her into paradise,
and may all the martyrs come forth to welcome her home;
and may they lead her into the holy city, Jerusalem.*

Love,

Nicholas

Hi Nick,

Your mother's death marks the end of a significant period of your life filled with mixed emotions. Be patient with yourself as you go through these coming days and months. You have my continuing prayers, and if, while you are back in AZ, you want to get in touch, I will be here most of the semester break.

From Bob McNair (bobmcnair2@socal.rr.com):

THE GOOD PADRE LECTURES AT ST BERNARDINES WHERE WE GO ON OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT. HE IS A DIABETIC WITH ALL USUALLY PROBLEMS . I HAVE BECOME ONE OF HIS COACHES. HE GOT SOME THE WORST INSTRUCTIONS --- WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT EAT . ITS IMPOSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE . HIS HEALTH IS SO BAD HE IS THINKING OF RETIRING FROM HIS DUTIES AT ST. MONICA'S IN SANTA MONICA. HE WANTS TO WRITE AND I TOLD HIM I WOULD GET HIM IN TOUCH WITH YOU IF O K

IT MAY NEVER HAPPEN . I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE WANTS TO WRITE ABOUT . HE IS A HUMAN DYNAMO

Hi Bob,

Good to hear from you.

Give Fr. Glassman my URL: www.doncbenjamin.com That is my website. If what I do seems to be of interest, the information about contacting me is in the About DCB folder.

Have another week of work on grades, and research, then I am going to take a week off to work with a couple of young friends on their house. Leah was my assistant when I was at Kino. She and Burak have four children. A couple years ago we added four rooms to the house, but there is still a lot to do.

Christmas eve we are going to Tucson. Jim and Laurie always have a party, and it is lots of fun. We do presents with them on Christmas day. Jim is a great cook. He and I are quite competitive in the kitchen. Christmas day we go to Pius X parish for mass. It is a very hospitable, and very prayerful place for the day – good music, good preaching.

Patrice and I had the most inspiring Thanksgiving. We went to Ciudad Juarez across from El Paso to be with long-time friends who have been working in Mexico for ten years and in Latin America for forty years. They always work on peace and justice issues – right now on the economic impact of Nafta on border communities in Mexico and US immigration policy is a big issue. Betty works with women in abusive relationships and with the some 400+ plus women originally recruited to work in the American owned machilas who have -- in Juarez alone -- have been raped murdered.

Their life work reads like a journal of everything and everyone in Peru, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina and Bolivia who have been involved in the struggle for peace and justice. Names like Oscar Romero, Jon Sobrino, Helder Camara, Ita Ford, Maura Clark, Dorothy Kazel, Jean Donovan filled our conversations during those days. All those folks and so many more were/are co-workers, personal friends.

Peter and Betty live in a tough colonia in a tiny little house – but their lives and their vision are so real, so sensible so faith-filled. With all the nonsense that goes on today in the name of religion, it was a true gift to be around these two, and remember just what faith can do to make human life so much better.

They are in the 70's and 80's now, and one of my concerns is their archives. They have been remarkably faithful in writing newsletters, keeping journals, mail, and, to some extent, limited publication books. I just afraid when they die or they have a fire all these primary documents will vanish. I encouraged them to see if one of the local universities would underwrite scanning and organizing it so that people studying what liberation theology was looking like on the ground during the last half of the twentieth century could use it.

After New Year's we are going to drive a rental truck to San Francisco to deliver some of Frances' furniture to Dianne, and then spend a couple days in the city. Nice to be close enough to SF to enjoy it.

12/7/2006 9:09 AM (Anniversary of Pearl Harbor, 1941)

You are one of those professors I will remember for my entire life. Where one door seems to close, another one will open. Teaching one less class will give you more time to finish this book you're working on...and that will teach even more people than one class room...

Peace to you, Dr. Benjamin-
Ashley Jacobson

On 12/6/06, don.benjamin@asu.edu <don.benjamin@asu.edu> wrote:

Hi Ashley,
You were so kind to express your appreciation of my teaching in class yesterday. I want you to know how much it meant to me.

Just as the semester was beginning the university reallocated funds away from our department. Consequently, I am teaching only three, instead of four, courses this semester, and only one course for the department next semester.

I am an avid teacher, as you know, and not having the opportunity to teach is hard on me. These last days of the semester were tough. Your kind words made it so much easier for me to remember this last class of fall, and to remember it with joy.

Thank you.

12/4/2006 12:08 PM

The Battleship Arizona yet weeps. That such events could actually have occurred, that the world could be so convulsed, that humanity could have inflicted upon itself such a frightful wound, all but defies belief. Yet the history books are there to tell us about it and to paint whatever lessons the authors of those books might surmise to be helpful. And for this conflict, much more so than for any previous one, there are films and recordings and photographs, immutable proof that these gigantic, incredible events did occur. And for now, thankfully, we still have our grandpas and grandmas, though their generation swiftly fades. They were there at Pearl Harbor, on Iwo Jima, at Omaha Beach and Buchenwald. They can tell you, should you care to ask. And when they are gone, there will yet be the Arizona, weeping beneath the waves. It is said half a million gallons of oil yet remain in her ravaged hull. At two quarts a day, a million days will pass before the last of it bleeds away. By then, of course, the ship herself will be gone, eaten into atoms by the inevitabilities of rust and time. And by then, perhaps we will have learned, at long last, a better way.

Gary Nelson, "December 7, 1941 -- Pearl Harbor: when Arizona became a symbol" Arizona Republic (December 3, 2006: V4

11/11/2006 5:55 AM

According to Daniel J. Socolow, director of the MacArthur Fellowship program, one of the three criteria for the grant is the grant's potential to transform the life of the recipient. (Southwest Airlines Spirit Magazine September 2006: 142-152). "We're looking for people who are extremely creative, who have great promise, and for whom the power of an award like this will help leverage that potential. There's no age limit, and recipients have ranged from 18-83.... The



MacArthur goes to people who are clearly very, very bright, but who demonstrate a whole lot more: energy, boldness, risk-taking, commitment, vision, willingness to explore and find out new things."

Daniel J. Socolow
Director, MacArthur Fellowship

11/8/2006 8:13 AM

Hi Lyn (Carolyn Osiek),

Thanks for these wonderful celebrations of a truly remarkable woman! It is hard to believe what courage and perseverance it took – even in our days – to grow through all the walls.

When I started my studies, for example, I had four hours of seminary in the morning, then I had to walk from the seminary (students were not allowed to drive) to Catholic University for three hours of Semitics every afternoon. It was an insane schedule, but it was one of those "as you as you get all your other work done, then you can work on a degree in biblical studies" kind of arrangements. To make the two mile walk from the seminary to the university I wore my black suit and collar. I got called before the master of professed to explain why I was not wearing my habit! I truly thought I was being practical – to the faculty I was rebellious. What turmoil such small things caused us all over the years.

I admire the perseverance, and the good humor, and the patience of a woman like Kathryn. I certainly am less forgiving, and less patient. I cannot believe with all the stress she lived to be 101 and inspired us all along the way.

10/10/2006 11:29 AM

Dear Doctor Benjamin,

Thank you for your very kind letter about the Festival and my work. I'm sorry I was not at the Festival when you and Patrice came---I would have enjoyed seeing and visiting with you as my wife Irene did.

I'll drop in the mail a color catalog of my iconography at the Arizona State University.

Thank you again and may God bless you and your family,

“Dan” Diamantis Cassis

From: Don C. Benjamin [mailto:dcben@asu.edu]

Sent: Monday, October 09, 2006 2:52 PM

To: cassis@blkbox.com

Subject: Greek Festival

Good afternoon!

We just returned to Phoenix today from the Greek Festival in Houston. Houston was home for Patrice and me from 1971-1997, and the Greek Festival was one of our annual pleasures – so we decided to enjoy it again.

We have a Theotokos icon you painted some years ago, and it hangs in our living room. We were admiring your large works in the cathedral, and had the most enjoyable conversation with your wife.

Thank you for your work, and for your inspiration.

Peace

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Arizona State University, Tempe AZ 85287 3104

10/9/2006 11:25 AM

From Mike Rooney:

You may already know, but Fr. Robert Flaherty died earlier this week at the age of 89. One of the really "good guys." I can't recall anyone saying that he/she didn't like him.

CARMELITE REVEREND ROBERT COLEMAN FLAHERTY DIES

(September 28, 2006; Darien, IL) The Order of Carmelites of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province under the direction of the Very Reverend John Welch,

O.Carm., Prior Provincial mourns the loss of Reverend Robert Coleman Flaherty, O.Carm., who died at the age of 89 on Thursday, September 28, 2006 at Edwards Hospital in Naperville, Illinois.

Father Flaherty, will be waked in the Chapel of Carmelite Carefree Village, 8419 Bailey Road, Darien, Illinois on Monday, October 2, 2006 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm. He will also be waked at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 8404 Cass Avenue, in Darien, on Tuesday morning, October 3, 2006 from 9:00 – 10:45 am. A Mass of Christian Burial will immediately follow there at 11:00 am. The Very Reverend John Welch, O.Carm., Prior Provincial of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province, will preside. Reverend Kevin Shanley, O.Carm., will be the homilist. On Friday, October 6, 2006 at 9:30 am, a visitation will take place at Holy Trinity Parish at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 237 Sea Street, Quincy, Massachusetts. A Mass of the Resurrection will follow at 10:00 am. Internment will immediately follow at Pine Hill Cemetery in Quincy.

Robert Flaherty was born in Quincy, Massachusetts, the son of the late Patrick Joseph and Ellen (Walsh) on August 22, 1917. He was one of three children in the family that included his twin brother, the late John Francis and Mrs. Dorothy Eilers. He attended both elementary and secondary schools in Quincy; attending St. John the Baptist Grade School, Central Junior and Quincy high school's. He also attended St. Philip Neri preparation school in Boston, Massachusetts.

Following preparatory school in Boston, Robert Flaherty joined the Holy Cross Fathers and attended Our Lady of the Holy Cross seminary in North Easton, Massachusetts. After two years there, he entered Mount Carmel College in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

He professed his simple vows at the Carmelite Novitiate house in New Baltimore, Pennsylvania on August 15, 1943. He professed solemn vows at Whitefriars Hall in Washington, DC, on September 29, 1946.

Father Robert Flaherty, O.Carm., was ordained a priest on June 7, 1947 at St. Simon Stock Church in Bronx, New York. After ordination, Father Flaherty began his career as a Carmelite priest at the Carmelite Junior Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts. While in Hamilton, Father Flaherty served as vocation director for six years until 1954. Moving back to New Baltimore, Fr. Flaherty was assigned to the Carmelite Novitiate house as assistant novice master and later house prior. In 1968 he moved from Pennsylvania to Washington, DC where he served as house treasurer at Whitefriars Hall. He held this position for two years before moving back to New Baltimore and becoming the pastor of John the Baptist church, where he served for eight years. He also served in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at St. Leo's church. At St. Leo's, Father Flaherty served first as assistant pastor and prior. In 1981 he was named pastor.

During his time in Pittsburgh, Father Robert conducted many retreats for the Sisters of Mary Immaculate and the Sisters of Charity located in Greensburg. Father Quinn Conners, O.Carm., who was Provincial of the Order during his association with Father Robert remembers him as, “a very personable and wonderful guy. He had great respect for everyone he encountered, especially the young student Carmelites. His great human touch was ahead of his time.”

When St. Leo’s parish was merged, Father Robert was assigned to the Provincial House in Barrington, Illinois where he served as house treasurer until his retirement.

Upon retirement, Fr. Robert first resided at Carmelite Carefree Village in Darien, Illinois, and then St. Patrick’s Residence in Naperville.

May he rest in peace.

Hi Mike,

Thanks again for keeping me in the loop.

One of my favorite memories of Bob was during our novitiate. I cleaned the priests' washroom, and for some reason thought it would be fun to screw a flasher into the ceiling light, so that when you turned the switch on the light would blink on and off. So I got the tall ladder, climbed up to the ten foot ceiling, got the globe off, removed the bulb and put the quarter size flasher in the socket and re-installed the bulb.

Next morning when I went to clean, the flasher was gone. Never heard a word. Thought it was weird because one of the Fathers would have had to go to all the work I had done to install the flasher, to uninstall it. But following a prime directive of practical jokers, I did not pursue it.

Then about a month later, someone else must have found the flashers in the storage area when I had found mine, and put them in the frats' second floor washroom. I guess Bob saw them on his way to chapel and announced: "Whoever put the flashers in the frats' washroom come to my office after breakfast." I knew that I had not struck the frats' washroom, but wanted to be sure he had not misspoke. So I pretended to be working on something outside his office to see who showed up. The villain appeared and Bob read him the riot act for both my and his mischief. That was the first time I learned that Humphrey hated practical jokes, and that Bob was trying to protect us from Humphrey's wrath!

I owe him at least a prayer.

9/28/2006 6:53 PM

Dear Jon Katz,

I am 64! Long ago in my life I was a Carmelite friar. Trained in that wonderful tradition of spirituality, I nonetheless felt holiness was for the elite – John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, not for me. Then finishing my BA at St Bonaventure University where Merton had taught, I read the Seven Story Mountain. Merton made holiness something that even I wanted to enjoy. I read Merton – as you did – fervently. I trusted him, I believed him, and then he died. There were not more journals. I was alone.

Then I discovered Henri Nouwen. Henri had that same wonderful gift of making difficult things – like holiness or spirituality – seem simple. He became my mentor. I never met Merton. During my PhD work, however, I met Henri. Picked him up at the airport when he came to give a talk. Sat up late listening to him share his passion for change. I never felt Merton's life was my life, but I did feel that Nouwen's life was my life. We were both priests. We were both professors. We were both struggling. In one way, however, we were different. I had begun my ministry in South Central LA, the year after the first Watts riots. I was there ten years. Teaching. Working as a parish priest. As a community organizer. Working on my PhD. When a call came from an ivy league college asking if I wanted a job – I balked. I spent two weeks talking with the folks in the community. They told me to go for it. I went from white, liberal, accepted member of a poor and suffering community to a college prof. Nouwen was different. He was a college prof – at Yale, at Harvard Divinity, and he agonized about doing something relevant with his life. So he went to Peru. Then he went on tour trying to convince Americans what a mess US foreign policy was making of Latin America. I went to one talk. Instead of the articulate and convincing Nouwen who wrote and spoke so eloquently of the spiritual life, he was halting, confused. The extremist tore into him during the Q&A, and I wept. All the years I spent in the ivy leagues working with students who could change the world, I was confident that the folks from Watts were there. Nouwen never had that endorsement. When he died – like Merton tragically and too soon – I was marooned.

No one spoke to me of the spiritual life like these two. I read widely. I like Annie LaMott most, but then I found Jon Katz. Patrice and I adopted an Australian shepherd. We had never had this breed and so we looking for help. We found A Dog Year. Orseon was a border collie. We read, we laughed we learned. We kept the Aussie. Today we cannot believe we actually got out the

papers from the Human Society one night and read the guidelines for returning an adoption. Denver has been part of our family for seven years!

Tonight we just finished reading *Running*. I know we are reading out of order. First *Dog Year*. Second *Bedlam*. Third *Running*. But you have inherited the mantel of Merton – and Nouwen. You have a wonderful sense of saying in simple ways what the human struggle to live a full – a spiritual life – entails. Thank you for your honesty. For your writing. For finding a way into our lives.

Keep writing. Keep in touch.

Jon Katz wrote back!

Thanks Doc, that is a beautiful note, and much appreciated. For a writer, you just can't get a better message like that, or from a more meaningful person.

8/30/2006 11:56 AM

In "**Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont (2006)**," directed by Dan Ireland, Joan Plowright is a recently widowed Englishwoman in her mid-70s who moves into an extended-stay London hotel inhabited by quirky characters played by Zoe Tapper, Anna Massey and Robert Lang. One day as she runs an errand, Mrs. Palfrey trips and falls in front of a basement flat inhabited by a handsome twenty-something played by newcomer Rupert Friend. He comes to her rescue and the two strike up a most endearing relationship -- he pretends to be her doting grandson (to help her save face in her new circle of friends), and she falls in love. Based on the novel by writer Elizabeth Taylor, the movie is charming at every turn due in great measure to the enchanting onscreen chemistry between Plowright and Friend.

Lively dialogue and appealing characters distinguish the novel, **Café Nevo (1987)** by the author of Changing States. Emmanuel, proprietor and sole waiter of Tel Aviv's Cafe Nevo, serves as the conscience of its patrons, eavesdropping, matchmaking, advising and sometimes solving the problems of his bedeviled customers. Plots abound: Ilana is a fastidious prostitute who becomes pregnant, won't marry the father, is denied forgiveness by her poor but judgmental family and finds solace in the friendship of Vered, who has cuckolded her faithless husband by sleeping with an Arab. Also present is Sarita, an unschooled artistic genius, who quietly makes sketches of the cafe, never noticing that Arik, Army deserter and son of a general, is falling in love with her. The women are all beautiful, but none, thinks Emmanuel, compares with Sarita's mother, killed long ago and now brought to miraculous life in her daughter's sketches. On this note of tremulous romance, this affecting book comes to an end.

8/24/2006 9:55 AM

Hi Ken [Morrison],

This week I was talking with Dusti Wilson, and referred her to you. Dusti took a couple of courses with me, and decided to add a REL minor to her work in history and anthropology. She will graduate with a history major in May.

Dusti is a very dynamic and hardworking young woman. She is currently taking Arabic and French! One of the courses she took with me was Archaeology and the Bible, and she is planning for a career in Ancient Near Eastern studies as an archaeologist. We talked about her graduate options at ASU, but our school is New World oriented. I am going to have Miguel and one other colleague at NAU who work in the Americas talk with her just to help her clarify that she wants to go to the ancient Near East. Then, we will go over the schools who do the best job with their students.

Thanks for you help with her.

Peace.

8/24/2006 9:47 AM

Hello Dr. Benjamin,

I am sorry i never got to connect with you again after my last phone call about a month ago when i was in Arizona. Life has been truly crazy for me lately.

I have big news to share. I decided to resign my position with Indigo Bridges. I will be moving to Colorado to work at a guest ranch for a few months. I am looking forward to the quiet time up there which will allow me to just BE for a while. It will give me an opportunity to further develop my spirituality, my physical strength and my connection with nature. I am looking forward to all that!

I hope you and Patrice are having a nice summer. I will give you a call once i get settled in Colorado.

Hugs,

Anny :)

Hi Anny,

Personally, I think you have made a good choice. The transitions program was a wonderful opportunity for you to see what it takes to get a dream into the real world of profits and losses, but when we talked about it, I truly felt it was not taking shape quickly enough. Leadership is a key to making start up ventures happen.

You loved the Grand Tetons, so I have not doubt you will love the Rockies. Denver is Patrice's home. We are going for the Labor Day weekend. Southwest just started service from PHX to DEN, and so we got \$89 tickets. We used to ski every spring break in the Rockies.

Thanks for keeping in touch.

Hi Annie [Ortiz],

Here are some of my favorite spiritual writers. Thought you might add them to your Colorado reading list. Then we can talk about them.

Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith (2000) by Anne Lamott
Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith (2005) by Anne Lamott
Credo (2004) by William Sloane Coffin

Peace.

8/10/2006 11:03 AM

Hi John [Baker],

Attached is my syllabus for my Women in the Bible course.

You may want to use:

Alice Ogden Bellis, Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes: women's stories in the Hebrew Bible Westminster/John Knox, 1994.

Or, if that seems a bit much, try.

Irmtraud Fischer, Women Who Wrestled with God: biblical stories of Israel's beginnings Liturgical Press 1995.

Let me know how it goes.

Peace.

Oh, btw, I need to beg whatever you can
give me for a Sunday School series on "Women in
the Ancient Near East." Syllabus?
----- Original Message -----

8/8/2006 6:22 AM

Hi Dan and Margaret,

Sorry we keep missing each other at the Casa.

Vancouver Island BC was gorgeous – cool, wet, green! We ate fresh fish that
we bought everyday directly from the fishermen. We had a room and kitchen
that looked out eastward over Craig's Bay (see picture). Sunrise and sunset
were absolutely beautiful.

One day we drove up to Horne Lake Caves, and I
spend a couple hours exploring some wonderful
underground caves. Guides took a small group of us
into the total darkness. What a wonderful experience.

Horne Lake Caves
Vancouver Island BC



The Butchart Gardens in Victoria were splendid. It's
amazing that the Mrs. Butchart spent her whole life landscaping the quarry
that her husband dug to get limestone for his cement factory. The factory is
gone. The gardens, however, are visited by thousands of people from around
the world every year.



Butchart Gardens
Victoria BC

We spent two days in Seattle going and returning from
Vancouver Island. Seattle is famous for Pike's Street
Market where vendors sell fish, flowers, fruit, and
vegetables. The color and the aroma is a meal in itself.

At one stall the workers throw salmon back and forth to each other. One of the workers call out another worker's name, and then throw the 20 lb fish to him. Patrice says there is a video on teamwork that uses these guys as a model.



**Pike Street Market
Seattle WA**

While we were visiting the market we overheard a woman tell her husband: "Of course, dear, we could quit our jobs, sell out home and move here to Seattle so that you could shop at the Pike Street Market!" Sounded like a good plan to me.

Peace.

Hi Bob,

What a great celebration!. I am currently 64. I will turn 65 in March.

Just found out in June that ASU reallocated the funding that supports contract faculty like me. So I will have 3 instead of 4 classes starting this month, and 1 class instead of 4 in the spring. That pretty well declares me retired. I would love to continue teaching, but picking up our lives and going somewhere else at this point would be cost us financially at a time when our income will be flat, and put us back to square one in settling into a new space. In moving to Phoenix from Houston it was amazing how many little things you loose, and have to replace – like where to eat good BBQ, find a park. Phoenix is comfortable and livable for us these days.

I can't say that I am fully embracing a leisure lifestyle. I am so used to working, to having commitments, to earning a living that I am more than a little depressed that all that is ending. I am grateful for the parachute which should help me transition.

Any tips?

7/28/2006 6:06 AM

►I talked with Jim last night. We got our first copy of the Wine Spectator.

► I talked with Tex Sample about passing my name around to give talks. He is part of a “progressive clergy” group that met with US Senate candidate Jim Pedersen. Anyone is better than John Kyl.

► Daniel Henninger in WSJ discusses living in a world where unguided Katyusha rockets with range of less than 95 miles can hold civilian population centers hostage: Israel, Pakistan, Taiwan, Kuwait, Japan. No Democrat wants to build a defense system against these VSBM – very short ballistic missiles.

► Lisa Goldman, a Canadian born Israeli from Tel Aviv IMs with Lebanese during the 2006 war at her blog: On the Face (<http://ontheface.blogware.com/>). Goldman: “...the citizens of the only two democracies in the Middle East, ...watch our dream of peace destroyed by insane religious fanatics.” Answer: “The Palestinian Authority is as democratic as Lebanon and Israel.” Goldman: “You are quite right about the PA ... It was my oversight.”



► Movies: “Quinceanera” (Richard Glatzer, Wash Westmoreland) 2005 Sundance Film Festival surprise. Set in Echo Park, Los Angeles.

► Mayor James M. Cavanaugh
2006
190 N. Litchfield Rd
Goodyear AZ 85338

Friday, July 28,

Dear Mayor Cavanaugh:

Congratulations on your initiative to invite a private university to open a campus in Goodyear! What a wonderful and needed resource, not just for the Valley, but the state as a whole. As you enter this next phase of the project, I wonder if you would be interested in hiring me to work on the city’s team in its on-going negotiations with these schools. I have a full career of experience with private and public universities, and ten years of experience here in Arizona that I think would be of great help in making the vision of a private university in Goodyear a reality.

I came to Phoenix in 1997 to serve as the executive director of the Kino Institute of Theology for the Diocese of Phoenix. Kino Institute was a school of theology in the Catholic tradition with a \$650,000 annual budget, 15-20 full time faculty and staff from a variety of faith traditions and some 350-400 adult students. Kino provided programs in theology, spirituality and ministry in both English and Spanish for adults from cities throughout the Valley as well as Prescott, Flagstaff, Kingman and Lake Havasu.

An exciting part of Kino Institute was its partnership with the University of San Francisco that had been offering graduate programs in Phoenix for more than twenty years. I also worked with the Catholic Theological Union (Chicago) and Xavier University (New Orleans) to offer similar programs in Arizona.

At that time I also worked on an initiative by Lewis University (Joliet IL) to establish a four year campus in Arizona (<http://www.lewisu.edu/>). Lewis University has an established reputation of providing the children of working families with a solid, service oriented education. Its two most successful programs are nursing and aviation. Virtually all of its nursing graduates successfully pass their boards on the first try, and a significant number of the employees at Chicago's O'Hare Airport are Lewis University graduates. Michael E. Waters, then chair of the Board of Trustees, was very pro-active in this project. Lewis, in fact, did at least one feasibility study, and may still have land it acquired in Buckeye for the project. During those negotiations I made a concerted effort to encourage Bishop Thomas J. O'Brien to partner with Lewis University, and told Mr. Waters that Kino would be happy to offer campus space for classes while the University was building its campus.

There was also a counter offer to the Diocese of Phoenix from an ultra conservative coalition of Catholic business people led by Msgr. Dale Fushek from St. Timothy Church (Mesa AZ) to bring Franciscan University of Steubenville (Steubenville OH) to Arizona (<http://www.franciscan.edu>). Franciscan University of Steubenville was rescued from bankruptcy by wealthy and religiously ultra-conservative Catholics and is used to train its students almost exclusively to work in evangelical movements like Life Teen founded by Msgr. Fushek (<http://www.lifeteen.com/>).

Bishop O'Brien did invite Lewis University to Phoenix. Franciscan University of Steubenville opened a campus in Denver. Nonetheless, in the short time since his arrival in 2004, the present bishop, Thomas J. Olmstead (<http://www.diocesephoenix.org/>), has closed the University of San Francisco program, downgraded Kino Institute to a catechetical program, and is said to be courting Ave Maria University founded by former Domino Pizza billionaire, Thomas S. Monaghan, as a "the country's first new so-called 'true' Roman Catholic university in four decades" (<http://www.naples.avemaria.edu/>).

The year 2004 was also decisive for another private university in the Valley. Grand Canyon University founded by Southern Baptists in 1949 was purchased by a coalition of Christian businessmen for use as headquarters of a for-profit, on-line school using the University of Phoenix model (<http://www.gcu.edu/>). Before the take-over Grand Canyon had become a fine example of a small – some 1500 undergraduates – liberal arts university in the Christian tradition. Unfortunately, like Franciscan University of Steubenville, poor financial management made it an easy target for wealthy investors who know business, but not education.

Despite the challenges that universities will continue to face in the political, economic and religious climate here in Arizona, there is the on-going vision – like your own – that private universities are needed in Arizona. For example, the United Methodist Conference has a representative in Phoenix working on the development of a university here.

These are exciting times for our three large, publicly funded schools. They are doing a good job for the state, and are restructuring to do an even better job. Diversity in education, however, is as important to the healthy growth of the state as diversity is in every other sector of our culture. I have a real passion and a genuine commitment for creating greater diversity in higher education here in Arizona. I look forward to talking further with you about working together to partner the city of Goodyear with a top quality private university that will serve the region in the best academic tradition.

Sincerely,

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Curriculum Vitae and List of Professional References attached

Dear Search Committee:

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

I am applying for the position of **Academic Advisor (SR #124375)** at the Barrett Honors College. I have a full career of teaching and mentoring students, and I have a strong commitment to the mission of the Barrett Honors College here at ASU.

I began my teaching career at Rice University in Houston TX. Like the Barrett Honors College, Rice University recruits academically outstanding undergraduates, and offers them a stimulating learning environment where they can develop into balanced and well rounded leaders in today’s world. In addition to my teaching responsibilities at Rice, I served as a faculty associate at Sid Richardson College for the University. Faculty associates at Rice University are faculty advisors, not adjunct faculty as they are here at ASU. Rice is comprised of a series of residential colleges, which do not offer courses

of study, but provide a living and learning environment for their students. Each year during orientation week I worked with a team made up of two returning students and one Rice alum. Together we mentored five incoming students into Rice University. I followed these five students for two years. I was responsible for approving their course choices, reviewing their grades, providing direction and counseling. Officially at any time I would have ten assigned students for academic advising. Practically, I mentored many more. I not only met with them in my office, but we also ate lunch together in the college commons. Prof. John W. Clark, Jr. was master of Sid Richardson College during my service, and would be happy to serve as a professional reference.

Since 1999 I have been a faculty associate, and then instructor, in the Department of Religious Studies at ASU. During that time I have continually mentored students seeking majors in the department, going on to graduate school in religious studies, law, medicine, and a variety of other fields. I have also worked each semester with any number of Barrett Honors students to complete their footnote 18 requirements in my courses. We have designed unique research projects together, met for individualized reading seminars and talked about the care and feeding of a good mind! Regularly at the end of each semester I send out invitations to my best students to consider applying to Barrett Honors College, and forward recommendations for those who are interested to Dean Jacobs. Prof. Joel Gereboff, chair of Religious Studies and Prof. Linell Cady, director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict would be happy to serve as professional references for my work in the department.

Not all students who have good minds know they have good minds. Not all students who know they have good minds know how to develop their minds and to contribute productively in today's global culture. Barrett Honors College has a unique role to play in the lives of these academically gifted men and women who come to ASU for their undergraduate education. I have a real passion and a genuine delight in working with students regardless of their academic ability. Because I am an intellectual I find it especially fulfilling to introduce gifted students to the intellectual life. I look forward to talking further with you about working together at Barrett. **(Please note: I will be out of town July 5-19, 2006.)**

Sincerely,

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

Professional References

Prof John W. Clark, Jr.

Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering
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Wednesday, June 28, 2006

► Dear Search Committee:
2006

Wednesday, June 28,

I am applying for the position of **Associate Director for Learning Support Services (SR #123709)**. I have a full career of teaching and mentoring students. I also have some ten years experience working at ASU with 125-150 students each semester – including at least 3-5 re-entry students in each class. As Executive Director of the Kino Institute of Theology, before coming to ASU, I demonstrated my ability to work successfully with adult learners, to plan and report, to supervise staff, to manage sizable budgets, and to relate successfully with community leaders.

My 300 level courses at ASU were writing courses (L). Each semester my teaching assistants and I worked patiently and consistently with the

students to help them improve their writing skills, and their classroom communication skills. They learned to formulate research proposals. They learned to use databases to locate articles and books for their research. They learned to use the on-line library catalogue, to download on-line journal articles, and to order materials not available in campus libraries through interlibrary loan. They learned to read articles and book chapters carefully, so that they could, in their own words, summarize an author's argument, and apply what they have learned from the author to their research. Prof. Joel Gereboff, chair of Religious Studies, and Prof. Linell Cady, director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict would be happy to serve as professional references for my work in the department.

Frequently I was the first instructor to require many students to use the tools that Blackboard provides. Therefore, they often needed help accessing Blackboard, downloading assignment directions and PowerPoint presentations to prepare for class; submitting and retrieving their research reports, displaying and reading their Microsoft Word documents once they were edited using the Insert-Comment and Track-Changes features. Judy Diane Grace, Ph.D., Interim Director, Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence at ASU, would be happy to serve as a professional reference for the work I do with my students.

In 2000 when I left the Kino Institute to return to undergraduate teaching at ASU, this school of theology in the Catholic tradition had 15-20 full time faculty and staff, and some 25 part-time faculty, from a variety of faith traditions. Kino was providing certificate programs in theology, biblical studies, spirituality and ministry in both English and Spanish for some 350-400 adult students from cities throughout the Valley as well as Prescott, Flagstaff, Kingman and Lake Havasu. In 1997 when I became the executive director, there was an immediate need for curriculum development, for student recruitment and for updating and improving the physical campus. For example, the school had no campus network; no databases for student information or financial records; no course catalogue; no course schedules, no newsletter; and no computer catalogue for the 35,000 books in the library. I hired a Dean of Students with a degree in student affairs and software development, and a Library Director with degrees in both theology and library science. These two women were part of a dedicated team that brought academic excellence to the school which allowed our students to mature intellectually and spiritually so that they could actively participate in their home communities. For example, caller ID in the Dean of Students' Office would immediately access academic and financial records, so that when the Dean answered, she could call students by name and make concrete recommendations on courses for completing their programs of study. Likewise, the library not only had a fully searchable on-line catalogue, but also provided inter-library loan services. Barry H. Sargent, Ph.D., Director of Kino

Institute would be happy to serve as a professional reference for my work at the school.

President Crow's vision for the New American University is re-shaping the learning community at ASU. His vision, however, is not the only change-agent at work on campus today. The students themselves impact how we will continue to learn together. Learning Support Services has a critical mission at a school like ASU with a general admissions mandate. It creates an important setting where the school-we-are and the school-we-are-becoming meet, and where change in our students and in us begins. I have a real passion, and a genuine delight, in working with students regardless of their academic ability. I am committed not only to help students at ASU make a living, but also to make a difference in today's world. I look forward to talking further with you about working together at LSS. **(Please note: I will be out of town July 5-19, 2006.)**

Sincerely,

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

Present Supervisor

Prof. Joel D. Gereboff

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7/3/2006 6:03 AM



Catherine de Hueck Doherty was born at the turn of the century into the wealth and luxury of Russian nobility, condemned to death during the Bolshevik Revolution, an immigrant to North America, friend of the rich and famous (she got Thomas Merton thinking about the direction his life was taking when he was still in college) and servant of the poorest of the poor, victim of an unhappy marriage and divorce, foundress of the Friendship Houses in America and the Madonna Houses (2888 Dafoe Rd • Combermere ON • K0J 1L0) throughout the world, and a pioneer in the Civil Rights Movement in the States. A woman passionately in love with God, she is considered a saint by some (her cause is under consideration) and a charlatan by others. Her story reads like some fantastic novel.

7/3/2006 6:08 AM

A Personal Remembrance of Dorothy Day

From [Love is the Measure](#) , a biography of Dorothy Day, published by Orbis Books

By Jim Forest

I first met Dorothy a few days before Christmas in 1960. On leave from my job with the U.S. Navy in Washington, I had come to New York to visit the Catholic Worker after reading copies of the newspaper that I found in my parish library. My first days were spent at Saint Joseph's House (then on Spring Street in the midst of an Italian neighborhood, soon to move a few blocks away to a building on Christi Street). From there I went to the Catholic Worker's rural outpost on the southern tip of Staten Island. In the large, faded dining room of an old farmhouse, I found half a dozen people gathered around a pot of tea and a pile of mail at one end of a large table. Dorothy Day was reading leading letters aloud.



few
but

What a handsome woman! Her face was long, with high, prominent cheekbones underlining large, quick eyes that could be teasing one moment and laughing the next. Her hair was braided and circled the top of her head like a garland of

silver flowers. The suit she wore was plain and well-tailored, good quality and yet almost certainly from the Catholic Worker clothing room on Spring Street, a distribution center for discarded garments open daily, except Sundays, to street people.

Thomas Merton

The only letter I still recall from that day's reading was one from Thomas Merton, the famous monk whose autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, had held many people in its grip, including me. Nineteen years earlier, Merton had withdrawn from "the world" to a Trappist monastery with a slam of the door that eventually was heard around the world. I had assumed he wrote to no one outside his family. Yet here he was in correspondence with someone who was not only in the thick of the world, but one of its more controversial figures.

In his letter, Merton told Dorothy that he was deeply touched by her witness for peace, which had several times resulted in arrest and imprisonment. "You are right going along the lines of satyagraha [Gandhi's term for nonviolent action; literally the power of truth]. I see no other way. . . . Nowadays it is no longer a question of who is right but who is at least not criminal. . . . It has never been more true than now that the world is lost in its own falsity and cannot see true values. . . . God bless you." This was one of Merton's first letters to Dorothy. Before long he was publishing articles in *The Catholic Worker*, and getting into trouble within his religious order for doing so.

Merton was one of countless people drawn to Dorothy and influenced by her. She had a great gift for making those who met her, even if only through letters or her published writings, look at themselves in a new light and question their ideas, allegiances and choices.

I met her when I was 19 and she was 63. Half a year later, after being discharged from the Navy as a conscientious objector, I joined the Catholic Worker staff in New York.

Jack English

While writing this book, I read an account by Jack English of Dorothy as she was 25 years before I met her. Jack had missed the talk Dorothy had given at his college, but the next Day he found discussion about her raging in the cafeteria. "They were talking about how beautiful she was. She had talked the entire lecture with a cigarette hanging out of the corner of her mouth, with a beret on, and someone said it looked as if she needed her neck washed." Jack was so intrigued that he decided to attend a meeting Dorothy was addressing that night in a nearby town. He found her amazing. "What impressed me so much was that she said, 'You can do this work wherever you are.'" Afterward Dorothy and Jack talked briefly. She urged him to read *The Catholic Worker*.

"That was the beginning of it. Something happened in my life. It wasn't a profound thing at the moment. She was not the kind of person that had been described to me that morning in the coffee room. I had read some of the lives of holy people and saints, but I had the feeling of the same education and even — I hate to use the word — holiness about Dorothy."

Recalling his first impressions about Dorothy in a taped interview with Deane Mowrer in 1970, Jack said he was still impressed with Dorothy's ability to engage herself with so many individuals. "She occasionally talks in terms of the abstract, but she never talks or operates except person to person." Jack had learned from her that "each human being is unique, totally unique, and that each time I meet and have a real encounter with another human being, I am changed somehow, whether for good or bad."

The Edge

The Dorothy Day I met was a quarter century older than the one Jack had met in the mid-1930s. Both the cigarette and beret were long gone. Dorothy had become even more formidable and was on the edge of being venerable. But the main qualities that so impressed Jack were just as striking to me: her ability to focus on the person she was talking to, not to see just a young face but your face, not discerning just a vague, general promise, but your particular gifts. Through Dorothy, you saw exciting possibilities in yourself you hadn't seen before. Also you saw what it meant to lead a life that was relentlessly God-centered. She blew the idea of saints as sugar-coated people out the window.

Her impact on Jack was similar to her impact on me. We both became involved in Catholic Worker houses of hospitality, which were found then, as now, in many cities.

Catholic Worker houses, while always having unique aspects, still have a lot in common. They are unpretentious places in run-down neighborhoods where down-and-out people are received and necessities given, all without forms, inquisitors or unsought advice. Perhaps there is some angel in heaven who knows exactly how many bowls of soup have been served in Catholic Worker houses since 1933. Millions, that's certain. Jack and I have both served our share of them, along with thousands of others who have been part of Catholic Worker communities down through the years. The remarkable thing about Catholic Worker soup is that it has a way of making you ask questions — Dorothy Day's questions — about what brings about a social order in which so many people are defeated and have to line up at the doors of soup kitchens.

The Houses of Hospitality

Being part of the Catholic Worker household in New York City was a mixed blessing. At that time, probably it was one of the less happy communities in the Catholic Worker movement. In fact we were hardly a community at all. But

there was one great blessing about being in that stressful setting; it was getting to know Dorothy, and to be known by her.

As I had discovered that first day at the farm on Staten Island, she was a wonderful and tireless story teller. She didn't just read the letters she received to herself, but read them aloud to those she worked with, oftentimes telling about the people who sent them.

I recall her reading a letter from the Gauchats family, founders of a Catholic Worker community in Ohio. Dorothy told us how the Gauchats had taken in a six-month-old child who was expected to die at any time. The child was deaf and blind, with a fluid-filled lump on his head larger than a baseball. "Bill Gauchats made the sign of the cross over that child's face," Dorothy said, "and he saw those dull eyes followed the motion of his hand. The child could see! Within a year David — that was his name — was well enough to be taken home by his real parents. His life was saved by the love in the Gauchats home."

Hearing stories like these day after day, we were learning something about life that you don't get in any classroom or even in many churches. At the core of each story there were always just a few people, maybe just one person, for whom following Christ was the most important thing in the world. What astonishing things came from that kind of discipleship!

Another story I recall her telling had to do with a prostitute named Mary Ann with whom Dorothy was briefly in prison in Chicago in the early 1920s. Dorothy hadn't planned to be arrested and was terrified of the guards. "You must hold your head high," Mary Ann told her, "and give them no clue that you're afraid of them or ready to beg for anything, any favors whatsoever. But you must see them for what they are — never forget that they're in jail too."

Some stories you would hear more than once from Dorothy if you remained near her long enough. Some sayings you were bound to hear frequently, even if you were only there for a short time. How many times have I heard her repeat Saint Catherine of Siena's remark, "All the way to heaven is heaven, because Jesus said, 'I am the way.' " There was a line from George Bernanos that she often used: "Hell is not to love anymore." Everyone at the Catholic Worker knew Dostoevsky had said, "The world will be saved by beauty." And there were many others.

Truths, Wherever Found

Recalling how often she quoted others, it's only fair to note that Dorothy was very much a borrower of other people's ideas and entirely unembarrassed about doing so. Her words tended to be as second-hand as her clothing, though the connections she made and the passion with which she spoke was all her own. Apart from the Bible, her main sources were the saints plus a few novelists whose books were basically religious. Among the saints, those she

most often cited were Paul, Benedict, Francis, Catherine of Siena, Theresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Therese of Lisieux.

Dorothy had much in common with Saint Theresa of Avila. Both had animated the foundation of many religious communities, and both were tireless travelers until old age made it impossible to travel further. Both were reformers who went through periods of being regarded as possible heretics. Both were outspoken and fearless.

But another Theresa, Therese of Lisieux, "the Little Flower," also inspired her. The only biography Dorothy ever wrote was about Therese and her Little Way. "The significance of our smallest act!" Dorothy said in that book. "The significance of the little things we leave undone! The protests we do not make, the stands we do not take, we who are living in the world!" (The book is long out of print, but sections of it are included in *Dorothy Day: Selected Writings*.)

Again and again in her writing and talks, Dorothy would stress the "little way." It was at the heart of everything she valued: "Paper work, cleaning the house, dealing with the innumerable visitors who come all through the day, answering the phone, keeping patience and acting intelligently, which is to find some meaning in all that happens, these things, too, are the works of peace, and often seem like a very little way."

The Reader

Dorothy had been, since childhood, a great reader. Her engagement in the world seemed only to fuel this side of her life. Certain books she read over and over again — I think of Dickens's *Bleak House* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. One can wonder whether the figure of Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov* isn't a co-founder of the Catholic Worker, so much did Dorothy value the old monk's teaching on active love. (The monk in the novel was partly inspired by Father Amvosy of Optina Pustin, to whom Dostoevsky turned in a time of personal tragedy. When I took part in the canonization of Father Amvosy at a monastery near Moscow in 1988, I thought that surely Dorothy was among the saints invisibly present to celebrate the day with me.)

In this period of acute nervousness about sexual roles, there is some hesitancy to say anyone is or ever was feminine, but Dorothy certainly was that. As she was usually ill at ease when anyone pointed a camera at her, her femininity rarely shows in her photos. Hers was a hearty femininity, such as you find in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*. Like the *Wife of Bath*, she could be, indeed often was, shocking in her plain-speaking way. She was able to tell a bawdy joke, much to the dismay of some of those who happened to encounter this side of Dorothy. She was also, at times, surprisingly shy, almost girlish, long after she had acquired grey hair. Then again, she could be as fierce and determined as one of those Russian women who repaired the streets and kept going to church even in the years of Stalin.

Her direct, at times shocking way of getting to the heart of things was much in evidence one night when she was speaking to a Catholic student group at New York University, not far from Washington Square Park. The Cold War was at its most frozen in that packed and smokey room. Clearly some of those present considered Dorothy an acolyte of the Kremlin. One of them demanded to know what Dorothy would do if the Russians invaded the United States. Would she not admit that in this extreme, at least, killing was justified, even a duty? "We are taught by Our Lord to love our enemies," Dorothy responded without batting an eye. "I hope I could open my heart to them with love, the same as anyone else. We are all children of the same Father." There was a brief but profound quiet in the room before Dorothy went on to speak about nonviolent resistance and efforts to convert opponents.

"Don't Call Me A Saint"

Probably nothing made Dorothy more nervous than adulation. Some people looked at her as if they could actually see a bright halo floating over her head. I don't know how often Dorothy made that famous remark — "Don't call me a saint; I don't want to be dismissed so easily." Maybe only once. But anyone who knew her was aware of how she would escape from those who treated her as a walking holy relic. Joe Zarella tells the story of someone approaching Dorothy and asking, "Miss Day, do you have visions?" Dorothy's response, according to Joe, was, "Oh, shit!" (These are the kind of stories you find in Rosalie Riegle Troesters superb oral history, *Voices from the Catholic Worker*.)

As I have come to realize while writing this book, Dorothy's embarrassment and annoyance in the face of a certain kind of admiration was not only genuine modesty. Rather she felt that many of these people would view her quite differently if they knew her better — knew her faults, and knew more about her past. She felt she had helped create an idealized image of herself by leaving out of her two autobiographies events she found particularly shameful in the years preceding her entrance into the Catholic Church, her abortion most of all.

It was clear in the New York Catholic Worker community that Dorothy didn't want any of us to read the one thing she had written about the abortion and the sad affair it was rooted in, her novel, *The Eleventh Virgin*. As far as I am aware, we all respected her wish without even knowing why she disliked the book so intensely. Not that the book would have been easily found in any event.

She once told her friend Bob Coles (the psychiatrist best known for his books on children in crisis) about the effort she had made earlier in her life to find and destroy every copy of the novel. Finally Dorothy brought this book-burning effort of hers to the attention of her confessor. The priest laughed. "My, my," he said. "I thought he was going to tell me to stop being so silly and mixed up in my priorities," Dorothy said to Coles. "I will remember to my last day here on

God's earth what the priest said: 'You can't have much faith in God if you're taking the life he has given you and using it that way.' I didn't say a word in reply. The priest added, 'God is the one who forgives us, if we ask Him; but it sounds like you don't even want forgiveness — just to get rid of the books.' " (The story comes from Bob Coles' book, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*, which is mainly made up of Coles' remarkable conversations with Dorothy over a period of year.) Little by little, those closest to her became aware of the sins of her more hidden past and perhaps helped her to carry some of the pain of it.

The Photos

To return to photos of Dorothy, you might get the idea looking at them that she had rather a bleak personality. While she was often a person of the utmost seriousness, those who never met her can't begin to understand the impact Dorothy had on others unless they can imagine how easy it was to be with her, how welcome one felt in her company. Much of her time was spent sitting at the table where meals were served, just sipping tea or coffee and talking to whoever joined her, sometimes speaking in an animated way, sometimes mainly listening.

When Dorothy was present, she was completely present. But often she wasn't there at all. She was either visiting other Catholic Worker houses and speaking at churches and colleges, or at the Catholic Worker farm, or at the beach house on Staten Island. In the New York house, being as centered on Dorothy as it was during the time I was part of it, her periods away left a hole that no one else could fill. She had delegated various responsibilities: handling the household money, having charge of the kitchen, managing the paper (though she was definitely the editor and publisher), taking care of the address list, and running the farm. But no one was in a position to make a decision in her absence which everyone else would accept. In the New York house, she alone could lay down the law, which at times was urgently needed.

During the period I was part of Saint Joseph's House in New York, 1961-62, we went through a number of nasty battles during times when Dorothy was away. Perhaps the worst was brought on by a decision made by the two-person kitchen crew to give the occasional pound of butter or box of eggs that was contributed to those coming on "the line" — the generally anonymous people who turned up for meals — rather than to "the family" — the much smaller group of people who had become regulars, were known by name, were living at the Catholic Worker and had a job to do within the household. The family ate after the line. The family, who had seen many volunteers come and go, were outraged, and the staff itself — six or eight people at the time — bitterly divided. It was in the aftermath of "the great butter crisis," late in 1961, that Dorothy appointed me as managing editor of the paper. I had just turned 20.

Always Factions

Conflicting quotations from Dorothy's writings began to appear on the community bulletin board, each faction hurling explosive bits of Dorothy at the other. On the one hand there would be a quotation from Dorothy declaring that we must be ready to roll up in old newspapers, giving our beds to those who needed them; and on the other hand a text in which Dorothy reflected that we must accept our limitations; that this too was voluntary poverty.

After some days Dorothy was back again. Without bothering to reconcile the quotations, she said (with the finality of a monastery's abbot) that the butter and eggs were to go, as before, to the family. The result was, in the end, the two people resigned, convinced that Dorothy Day was a fraud. In brief, she hadn't lived up to her own quotations.

These events, while petty and even comic when viewed from the outside, were grueling from the inside. There must have been hundreds of blow-ups as bad or worse during the 47 years that lay between the founding of the Catholic Worker and Dorothy's death. It is an endless cause of wonder to me that, despite all these harsh trials within the community, she nonetheless retained her capacity for faith, hope and love down to the last day of her life. (A phrase she often used was "the duty of hope.")

Learning From the Poor

For my part, one of the things I learned at the Catholic Worker (which Dorothy often defined as a school) was that the poverty-stricken for whom the houses of hospitality existed were often easier to live with and more merciful than the young volunteers who knew more about ideology than defeat in life. Yet for all our shortcomings, we did manage to get a great deal done: Food begged and bought, meals cooked and served, clothes received and given away, dishes washed, floors scrubbed, sheets laundered, bread baked, the paper mailed out, the mailing list kept up-to-date, people with medical needs assisted, and handwritten thank-you notes sent out to each and every donor, no matter how small the gift — all that and much more.

Not the smallest problem in the house was the noise. I recall one day trying to carry on a conversation with Dorothy about an article we were thinking about using in the next issue. We were at her desk in a tiny office next to the front door of the house on Chrystie Street, just in front of the area in which meals were served. It was the noisiest floor in the house. That morning we could hardly hear each other. In the middle of a sentence, Dorothy got out of her chair, opened the door, and then yelled loud enough for a corpse to blink, "Holy silence!" Silence briefly reigned at Saint Joseph's House such as a Trappist monk might envy.

On Her Knees .

Dorothy's ability to survive community life and even to see good in those of us who came to help was surely due to the depth and intensity of her spiritual life. It was obvious to anyone who was in sight of Dorothy for more than a few hours that she was a woman of prayer.

When I think of her, I recall her first of all on her knees. This might be at the nearest parish church or the chapel at the Catholic Worker farm. (The archdiocese had permitted a chapel on the farm and reservation of the sacrament within it.) Dorothy would spend a good deal of time every day on her knees, praying. I looked in the prayer books she left on the bench one day and discovered page after page of names, all written in her careful italic script, of people, living and dead, for whom she was praying. She prayed as if lives depended on it. (Bob Coles credits Dorothy's prayers with the miraculous cure of his wife, who was dying of cancer.) "We feed the hungry, yes," she said. "We try to shelter the homeless and give them clothes, but there is strong faith at work; we pray. If an outsider who comes to visit us doesn't pay attention to our prayings and what that means, then he'll miss the whole point."

She went to Mass every day until her body wasn't up to it and even then still received Communion every day, carefully preparing before and giving plenty time afterward for thanksgiving. She went to confession at least once a week. She loved the rosary and prayed it often. "If we love enough," she once noted, "we are importunate: we repeat our love as we repeat Hail Marys on the rosary." She also used the Jesus Prayer and recommended its use to others.

Especially the Orthodox

It was striking to me how deep was her love for Christians of other churches, but especially for the Orthodox churches. What was at the root of her special affinity to Orthodoxy I don't know. Perhaps it had to do with her Russian friendships, and the special place Dostoevsky had played in the formation of her vocation. The first time I visited an Orthodox church it was with Dorothy, and the first time I attended the magnificent Orthodox Liturgy it was with her as well. In the early '60s, she was a friend of a priest serving at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral on East 97th Street in Manhattan, Father Matthew Stadium from Moscow, who became an occasional visitor both to Saint Joseph's House and the farm. (Back in Moscow in later years, he was the priest who first got his parishioners into voluntary service at a local hospital when, in the new climate the flourished under Gorbachev, religious believers were no longer excluded from a social role.)

Dorothy's longing for the repair of the rift dividing eastern and western Christianity drew her into the Third Hour group, perhaps the only place in Manhattan at the time where people met who had in common a love of Orthodoxy, whether or not they were Orthodox themselves. I can remember

sitting next to her at a Third Hour meetings, trying to make sense of the Russian words she and others used so comfortably.

Her commitment to the Catholic Church was never at issue. In fact it disturbed many people, including some in the Catholic Worker community, that she was such a devout Catholic, so wholehearted in her acceptance of Catholic teaching and the church's hierarchical structure. She was critical not of what the church taught but rather its failure to live out its teaching.

Dorothy found Catholicism the Christian body least trapped in nationalism. Perhaps still more important to her, it was the church most crowded with the poor. Also it was the dispenser of sacraments without which life was, for her, barren.

Dorothy often stressed obedience (the root meaning of which is "listening"), insisting that if she were ordered to stop publishing *The Catholic Worker*, she would do so, though not without trying first to change the cardinal's mind. "You mean," I asked her one day, "if the cardinal says we have to give up our stand on war, we give it up?" "Not at all," she said. "But then we might only use quotations from the Bible, the sayings of the saints, extracts from papal encyclicals, just nothing of our own." She said that if there was no alternative but to stop publishing the paper, she would do so, hoping others might carry on. Then she quoted the Gospel: "Unless the seed fall into the ground and die, it cannot bring forth new life."

Her devotion to the church, however, was not without critical bite. She often spoke of the church as being "the cross on which Christ was crucified." Though the metaphor sounds poetic, it was no complement. Similarly Dorothy occasionally remarked that the net Peter had lowered into the human sea once Jesus made him a fisher of men "caught many blowfish and quite a few sharks." There were priests and bishops who reminded her "far more of Cain than of Abel."

However striking an individual Dorothy might seem, her ideas were not individualistic. Part of the value of the church for her was that it brought people together across many lines of division — political, ideological, economic, geographic, even the borders drawn by time, as she often remarked that "there is no time with God." Her early attraction to radical movements probably had a similar impetus: people coming together in a spirit of self-sacrifice to make the world a more caring place in which no one is thrown into the garbage heap. She often pointed out that political radicals had led her to the poor, not the church. It was the radicals who were asking why there were so many hungry, homeless, jobless people in a world that has the means to meet everyone's needs.

The friendships that she formed with a number of radicals she maintained quite openly right through the Cold War to the end of her life, never letting

ideological differences or political expediency get the upper hand. When Elizabeth Gourley Flynn — one of America's leading Communists — died, she left her small estate of clothing, books and furniture to Saint Joseph's House.

Dorothy's commitment to people who somehow became part of her extended family was one of her most striking traits. She might at certain moments be quite harsh in what she had to say when a matter of principle was at stake, yet I can testify from my own experience that not only did she never end a relationship because of disagreement, but would sooner or later beg forgiveness, sometimes in the most abject way.

Her Way of Seeing

I noted earlier that, in ideas, Dorothy was a great borrower. But her way of seeing things was very much her own. I think, for example, of what happened one day when a co-worker and I were clearing out rubbish from a small apartment one flight up in a cold-water tenement on Ridge Street. Dorothy was having increasing trouble managing the five flights to the apartment she had been living in on Spring Street. These two-rooms could be reached more easily. Stuart and I dragged box after box of debris down to the street, including a hideous (so it seemed to us) painting on plywood of the Holy Family. Mary, Joseph and Jesus had been painted in a few bright colors against a battleship grey background. We shook our heads, deposited it in the trash along the curb, and went back to continue cleaning. Not long after Dorothy arrived, the plywood painting in hand. "Look what I found! The Holy Family! It's a providential sign, a blessing." She put it on the mantle of the apartment's extinct fireplace. I looked at it again and this time saw it was a work of love and faith, however simply rendered. If it was no renaissance masterpiece, it had its own beauty. But I wouldn't have thought so if Dorothy hadn't seen it first.

Dorothy is no longer with us. At least we can't sit down and have a cup of tea with her anymore. But there is no doubt that she remains a vital presence. Many regard her as a saint, and not as a way of keeping her at a safe distance. There are historians who describe her as the most influential American Catholic of the last hundred years. Perhaps it is true. In any event, she set an example which continues to influence many people. One can say she helped bring about a reformation that centered on the Catholic Church but reached far beyond it. It is not formation emphasizing theological doctrine but one rooted in the sacredness of life, the truth that we are each made in the image and likeness of God, and the real presence of Christ in the poor. She gave an example of hospitality and mercy as a way of life. "We are here to celebrate Him," she declared, "through works of mercy."

To put it as simply as possible, she gave an example of active love. ["Love is the measure,"](#) she so often said, "by which we will be judged."

Dear Search Committee:
2006

Wednesday, June 28,

I am applying for the position of **Associate Director for Learning Support Services (SR #123709)**. I have a full career of teaching and mentoring students. I also have some ten years experience working at ASU with 125-150 students each semester – including at least 3-5 re-entry students in each class. As Executive Director of the Kino Institute of Theology, before coming to ASU, I demonstrated my ability to work successfully with adult learners, to plan and report, to supervise staff, to manage sizable budgets, and to relate successfully with community leaders.

My 300 level courses at ASU were writing courses (L). Each semester my teaching assistants and I worked patiently and consistently with the students to help them improve their writing skills, and their classroom communication skills. They learned to formulate research proposals. They learned to use databases to locate articles and books for their research. They learned to use the on-line library catalogue, to download on-line journal articles, and to order materials not available in campus libraries through interlibrary loan. They learned to read articles and book chapters carefully, so that they could, in their own words, summarize an author's argument, and apply what they have learned from the author to their research. Prof. Joel Gereboff, chair of Religious Studies, and Prof. Linell Cady, director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict would be happy to serve as professional references for my work in the department.

Frequently I was the first instructor to require many students to use the tools that Blackboard provides. Therefore, they often needed help accessing Blackboard, downloading assignment directions and PowerPoint presentations to prepare for class; submitting and retrieving their research reports, displaying and reading their Microsoft Word documents once they were edited using the Insert-Comment and Track-Changes features. Judy Diane Grace, Ph.D., Interim Director, Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence at ASU, would be happy to serve as a professional reference for the work I do with my students.

In 2000 when I left the Kino Institute to return to undergraduate teaching at ASU, this school of theology in the Catholic tradition had 15-20 full time faculty and staff, and some 25 part-time faculty, from a variety of faith traditions. Kino was providing certificate programs in theology, biblical studies, spirituality and ministry in both English and Spanish for some 350-400 adult students from cities throughout the Valley as well as Prescott, Flagstaff,

Kingman and Lake Havasu. In 1997 when I became the executive director, there was an immediate need for curriculum development, for student recruitment and for updating and improving the physical campus. For example, the school had no campus network; no databases for student information or financial records; no course catalogue; no course schedules, no newsletter; and no computer catalogue for the 35,000 books in the library. I hired a Dean of Students with a degree in student affairs and software development, and a Library Director with degrees in both theology and library science. These two women were part of a dedicated team that brought academic excellence to the school which allowed our students to mature intellectually and spiritually so that they could actively participate in their home communities. For example, caller ID in the Dean of Students' Office would immediately access academic and financial records, so that when the Dean answered, she could call students by name and make concrete recommendations on courses for completing their programs of study. Likewise, the library not only had a fully searchable on-line catalogue, but also provided inter-library loan services. Barry H. Sargent, Ph.D., Director of Kino Institute would be happy to serve as a professional reference for my work at the school.

President Crow's vision for the New American University is re-shaping the learning community at ASU. His vision, however, is not the only change-agent at work on campus today. The students themselves impact how we will continue to learn together. Learning Support Services has a critical mission at a school like ASU with a general admissions mandate. It creates an important setting where the school-we-are and the school-we-are-becoming meet, and where change in our students and in us begins. I have a real passion, and a genuine delight, in working with students regardless of their academic ability. I am committed not only to help students at ASU make a living, but also to make a difference in today's world. I look forward to talking further with you about working together at LSS. **(Please note: I will be out of town July 5-19, 2006.)**

Sincerely,

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

Present Supervisor

Prof. Joel D. Gereboff

Chair, Department of Religious Studies at ASU

Mail Drop 3104

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Monday, January 12, 2015

Good Morning! [Ray Tiemann]

David Felton and Jeff Proctor-Murphy are both local UMC pastors – 30 somethings – that I came to know through Tex Sample. Tex is an ethicist who taught at the St Paul – the UMC school of theology in Kansas City – before coming to Phoenix.

Dave and Jeff are truly inspiring people – truly inspiring pastors. LTQ is their effort to provide thoughtful, and challenging material to use with adults in faith based communities. These discs come with teaching guides. You can see more about the project at: <http://www.livingthequestions.com/>

Peace.

Dear Search Committee:

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

I am applying for the position of **Academic Advisor (SR #124375)** at the Barrett Honors College. I have a full career of teaching and mentoring students with a strong interest in the role of the Barrett Honors College here at ASU.

I began my teaching career at Rice University in Houston TX. Like the Barrett Honors College, Rice University recruits academically outstanding undergraduates, and offers them a stimulating learning environment where they can develop into balanced and well rounded leaders in today's world. In addition to my teaching responsibilities at Rice, I served as a faculty associate at Sid Richardson College for the University. Faculty associates at Rice University are faculty advisors, not adjunct faculty as they are here at ASU. Rice is comprised of a series of residential colleges, which do not offer courses of study, but provide a living and learning environment for their students. Each year during orientation week I worked with a team made up of two returning students and one Rice alum. Together we mentored five incoming students into Rice University. I followed these five students for two years. I was responsible for approving their course choices, reviewing their grades, providing direction and counseling. Officially at any time I would have ten assigned students for academic advising. Practically, I mentored many more. I not only met with them in my office, but we also ate lunch together in the college commons. Prof. John W. Clark, Jr. was master of Sid Richardson College during my service, and would be happy to serve as a professional reference.

Since 1999 I have been a faculty associate, and then instructor, in the Department of Religious Studies at ASU. During that time I have continually mentored students seeking majors in the department, going on to graduate school in religious studies, law, medicine, and a variety of other fields. I have also worked each semester with any number of Barrett Honors students to complete their footnote 18 requirements in my courses. We have designed unique research projects together, met for individualized reading seminars and talked about the care and feeding of a good mind! Regularly at the end of each semester I send out invitations to my best students to consider applying to Barrett Honors College, and forward recommendations for those who are interested to Dean Jacobs. Prof. Joel Gereboff, chair of Religious Studies and Prof. Linell Cady, director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict would be happy to serve as professional references for my work in the department.

Not all students who have good minds know they have good minds. Not all students who know they have good minds know how to develop their minds and to contribute productively in today's global culture. Barrett Honors College has a unique role to play in the lives of these academically gifted men and women who come to ASU for their undergraduate education. I have a real passion and a genuine delight in working with students regardless of their academic ability. Because I am an intellectual I find it especially fulfilling to introduce gifted students to the intellectual life. I look forward to talking further with you about working together at Barrett.

6/27/2006 4:49 AM

Colonoscopy yesterday went well – clean as a whistle, and a health prostate. Now what more does a 64 year old male want out of life.

During my day of bowel preparation we went to see: Prairie Home Companion. Woody Harrelson played Left in the cowboy duo “Lefty and Dusty”. At one point they sang “Bad Jokes.” A lot of good one-liners.

Hey Lefty. I think my wife died!

What do you mean ‘you think’.

Well the sex is still the same, but the dishes are piling up.

Hey Dusty, did you know that diarrhea is hereditary?

No Lefty, I didn’t.

Yup. It runs in your jeans!

There is a segment called “What’s This World Coming To?” on a morning radio show we enjoy. This week they read a news article about some poor soul who had a penal implant that malfunctioned, and – as the host described it – caused his male member to remain in the ‘upright and locked position’ For ten years. He finally sued the manufacturer and won, complaining that he could not hug family members or hold his grandchildren on his lap. Ten years.....

6/23/2006 3:32 PM

Dear Peter and Betty,

Peter, how wonderful to receive your letter in the mail today. You have an absolutely Pauline gift for writing. Thank you for including us among your faithful.

Thank you for your kind words about the biography I sent to you. I tell those stories about my parents to my students, and although, at the time, I was not trying to be manipulating by asking them to drive me to Lafayette Park, I feel a twinge of guilt every time I tell the story.

We will keep Betty's brother in our prayers. My strategy for surviving in the church today is to concentrate on the good, ordinary people of faith whose lives bless all of us. Every time I focus on the organization, I am just painfully discouraged. But the goodness of the folks is continuously inspiring. And you and Betty are among those wonderfully good people who keep the faith.

Thank you too for Kathy Kelly's prayer. I do not know her, but I was so inspired by the courage of someone like Jill Carroll, the free lance journalist, that the Christian Science Monitor worked so hard to free. These folks are remarkable witnesses for good.

I have only traveled in Egypt, Jordan and Israel, not Iraq. And you are right. Those of us who work in biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies cannot truly believe that we are watching the world of the Bible that we study, and that we love, dissolve in our time. Next to the brutality and loss of human life, the loss of the legacy of the past seems unimportant. Nonetheless, when the new Iraq emerges it will have lost so much of its heritage.

During the first Gulf War a number of biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholars were activated with their reserve units. For a while they were posting notices on the internet about the condition of archaeological sites, antiquities and museum collections. It was great to have that kind of eye witness account. Soon, however, the Department of Defense closed the site fearing it would reveal troop movements.

You are right, it is now more and more common to use "First Testament" and "Second Testament" rather than "Old Testament" and "New Testament". Even though I followed the "Old Testament" convention in the title of my book, I don't use the phrase "Old Testament" in the book itself.

As I explain: By the time of Jesus, most Jews considered the Bible as a covenant or testament negotiated by Yahweh and Israel. Covenant is a genre developed by diplomats in the ancient Near East who negotiated treaties between one village or state and another to prevent or to end wars. The intention of covenant, like the function of diplomacy, was to clearly identify the responsibilities the negotiators had toward one another. The technical term in ancient Israel for fulfilling these responsibilities was *hesed*, or "love." Love here is not simply an emotional attachment; it is a binding contractual obligation. The intention of a covenant was to help two communities "to love one another" or to live in peace.

As a covenant, the Bible characterizes Yahweh as the divine patron of ancient Israel and Israel as the client people of Yahweh. "I, Yahweh, their Godparent, am with them . . . they, the house of Israel, are my people . . . you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your shepherd" (Ezek 34:30–31). In

this covenant Yahweh agreed to protect and to provide for Israel and Judah, and the people of Israel and Judah agreed to make no covenants with any other divine patron. Jews who became Christians believed that, as the book of Jeremiah (Jer 31:31–34) had promised, Jesus had renegotiated Israel’s covenant with Yahweh. Therefore, they began calling the Hebrew Bible the “Old Covenant” or “Old Testament,” and their own interpretations of it the “New Covenant” or “New Testament.” Christians did not consider themselves a new religion, but a renewed religion. Therefore, Moses, Micah, Jesus, and Akiva all summarize the Bible with the same words: “love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deut 6:5; Mic 6:6; Matt 22:37–40; Mark 12:29–31; Luke 10:27; *Genesis Rabbah* 24, 7).

In Old Testament Story, an introduction and in my classes, I always refer to “the Bible”, not the “Old Testament”, and to the “Christian New Testament”. I point out to students that although Jesus is made to say “...found me a church” (Matt 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-20), no where does Jesus say “...write me a Bible”. He already had a Bible – the Old Testament. Curious, Jesus followers decided to do both; they founded a church and they wrote a Bible!

By the time the calendar said it was summer this week, we had already two weeks of temperatures over 100! This weekend we will be over 110!

I am teaching my first on-line course this summer. I think I told you I am teaching my first on-line course this summer session. It is a “learning experience”, but I had planned to move to some on-line teaching when I get too old to come to class, and so this has been a good start.

First years of anything are always more work than they will be in subsequent years. I started some weeks before the semester ended using Respondus software to create multiple choice exams for the assigned reading. I went to the workshop, and did a lot of tutoring with one of the techs in Instructional Support. Then just before the summer session started, the University upgraded the software for Blackboard, and Respondus was no longer compatible with Blackboard. What this meant was that I could go on composing exams, but I could not upload them to Blackboard for the students to use. Instructional Support is working with Respondus to correct the mismatch, but by last weekend, I decided to revise the course requirements eliminating the exams. That turned out to be the right decision because Respondus is still off-line.

I so enjoy the face to face with students in class that I still do not know how I will do without actually seeing them. Nonetheless, I am getting to know them through their e-mails and their participation on the Discussion Board.

I was also not convinced that on-line learning is really a match for the humanities. It certain can work for certification courses where knowing the manual is the aim of the course (real estate, CPA, etc.) – but critical thinking is a different learning skill. I require these students to make three postings on the discussion board for each assigned reading. They must post something they learned from the reading, something they did not understand from the reading, and respond to another student's question about the reading. Actually I have been pleasantly surprised at the quality of the conversation on the discussion board. They are learning, and they are learning to think.

Patrice is still doing the kind of wonderful work she does with her patients and the nurses. I continue to be amazed at her remarkable diagnostic skills, and how often her initiative in getting physicians to run tests for their patients saves their lives. And the patients and their families are so grateful to her. She is such a human face for them as they struggle with cancer and the hospital system. I also continue to admire her ability to operate in a system which like all institutions is so political in a bad sense. She has the ability to say something, but not so much as to alienate herself, and keep her from getting back to the business of caring for the folks.

Our continuing love and prayers to both of you. I keep looking for a window of time when Patrice and I can come to Juarez City again, and we will.

6/21/2006 11:03 AM

From Joel Gereboff this morning!

Due to serious cutbacks in the funding the department has received that has allowed us to offer many courses through our wonderful group of faculty associates, we will have to make serious reductions in the course schedule for the coming academic year. While we will be able to retain a good number of the courses already scheduled and well enrolled in for the fall, as of the spring semester, we will need to readjust the proposed, but not yet scheduled set of spring courses.

I will be in touch individually with each of you regarding the revised courses I am able to offer you to teach. I seriously regret this significant change and these alterations are in no way a commentary on the quality of your work. To the contrary, you are an exceptional and dedicated group of teachers and we continue to value all you do for our unit, the students and the university.

The changes relate to fall and spring schedules. Winter and summer schedules are funded in other ways, and as of now we will retain the already submitted winter schedule.

It is with much regret that I have to make the following adjustments to your scheduled courses for next year. You do so much, are so dedicated and students learn so much. But without access to funding, I just can't schedule classes.

For fall-I can retain 3 of your 4 classes and have to cut only the 394, Women in the Bible.

As of now for spring I can offer you to teach only one section of 315 that presently is down for TTh 4:40-5:55.

Wow!

Teach the fall – it is better to look for work while I am working than to look for work without work.

Talk with Judy Grace about other jobs at ASU

Talk with Phil Gordon about a job with the city.

Talk with Tex Sample.

Talk with Deanna

Talk with Mark Jacobs about Honors College

Search school districts

Home Depot
Living the Questions

Buckeye on attracting a private college

Talk with PVCC

Talk with A.J. Levine

Talk with Norbert Samuelson about Jewish Studies.

Preaching the Lectionary for Methodist Conference (Bishop Minerva Carcaño)

Preaching the Lectionary at Spirit of the Desert for Lutheran Diocese

Try to think of this as an opportunity, not a termination.

Use free period in fall to job search

6/14/2006 4:28 PM

I am just now reading Da Vinci Code. A page turner.
Guess we'll see the movie this weekend.

I have only been paying cursory attention to the church flap over the book / movie. I had been thinking that it was all in regard to the claims made about Mary of Magdalene. Now that I'm into the book I see that what the RC church must really, really be upset about is the sinister light cast upon Opus Dei. Is that your understanding, too? They do come off pretty badly. I know the Opus people were always a thorn in your side, about like the John Birch Society, right?

John
jjwbaker@earthlink.net

Just back from a long weekend in San Diego. What a lovely few days – 70 degrees at noon, sunset over the bay....

Patrice and I read the Da Vinci Code a couple summers ago on vacation because so many people were asking me about it. Actually, I read a lot, but who dunnit's are not a genre I read. Nonetheless, like you, I found it a really good read. Especially because of the religious aspects – I am a hard audience, and if Dan Brown had not done his homework he would have lost me – which he did not.

Since the recovery of the Gnostic Gospel of Mary Magdalene, it is pretty clear that she was the beloved disciple – the best and the brightest of Jesus' followers. After his death Mary became the primary interpreter of what Jesus taught and did, and held the fragile group together. She was the first pope, but there is nothing in the Gnostic gospel about a sexual relationship between Jesus and Mary. As the monarchical episcopacy emerged under Ignatius of Antioch and company, the boys were not comfortable with apostolic succession from a woman. Therefore, they reformed the Mary tradition, and instead of being the beloved disciple, she became a model of the sinner who repents.

Actually, I thought Dan Brown was particularly gentle on Opus Dei, and remarkably well informed by a group that makes the CIA look like a neighborhood welcome wagon. The only inconsistency – beside the assassin monk – I noticed is that the monk was an orphan befriended by the Opus Dei bishop. Opus Dei does not give a rat's ass about the poor, they are strictly

after the Catholic rich and famous. I “deprogrammed” a couple of Rice students that Opus Dei in Houston got hold of – actually just met them in my office. It was painful to see these kids with great minds, and yet whatever part of the brain that handles religion was totally fried. One kid was in the group for seven years – his story of getting out would make a movie. He got himself transferred to Mexico City, and then got out of Mexico. Italy was like an Opus Dei gulag. He was under supervision everywhere he went.

I am not reading a lot about why Catholics are bent out of shape, but it seems to me that what Catholics find most offensive is Brown’s suggestion that the Catholic Church has blatantly rewritten what Jesus taught and did, and that true Christianity is more Gnostic, more sexual, more fun than the average Sunday Mass. Needlessly to say any suggestion that the Catholic Church does not do well at telling the truth these days is certainly very easy to believe, and touches a tender spot in an already wounded Church.

6/9/2006 6:12 AM

A couple “two thumbs down” from the summer film festival.

The Passenger (1975) In director [Michelangelo Antonioni](#)'s gripping drama, correspondent David Locke ([Jack Nicholson](#)) -- on assignment to cover an insurrection in North Africa -- stumbles upon the corpse of an acquaintance. Disenchanted with his life, Locke makes a momentous decision: He assumes the dead man's identity, not knowing that he was a gunrunner for the insurgents. But by the time Locke realizes that he's put himself in grave danger, it may be too late.

One of the most slow moving films ever. Hard to see the point of it all. Maybe all the CSI dramas have ratcheted up the level of suspense we want in a movie. Was interesting to see the young Jack Nicholson, but we really liked him better in **About Schmidt**. He was old, he was a seasoned actor. He was more fun!

The Hours (2002) This gripping drama visits three 20th-century women: the incomparable Virginia Woolf (Nicole Kidman, in an Oscar-winning performance), hard at work on her classic Mrs. Dalloway while battling depression in the 1920s; Laura Brown (Julianne Moore), an unsatisfied 1950s housewife who finds solace in Woolf's novel; and Clarissa Vaughn (Meryl Streep), a modern-day book editor who's losing her former lover to AIDS.

The Virginia Woolf connection, and the actors in this film drew us to it. I had had the book on my shelf for too long, and thought the movie might motivate me to read it. This is the kind of movie, however, that can send you running

for your Prozac. There are three sets of characters in three different time periods. Woolf is writing her book in the 1940's; Brown is reading the book in the 1950's, and Vaughn's lover is Brown's son today. The question for Woolf is whether to kill her protagonist and herself, which is the same question that Brown deals with, and that her son deals with. In the end Brown survives; Woolf and Brown's son do not.

Wednesday we went to the new Mesa Arts Center to see **Tuesdays with Morrie** by Mitch Albom. We really enjoyed the book, but the play was not well written. The focus in the book was Morrie's wisdom from his life, and about his death. The focus in the play was on Mitch's immaturity. The acting was also weak even though the production has been getting great reviews. The Arts Center is new, and has been touted as a state of the art facility, but is actually kind of odd outside, and not all that comfortable inside.

Today we leave for a few days in San Diego. We will come home on 6.13. Just a wild hair! We are looking forward to comfortable days and cooler nights.

I think I told you I am teaching my first on-line course this summer session. It is a "learning experience", but I had planned to move to some on-line teaching when I get too old to come to class, and so this has been a good start.

First years of anything are always more work than they will be in subsequent years. I started some weeks before the semester ended using Respondus software to create multiple choice exams for the assigned reading. I went to the workshop, and did a lot of tutoring with one of the techs in Instructional Support. Then just before the summer session started, the University upgraded the software for Blackboard, and Respondus was no longer compatible with Blackboard. What this meant was that I could go on composing exams, but I could not upload them to Blackboard for the students to use. Instructional Support is working with Respondus to correct the mismatch, but by last weekend, I decided to revise the course requirements eliminating the exams. That turned out to be the right decision because Respondus is still off-line.

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reading. Actually I have been pleasantly surprised at the quality of the conversation on the discussion board. They are learning, and they are learning to think.

There are 12 students in the class. Nine are actively participating, 3 have not participated at all. Only 6 have submitted topics for research, and their proposals are due 6.12, so it will be interesting to see how that develops.

Actually, after only six days on-line I am satisfied enough that I would be willing to teach the course again – perhaps during the winter session.

What did you do for Laurie's b'day?

Love.

5/31/2006 11:45 AM

In Say a Little Prayer by E. Lynn Harris, (<http://www.elynnharris.com/index.asp>) Chauncey Greer is the owner of The Cute Boy Card Company, a thriving company in Atlanta. As a teenager, he was a member of a popular boy band, but left in disgrace when word got out that he and his bandmate D had become much more than good friends. A free spirit now on the brink of forty, Chauncey has always hooked up with both men and women. With the age of the "down low" making women more cautious, however, Chauncey has been focusing on the guys.

After one too many bad dates, Chauncey finds himself in church, where the minister's message inspires him to follow his dream of a musical career once again. Although he's lost touch with D, as he starts writing songs his thoughts inevitably turn to his former lover. Chauncey's smashing performance at the church earns him a standing ovation and an invitation to participate in an upcoming revival. But Chauncey soon discovers that an ambitious fundamentalist preacher plans to use the revival to speak out against gays and gay marriage. Feeling angry and betrayed, Chauncey and other gay members of the church decide to take a stand against the church's homophobia by staging a "Day of Absence" when all of the gay members and their friends and family stay home. Everything is going as planned . . . until D appears on the scene and Chauncey has to face some hard choices about his future.

I Say a Little Prayer is filled with the plot twists, humor, and provocative insights readers expect from Harris. Like his last three novels, it is sure to rocket to the top of bestseller lists nationwide.

5/30/2006 8:29 AM

Today was a long day. I did walk. I did not work out or bike. I ate chips! Ugh.
I had a good meeting with Steven Farnsworth.

Tuesday, May 30,

2006

To whom it may concern:

What a pleasure it is to recommend **Steven Lee Farnsworth** (601.42.9164) to you for dental school. Steven was a student with me in a Religious Studies course: "Archaeology and the Bible" (REL 394 05396) at Arizona State University. The course offers students an understanding of the Bible of ancient Israel in the context of the Ancient Near East using social sciences like archaeology and anthropology. Steven's grade in this course is based on three writing projects and class participation.

In his writing projects Steven studied tel Lachish in Israel and its importance for understanding, for example, a Trial of Jerusalem in the book of Jeremiah (Jer 34:1—35:19). He did a PowerPoint presentation explaining the work of Amihai Mazar (Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E.) on this site and this period. He used the work of Mazar and Don C. Benjamin (Old Testament Story, an introduction) to create a fictional character and describe a day in the life of this character as a resident of Lachish during the war between Judah and Babylon when Lachish was destroyed. Finally, Steven did a ATLA database search for five journal articles on the excavations at Lachish; used interlibrary loan to acquire the articles; and then abstracted each.

Class participation required him to contribute to discussions of the assigned readings for each meeting that would demonstrate that he, in fact, did the readings, that he understood the readings well enough to explain them in his own words, and that he could apply what he learned from the readings to situations other than those discussed in the readings themselves. Steven did good, strong work in "Archaeology and the Bible" with me on both the written and oral projects.

Steven comes from a family of dentists. He has two brothers who are finishing their dental training, and Steven set aside time both during summer 2005 and 2006 to shadow a dentist for 25-30 hrs each week. He not only knows what dental school will expect of him, but also what a day in the life of real dentists demand. I admire his good sense in informing himself about the decisions he needs to make.

Steven is a reader, which is a wonderful trait in a student. He enjoys both fiction and non-fiction. Currently he is reading Thomas Friedman, Longitudes and Latitudes. It is certainly important for students to read what is assigned for their classes. This habit, however, lasts only for their years in school. Outside reading is a habit of learning that lasts a lifetime.

I spent some time talking with Steven about why he wanted to do what his brothers were doing instead of doing something different. In fact, he has one brother who is an electrical engineer, and not a dentist. He told me he also considered law school, and took the same practical steps to educate himself about that career as he did for dental school. What attracted him to dentistry was not just doing what his brothers were doing, but doing something that would involve him directly with people, with their families, with patients throughout the stages of their life. He chose dentistry because it is not just something to do, but something he can do the best he can. I would support his decision.

I was also interested in why was applying to so many schools so close to home in Arizona. During his two years of service as a Mormon missionary in Pennsylvania he met and spent time with people whose life experiences were very different from his own. It broadened and deepened his appreciation for the diversity in human life. Nonetheless, he feels a real responsibility to stay close to his mother, recently widowed by the untimely death of her husband to cancer -- and to be able to share the passages in the lives of his extended family members. Going to school closer to home will make that possible. Again, whether, in fact, Steven goes to school close to home or far away from his home, I was satisfied that he had thought about his choices, and had made a good choice.

Finally, I talked with Steven about his ability to compete – in dental school and in the workplace. One of the things we discussed was his experience in high school athletics. As a football player he learned to compete – for a place on the team, and for his team to place well in their league. Steven is a gentle and quiet man – he is not threatening in any way. He is, however, more than capable, in my opinion, to get into dental school, to do well in dental school, and to work hard as a dentist to make a living for himself and his family and to make a difference in his community. He will do well in your program, and reflect well on your school as an alumnus.

If I can be of further help in your consideration of Steven, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.
Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

I continue to be inspired by such young and good people.

Did work on wet spots that may harbor mosquitoes that have been driving us nuts! Drilled holes in hose bowl, and put it up on bricks. It is dry. Also sprayed around the base of spa. Greg from Arizona Termite Control suggested both. He inspected the house for termites, and found none.

When I left for my meeting with Steven, I has this powerful feeling that I had left the water running into the kitchen sink. I thought about going back to check, but would be very late for my meeting. At any rate the water would not overflow, but flow over the divider between the two sinks and drain through the garbage disposal. Then I thought I would pick up Steven and drive back to the house and interview him to and from, but that sounded really bizarre. A truly senior moment.

Talked with Matt Ewing today. Phil Nessinger died. Marty Benson is in a coma. Matt himself says he is fine, although falls. It is always so good to hear his voice.

Philip Nessinger, O. Carm. (PCM)

Fr Philip Nessinger, member of Province PCM, died December 13, 2004 after a long illness. He founded several parishes for the Province. He had been retired for two years. Philip was born June 6, 1924 in Chicago. He was professed August 15, 1944 and ordained June 16, 1950.

Edited some of the pictures I took at the Harvard Semitic Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Art.

Friday, I bought a new Olympus 6.0 megapixels 10X Zoom. Trying to read through the manual to learn how to use it. Has great pre-set programs for museums, shooting through glass, available light, etc.

Saturday we went to the farmers' market for vegetables/bread and worked around the house. Tired a new neighborhood Thai restaurant for lunch. Saturday evening we went to Symphony Hall for a rousing John Philip Souza concert.

Sunday we cleaned the spa and took our inaugural summer dip in the cold water. That afternoon we took Burak and Leah to the airport. Leah was my

assistant at Kino, and I worked on their house last summer. They were leaving for two months in Turkey. Burak mom came after their baby was born and stayed the year with them. Twelve huge pieces of luggage! They were excited.

Yesterday, a colleague of mine from Vanderbilt in Nashville came into town for a worldwind interview – arrived at 1:30PM, left at 6PM. Patrice and I picked her up at the airport. Was good to see her. We put pork ribs in the slow cooker with Sweet Baby Ray's sauce. Yum. Then to keep our interfaith credentials current, we had a side of potato salad from our local Jewish deli – Chompie's.

Another great entry in the summer film festival.

An Unfinished Life: from the acclaimed director of *Casanova*, *Chocolat* and *Cider House Rules*. Academy Awards winners Robert Redford (Best Director, *Ordinary People*, 1980) and Morgan Freeman (Best Supporting Actor, *Million Dollar Baby*, 2004) star in this powerful story of risk and redemption. Stoic and heartbroken, Einar Gilkyson (Redford) quietly lives in tire rugged Wyoming ranchlands alongside his only trusted friend, Mitch Bradley (Freeman). Then, suddenly, his daughter-in-law (Jennifer Lopez *Sball WeDance*) whom he blames for the death of his only son arrives at his door broke, desperate and with a granddaughter he's never known. But even as buried anger and accusations resurface, the way is opened for unexpected connection, adventure and forgiveness.

5/25/2006 9:07 AM

First movie in the summer film festival. Great flick.

Ladies in Lavender

It's 1936, and two sisters, Janet and Ursula Widdington (Maggie Smith and Judi Dench), are at their beach house in Cornwall for some rest and relaxation. But their idyll is interrupted when they chance upon a mystery man awash on the beach and decide to nurse him back to health. Turns out he's Andrea (Daniel Bruhl), a violinist who was bound for America when his ship encountered trouble. Before long, he takes the quiet fishing village by storm.

Rated PG-13 1 hr. 43 min. 2004

5/9/2006 5:43 AM

Instead of food, get physical.

Ma'at is the schedule. "Keep the schedule, and the schedule will keep you."
(Humphrey Connors, O. Carm.)

4/30/2006 7:06:02 AM

Sociologist group names 'essential' protest songs

WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON - Those professional bleeding hearts over at the American Sociological Association have helpfully put together a list of the "essential" protest songs of the past five decades and published it in the latest issue of the journal *Contexts*.

Fourteen tunes made the cut, including such standards as *We Shall Overcome*, Bob Dylan's *The Times They Are A-Changin'* and the 1930s union anthem *Which Side Are You On?*

Other notable selections:

Fight the Power by Public Enemy. "An exuberant hip-hop call to arms," the editors declared of this 1989 mega-hit.

Respect by Otis Redding and performed by Aretha Franklin, a song that proves "the personal is political."

O Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud) by James Brown. The Godfather of Soul also had a way with Black-power anthems.

I Ain't Marching Anymore by Phil Ochs. "An antiwar classic, complete with a revisionist history of American militarism," the editors wrote.

Strange Fruit by Abel Meeropol and performed by Billie Holiday. , "Chilling protest against lynching. Maybe the greatest protest song of all time." (Meeropol, a New York City schoolteacher, later adopted the children of executed spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.)

Lift Every Voice and Sing lyrics by James Weldon Johnson; music by J. Rosamond Johnson. These accomplished brothers wrote what is "known as the "Black National Anthem," the antidote to *America, the Beautiful*.



I am grateful today for Annie Lamott who writes and believes.

“We must be willing to get ride of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.” Joseph Campbell.

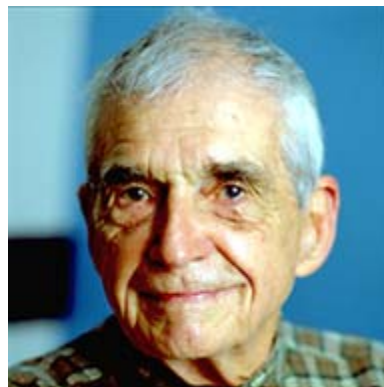
To Leah Iverson (El Salvador)

“I was telling your story to a friend on the phone yesterday. Kim and Michael have been friends for years. Kim and Patrice worked together in Houston. Their daughter is graduating high school this year, and we knew them before Emily was born! They live in a small town in the Texas Hill Country between Austin and San

Antonio. Their Lutheran congregation is being raked by conservatives who are trying to force a vote excommunicating gays from membership and ministry. When twenty members of the congregation met with the church council to give the council a sense of the congregation, Kim was one of only four members who did not passionately support the anti-gay initiative. Among other things, I told Kim about you, about your cousin, about your initiative between your sorority and the gay fraternity (you keep getting chosen to be fiesta queen!) at ASU. I wanted her to realize how things change when you actually meet and know and love someone who is gay instead of just talking about “those gays and lesbians”. I also wanted her to realize that not all twenty-something heterosexuals are anti-gay – her daughter Emily considers gays to be unchristian! Thanks for helping me – even a 1,000 miles away.”

2/3/2006 11:10 AM

I am grateful today for Daniel Berrigan, S.J.



Maybe it's the abundance of blank wall to stare at, and the time to do it, but a lot of resolutions get made in prison. When the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, S.J., found himself locked up in Danbury Federal Penitentiary in 1970 for burning Vietnam War draft files and leading the F.B.I. on a three-month chase around the United States, he, too, resolved to change his life.

He did not, as is often the case in such moments, decide to become a law-abiding citizen. Since his release in 1972, he has been arrested dozens of times for additional acts of civil disobedience, most of them protesting war. And at 81, he boasts of being "entirely unreformed."

No, Berrigan's resolution involved his academic status.

"I made a great vow that I would never again settle on one campus," he recalled one afternoon last December over soup at a modest bistro near the West Side Jesuit Community on 98th Street in Manhattan, his home. He reasoned that without a full-time job like the one he'd held at Cornell University in 1970, no one could try to cut back on his activism by threatening to fire him.

So his teaching posts at a long list of schools have been more like dates than a marriage. "If I'm invited for a semester," he explained, "as I've been continually, they know I'm departing, and I know I'm departing, and it goes well."

He kept this vow until 2000, when Fordham offered to name him poet-in-residence. He agreed.

Does this mean that he has succumbed to the charms of Fordham—where he has been a visiting professor several times over the years—and begun to fall in love? Sorry, but no. Except for the Jesuits, to which he has belonged for 63 years, Berrigan is too prickly and independent to pledge himself to a single institution.

Yet, starting with his 1954 stint as an instructor at Saint Peter's Prep in Jersey City, N.J., he has always taught somewhere. He enjoys the classroom, where he tries to "fire minds to a flare" by challenging students to confront stark moral choices in difficult literature. Judging from his most recent stack of student evaluations, that is pretty much what he did in "Poems by Poets in Torment," a

class he taught at Lincoln Center last spring.

“I think I have put more of myself into this class than any other I have taken,” wrote one. “And I know for certain that I have gotten more out of it than I can even hint at here.” Another student complimented Berrigan for talking about how faith and a radical politics inform his poetry. “This class is real to us because you’re real to us,” the student wrote. “You’re not just a snooty academic with a bunch of fancy degrees.”

Perhaps you didn’t even know that Berrigan is a poet. His embattled fame as an avatar of nonviolence has long overshadowed his art. But his credentials are impressive. He has published 14 volumes of poetry. (The most recent was *And the Risen Bread: Selected Poems, 1957-1997*, published in 1998 by Fordham University Press.) His first book of poems, *Time Without Number*, was published in 1957. It was nominated for a National Book Award and won the prestigious Lamont Prize for Poetry from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In jail or out, Berrigan has been seriously composing poems ever since.

“As a poet of witness, he’s one of our most important voices,” said Elisabeth Frost, assistant professor of English at Fordham and director of Poets Out Loud, an eight-year-old poetry reading series held at the Lincoln Center campus. “He has a real warmth and quietness, in which he couches the boldest of his stances.”

Berrigan read for the series, which has featured major poets like Derek Walcott, Gwendolyn Brooks and Kenneth Koch. In his work, he is no blushing celebrant of nature or the worrier of an indwelling self. He is tender and critical and often scolds what he loves, as in the poem “O Catholic Church”:

I could love you more if
you mothered me less, if you
egged on like a shrew by expensive shrinks
and your own shrinking shadow
weren’t such an
Amazon of Order

Such severity is belied by Berrigan’s person. His face has been weathered and creased by a life’s long winter of fights, but you get the idea, while he gently sips his soup, that he’d rather not always be beating the drums of doom. He complimented his recent students for wrestling with his course, which included readings in Bertolt Brecht, Günter Grass, Federico Garcia Lorca, Pablo Neruda and Primo Levi.

“It’s very easy to dump on young people,” he said. “But they will be as good or mediocre as we are, depending on the example we give.”

French Clements, a senior and a dance major from San Jose, Calif., liked his class well enough that when his mother and 13-year-old sister, Iris, came to visit, he had them attend it.

“We were doing some poem that had to do with napalm and naked burning children,” he said. “I gave some looks to my sister, but she was all there, which says something about the humanity of Father Dan’s approach.” He added that there was a drawback to Iris’ visit: “Now she thinks that all college classes are going to be that inspiring, nicely condensed and well expressed.”

Several students complained in their evaluations that Berrigan spoke too low in class. It is one of his contradictions that he expresses a furious rhetoric in tones that lull. For example, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music before a recent screening of a documentary about one of his anti-war actions, an audience member asked him if the world’s store of justice had increased since the start of his career.

In a kindly voice, Berrigan answered: “It’s the most dangerous time of my life. With the president and his crew, we’re in the hands of ideologues that don’t recognize any moral boundaries, have only contempt for human life and are money-mad. That’s a very lethal combination.”

Though he can be strident, he has earned the right to speak his mind, said the Rev. Jeffrey von Arx, S.J., dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill.

“Not everyone agrees with what Dan Berrigan has to say about every issue,” he said. “But no one can challenge his sincerity or his conviction to put his life on the line for his beliefs.”

His most recent students seemed to feel the same. Many praised him for putting flesh to abstract concepts like conscience and fruitful sacrifice. “I would like to thank you for strengthening my view of Christianity,” wrote one. Another added: “Maybe one day I can have the strength to live the life I want to live.” That sounds like a resolution.

—Jim O’Grady (FCO ’82) is co-author, with Murray Polner, of *Disarmed and Dangerous: The Radical Lives and Times of Daniel and Philip Berrigan*.

1/30/2006 5:39 AM

“Without risk there’s no discovery, there’s no new knowledge, there’s no bold adventure, all of which help the human soul to soar, and the greatest risk is to take no risk.

“Our lives were shattered, but in the years that followed the family persevered with tremendous success.”

June Scobee, widow of Francis R “Dick” Scobee, Challenger’s commander on January 28, 1986 at the 20th anniversary of the disaster at the Kennedy Space Center, FL.

I had been invited to the University of Houston as a visiting scholar for the spring semester 1986. I had taught a morning class at Rice University, and was driving over to the UH campus. Waiting for a light to change I turned on the radio to see if the Challenger launch had gone on schedule. The radio was eerily silent for some seconds, and then a reporter’s voice spoke as quietly as if he were reporting a golf tournament. It took me several minutes to hear enough to realize the shuttle had exploded shortly after launch.

I walked into the reception scheduled to greet me to the campus. There were some fifty people in the room. I don’t remember what I said. I don’t remember what they said to me.

After the reception I walked over to get my campus ID. The voice on the TV was still disconnected. I looked a question at the ID clerk: “Have they begun any recovery.” “There is nothing left” he told me. I knew that could not be true. The shuttle was huge, and in the days to follow there was to be a recovery – grim, and shocking.

I remembered that Ronald McNair had taken his saxophone hoping to play jazz in space...

Again my life was reeled by death – John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert F. Kennedy. Now Dick Scobee, Ron McNair, Michael J. Smith, Judith A. Resnik, Ellison S. Onizuka, Gregory B. Jarvis, and Chirsta McAuliffe – a teacher.

1/15/2006 6:17 AM

I am grateful today for Chris and Don Kuelling.



Thursday, January 05, 2006

I am grateful today for Ed Ryle.

A steward we all might emulate

Paul Martodam

CEO of Catholic Charities Community Services.

Monsignor Edward J. Ryle, who died Dec. 28, was the sort of priest who brought great honor to his church and great good to all people, particularly the poor, the oppressed and the powerless.

He lived social justice and called others of faith and goodwill to do the same. Now that he has gone to his reward, perhaps we can all reflect and learn from his exemplary life.

When monsignor retired from the Arizona Catholic Conference, where he served as the voice of the church before the Arizona Legislature for many years, the headline in The Arizona Republic correctly recognized him as "God's lobbyist." He was a tireless advocate for the poor and oppressed among us, constantly challenging public policy leaders to be stewards of justice.

Monsignor Ryle committed nearly every waking hour to some effort for the poor and oppressed. For more than 30 years, he served on the boards of directors of Catholic Charities Community Services (formerly Catholic Social Service) and

the Foundation for Senior Living. He constantly challenged our agencies to reach out to the poor and the marginalized people of our communities.

He maintained close relationships with people with whom he vehemently disagreed. Above all, monsignor believed in the power of prayer. Countless times, when I sought his help on a perplexing matter, he would add to his wisdom: "Pray harder." Good advice then, good advice now.

May he rest in peace and may we all begin the New Year with a renewed commitment to every man and woman. –

Tuesday, January 03, 2006

Today I am grateful for Tom Ziegler, my friend.

Don,

Happy New Year;

I want to appologize for not responding sooner regarding the great pictures you sent of Hamilton and your newly remodeled house. I use a Macintosh computer and my MS Office software got infected with some kind of bug and I had to expung the offending software from my machine. So, I couldn't open your PowerPoint files. I came over to Washington and Lee this afternoon and used one of the schools computers to finally get a look at your pictures.

Were we ever that young? Good lord, but those two years in Hamilton were certainly... I don't know. Fill in the blank. Three years ago I had a reading of a play up in Provincetown, Mass and on the way home decided to find Hamilton and the school. Of course it'w now the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, but the Carmelite coat of arms still welcomes visitors from its place over the main door of what used to be the chapel. The main building was being extensively remodeled at the time of our visit, and i think the chapel was being converted into a reception hall. I did find my senior year room (cell?). I was in with Meneke for a while; in a room located right next to that of Fr. Colombo because we were such hellions. Did you ever have to kneel on your knuckles out in the hall? For me it was an almost nightly activity.

Anyway, it was great seeing all those guys who had, at the time, been so much a part of my life.

Thanks also for the snaps of your house. I particularly liked the refrigerator covered with family graffiti!

Have a great winter term. I'll get that script off as soon as I've done a little pruning of the second act.

Ciao

Tom

My only trip back to Hamilton was years ago. Mike Mulhall and I were at a meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association. He came up to me in typical fashion and simply announced: "We are going to dinner after the meeting, and then to Hamilton!" No excuses or I don't have the money crap."

We arrived, and Michael walked right through the front door. The security guard asked: "May I help?" "No" Michael answered with a wave, "We're familiar!" Off we went toward past the classrooms with the security guard following us at a distance. The dorms had been converted to apartments for married students -- the chapel was still a chapel, the study hall was storage... and the urinals in the bathrooms still smelled of the same disinfectant that we used!

Here's one of my kneeling out stories. When we were at Niagara, Frank Battafarano from NJ, who had joined the class from Rutgers, became a prefect for the high school students. He had heard our stories about "kneeling on our knuckles." One study hall a student was acting out and Frank ordered him to kneel on his knuckles. By that time kneeling out was history. "What's that mean, Frat?" the kid asked. Immediately Frank realized he did not know what it meant either. In a frantic moment of improvisation, he told the student to kneel, pull his fingers into the palms of his hands and put them under his knees. The tradition was simply to put your hands under your knees palms up. As far as I know that kid is still crippled -- although Frank was not the least embarrassed.

Peace.

Monday, January 02, 2006

Today I am grateful for Denver -- an Aussie, our dog!

12/22/2005 7:51 AM

I set the alarm for 5 AM – and worked at my desk for a couple hours with just a cup of coffee. Now it is 8 AM, and I am trying to decide what to eat. I have a knee jerk reaction when Patrice goes to work that I am on my own and can eat whatever I want. I am going to try to read Roizen and Oz, YOU for 10 minutes before eating.

It is important to eat. Not eating only prompts your metabolism to slow, not to speed up.

After I eat one thing, I need to wait twenty minutes before eating something else.

Snack at 11AM.

12/21/2005 3:55 PM



Was going through some of my mother's papers this PM, and found this clipping. It was on the front page of the Evening Star (Washington DC March 11, 1965) under the headline: "Marchers Keep Vigil in Selma". The caption read: Carmelite Father Ignatius Benjamin and Cajetan Menke join all night vigil at White House".

What amazes me is that my mom and dad almost disowned me for this photo! I can't imagine that she kept it.

12/18/2005 6:18 AM

I am grateful today for Will and Grace Partain!

Hi, lovely Don and Patrice! Don, your note-to-my-note has finally spurred me to write my very-long-planned message to you guys. (I'm sure I've mentioned my "e-mail swamp" before, so I won't again.)

First, thanks for your very interesting post-Scotland messages. Lots of details that I can use to pretend I'm a competent tour guide for future guests.

We did manage two more sets of guests after you all, though one was cheating (a couple up from Cambridge for two days -- in fact, he took some interest in your book, Don). The others were from Texas and had a genealogical motif to their visit. By chance, I managed to conjure up the brother of the (Oliphant) clan chief, and we spent a day roaming back roads of Perthshire, looking longingly over tracts of land that his great-great-great-great-grandfather had lost gambling or something. You could see it still hurt the guy! Anyway, all in all, we had a bumper harvest of people in 2005, all of which I enjoyed.

I think I've only semi-signed-up one set of visitors for next summer; but I think my brother David is bringing a choir of twenty... Anyway, we always have plenty of room for you. I found one or two Egyptian artifacts in the Hunterian museum which you didn't see, but I don't have the slightest intention of telling you what they are -- you'll have to come see for yourselves.

Overall it's been pretty quiet otherwise. Next up is Christmas Lunch for sixty (actually, suspect it won't be quite that many) -- I agreed to take over the "community lunch" from the (competent) woman who's done it for a good while. Patrice, if you're in the neighborhood any time from about the 22nd, I'm sure I can find some onions for you to chop. If hunger and food poisoning are avoided, I'll be happy.

Something I expect to enjoy this Advent season has just started: BBC Radio 3 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/>) is broadcasting all of the surviving work of J S Bach (known in theological circles as "the even newer testament") in one huge gulp, between tonight and Christmas Day. If you're suitably wired, you can hear it all, too. Think of Grace -- I plan to be completely insufferable about it.

Have a great trip/Christmas season out west -- sounds great. Our love to you both,

Will

12/16/2005 9:44 AM

I am grateful today for Rolf Knierim.

Rolf & Hildegard Knierim Year End 2005

**To our relatives, friends, acquainted persons, and their families
Greetings and Wishes from us for your personal wellbeing, comfort, and**

contentment

During whatever holidays you observe this season - and in the coming year!

Throughout the year of our fiftieth wedding anniversary, in which Hildegard's health was restored and is being kept under control, the primary concern for our common private life has guided us, and our needs have been provided and protected. We are well.

Our sons and daughters are alive, well, and work. Two, Johannes with his wife Alba, and Barbara with her son Tommy, live near us in Southern California; Eva, single, lives in Oregon near our former daughter-in-law Pamela and her husband John McLellen; Eberhard is married to and lives with Merry Beth and her three children in Kentucky somewhere near the border of the State of Ohio. They expect a child of their own, a girl; and Gabriele lives with her husband Cliff(ord) Burrows and their four year old daughter Ashley in Buffalo, Wyoming. We have been encouraged by the fact that as of this passing year each, rather than only two of them as before, owns, or, as in Eberhard's case, is married to a spouse who owns, her/his home - in times in which it is for more and more people becoming increasingly difficult to realize "The American Dream."

Before, during, and after Hildegard's cancer, we have been grateful for being supported by visits from Germany, by Dagmar from Mainz and Heinz & Suse from Alzey, and also by various kinds of support by many of you. Hildegard has emphasized that she was particularly strengthened by her special "support groups," her music-, her literature-, and her folks-dance-group. At the same period, Helmut, the youngest of us three -originally four - Knierim brothers, husband of Waltraud, nee Dosch, father of three and grandfather, died of cancer in Pirmasens at age 70. And my cousin Karin Klein, nee Knierim, the daughter of my father's youngest brother Edmund, died at age 62, also in Pirmasens and also of cancer. We congratulate all - known and unknown - who are well and happy, as we are on the side of all who are destitute and in grief.

We also share with many our satisfaction about the many things that we consider amazing and good in this country, the land and many genuinely friendly, sincere, trustworthy people, just as we share with many our dissatisfaction about many conditions of the nation, domestically and internationally, which justify neither respect nor silence.

Of the endless number of serious developments in recent years, none has united the American people, including us, more than the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, and, from 2002/3 on, divided them progressively more than the American invasion of Irak commanded by President Bush, followed by the history of the American occupation of Irak to and beyond this day, the inescapable fruit of that invasion.

We consider it as our duty that we must have a position on this matter, neither neglect nor ignore it; and that we must especially speak out and not be silent about it. Not to meet these conditions would be inexcusable. It would mean that we betray the sum total of our life's experience, of the principles of our ethos based on common human morality and especially on our understanding of what it means to uphold the meaning of the presence of the spirit of Jesus Christ in the world today, the meaning to which our lives have been committed through observance and in spite of failure.

We must remind you:

By the mid-time of our teenage years we had lived through, and belonged to those who had survived, the rule of Hitler and WWII.

By 1946 we had learned that for the conduct of the Nuremberg trials three new legal principles were created, which from now on would be the basis for the prosecution internationally, namely, of crimes against humanity (e.g., Auschwitz), of war crimes (e.g., unprovoked aggression by a nation against another nation), and of the personal. individual responsibility of those who make and contribute to the decisions for such crimes.

By 1949/50 its newly established Constitution subjected the German Republic to the strict conditions for avoiding any of these three internationally banned crimes.

By the same time, we had learned much more, and more discriminatingly, than we had known during 1933 - 45, about the role of the Churches during the Nazi regime, and especially about the one tenth of one percent of the members of the "Confessing Church, " also about Bonhoeffer. From that time on to this day, in Germany and the United States, the question - asked or silent - has always been part of our lives as to where we stood, whether or not we resisted, whether or not we were silent - implying that having been silent or behaved in the pietistic attitude of political abstinence is no excuse for having been responsible for the No?i rpginw which is indeed true.

In the Spring of 1950, my Church sent me to an ecumenical conference of ministers from the western European countries at the "Evangelische Akademie" in Schwerte Westfalia, on the subject of war after WWII, including the ethics in the political propaganda of warfare, about misleading leaders and the mislead.

Either in the Fall semester of 1950 or the Spring semester of 1951 I, a seminarian, heard at the Methodist seminary in Frankfurt the famous American Evangelist Stanley Jones lecture to the assembled leaders of the Protestant Churches of the Frankfurt area (including Niemoller) saying that "we have ten more years to convert Asia - and China still - to Jesus Christ, before they fall to godless Communism. "

In June-July 1952, as the delegate of the German Methodist theological students to a World Conference of some three hundred theological students at the Oecumenical Institute in Bossey/Switzerland, I heard the American Professor of Ethics Paul Lehman from, I believe, Union Theological Seminary say in a lecture that "the structure of the American democracy represents the closest kind of the influence and rule of Jesus Christ on earth."

Of course, the subject of war has always been a part of our lives in the ministry and in our life long study of the Bible.

We have not left behind these experiences when we adopted American Citizenship.

Here, then, is our position:

We support the struggle worldwide against violent terrorist warfare of whichever ideological and territorial origin. Also, we were in favor of the 1991 liberation of Kuwait from Saddam's invasion. And we were certainly not opposed to the predominantly American invasion of Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. In both cases the military intervention was called for against two nations and their leaders, which had been proved beyond any reasonable doubt based on factual evidence to have waged or supported war beyond their borders against other nations, in the case of Afghanistan also against the United States.

However, from the moment of the debate in the UN Security Council in February 2003 and to this day we have been in decided opposition to President Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq. It is beyond any doubt that the Bush government propagated before the world, most clearly in the February 2003 UN Security Council, that Saddam Hussein possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and was ready to use them against America and other nations at any moment, and also that Hussein is hosting bases for the training and spread of Islamic/Jihadic/Al Qaeda terrorists. It made it clear that in view of the danger that Saddam would any moment use his WMD, Saddam had to leave Iraq within a week or the United States would invade - preemptively and even unilaterally; whereby its army was already ready to march, and did so within two weeks.

Already at that moment, the two contentions that Saddam possessed WMD, was ready to use them, and hosted training camps for terrorists, were discredited in the debate. While proof beyond doubt by irrefutable facts - an irreducible minimum condition for a defensible war of aggression - did not exist, the Bush government continued to claim that proof existed despite the fact that it could not prove such existence. And it was not willing to allow for half a year for final fact-finding proof (Blix). This stance of our government - the

rejection of necessary and demanded material proof for its contentions; as given in the invasions of Kuwait and Afghanistan - amounted to the violation of basic legal and ethical principles. And it was not comfort that the majority in Congress - from both parties - which should have been expected to resist the indefensibility of contentions alone, supported President Bush' decision for war regardless of the violation of law and ethics.

We concluded that President Bush intended to invade Irak regardless of proof for its contentions, without delay, and that, deceptively, he insisted in nothing more than the rhetoric of his contentions in order to be supported by the American public.

After the invasion, it became confirmed that no WMD had existed, and that Saddam had not hosted Islamic terrorists. Thus, our government, using the diabolic method of spin-doctoring the arguments and with them the truth, continued trying to deceive the nation and the world by *a silentio* dropping the originally propagated reason for the invasion and replacing it by advocating the need for establishing democracy in Irak - as if that call had been the original argument, or as if it had been publicly supported had it been the original argument. And never did the government of President Bush admit that its reasons for the original invasions were - at least! - in error. Throughout the invasion and the occupation of Irak, the societal ethos of the nation has become enmeshed in an inextricable web of perverted facts.

Whatever has happened since the invasion and whatever will happen from now on will have to be seen - regardless of any kind of propaganda - as the exclusive consequence of this indefensibly propagated invasion. Undeniable is the fact that without the invasion based on unjustifiable reasons to begin with, we would not have these consequences, neither in Irak nor in the struggle against terrorism, and President Bush, the Commander in Chief, would not have to be held personally responsible for the unnecessary death of thousands and of ten--thousands of our wounded soldiers, let alone the death and destruction in Irak.

The indefensible original decision for the invasion has become fateful for our generation. It also has become another fateful chapter in the history of un-Christian generations in the history of Christianity, generations of which "America, the Christian nation" is the most conspicuous example on earth today. When we consider the supreme importance of the contrast between war and peace on earth, it is clear that neither any one of the three monotheistic religions nor all united have taken the lead to promote, let alone secure, peace, and the conditions for peace, and abolish war and the conditions for it on earth. We, however, have first to look at ourselves. Some of us have long since learned that the portrait of the way of the spirit of Jesus Christ on earth is incompatible with any kind of nationalistic "Christianity" in which God/Jesus - nation - military might - money are symbiotically, inseparably,

idolatrously, fused.

We were admonished that we should at least Christmas leave alone with that political stuff. But Christmas is anything but sentimental withdrawal into the inner peace in our psyche. It is the outflow of the sentiment of our hearts into the peace on earth. The most relevant meaning in any reference to the birth of Jesus in the New Testament is in Luke's story expressed in the doxology of the angelic host: Glory - to God in the highest; and on earth - Peace among the humans with whom God is pleased. On earth among the humans ! - Peace. The *Pax Jesu Christi* (in Luke's program in contrast to the worldwide imperial *Pax Romana* of the time) and Peace (- on earth among the humans; not war, let alone indefensible war! With that focus in the very first place, Christmas is for us eminently important; without it, we can be content with wishing you as ourselves just have happy holidays.

Yours cordially

Rolf and Hildegard Knierim

12/14/2005 7:42 AM

I am grateful today for Inge Casey, and her dedication to social justice.

How to triage all the things I have to do, and choose things to do? Make a schedule for my personal research time. Something for reading. Something for writing. Something for Museum visit. Time for remodeling.

12/12/2005 6:30 AM

9/11/2005 10:41 AM

I am craving food, probably because I am bored, not because I am hungry. Perhaps I can distract myself by writing in my journal.

“When I returned to civilian life after my army service in World War II, I often lost myself in unhappy contemplation of the destructive events of recent history.” (Progoff 1975-1992: 2)

When I resigned from my active ministry as a priest and a Carmelite on Ash Wednesday February 28, 2001, I too continued to find myself lost in the unhappy contemplation of the destructive events of my own recent history. Perhaps I can identify the things that continue to trouble me and “write them out.”

9/17/2005 7:18 AM

We are sustained in this great quest for happiness, it seems to me, by hope. We know, even if we do not admit it, that there can be no guarantee of a better, happier life than the one we are leading today. ...The next life or tomorrow – we can never be certain which will come first. But we hope to go on living. We hope that through this or that action that we can bring about happiness. ... The desire or inclination to be happy and to avoid suffering knows no boundaries. (Dalai Lama 1999: 4-5)

9/19/2005 5:09 AM

“...success in helping students learn even some core materials benefits from the teacher’s willingness to recognize that human learning is a complex process. Thus we had to apply a sweeping sense of educational worth that stemmed not from any one discipline but rather from a broad educational tradition that values the liberal arts (and natural sciences), critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, concern with ethical issues, and both a breadth and depth of specific knowledge and of the various methodologies and standards of evidence used to create that knowledge.” (Bain 2004:8-9)

Adapt for syllabus?

12/9/2005 8:44 AM

I am grateful today for Eric Elnes.

Hi Eric,

Thanks for your time yesterday, and for the information about CrossWalk America. What a wonderful, prayerful and positive statement of faith the affirmations reflect.

Am glad to hear you are publishing your dissertation. After we spoke, I thought you might like to consider hiring a student to do the documentation checking for you. I had an undergraduate student this semester that I would be happy to ask if that seems doable to you.

I have a good friend who is the editor of Jossey-Bass. The press has a good list of contemporary spirituality titles. When Sheryl and I were talking at the annual SBL meeting in Philadelphia before Thanksgiving, I asked her for a book to change my life! She recommended: A Hidden Wholeness: the journey toward an undivided life by Parker J. Palmer. It would make a wonderful guide for people leading small groups in the congregation.

Peace.

12/8/2005 5:23 PM

March 12-13, 2005 I was invited by the Society of Biblical Literature to join two other authors of introductions to the Hebrew Bible for a two-day program in Winston Salem NC on how to teach introductory courses. I reported on how I designed my Old Testament Story, an introduction and then heard a detailed review of the work by Joseph Scrivner, Samford University, Birmingham AL. All of the reviews of Old Testament Story, an introduction are available at: <http://www.doncbenjamin.com/>

Full Version 3.7

The public face of Christianity in America today bears little connection to the historic faith of our ancestors. It represents even less our own faith as Christians who continue to celebrate the gifts of our Creator, revealed and embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Heartened by our experience of the transforming presence of Christ's Holy Spirit in our world, we find ourselves in a time and place where we will be no longer silent. We hereby mark an end to our silence by making the following affirmations:

As people who are joyfully and unapologetically Christian, we pledge ourselves completely to the way of Love. We work to express our love, as Jesus teaches us, in three ways: by loving God, neighbor, and self.

(Matt 22:34-40 // Mk 12:28-31 // Lk 10:25-28; Cf. Deut 6:5; Lev. 19:18)

Loving God Includes:

Affirmation 1: Walking fully in the path of Jesus, without denying the legitimacy of other paths God may provide humanity;

Matthew 11:28-29; John 8:12; John 10:16; Mark 9:40

As Christians, we find spiritual awakening, challenge, growth, and fulfillment in Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection. While we have accepted the Path of Jesus as *our* Path, we do not deny the legitimacy of other paths God may

provide humanity. Where possible, we seek lively dialog with those of other faiths for mutual benefit and fellowship.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found wherever love of God, neighbor, and self are practiced together. Whether or not the path bears the name of Jesus, such paths bear the identity of Christ.

We confess that we have stepped away from Christ's Path whenever we have failed to practice love of God, neighbor, and self, or have claimed Christianity is the *only* way, even as we claim it to be *our* way.

Affirmation 2: Listening for God's Word which comes through daily prayer and meditation, through studying the ancient testimonies which we call Scripture, and through attending to God's present activity in the world;

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 13:12

As Christians, we listen for God's Word in the living presence of the Holy Spirit, praying every day, and discerning God's present activity in our world. We also study and revere the ancient records which we call Scripture, recognizing that they have been formed within distinct historical and cultural contexts, yet have been informed by God's Spirit, which transcends all ages and times. Most of all we seek the meaning of salvation, of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as it is presented in the Scriptures and discerned in daily life.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers engage in daily prayer and meditation, as well as personal and community study and interpretation of Scripture, as central ways God's continuing voice is discerned in everyday life.

We confess that we have moved away from Christ's Path when we have claimed that God's Word is restricted to that which may be contained in a written document, or that either the recording of God's Word in Scripture, or our interpretation of it, are infallible. Further, we have moved away from the Path when we have allowed the mere fact of Scripture's fallibility, or our own, to dissuade us from seeking God's Word in Scripture, prayer, and reflection on daily life.

Affirmation 3: Celebrating the God whose Spirit pervades and whose glory is reflected in all of God's Creation, including the earth and its ecosystems, the sacred and secular, the Christian and non-Christian, the human and non-human;

Genesis 1:31a; Psalm 96:1,11-12; Acts 17:23

As Christians, we seek to act as righteous stewards of the earth and its ecosystems. We celebrate the reflections of the Creator's glory in both the sacred and secular, human and non-human, Christian and non-Christian.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers act as caring stewards of the earth, and where the presence of the living Christ is celebrated wherever Christ's spirit manifests itself, transcending all preconceived human categories.

We confess that we have stepped away from this Path when we have ignored our role as stewards of the earth, or have interpreted Scripture in a way that fails to account for the sacredness of the earth or the integrity of its ecosystems. We have further moved away whenever we have claimed that that the glorification and praise of God is limited only to that which is consciously and overtly Christian.

Affirmation 4: Expressing our love in worship that is as sincere, vibrant, and artful as it is scriptural.

Genesis 2:7; Exodus 31:2-5l; Revelation 18:22

As Christians, we strive to respond to God's artistry in Creation by integrating the arts in worship, education and proclamation. We encourage the reclaiming of artistry and artistic expression in all Christian endeavors, both personal and communal.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers make sincere and vibrant worship of God as central to the life of their community as Jesus did. We further affirm artistic expression as a way of reflecting God's creativity, joy, and prophetic voice in what may be seen, heard, felt, tasted, sung and spoken.

We confess that we have moved away from Christ's Path when we have failed to make worship the product of our best efforts to experience and express love for God, neighbor and self in community with others. We have moved further from this path when we have considered the arts as trivial or merely tangential to the life of a mature Christian community.

Loving Our Neighbor Includes:

Affirmation 5: Engaging people authentically, as Jesus did, treating all as creations made in God's very image, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, nationality, or economic class;

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:3-7

As Christians, we welcome those of every race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental ability, nationality, and economic class into the full life of our community.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers uplift and celebrate the worth and integrity of all people as created in God's very image and likeness. We further affirm that Christ's Path includes treating people authentically rather than as mere categories or classes, challenging and inspiring all people to live according to their high identity.

We confess that we have stepped away from this Path whenever we have failed to recognize the essential goodness of God's Creation by treating some classes of human beings as more godly than others. We have moved further from Christ's Path when we have treated people superficially, as objects to be used rather than human beings with depth and distinction.

Affirmation 6: Standing, as Jesus does, with the outcast and oppressed, the denigrated and afflicted, seeking peace and justice with or without the support of others;

Micah 6:8; Luke 12:48

As Christians, we advocate and care for those who experience oppression and poverty, either physically or spiritually, within our faith communities, our country, and the world. We recognize the local congregation as the primary context for offering such care, even as we seek to extend it beyond our faith communities into the wider world.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers honor the essential unity of spirit and matter by connecting worship and theology with concrete acts of justice and righteousness, kindness and humility, with or without the support of others.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path when we have suggested that Christianity is concerned with only the spiritual in contrast to the material, or vice-versa. We have moved further away when we have celebrated blessings given by God without also acknowledging responsibilities that come with blessing.

Affirmation 7: Preserving religious freedom and the Church's ability to speak prophetically to government by resisting the commingling of Church and State;

Luke 20:25; 1 Peter 2:17

As Christians, we strive to live as responsible citizens of our country, just as we seek to live as Christ's disciples. We celebrate the separation of Church and State as much for the protection of the Church, and other faith communities, as the State.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers honor the role of the State in maintaining justice and peace, so far as human discernment and ability make possible. We affirm the separation of Church and State, even as we endeavor to support the state in as far as Christian conscience allows.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path when we have confused the role of the State with that of the Church. We have moved further from the Path when we have renounced the Church's calling to speak prophetically to the State by suggesting that the Church should or could take on the nature, tasks and dignity which belong to the State, thus becoming itself an organ of the State.

Affirmation 8: Walking humbly with God, acknowledging our own shortcomings while honestly seeking to understand and call forth the best in others, including those who consider us their enemies;

Luke 18:9-14; Luke 6:27-29; Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:18-19

As Christians, we recognize that we are misfits both with respect to God's Realm and the world. We are misfits with respect to God's Realm in that we rarely live up to the principles and ideals we espouse. We are misfits with respect to the world in that the ideals for which we strive frequently do not conform to the ways of the world.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers love those who consider them their enemies as much as they love themselves, striving humbly to embody the "fruits of the Spirit": love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path when we have promoted a notion that people of faith are morally or ethically superior to those without faith. Further, we have moved away when we have supported any cause, no matter how just or righteous, without reflecting the "fruits of the Spirit" toward all.

Loving Ourselves Includes:

Affirmation 9: Basing our lives on the faith that, in Christ, all things are made new, and that we, and all people, are loved beyond our wildest imagination – for eternity;

Psalm 22:27-29; Psalm 23:4-6; Psalm 139:7-12; John 3:16-17; Romans 14:7-11; Philippians 1:20-26

As Christians, we bear witness to, and nurture faith in, all persons who are hungry for, or open to the revelation, love, and salvation of God in Christ. We do not seek to evangelize those who have no desire to explore the Christian Path. We trust, rather, that God's love, grace and invitation, has been, and will be, revealed in other paths, witnesses and times.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers are continually discovering, and rediscovering that they – and all people – are loved beyond their wildest imagination, and they determine to live their lives according to this discovery. We find in this discovery and surrender the very essence of salvation, which is a process, not an end-point, within an eternal journey.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path whenever we have denied God's love for all people, or have denied the effectiveness of God's eternal will that all be saved. We have moved further from Christ's path when we have not actively borne witness to God's love and grace with those who seek it.

Affirmation 10: Claiming the sacredness of both our minds and our hearts, recognizing that faith and science, doubt and belief serve the pursuit of truth;

Proverbs 1:20-22; 1 Corinthians 3:18-19; 1 Corinthians 14:15

As Christians, we seek to develop intellectually as sincerely as we seek emotional development. We further seek to clarify that the truths contained in Scripture are not conveyed primarily through scientific revelations, but through

wisdom which may be gleaned frequently in story and song, symbol and parable.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers value the pursuit of wisdom, which is found at the intersection of head and heart, where God seeks relationship with the human soul.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path when we have denied either the role of the mind, or that of the heart, in the seeking of wisdom.

Further, we have moved off the Path when we have denigrated the role of doubt or pursuit of scientific knowledge as if they were enemies rather than allies of faith.

Affirmation 11 Caring for our bodies, and insisting on taking time to enjoy the benefits of prayer, reflection, worship and recreation in addition to work;

Exodus 5:4-8; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

As Christians, we strive to embrace and embody ways of living that promote the health of the body, the joy of living, and the benefits attained when work is combined with rest and recreation, reflection and prayer. We do this for our sake, for the sake of others, for the sake of the earth, and for the sake of Christ.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers care for their bodies as temples of the holy, and take time to pray and play, to worship, and to reflect, as essential parts of their vocation.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path when we have supported the ethics of Pharaoh over the ethics of God by promoting systems of production and consumption without attending to the disciplines of rest and recreation, reflection and prayer. We have further moved from the Path when we have denigrated or abused our bodies, or those of others, or denied the rights and responsibilities of others to make decisions about how they care for the bodies God gave them.

Affirmation 12 Acting on the faith that we are born with a meaning and purpose; a vocation and ministry that serves to strengthen and extend God's realm of love.

Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 5:15-16; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31

As Christians, we practice prayer as a daily discipline, seeking in prayer both to enjoy God's presence and to discern God's will for our lives and our faith communities. We accept it as one of our highest responsibilities and privileges to help those in our communities of faith discern God's direction for their lives, and to celebrate and value their discernment in the worship and missional life of the church. In every available way, we seek to help people develop and use their diverse callings as an expression of their faith.

We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where all of Christ's followers are understood to be called into a ministry. God's intention for us can be found and followed, however haltingly and imperfectly, in obedience to the guidance

and insights, which come in prayer. We hold this conviction to be true of the Church as well as of each of its members.

We confess that we have moved away from this Path when we have claimed that one form of ministry is any higher or more sacred than any other, in or outside a church. Further, we have moved from the Path when we have failed to concretely value meaningful input and participation by both laypeople and clergy in the worship and mission of our communities.

12/6/2005 7:26 AM

I am grateful today for Peter Hinde and Betty Campbell.

From: Peter Hinde [mailto:pchinde2@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, December 05, 2005 11:18 AM

To: dcb@asu.edu

Subject: what's up?

Dear Don...Patrice, A blessed season to you! How are you two doing? It seems ages since we have heard from you. We are getting our annual newsletter out in a week or so I won't afflict you with any more reading material here. What are you doing over the Christmas days? How about gracing us with a visit here? Abrazos, Peter

Hi Peter, (I will put a hard copy of this e-mail in the USmail, so you don't have to read it all now!)

Thank you for your blessings, and your good thoughts for Patrice and me. We, too, have been talking about coming to Juarez. In fact every year at this time we retell the stories about Christmas of 2000 when you and Betty created a posada for us.

Our problem continues to be that with Frances' death in December, and then Patricia's death in February, 2005, Patrice exhausted all of her accumulated vacation time. She is going to sit down this week and calculate how long it will take for her to accumulate time off, so that we can do some planning. We really do want to see you.

2005 has been a demanding year for both of us.

The anniversary of Frances's death is December 19. She had a wonderful death, but we still miss her terribly. She was such a part of our lives. We had memorials for her in Denver where she is buried, and then in Houston where she had friends for years.

Since Frances' death we have decided to stay in this house. Originally, we had intended to sell or rent this house, and move closer to downtown into a smaller house. I had remodeled Frances' three rooms and her bathroom to make them accessible after she had her first hip replacement in 2002. So we decided to make this our permanent home, even when we stop working. So this year I have remodeled the living room, and will finish the kitchen during the upcoming break between semesters. We had a contractor replaced the windows with high efficiency glass and frames to reduce our energy use in winter and summer – and still need to replace the A/C and furnace to get a lower energy use model. We have gone through Frances' furniture – refinished and reupholstered pieces we want to keep – and given the rest away. The physical changes are helping us come to terms with the loss.

Patricia, Frances' sister, died on February 25. In contrast to Frances' death – Patricia's death was long, and difficult, and painful. She was a Sister of Loretto KY. Wonderfully talented woman. A superb violinist. Taught orchestra. In fact some of her most wonderful years were at Loretto in El Paso. She migrated from teaching middle class white children – to organizing orchestras among the poor with instruments she collected from her former students. While we were all on vacation together about ten years ago, she had a massive heart attack. She survived, but the quality of her life was terribly compromised. She was too ill to come to Frances' funeral, but one of the SL's kept her cell phone open throughout the mass so she could hear it all. From January onward, Patrice and I made several trips first to Kansas City which was her home for 40 years, and to KY where the community moved her just a few weeks before she died. The sisters were kind to her, but they really had little understanding of how to work with Patricia at the end of her life. Healthcare in rural KY was also very difficult. She suffered terribly, and to some extent unnecessarily, before her death. It was hard on us not to have been as helpful to Patricia, as we had been with Frances. Caring for her at such a distance was also a drain on us. We had memorials for Patricia in KY, Kansas City, and Denver where her ashes are buried with her family.

Death and dying consumed almost half the year – and with both of us continuing to work, it felt like running a marathon.

We took two weeks vacation in July. Went to visit a student from my first year of teaching who now lives and works in Scotland. Arriving just days after the subway attacks – and W's appearance at the G8 – I was prepared for an unhappy time, but it was just the opposite.

We met for the first time the Irish cousins that Frances kept in touch with – about five families. Patrice’s grandfather had financially supported their families during the hard days after he emigrated.

I also got to spend some good work days in the British Museum. My current project is: Stories in Stone: the Bible in archaeology.

My student is Southern Baptist, and his wife – Anabaptist. She and her sister come from a wonderfully committed Christian family, and they still devote generous time to working through the church. As we sat and talked I realized my frustration with the Catholic Church – especially here in Phoenix – needs perspective. I need to focus on the good that ordinary people – like you and Betty – do, and stop waiting for the institution to live the gospel. Will and Grace – those are really their names – belong to a congregation of less than 100 persons. Yet they feed the sick, clothe the naked, educate....

After visiting with Will and Grace in Glasgow – which is a big city – we spent most of our time in a village. Like your neighborhood, people go each day to buy food – first from the baker, then the butcher or fish monger, then the green grocer – even tourists like us are called by our first names – every food is sold to you by someone who has handled it, knows it. It was a really grass roots experience for us. Then we would take it back to our cottage, cook it slowly, eat it slowly....

We came home refreshed, and I was ready to begin a new school year.

When we went for our annual physicals, however, both of us needed surgery. Patrice needed to have her gall bladder removed, and I needed carpal tunnel surgery on my left hand. Neither surgery was life threatening. Both of us wanted to have the surgeries now after classes ended, rather than then, but our family physician was clear that we needed the surgeries then rather than now. Both of us recovered well, but it took two weeks in September, and then two weeks in October – and so we have been playing catch-up ever since. My last class is today, and grades are due on 12.19, -- Patrice’s last class is next Friday, so we are both ready for an Advent with less stress.

I am encouraged that the sanguine and unquestioning support for W is beginning to change – I wish I could see signs of re-birth in the church, but it will come. And so will we – to Juarez.

Our love and prayers for you and Betty in this season of life.

12/5/2005 8:48 AM

I am grateful today for Jeanne and Richard Paul and all the good people at the Casa who were so good to Frances and continue to be such a welcoming community for us.

Hi Jerry,

What a truly odd assignment! Denomination, ethnicity and gender never appear on the curriculum vitae of scholars, nor are denomination, ethnicity and gender ever used by reviewers to evaluate the merit of academic publications.

What you want to know is that I have an M.A. in Semitic Languages from the Catholic University of America where I studied with Patrick Skehan, and wrote my thesis on the “man and his brother” idiom in Hebrew, and how it was translated into the Septuagint. The project demonstrates how language reflects the evolution of Judaism from its Semitic to a Hellenistic world. You also want to know that I have a Ph.D. in Religion from the Claremont Graduate University where I studied with Rolf Knierim, who was the last student of Gerhard von Rad (Heidelberg University) and wrote my dissertation on the urban traditions in Deuteronomy. I argued that when cities joined Israel they understood Yahweh differently than when villages joined Israel. For these urban Hebrews the saving power of Yahweh was experienced in the justice system of the gate courts.

What you also want to know is that I have taught in the Religious Studies Department at Rice University – an ivy league school with no historical connections to a religious community, and am now teaching in the Religious Studies Department at Arizona State University – the largest Religious Studies Department at any state school. I also have taught at Fuller Theological Seminary SW in Phoenix, St Mary’s School of Theology in Houston, and a wide range of Jewish, Christian and university based adult learning programs.

I am delighted you are using Old Testament Parallels, laws and stories from the ancient Near East, which is now in its third edition. You can preview a copy of the latest edition at: <http://www.doncbenjamin.com/> Vic and I are delighted that it continues to be such a useful classroom tool for putting the Bible into context.

Nonetheless, so you can get you final completed.

I am a **white male** with an Hispanic name (Don Carlos Benjamin!). I also speak Spanish as a second language.

I was raised and still am **Catholic**. I was born in northern Louisiana to a Catholic mother and culturally Christian, – but not church going father -- whose parents were also culturally Christian farm people from Nebraska. My mother's mother, who lived with our family, was also Catholic, and it is from these two women that I have my faith. As part of a military family we moved regularly throughout the south – Louisiana, Florida, Missouri, Georgia, and North Carolina. I went to 8 schools before graduating high school. Therefore, I grew up the south as a Catholic in an evangelical Christian world, and was never was part of the large Catholic ethnic communities of the east or Midwest.

My mother's grandparents were **Irish** immigrants in the 19th century. Her father was **German**. He too was a soldier. His family, -- and my father's family -- were from the Midwest – Nebraska, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri. They had migrated from the east coast at the end of the War of Independence. During the War Between the States, my people fought for the Union. Five died as Confederate prisoners of War.

Send me a copy of your paper. I would enjoy reading it – once my own grades are in.

Peace.

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From: SJERRY671@aol.com [mailto:SJERRY671@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2005 7:02 PM
To: dcben@asu.edu
Subject: Bibliography Information

Dr Benjamin,

I'm an MDiv student at Golden Gate Seminary, Rocky Mountain Campus in Denver. My OT Introduction professor, Dr Frank Ames, has asked us to identify the denomination, ethnicity, and gender of the authors of our text, one of which is *OT Parallels*, and all references cited in our papers. Could you please share with me your denominational affiliation?

Thank your very much sir.

Jerry Shockley

12/4/2005 6:41 AM

I tried Parker Palmer’s Woodcarver’s method on Stories in Stone this morning while I walked in the park. Meditate – focus on the task.

Genesis:

Garden

Eden
Yuri Zannis
hanging gardens
an urban masterpiece like Central Park, not a nature preserve

Tree of Life

Apple/Quince

Naked is divine; clothed is human

Snakes

Litany of Thanks

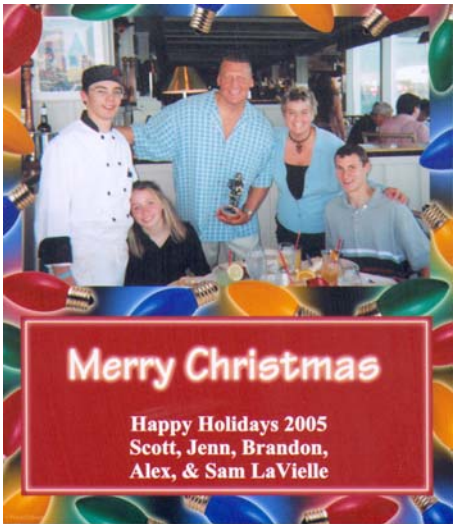
Jenn and Scott
Zev Garber
Tony Campbell
Cheryl Fullerton
Betty Ballinger
Jim and Laurie

I am grateful to day for Jenn and Scott.

What a great picture of your family on our first Christmas card of the season.

It was good to be in Tucson for Thanksgiving. Sean is doing great at Boulder – focused, motivated. Chris and Don came through Phoenix on their way home and we has a good time with them.

We are looking forward to seeing you – If you want, we would love to have you come up for diner at our house and an overnight. Otherwise, we will be in Tucson 12.23-25.



Out love.

12/2/2005 7:08 AM

I finished my grades, and there are still two days of class to go. I needed help from Ryan, or I would never have finished reading 315 before Monday! Delegation is better than despair.

Hi Tony,

Congratulations on your festschrift! What a nice recognition of who you are and what you do. I was hoping to see you last week in Philadelphia --

I wanted to thank you for how compassionate and concerned you were about me at the meeting in Denver in 2001 after I resigned from ministry. That was truly kind, and unique of you.

Patrice and I are doing well. I am truly delighted that I still have a place to teach – classes finish 12.06, then exams, and grades due 12.19 – Joel Gereboff, the chair at ASU, has been such a wonderful and welcoming colleague. I am proud of my 35 years of ministry, the work, the people, the good experiences of church. And I am grateful that I was able to leave with my faith intact. My faith was always a priority for me – do not need to be a Carmelite, I do not need to be a priest, but I do need to be a person of faith. I realize faith is a gift, but it makes such a difference in my life.

Be well, my friend. Continue to bless, to teach, to celebrate life. Ad multos annos.

11/30/2005 7:43 AM

Today I am grateful for Cheryl Fullerton, who encouraged me so long ago in New Orleans to turn Old Testament Story, an introduction into a book.

Cheryl recommended that I submit Stories in Stone to Wadsworth or Prentice Hall. I looked at Prentice Hall and they only have Hershel Shanks anthology – and it sells for \$53! Way out of range for the class room. I did move it, however, to my competition shelf.

It is 8:30AM, and I still have not gone to the park. I have read some papers, so that is good. Now the park hoping that it will give me an energy boost.

11/29/2005 5:48 AM

Chris and Don Kuelling were here last night, and stayed with us. I think it was a good evening. I got out a box of memories from Mother's house – we looked at old pictures. Chris and I took the dogs for a walk in the park. We watched CSI Miami and ate ice cream together.

I slept well. Up at 1 AM for an emergency pooch – I think all the veggies yesterday on the new diet. Then nothing until 5 AM.

Today I am grateful for Betty Ballinger and all the good things she does in the community.

Chris and Don left about an hour ago, and I still can't get back to work.
11/28/2005 8:49:19 AM

Today I am beginning to diet, and to be grateful for ordinary and good people who bless my life. I feel completely betrayed by organizations – the structure, and I need to focus on the individual.

Today, I am grateful for Jim and Laurie – who they are, what they do, and that they share their lives with us.

Brian and Chris from Discount Window finished installing our new double pain, argon gas, vinyl frame windows and doors. It took three times to get all the parts here, and installed. That part was a hassle. But Brian and Chris were really conscientious, and I liked the way they worked. They even went over to 35th St with me to see if I could recycle the Arcadia door they removed from Marconi. Chris worked on it, but it was a different style. He screwed the stationery door tight because otherwise it could be lifted and opened. Brian said his brother Matt is looking for a rental, so I told him to call me on Saturday when the carpet installers are there. I may have solved two problems at once. I gave them a \$50 tip, probably not enough, but something.

Went to Fry's to pick up some groceries for Chris and Don tonight, and some things for my diet.

9/11/2005 10:41 AM

I am craving food, probably because I am bored, not because I am hungry. Perhaps I can distract myself by writing in my journal.

“When I returned to civilian life after my army service in World War II, I often lost myself in unhappy contemplation of the destructive events of recent history.” (Progoff 1975-1992: 2)

When I resigned from my active ministry as a priest and a Carmelite on Ash Wednesday February 28, 2001, I too continued to find myself lost in the unhappy contemplation of the destructive events of my own recent history. Perhaps I can identify the things that continue to trouble me and “write them out.”

9/17/2005 7:18 AM

We are sustained in this great quest for happiness, it seems to me, by hope. We know, even if we do not admit it, that there can be no guarantee of a better, happier life than the one we are leading today. ...The next life or tomorrow – we can never be certain which will come first. But we hope to go on living. We hope that through this or that action that we can bring about happiness. ... The desire or inclination to be happy and to avoid suffering knows no boundaries. (Dalai Lama 1999: 4-5)

9/19/2005 5:09 AM

“...success in helping students learn even some core materials benefits from the teacher’s willingness to recognize that human learning is a complex process. Thus we had to apply a sweeping sense of educational worth that stemmed not from any one discipline but rather from a broad educational tradition that values the liberal arts (and natural sciences), critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, concern with ethical issues, and both a breadth and depth of specific knowledge and of the various methodologies and standards of evidence used to create that knowledge.” (Bain 2004:8-9)

Adapt for syllabus?

