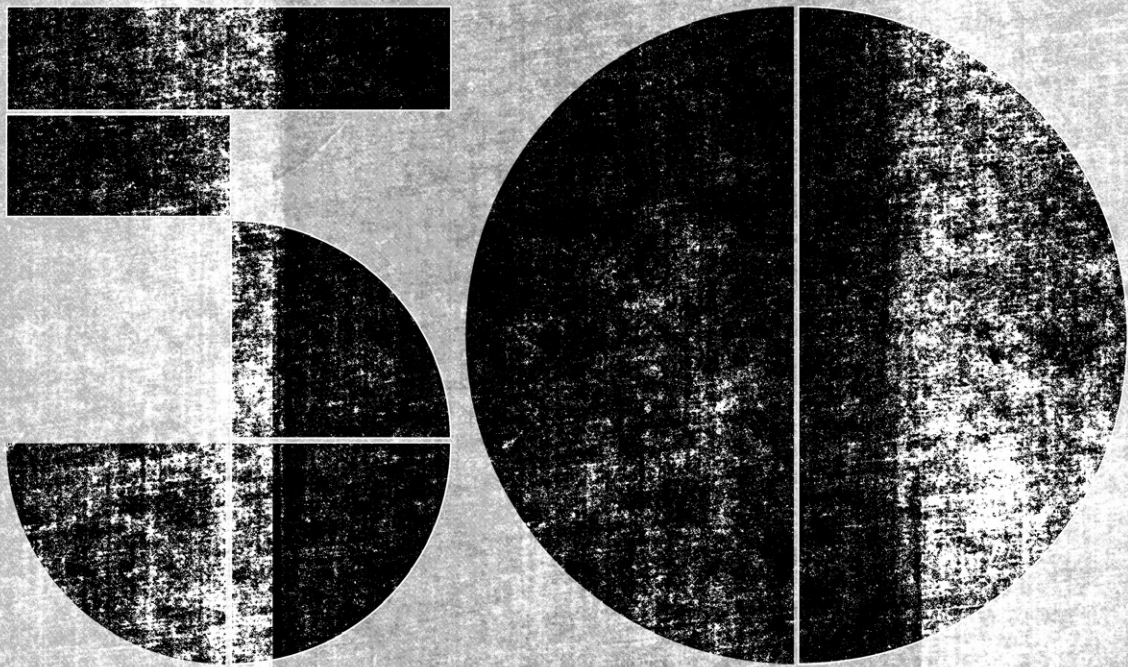


BEARINGS

for the Life of Faith

SUMMER 2017



A PUBLICATION OF THE COLLEGEVILLE INSTITUTE FOR ECUMENICAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH

Editors' Note

Making soul takes time. For the past 50 years the Collegeville Institute has been doing just that—making soul in communion with a particular place, particular people, and particular deep traditions.

The place is central Minnesota, where the coniferous forests running to the north meet the deciduous woods that push up from the south and east, and both edge the great prairie that stretches west. It's Bauhaus buildings, immigrants from Germany, gracing a glacier-carved landscape; it's fox and deer, loons and herons, eyeing intruders in their world; and it's a monastic community praying and working, working and praying, from the twilight of the horse drawn plow to the dawn of the digital age.

The people are those who established the institute, nurtured and tended it over the years, contributed to its work with a multitude of gifts, including time and money, participated in its programs, made friends, wrote books and articles, shared meals, shared stories, shared lives shaped by faith in conversation and daily life, returned home renewed, and, often, returned again for more.

Heir to the ecumenical movement, a key religious development of the 20th century, the Collegeville Institute has been ready to welcome the other with respect and hospitality. Established by Benedictines, whose deep tradition traces back to the 6th century, hospitality is part of the Collegeville Institute's genetic structure. "Listen with the ear of the heart," says the Rule of St. Benedict, a lesson well-learned by ecumenism, and a habit that shapes the life of the Collegeville Institute.

It will take two issues of *Bearings* to celebrate 50 years of soul making at the Collegeville Institute. This issue takes us from 1967 to 2002, when, after 35 years of activity, the Collegeville Institute's board of directors engaged in a significant moment of reflection, retrospective and prospective, about the Collegeville Institute's work and identity. The next issue will pick up the story at that point, in a slightly different key.

We hope you'll take the time to read accounts of the Collegeville Institute's story in this and the next issue, to meet some of the remarkable people who contributed to its life, and to join us in celebrating the work of a singular institution that has been given the great gift of pursuing its ecumenical mission for 50 years "so that," as the Rule of St. Benedict counsels with the writer of I Peter, "in all things God may be glorified."



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The First Half-Century of an Adventure:

“Where Do We Go from Here” to “Where Have We Come from There?”

Patrick Henry

PATRICK BUTLER’S QUESTION

“Where do we go from here?” asked Patrick Butler, a St. Paul, Minnesota, businessman and philanthropist, to Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB, a monk of Saint John’s Abbey. The answer is the life story of the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, now 50 years old and counting. From the Collegeville Institute’s vantage point in 2017, the question has come full circle: “Where have we come from there?”

Kilian had not expected Patrick Butler’s question, so his response wasn’t immediate. The reply he eventually gave was grounded in his own experience, the spirit of the age, and his monastic community’s treasure trove of imagination and boldness. What Patrick Butler heard loud and clear were the words “Kilian; Second Vatican Council; Saint John’s.”

Pope Saint John XXIII’s council (1962-65) catapulted the Roman Catholic Church smack into the middle of the ecumenical movement (which had started half a century earlier). Saint John’s Abbey and Saint John’s University had already been pioneering the investigation and reassertion of Christian unity.

Saint John’s School of Theology and Seminary undertook to teach Protestant theology, for example. Professor McDonnell told the abbot that if they were going to teach it, somebody needed to know something about it. So, in 1960 Kilian was off to Germany. Four years later he earned his doctorate from the University of Trier with a dissertation on John Calvin’s theology of the sacraments. Nowadays writing on such topics by Catholics is old hat. Back then, it was unheard of.

Kilian’s time in Germany was funded by a grant. He had written to ten foundations. Eight said no, two said yes. He accepted the earlier of those two positive responses, the one from the Aimee Mott Butler Charitable Trust in St. Paul.

Each year he wrote a long letter to Patrick and Aimee Butler. He told them about people he was meeting, new issues surfacing in university life, what it meant for an American to be studying in Germany during the Second Vatican Council, and even how he was managing to cook his own meals.

In 1989 Kilian reflected on the early 1960s.

Life in Germany gave me perspective on the situation of the churches in the United States. I wrote to the Butlers how it struck me that churches, especially the Catholic Church, had long been out of the missionary stage and were no longer dependent on European Christianity for a whole range of religious needs. No longer a missionary country, we were nevertheless still living with a missionary mentality.

As for scholarship, we were living off the translations of European research. This could not go on. Certainly we would always be reading the books of European scholars, but we have our own national history. We need to write out of the American experience.

When Kilian returned to Saint John's, he wanted to thank the Butlers in person. *He had never met them.*

During the conversation, he learned that Patrick Butler had made copies of his yearly letters and sent them around to his friends. "Over lunch, as we discussed my experience in Germany, Patrick asked, 'Where do we go from here?' I swallowed and said I would go back to Saint John's and consult with my confreres."

While Kilian was in Germany, and even earlier, ecumenism was mushrooming at Saint John's. In 1957 Fr. Godfrey Diekmann, OSB (1908-2002), in a memo to Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, OSB (1906-1996), was already sounding an alarm about "the relatively low incidence of American Catholic scholarship." In 1963, following on a dialogue between students at Luther Seminary in St. Paul and at the Saint John's School of Theology that had been held annually since 1958, a proposal was made to establish a Library of Catholic Theology at Luther and a Library of Protestant Theology at

Saint John's. At Collegeville, this soon developed into what was to be called an "Ecumenical Study Center" in the Saint John's Library.

By 1964, the idea for what would become the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research was coming into focus. In a memo, dated March 20, 1964, to Abbot Baldwin, Fr. Arno Gustin, OSB (1906-91), president of Saint John's University, outlines a proposal from Fr. Michael Blecker, OSB (1931-88), who would himself be the university's president 1971-82. "Might I suggest," Blecker had written,

a project I shall very briefly describe as an "Institute for Ecumenical Studies" set up on the same basis as Princeton's Advanced Institute of Studies [actually Institute for Advanced Study]. It involves provision of a small permanent staff, a building, and very large annual stipends to be offered top-notch scholars who seek to do advanced study in the area involved, and money for the publication of their research. . . . [The] Institute would have to provide offices and some if not all "apartments" for those involved, thus we would get a building out of it of handsome proportions.

It was in this ferment of ideas and proposals that Kilian fashioned his answer to Patrick Butler's question. He consulted with many monks, especially Abbot Baldwin, Michael Blecker, and the then new president of Saint John's University, Fr. Colman Barry, OSB (1921-94). What emerged from these conversations was the idea of a postdoctoral research institute (combining a retreat center with it was considered and discarded). "The postdoctoral level would determine the Institute's essential character," Kilian said, "though other persons with serious research projects would not be excluded."

Patrick Butler said he would think about it. Kilian recalls hearing, “Don’t call me; I’ll call you.”

Patrick Butler’s answer

A year later Kilian took the risk of calling. He said to Patrick that now was the time to ride the crest of an ecumenical wave that could provide a surge of energy to move the project forward. The Butlers invited him to visit them in St. Paul. Kilian later reported what happened during the conversation.

All systems were go, the project was going to fly. And the remarkable fact was this: the Butlers did not appoint a committee, they did not suggest a feasibility study. They probably sought advice from others, but the decision to go ahead was uniquely theirs. They saw that the churches needed to do their own research. From the beginning, they grasped the significance of doing this research ecumenically—that is, you do not tag on the ecumenical dimensions after the research is all finished. Ecumenical character belongs constitutively to the task of theological scholarship today.

You do not tag on the ecumenical dimensions after the research is all finished. Kilian had learned this lesson while living in the midst of Protestants in Germany. The Second Vatican Council, with its opening of the church’s windows, acknowledged it. And Saint John’s was already practicing it.

If ecumenical character belongs to the task of theological scholarship today, how best to establish that character? Kilian looked to the model of a Benedictine monastery: establish a community of scholars in which each one works on an individual project but in a framework allowing all participants to share their research with their peers and receive feedback. And such a com-

munity would include families, so scholars can be in residence for a semester or even a year.

The first iteration of the Institute idea didn’t include families. Kilian, his sense of humor evident even at the Institute’s founding, said to a Minneapolis *Star Tribune* reporter in October 1967 that he had described the institute to some East Coast scholars. “They said it was very interesting but that it would never work to exclude wives and children. They told me it was the kind of scheme only an unmarried priest would think of.” One could add that only patriarchal academics would distinguish between “scholars” and “wives”—and, in a challenge to the prejudice, the Institute’s very first two resident scholars were wife and husband, Arlene and Leonard Swidler, accompanied by their two daughters.

Reminiscing 20 years after the Institute’s beginnings, Kilian said at the 1987 Institute spring Board of Directors luncheon, “Our dream was to build a post-doctoral institute where scholars would be able, over an extended period of time, to share a whole spectrum of their lives: their faith, their scholarly competence, their prayer, their families, their play.” And in a 1992 interview he drove this point home: Ecumenism “has to have a human base. We can sit down in our own houses and universities and read each other’s books, but ecumenism is not going to happen that way. You need trust and friendship.”

It was not all-grand theory. In an observation that brings a knowing smile from subsequent executive directors and office staff, Kilian wrote, “The Butlers knew that scholars do not live on top of the mountain in contemplation. They asked about grubby details: Who would take care of snow removal? Who would collect the garbage? What about sewage?”

Many philanthropists ask that a proposal be

scaled back. Not Patrick Butler. “I suggested room for about five scholars. I well remember Patrick objecting, ‘But five is not a group, you need ten.’” And the Butlers warmly embraced the selection of the eminent Marcel Breuer, designer of the Saint John’s Abbey and University Church and other Saint John’s buildings, as architect for the apartments where the scholars would work and live during their stay. The choice of Breuer connects the Institute that came to be with the idea first broached by Michael Blecker—it was Breuer who designed the Institute for Advanced Study, and he adapted for Collegeville what he had fashioned in Princeton.

were the risk takers. They caught the vision and considered the possibilities, made their decision, then moved with dispatch beyond frontiers. They never turned back from their original daring.”

The Butlers were visionary risk takers, to be sure—and their entrepreneurial spirit fit right in at Saint John’s, which in the 1960s was a hotbed of such initiatives by the monks of Saint John’s Abbey. One would have to look long and hard to find a record of sustainable innovation to match the nearly simultaneous inventions of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (1965), Minnesota Public

Radio (1967), the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (1967), and the Jay Phillips Center for Interfaith Learning (1969).

They caught the vision and considered the possibilities. . . . They never turned back from their original daring.

The Butlers gave a grant of \$250,000 toward the construction of the Institute. When the bids came in, the cost for 10 units and an administration building was \$350,000. “I returned to Patrick Butler and proposed we go ahead and build half the institute, see how it prospered, and then make a decision about the second half. But Patrick said, ‘If we do it, we do it.’ He gave us another \$100,000.” The scholars needed studies in the Saint John’s Library. The Butlers gave another \$50,000 for that purpose. \$400,000 total, or just under \$3 million in today’s dollars.

Kilian summed up the story of the Institute’s origins: “I was the cautious one. The Butlers

The moment when Kilian’s dream, the Butlers’ generosity, and the boldness of Saint John’s converged arrived on October 13,

1966, when Abbot Baldwin “proposed that the [Saint John’s monastic] chapter . . . proceed to the construction of the first stage of the [Institute] building, which is to be erected on the west bank of the Watab above Flyntown,” and the chapter responded yes. In a letter dated June 5, 1967, to the newly named Board of Directors, Kilian notes “a local strike which was holding up construction has finally ended and the workers will therefore begin building the Institute this morning.”

On October 14, 1993, the Butlers’ role was permanently registered in a resolution of the Institute’s Board, naming the administration

How Blest This Place Where God Is Praised

by Jeffery Rowthorn



1. How blest this place where God is praised as all the sea - sons sing; the
 2. How blest this place where Christ is known as bread and wine are shared, as
 3. How blest this place the Spi - rit fills with quest-ing minds and hearts. Here
 4. How blest this place where we are met in God's sur - pri - sing ways: a

wind and snow, the gen - tle breeze in turn their tri - bute bring. The
 old di - vi - sions, now out-worn, are lo - ving - ly re - paired. Here
 time al - lows them to pur - sue what scho - lar - ship im - parts. As
 lake-side walk, a si - lent time, a joy - ful hymn of praise. As

loon's re - turn, the fal - ling leaves re - veal God's faith - ful - ness, so
 wor-ship hal - lows each one's work and faith is fed by prayer, as
 in-sights, hopes and lives are shared in close com - mu - ni - ty, the
 we dis - co - ver whose we are, God grant us to ac - quire a

let us join with na - ture's choir and sing in thank - ful - ness.
 day by day we ce - le - brate Christ's love be - yond com - pare.
 Spi - rit sows, for fu - ture growth, the seeds of u - ni - ty.
 heart and mind en - dowed with sparks of pen - te - cos - tal fire.

Tune: KINGSFOLD (CMD - 868686)

Jeffery Rowthorn - January 2017

written to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Collegeville Institute in 1967

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building Butler Center, in memory of Patrick Butler and in honor of Aimee Mott Butler,

in gratitude for the vision and exemplary generosity that underwrote the construction of the Institute and has continued to support and sustain its work. It is our hope that this public recognition of the Butler role in the Institute's origins and flourishing will keep ever vivid in our minds and in the minds of those who come after us the remarkable consequence of Patrick and Aimee Mott Butler's query to Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB, on his return from Europe in 1964: "Where do we go from here?"

WHY THIS STORY IS TOLD THE WAY IT IS

Like Patrick and Aimee Butler, the monks of Saint John's were also visionary risk takers. Their four institutional creations of the 1960s thrived, at least in part, because the monks didn't insist on control. Each entity was set free to be governed by its own Board of Directors. The abbot of Saint John's Abbey and the president of Saint John's University would be Institute Board members *ex officio*, but their votes counted no more than anyone else's.

The significance of that decision, which favored the autonomy of the Institute, is underscored in this brief history, which is organized according to the succession of Board chairs. Special attention is given to one or more features of each one's tenure that helped form the Institute's identity.

Executive directors add color, and occasionally even contours, to a nonprofit's outward and visible signs. Those outward and visible signs, however, are determined by the inward and invisible character of the institution, which reflects the values, intentions, puzzlements, and

insights—in short, the passions—of the Board members. And those passions come to focus in and on the chair.

It is a truism that history is not an assemblage of facts. It is a story, and the one telling it makes choices—how to frame, what to include and exclude, when to use the active voice and when the passive, how much to quote, how much to summarize.

The decision to weave the story around the succession of Board chairs is grounded in this historian's experience. Before becoming executive director of the Institute in 1984, I was a college professor, insulated from the college's board by a layer of administration. I thought the institution's character was determined by us faculty, sometimes with the administration's collusion, but often against its wishes.

So when I became responsible to a board, I was in for a novel experience. I learned that a board really is responsible for what an institution is and does. And at the Institute I was fortunate to work with, and for, a remarkable group of Board members. They consistently chose outstanding leaders to become chairs. I have elected to highlight the succession of chairs mostly because of their intrinsic importance, but also because their own stories cover a wide spectrum of ecumenical conversions and commitments. For instance, Bob Piper's tenure in the mid- and late 1980s grew from a chance encounter with Kilian when Bob, studying at a Protestant seminary, took a class taught by a visiting Benedictine monk, Kilian.

There are many Board members whose impact on the Institute has been, and in some instances still is, immense. Much space could be devoted to the abbots of Saint John's Abbey and the presidents of Saint John's University, who have assumed responsibility as members *ex officio* of the Board. This history could even have

taken its bearings from the interweaving of the stories of the Institute and Saint John's. Saint Benedict's Monastery and the College of Saint Benedict would also play a part, as monks and sisters have gone out of their way to offer hospitality to resident scholars and their families.

The Resident Scholars Program has been at the heart of the Institute since the beginning. The over 550 participants, from (nearly) every state in the union and about 35 foreign countries, many with their families, have had the chance in Collegeville, during a semester or a full academic year, and in recent years for shorter periods, to finish long-dormant research and writing projects, or start a new exploration, or retool for the next chapter in their life. Scores of books, hundreds of articles, revised syllabi, and rejuvenated spirits can be traced back to Collegeville. The most significant difference from the scheme proposed in 1964 by Michael Blecker is the decision not to offer "very large annual stipends," but in fact to charge a very modest fee. Many scholars have access to sabbatical financing; the Institute provides them an ideal place to spend their time.

One scholar's comment speaks for many, probably most, who have had the privilege of doing "ecumenical and cultural research" at Collegeville:

A new concept of "peers" emerged for me. In this Institute community we constantly were confronted with challenges of thought and feelings. It was blessedly different from our usual peerage. We had no

need to wear masks or hedge our thoughts against possible professional harm. Dialogue was fostered by openness, respect, and sometimes grudging admission of the defeat of one's pet ideas.

The history of the Institute could be written as an account of the resident scholars and the impact of the work they started, continued, completed, or planned while they were in Collegeville. It would be more a *Canterbury Tales* than a standard chronicle. In the era of cyberspace, an alternative is available, and during this semi-centennial year *Bearings Online* is featuring some of the Institute scholars and their work (along with Board members and others who have taken part in Institute programs),

Scores of books, hundreds of articles, revised syllabi, and rejuvenated spirits can be traced back to Collegeville.

and some of the stories, often hilarious, from their time in Collegeville—for instance, the scholar from the warm south who in a Minnesota sub-zero January thought to warm up the car's engine by putting the toaster from the kitchen beneath it.

To write about the shelves of books associated with Institute residencies is impossible in this essay, and to select a few would be to ignore the many contributions to our understanding of God, the world, and ourselves, made by generations of Institute scholars. But perhaps to write about one book written at, and shaped by,

the Institute, might give readers a flavor of the quality of work generated by Institute scholars.

Catherine Mowry LaCugna, at Collegeville 1985-86, wrote *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (1991), and in doing so she worked closely with Kilian (they published a joint article). Catherine does not of course get sole credit for the recovery and re-appropriation of the Trinitarian basis of Christian theology in recent decades, but her book drew on that retrieval and added great momentum to it. In *God For Us* she springs theology free from a speculative trap so it can range across fields of narrative. Catherine died of cancer in 1997, at age 45, much too young. Even in her short career, she takes her place among those theologians who have left a work of self-evident lasting significance.

THE BILL THOMPSON YEARS (1967-70)

Courtesy of The Historic Images Outlet



The inaugural Board chair was William P. Thompson (1918-2006), a lawyer, who at the time was Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian General Assembly and a national leader in the civil rights movement.

He would later become president of the National Council of Churches and a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

Thompson's chairing the Board conveyed three critically important public signals. First, the Institute is in a Catholic place but is not a Catholic enterprise. Second, it is in the Minnesota countryside but it has national ambition and reach. Third, laypersons are no less weighty than clerics in determining "where [to] go from here."

The Board that Thompson chaired was a powerhouse. That such a group could be assembled for a brand-new venture testifies to the high regard in which Saint John's was held in its immediate surroundings and far beyond. When Abbot Baldwin Dworschak and President Colman Barry made phone calls, people returned them.

The charter members of the Board numbered 26. Some were academic luminaries, who would become famous in later years: Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert McAfee Brown, John Meyendorff. Some were ecclesiastical luminaries, most notably Alvin Rogness, president of Luther Seminary (subsequently Luther Northwestern), who was an early advocate of welcoming women to seminary training and who helped pioneer dialogues between his seminary and Saint John's. Some were public service luminaries, preeminently Arthur S. Flemming, at that time president of Macalester College and of the National Council of Churches. He had been U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and would in 1974 become chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

In 1970 the sitting governor of Minnesota, Harold LeVander, joined the Board. When he retired from the Board, 15 years later, Board members recalled "the Governor's" warm and gently humorous accounts of the way his father, a Lutheran pastor, together with a Catholic priest friend, taught him ecumenism in the days when cordial relations were the exception rather than the norm. In his work as a lawyer advising clients on estate planning, LeVander in 1975 obtained for the Institute its first bequest, \$69,000 (\$310,000 in today's dollars) from Fannie Gilbertson. Before the inauguration of the Endowment Fund in the Jim Halls and Bob Piper years, the Gilbertson Reserve helped see the Institute through some very lean times.

That there was need for such a financial cushion is revealed in a sentence from a meeting of the Board of Directors in 1970. Seldom in the annals of nonprofit financial reporting is there a statement so plainspoken, so unvarnished, so complete in itself: "A deficit was incurred because money authorized for expenditure had not been raised."

During the Thompson years the Institute struggled to make itself well enough known to attract sufficient numbers of resident scholar applicants (known at that time as fellows), but by 1971 the numbers exceeded the places available. Efforts were made to assemble groups of scholars to work on a common topic, but funding wasn't secured. It became clear that when academics have sabbaticals, they want to focus on their pet subject, which has lain dormant while they fulfill their own institution's requirements. Submitting to an agenda set in Collegeville would have little appeal.

THE RAY MORRIS YEARS (1970-76)



Courtesy of Yale Divinity School Archives

Raymond P. Morris (1904-90) was widely recognized as the most influential theological librarian of his time. During 40 years (1932-72) as librarian

and professor of religious literature, he made the Yale University Divinity School Library into a model of comprehensiveness and accessibility for both professional researchers and students. He was sought after by many seminaries around the country as a consultant on library policy and development.

He directed a program that helped 90 seminaries and departments of religion enlarge their library collections. In 1956 he organized

the library for the World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva. Theologically astute as well as administratively skilled, he gave to theological librarianship a status that had to be acknowledged by faculty. Morris's chairing of the Board highlighted the Institute's commitment to serious scholarship.

Crisis

A May 15, 1971, document, "Observations: Direction and Development," issued in the name of Ray Morris and Kilian McDonnell, makes clear that Morris had inherited a crisis.

At the very moment when long-anticipated hopes might be realized, there is the real possibility and the harsh reality that the whole enterprise could fail. Indeed, there is no exaggeration to speak of the next six months as confronting the Institute with a "Crisis of Survival." The fact of survival needs to be faced by all who are committed to the magnificent ideals expressed by its leaders and by all who have made real sacrifices to create the fabric through which significant substance could be given to worthy aspirations.

Fundamental flaws may be detected from the initiation of the enterprise. At this moment, there is no common statement of purpose or philosophy describing the rationale for the Institute. Nor is there an understanding of the structures of government and reasonable responsibility for the operation of the Institute. Presently, there is neither the money nor rational plans to obtain it for the support of the Institute or its works. Continual operating deficits use red ink to point an arrow at the spectre named "BANKRUPTCY." For lack of a philosophy of purpose and governance, and because there is no real understanding of the practice of development (opera-



Surveying the Land. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

tional fund raising), the whole enterprise could be arrested at the very moment it could begin to realize its potential.

Nothing constructive results from finger-pointing. This paper is, therefore, an attempt to demonstrate what must be done if the enterprise is to survive and flourish.

The message of the document is pointed at the Board members themselves: "Let it be understood from the outset that these 'OBSERVATIONS' are rooted in the concept that the Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the resolution of the present crisis." In an

to the Board reinforces the point: "It seems imperative that we think well beyond foundations as a major source of revenue. We will need contact with generous individuals who can be excited about our work." A December 1970 memo from Kilian to the Board had included "a list of the 79 foundations to whom we have made requests. To date we have received slightly over \$3,000 in grants."

The Observations include pages of specific recommendations for organization, committees, administration, and strategies. Within a few months, the Board had adopted almost all the proposals into a *Handbook* that began the process of crisis resolution.

The Institute seeks to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to research in the cause of ecumenism and the unity of mankind.

insistence that suggests a liability lurking in the assemblage of a board of luminaries, the document states, "The Board can have no place for 'honorary or advisory' Directors. All must be committed to service, action, sacrifice of time, and resources."

Budgeting had been rather haphazard, and appeals to foundations were made simply through letters, not through cultivation. "Immediately abandon all development efforts presently initiated save those with demonstrated promise for immediate returns. It should now be obvious that faceless foundations are non-productive." Kilian's 1971 report

The way forward

The *Handbook* addresses first the need for a statement of purpose, which underscores the words "ecumenical" and "cultural" in the Institute's name.

No theological or religious concern can disassociate itself from service to the world or from man's search for unity in the whole inhabited world. . . . The Institute seeks to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to research in the cause of ecumenism and the unity of mankind. While theologians are encouraged to come to reexamine areas of doctrinal disagreement and together grow in an understanding of the revelation, historians are invited to join in discussion with them to help illuminate the origins of our present divisions. Likewise, scholars in the humanities, in the social and behavioral sciences, in communications, or in other disciplines, are welcome to join in

the dialogue to make their contribution to a fundamental growth in human understanding.

And then the *Handbook* turns to organization.

From the beginning, an experiment with dual administration had prevailed. Kilian was executive director, and there was an associate director. The problem was in the distribution of duties.

The initial associate director was Philip Kaufman, OSB (1911-2008), whose personal story was itself one of evolving religious identity—he was a Reform Jew who had converted to Catholicism. His master's thesis at Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary was on Martin Luther and was directed by Kilian. Philip served until late 1969, when he left to work with a Benedictine women's monastery in Madison, Wisconsin. He wanted to become more involved in ecumenical work at the pastoral level and less immersed in administrative duties.

The ecumenical character of the Institute was then highlighted by the appointment in February 1970 of C. Jack Eichhorst as associate director. He was a Lutheran who was already familiar with the Institute, having lived there in the summer of 1968 while he finished his Yale dissertation. And ten years before that, when he was a student at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Jack had been a prime mover in the ongoing meetings between students there and at the Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary. He had come to know Kilian, and in fact paid him a visit in Germany when Kilian was studying there.

Both Philip and Jack had, by default, major responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Institute and, especially, for fund raising.

Kilian was frequently away at dialogues and other ecumenical conversations; indeed, his periodic reports to the Board include extensive accounts of his involvements nationally and abroad. But the Observations document strongly hints that the division of responsibilities was unworkable.

In October 1972 Jack left the Institute to become pastor of Atonement Lutheran Church in St. Cloud. The position of associate director remained unfilled for two years.

In May 1973 the Board named Kilian to a new position, president of the Institute, which meant he would no longer be involved in administrative work but would stay active in research, academic counseling, writing, and lecturing. Morris Wee (1906-95), retired pastor of Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, was appointed executive director with a contract for two years. "All my life I hoped for the day we could do away with the hostilities, the animosities, the competitiveness," he said, explaining why he was pleased to be taking a more active part in ecumenism. "It is important to develop the common trust and understanding we have in one another, in the Christian community and as far and wide as we can go."

In October 1974 Jerome Theisen, OSB (1930-95), who would go on to become Abbot of Saint John's (1979-92) and then Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order (1992-95), was named associate director, a post he held for two years. That position was eliminated in 1976, and the executive director became responsible for both operations and program.

The "second founder" and two other steady hands

Apparently, the job of executive director wasn't quite what Morris Wee had expect-

ed. In October 1973 he noted for the Board two problems: (1) the low visibility of the Institute and (2) a slowdown of financial support. By the following May he was writing to Ray Morris about a search committee for his successor.

The Institute Board's most consequential decision ever was made on Ray Morris's watch: to call Robert S. Bilheimer (1917-2006) as executive director in 1974. Kilian himself acknowledged in a talk to an Institute luncheon in 1987, "Anyone who knows me but slightly knows that I am not an administrator. I know

international Affairs Program of the National Council of Churches during the Vietnam War. By naming Bob to head the Institute, the Board was unequivocally putting the Institute in experienced hands and positioning it squarely within the worldwide ecumenical movement.

It wasn't just Bob Bilheimer's hands that would guide the Institute.

Sister Dolores Schuh, CHM, whose sister was married to Kilian's brother, had served on the Institute staff for a year, 1970-71, un-

til she was called back to her community in Iowa to oversee their college's self-study for re-accreditation. In 1974, at the invitation of Morris Wee, she returned to Collegeville as the Institute's administrative secretary just a few months before Bob Bilheimer took office in December. She would remain

at the Institute for 30 years (her title became executive associate in 1986).

I described her role in the Institute's administration in the 1987 Annual Report.

Sister Dolores has a sense for schedules, for what can and cannot get done in a given stretch of time, that makes a foil for my deeply conditioned professorial instinct that things can always be deferred ("extensions" given), and she knows just how to get my attention with "Don't you think we had better do *this* next?" When I was being interviewed for this job, incoming Board chair Bob Piper made a distinction: "If a professor at Swarthmore has a bad

"All my life I hoped for the day we could do away with the hostilities, the animosities, the competitiveness."

how to open a door. I can manage paper clips, postage stamps, and on good days, my computer. Beyond that, forget it." And he called Bob Bilheimer "the second founder" of the Institute.

Anyone who knew Bob Bilheimer but slightly knew he was an administrator of the first rank. He called himself an "ecumenical engineer." He had organized the first three assemblies of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam 1948, Evanston 1954, New Delhi 1961); led a World Council delegation to South Africa in the immediate aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre (1960), where he organized the Cottlesloe Conference of church leaders; and was director of the In-

day, Swarthmore hardly notices; if the executive director of the Institute has a bad day, the Institute has a bad day." He was right on the first count, wrong on the second. He did not reckon on Dolores. When our bad days coincide, the Institute is in trouble. But we try to stagger our bad days.

Dolores was always the Institute's memory, frequently its conscience, and usually its caretaker: stuffing envelopes, lighting pilot lights, shoveling or sweeping the walks, keeping the student workers busy, calling plumbers or electricians, working with others to get apartments cleaned in the summer, pulling weeds from between patio rocks, watering the lawns (before the installation of a sprinkler system)—and the list could go on. Her account of the history would make clear that the Institute, at its heart, is a neighborhood community.

Another administrative move engendered a lasting effect on the Institute's character. On May 16, 1975, Bob Bilheimer wrote to Fr. Wilfred Theisen, OSB, about an action of the Board's executive committee: "That the committee appoint Wilfred Theisen, OSB, to the post of Liaison Officer of the Institute, with the responsibility of providing contact between Institute Fellows and members of the Saint John's community." Wilfred replied, "The conditions are perfectly acceptable to me."

By 1978 the arrangement had become part of the texture of Institute life. Bob wrote, "You keep us here well within the orbit of the beneficent Benedictine presence." Wilfred would remain liaison officer for 40 years.

In the same 1987 Annual Report in which I wrote about Dolores, I said this about Wilfred:

Father Wilfred's new title, full Professor of

Physics at Saint John's, does both him and the University honor. It is a benefit to the Institute that our Liaison Officer is a physicist and historian of science. He demonstrates to our Resident Scholars that monasticism is a way of life for people who do all sorts of things, not just for those who have a peculiar or professional interest in things commonly designated "religious." Much more important than what he represents, though, is what Wilfred is: a remarkably warm, open, generous-spirited person who embodies Benedictine hospitality, especially, I think, for those who come from abroad and have so many adjustments to make. Wilfred seems to know instinctively what they need, and provides it without patronizing or condescending. It helps to have behind you fifteen hundred years of accumulated experience receiving guests.

Yes, Bob Bilheimer was the Institute's second founder. And what he established remained steady through the decades largely because Wilfred and Dolores kept the faith.

In October 1975 the Board gave Bob approval for a plan called "Ecumenical Directions" that meant Bob traveled the country, asking knowledgeable and insightful people, "What are the most pressing ecumenical issues today?" What Bob discovered led to two major proposals. One of them put the Institute on the national map; the other changed dramatically the way summers were spent in Collegeville. Although both initiatives came to fruition after Ray Morris's tenure, it was under his leadership that *Faith and Ferment*—a signature research project of the Institute—and the tradition of summer consultations—bringing people of various traditions together to discuss matters of faith that were of interest to the greater population—began.

THE TERRY HANOLD YEARS (1976-80)



With the Institute's national character firmly established by the chairing of Bill Thompson and Ray Morris, the (to date unbroken) practice of chairs from Minnesota began with Terrance Hanold (1912-96), whose position as president of Pillsbury signaled the Institute's status as a significant part of Minnesota society and culture.

Speaking at a party for Terry on his retirement as chair in 1980, Kilian said, "Though muted and clothed in that humor which not only entertains but brings the argument forward, there is in Terry an undeniable recognition that ecumenism, while embracing the whole of contemporary culture, is a religious endeavor."

The quality Kilian praised is expressed well in a prayer that Terry spoke at the beginning of the Board's 1987 annual meeting (it is tradition for meetings to begin with a short worship service led by a Board member).

We address you [God] always with the abiding question in our hearts: What is human-kind that you are mindful of us? We have a shadowed understanding of the answer, vastly imperfect but sufficient to our need, that we are appointed to seek and fulfil the portion of the divine intent "made known to us, or to be made known." For yours is a continuing revelation that is infinite and without end. To those who wait upon the Lord, and not infrequently to those who do not, there comes some flash of understanding.

There will always be restless outriders from the established bodies of belief.

There will always be differences within and between these bodies. There may again be new voices calling from the wildernesses. Our search is not advanced by abating or repressing these expressions. It will be served if we listen for the still voices of new insight, of further wisdom, of resolved conflicts, that must arise from these contests.

The two developments noted at the end of the Morris years come to clear expression in the 1976 Annual Report. And that annual report—the start of a tradition—including the executive director's assessment of the previous year and a financial accounting, was itself an innovation, signaling Bob Bilheimer's administrative acumen.

Summer consultations

The outgoing (Morris) and incoming (Hanold) chairs jointly state that in the interests of an expanded program with direct impact "upon the general religious community—both lay and clerical—the Board [has] adopted the policy of promoting open conferences, conversations or colloquia on matters within our province which would be of particular interest to theologians, or of perceived importance to church people generally, or having appeal to the public at large."

The initial expression of this shift to "open conferences, conversations or colloquia" was an inquiry on "What does it mean to confess faith in God today?" In Bob Bilheimer's travels around the country he heard repeatedly that the most pressing ecumenical question was not relations between churches, but a far more fundamental issue about faith itself.

He invited Board member Thomas F. Stransky, CSP, and me, a 1975-76 resident scholar, to serve as co-chairs of this inquiry. The three

of us together developed an invitation list that inaugurated a distinguishing characteristic of the Institute: people assembled in uncommon mixes.

Besides ensuring an assortment of group members, the planners made two decisions that became fundamental to the whole subsequent array of summer consultations (the terminology adopted—though not always strictly adhered to—was “inquiry” for the subject to be considered, “consultation” for a particular gathering to discuss it). First, there would be no formal papers prepared in advance: “All we ask you to bring is your life.” Second, first-person discourse would be the norm. If a scholar wanted to cite a noted theologian, that would be all right but not to score points; rather, what that theologian said would be something that had helped him or her make sense of human experience.

Years later, Margaret O’Gara (1947-2012)—resident scholar, Board member, participant in many consultations—recognized that this new Institute program development was a transposition into a different key of Kilian’s original intent to foster collaborative scholarship: the first-person stories became the subject of the group’s research.

The Institute’s memory includes many instances of participants’ appreciation for what soon came to be called, in ecumenical circles around the world, “the Collegeville style.” A cogent expression of thanks, which serves as an example for all of them, is from Roberta Bondi, who, in her book *Memories of God*, says this:

At Collegeville, I finally accepted that the theological work of telling one another our stories, or talking about the ways in which our concrete and particular experiences intersected with the great Christian doctrines, was not private work, or work

done on behalf of each of us as individuals. It was a common work, real theology, done in order to find a way to claim for our own time and our own generation what it means to be Christian.

The inquiry on “Confessing Faith in God Today” started in the summer of 1976 with 13 participants. During the next six years the group expanded, and at one time or another 34 attendants gathered. The book that resulted, *God on Our Minds*, by Patrick Henry and Thomas F. Stransky, includes these paragraphs in its introduction:

This book records what some Christians have discovered together. Time and again we were surprised, caught off guard, pulled up short by unexpected and unpremeditated insights. The contents of our answers came much more as gift than as planned achievement.

Three summers of preliminary discussion (1976-78) were followed by three summers of intense, sustained inquiry (1979-81). Until the end of the 1980 session we did not have an explicit intention of publishing our in-house materials. The conversationalists had no eye on an audience, no guarded thoughts such as “outsiders are already listening in.” The quotations which lace this book are from notes taken of the conversations, from fragments written down, rather hastily, during the solitude sessions of the meetings, from reports of church study groups that asked the question and experimented with the method. The sources of the quotations remain unnamed.

Faith and Ferment

In the second part of that same 1976 Annual Report Bob Bilheimer outlines “Faith and Fer-



Fireplaces. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

ment: Interdisciplinary Research Project in Minnesota,” conceived “as a contribution to thought and action concerning the future.” Succeeding years, into the time of Jim Halls’s tenure as chair, saw “Faith and Ferment” develop into a wide-ranging and sophisticated investigation of the actual state of Christian life in Minnesota. The progress of the project is one of the steady themes of Institute annual reports.

The way was not always easy. As Bilheimer says in the General Introduction to *Faith and Ferment: An Interdisciplinary Study of Christian Beliefs and Practices* (1983), “It is no small matter to discover the condition of churches.” But thanks in large part to what he characterizes in that same introduction as “a generous, critical, and supportive Board,” much was discovered, and the book attracted a great deal of notice in Minnesota and in the nation.

It was, indeed, no small matter to discover the condition of churches, not only because churches are complex organisms, but also because the disciplines necessary to make the investigation are not accustomed to working together. The Institute engaged the services of anthropologists, sociologists, and theologians, constitutionally wary of each other’s starting points and methods. There were plenty of occasions during the project when it could have come to a grinding halt.

However, Bilheimer himself, and his chosen agent to keep everyone in line and on task, Sister Joan Chittister, OSB—who had joined the Board in 1976 and would become one of the most widely recognized religious spokespersons of her time—managed to pull it off. Joan, at the time already a force of nature, and the noted church historian, Martin Marty, co-wrote the book, and Bob Bilheimer was listed as editor. *Faith and Ferment* garnered national attention, including a two-page article in

Newsweek. “Although limited to a single state,” Kenneth Woodward wrote, “the research is of such depth and breadth that it raises serious questions about how all U.S. Christians interpret and practice their faith.”

Bilheimer succinctly summarized the whole process in his 1982 Annual Report: “From the time of the first feasibility consultation, through the pilot project, to formulation of the full scale research project, to the year-long process of funding, to the detailed design, to data gathering and the writing of the report, some seven years have passed.”

THE JIM HALLS YEARS (1980-84)



James A. Halls, a partner in the Minneapolis law firm of Faegre & Benson, joined the Board in 1975. In 1976 he agreed to serve as chair of the Development Committee, a position he held until he

was elected chair of the Board in 1980. During his four-year term Jim saw the Institute through some lean financial years and worked diligently to broaden the base of support.

Jim did not begin his career as an attorney. His father was the editor and publisher of a weekly newspaper in Ellsworth, Wisconsin. Jim and his five brothers and two sisters all did a stint in the printing shop. After receiving a degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin in 1951, Jim was drafted into the U.S. Army and served in the Korean War from 1951 to 1953. Following his discharge from the service, he returned to Ellsworth and edited the *Ellsworth Record* for one year before entering law school in 1954.

Courtesy of Faegre Baker Daniels LLP

Jim joined Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis in 1957 and has been an active member ever since. But he wasn't always a churchgoer. In his youth, a bitter dispute erupted between the Catholics and Lutherans in his hometown, and he lost respect for his church. He recalled that period in his life when he accepted the opportunity to become involved in the ecumenical scene by joining the Institute's Board.

When asked to preach on Laity Sunday at Central Lutheran, Jim spoke of his struggles with the faith and then gave the congregation his three basic rules: 1) Use your minds! 2) Study the Scriptures in a serious quest for the truth! 3) Strengthen your faith with knowledge!

New traditions firmly established

Besides the publication jointly published by Fortress Press (Lutheran) and Liturgical Press (Catholic) of *God on Our Minds* in 1982 and of *Faith and Ferment* jointly published by Augsburg Press (Lutheran) and Liturgical Press in 1983, the Halls years saw a rapid expansion of the program of summer consultations into diverse areas: The Human Condition (collaboration with the Institute for Human Development at Saint John's University); The Function of the Professional Ministry; Black Theologians Confess Faith in God Today; a meeting of the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (which became a long-standing tradition); The Meaning of Ecumenism; Mutuality of Men and Women in the Black Church; and Orthodox Laity.

Embedded in this list are features of Institute programming that have persisted through the

decades: cooperation with other institutions; a welcoming place for exploring the religious experience of black people; attention to women; and steady attention to the reason for the Institute's existence in the first place, ecumenism itself.

Indeed, the inquiry on the meaning of ecumenism (1982-84), which brought together

***Faith and Ferment* garnered national attention, including a two-page article in *Newsweek*.**

27 persons, included three who would come to embody, in their friendship and collegueship (as well as their Board membership), the Institute's identity: evangelical Protestant Richard Mouw, Roman Catholic Margaret O'Gara, and Ukrainian Orthodox Anthony Ugolnik. Their interwoven stories provide the structure for an Institute book by Esther Byle Bruland, *Regathering: The Church from "They" to "We"* (Eerdmans, 1994).

Henry succeeds Bilheimer

Bob Bilheimer retired in 1984. The search committee for his successor hired me from my position as professor of religion at Swarthmore College. I had been a resident scholar 1975-76 and again in spring 1984, and had been involved in summer consultations each year since 1976. My scholarly field is the history of Christianity, and my 17-year experience teaching in a liberal arts college, where ev-

everybody has to be something of a generalist, was ideal preparation for engagement with the scope of projects that 255 resident scholars brought to Collegeville during my 20 years as executive director.

I inherited from Bob Bilheimer a comprehensive and detailed plan for mining the veins of theological and programmatic ore embedded in *Faith and Ferment*. There had been a series of regional conferences around Minnesota to fuel interest in the study's discovery of both the vitality and the confusion in the churches. As a consequence of this preparation, 217 Christians, most of them laypersons, from all regions of Minnesota and about a dozen denominational traditions, gathered in Collegeville in June 1985 for a three-day statewide conference called "Christian Identity, Mission, and Unity Today" ("Faith and Ferment Conference," for short).

The report of the conference helped shape subsequent Institute programming, and even style: "Leadership and language are linked: those who write church documents, including ecumenical ones, should be subject to the discipline of plain speech, free of jargon and administrative huff and puff. We are being trained and shaped every time we get together: all church meetings should be designed to model collegial rather than hierarchical relationships."

THE BOB PIPER YEARS (1984-90)

Courtesy of the Piper family



H. C. (Bob) Piper was already a Minnesota legend when he became chair of the Institute's Board. He had turned the investment firm of Piper, Jaffray & Hopwood into a moral

as well as economic force. And his religious pilgrimage was inadvertently shaped by a chance encounter with Fr. Kilian.

Bob was doing a deal with a wealthy guy, and Bob asked him why, with a roomful of money, he wanted more. The client said, "That's only one room." Bob woke up to the fact that he was posing to the client a question he needed to ask himself.

Needing to know and understand more about himself and his goals, Bob enrolled in United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. "The class I wanted to take was full, so I chanced into a room where a visiting professor was talking about the theological significance of the Second Vatican Council. I was prepared to be bored out of my mind. Within a very few minutes that visiting professor, a Benedictine monk from Saint John's named Kilian McDonnell, had absolutely captivated me."

Having intended to take just a course or two, Bob proceeded to find out what getting a degree would require. And seminary proved the occasion for

an experience of grace—I was crucified with Christ and raised with him. But then the question loomed large: What was I to do with this grace? What difference does it make? For me, it was mainly a turn outward, a change of priorities. For the first time I really considered the lilies of the field, really pondered the mustard seed and the leaven. I realized there is much to be done, but my job is to cooperate, to get things started, to sow the seed, to invest the faith I have inherited, and leave it to God to give the increase.

"A Joyful Noise"

In Bob Piper's tenure, the endowment campaign that he had spearheaded when Jim

Halls was chair achieved its goal of \$1,000,000. Recognizing that the Institute depends on the support of many people, the Board decided to celebrate its twenty-first birthday, its “coming of age,” by saying thank you in a surprising, fresh way: a musical birthday gift to the community.

The Institute spread the word that it was seeking a composer. With the expert help of musical entrepreneur Philip Brunelle, Merrill Bradshaw, professor of music at Brigham Young University—yes, a Mormon—was commissioned.

The challenge posed to Bradshaw was to write music in contemporary idiom that nonetheless retrieves in various ways the many traditions of Christian music. The result was “Christ Metaphors: A Festival of Images for Chorus and Orchestra.” The movements explore comparisons between Christ and various objects, some alive, some inanimate (flower, rock, lion, fire, light, fountain, lamb, life, even an instrumental “unspoken metaphors”).

“A Joyful Noise” took place on November 2, 1989, in a sold-out (all 2,462 seats) Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis. Choirs from Saint John’s University, the College of Saint Benedict, and Saint Olaf College (240 voices in all), and a 58-piece orchestra were conducted by Philip Brunelle. Thanks to many benefactors, ticket prices were reasonable, and the accounting for the entire enterprise, during the three years from its inception to the bills that continued to arrive for a few months after the event, showed a positive balance of \$431 on a total budget of more than \$90,000.

Bob knew how to make things happen because he knew how to get people to do things: Ask them, keep after them, and, most important, set the example by doing things yourself. Scores of people, Board members and others,

contributed their time, expertise, and money. One instance vividly illustrates Bob Piper’s effectiveness.

During an early morning Public Relations Committee meeting the idea surfaced that the Institute should get a striking, colorful art work to serve as a focus for publicity. Before noon, Bob Piper had called Steven Sorman, one of the Midwest’s best-known artists, outlined the project to him, and secured a commitment from Sorman to meet the next day. Before long, Steven Sorman had created 12 unique monoprints, which he gave to the Institute. One was unveiled by Joan Mondale, a prominent arts advocate and wife of former vice president Walter Mondale, at a luncheon to inaugurate ticket sales. All dozen prints were sold, turning Bob Piper’s public relations idea into a gift of \$17,000 (worth twice that much today).

Stony the Road We Trod

Many summer inquiries took place during the Piper years. One proved especially significant.

Board member Thomas Hoyt, Jr. (1941-2013), professor of New Testament at Hartford Seminary (who later became a bishop in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and president of the National Council of Churches), noted that black biblical scholars in North



Patrick Henry, Ocie Hoyt, and Thomas Hoyt. Photo courtesy of Saint John’s University Archives.

America had never had the opportunity to gather over an extended period to develop even the beginnings of a comprehensive expression of their biblical perspective. Of course they do not have a single point of view, but the time was long overdue for them to have the setting and the time to find out what they could say in common.

During four summers (1986-89) of week-long meetings in Collegeville, supported by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., 20 scholars participated in discussions that led to the publication by Fortress Press in 1991 of *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*. It is a book of consequence not only in the black community but for biblical studies more generally because of the unfamiliar content and because the book itself is an uncommon kind of cooperative effort. By its format it expresses one of the features of black religious life, the commitment to community. The book has sold an astonishing 44,000 copies and is still in print a quarter-century later.

The Institute chose to mark the publication with an event that took its cue from something that had been repeatedly expressed by the scholars who wrote the book. In their summer meetings they had acknowledged from their own experience the need for, and all-too-frequent lack of, mentoring for African Americans as they enter the field of scholarly biblical study. They hoped that some process for guidance could be developed.

Invitations to a weekend called "Paving the Stony Road," to be held in Washington, D.C., in October 1991, were sent to all established black biblical scholars and to all black candidates for the Ph.D. in biblical studies. A letter was sent to more than 160 seminary deans, asking them to pass information about the conference to any of their African American M.Div. candidates who had expressed seri-

ous interest in pursuing a doctorate in biblical studies.

There were 100 registrants—22 established biblical scholars, 30 Ph.D. candidates, and 48 M.Div. candidates—from 18 states and the District of Columbia. They gathered in plenary sessions to hear the authors of *Stony the Road We Trod*, and in small groups to meet the authors and to tell their own stories of frustration and breakthrough. The purpose of the conference was perhaps best served by the informal conversations at meals, the one-on-one speaking and listening, the beginning of friendships, the creating of networks.

The conference vividly illustrated the power of tradition as a living force. That power continued to be demonstrated in subsequent years when, at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, newly minted scholars would tell me that "Paving the Stony Road" had made all the difference.

THE JIM SHANNON YEARS (1990-94)



Courtesy of SJU Archives

James P. Shannon (1921-2003) joined the Board in 1984. He was surprised to be asked, and even more surprised when, a year after he had declined, he was approached again. Jim had been much in-

involved in the "Faith and Ferment" study, especially as a consultant on fund raising, but Board membership would be an entirely different matter.

In a talk called "What the Ecumenical Institute Has Done for Me," delivered at the spring luncheon in April 1995, Jim recalled that within a

year of two of the Institute's opening, Kilian had invited him to become a resident scholar, an invitation that he wasn't able to accept at the time. When, in 1983, Bob Bilheimer asked him to join the Board, Jim said, "I turned him down. I said I thought I brought some negative baggage."

The title of Jim's 1998 autobiography, *Reluctant Dissenter*, succinctly captures his identity from one angle. He was a Roman Catholic priest, president of the College (now University) of St. Thomas (at the time, age 35, he was the youngest college president in the country), and an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. As a bishop, he attended the final session of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

In 1968 he resigned as bishop because of fundamental disagreement with the total prohibition of artificial contraception in Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. He wrote to the pope: "In my pastoral experience I have found that this rigid teaching is simply impossible of observance by many faithful and generous spouses, and I cannot believe that God binds man to impossible standards."

He was certainly not alone in his reservations, but he had the courage and honesty to state, in the same letter to Paul VI, "I cannot in conscience give internal assent, hence much less external consent, to the papal teaching which is here in question."

If from one angle Jim was a dissenter, from another his identity was that of a keen advo-

cate. In March 1965 he responded to Martin Luther King Jr.'s appeal to come to the funeral service in Selma, Alabama, for James Reeb, a Unitarian minister who had been murdered while working for voting rights for blacks. Jim was with King again, at Arlington National Cemetery in February 1968, for a vigil rally of Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam, where he, King, and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke briefly.

After being away from Minnesota for a few years, Jim returned and served as head of the Minneapolis Foundation and the General Mills Foundation. He achieved national stature in philanthropy and nonprofit manage-

It is a book of consequence . . . because the book is an uncommon kind of cooperative effort.

ment. When he retired, Governor Rudy Perpich and Twin Cities mayors Don Fraser and George Latimer declared October 28, 1988, "Jim Shannon Day in Minnesota." The Wilder Foundation's James P. Shannon Leadership Institute, with its program for nonprofit managers, reflects Jim's influence in its motto, "Renew, Recharge, Rededicate."

Jim had chaired the Institute's Program Committee before he became chair of the Board. He brought to his new responsibilities a keen sense of how an organization's identity shapes and is shaped by what it does. At no moment in the Institute's history was its character

more brightly illuminated than in a 180-degree turn in a Program Committee meeting in 1993.

Ecumenism Among Us

Pressure had been mounting for some time to have a large conference, on the model of the Faith and Ferment Conference in 1985. The idea that surfaced was “Transmitting the Ecumenical Tradition,” a worthy enough goal, to be sure. But as the conversation proceeded, the committee came to realize that the very formulation made a prejudgment—that ecumenism is something some people have and need to give to others—“experts” prevail. By the time the meeting was done, the conference title had changed to “Ecumenism Among Us.” Ecumenism is something people find together.

As the introduction to the Ecumenism Among Us report says,

The conference was designed to put all ecumenical stories—the familiar ones and the unfamiliar ones, the ones identified publicly and historically with the name “ecumenical” and those stories that reflect ecumenical substance but have traditionally choked on the term “ecumenical”—on a level playing field, without prescribing in advance an answer to the question, Who decides what unity looks like? Nobody’s story, not even the best-known story, was to be the standard in terms of which the authenticity of others was to be measured. If part of the Institute’s mission is, as Bob Bilheimer had so cogently put it, “to discover and organize those who are ecumenical but don’t know it,” the Institute must be open to learning from them new dimensions and truths of ecumenism.

Two hundred eight participants, from 41 different Christian traditions, ranging in age from 17 to 87, gathered in Collegeville from June 4 to 8, 1994. There were no traditional speeches. Instead, conversations were scheduled for groups of five or six people, everyone eavesdropped on everyone else, and as soon as the conversationalists were finished, everybody moved to tables of seven or eight and continued talking about the subject. The format made the point: No one voice had intrinsic authority.

The Silver Anniversary Campaign

Ecumenism Among Us, including the preparation for it, provided the programmatic focus for the Shannon years. But programs happen only if there is an organization to have them, and organizations cost money. Certain initiatives garner specific support, but salaries and utility bills have to be paid, and while annual fund contributions help, they can’t make ends meet.

The initial endowment campaign had achieved its \$1,000,000 goal shortly before Bob Piper’s death in 1990. Within a couple of years it was clear that another endowment drive was essential. A Silver Anniversary Campaign was announced, with the goal of another \$1,000,000 by June 1994. Of the total, \$100,000 was allocated to capital improvements.

The campaign was chaired by Elizabeth Musser (1911-2001), who had joined the Board in 1970, and whose quiet but steady presence and unfailing generosity through the decades had been crucial to the Institute’s flourishing.

In spring 1994, \$88,000 remained to be raised to meet the Silver Anniversary Campaign’s goal. Betty Musser’s report to the Board at its annual meeting in October—“As of today our



Building in Process. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

gifts and pledges total exactly \$1,000,000”—was especially gratifying in an era of shrinking contributions (between 1990 and 1994 charitable giving in the United States had declined by almost 25 percent).

Betty insisted that Jim Shannon deserved as much credit for the campaign's success as she did. One crucial role he played he knew nothing about. In the final weeks before the annual meeting, several appeals were made with an added incentive, "We want to attest our regard for Jim Shannon as he completes his term as Chair of the Board by bringing the Campaign to completion now." These appeals worked, and Jim, who thought the campaign was still about \$50,000 short, was astonished when he heard Betty's announcement.

THE JOHN STONE YEARS (1994-98)



John F. Stone (1937-2016), was a lawyer with the Moss & Barnett firm in Minneapolis when he joined the Board in 1976. His stature in the Twin Cities was signified by

his presidency that year, the nation's bicentennial, of the Aquatennial, the largest and most popular ten-day annual event in Minneapolis.

John brought to the Institute a strong commitment to the involvement of laypersons in every facet of the ecumenical movement. Indeed, when asked to share his thoughts on ecumenism, John replied:

I have been struck over the years that religion in general and Christianity in particular have been competitive forces in our society. The responsibility for this rests in

part on an imbalance between the professional clergy and a relatively ineffective lay membership. My primary interest in serving on the Institute Board is to be able to explore the relationship of Christians in institutional settings and find those areas of commonality that will reduce the competitive nature of the institutions and encourage and foster a broader sense of community. Once that is accomplished, maybe we can tackle the relationship between all world religions.

John's tenure as chair was characterized by two efforts. Both were grounded in, and helped to determine, the Institute's identity: (1) the oral history project and (2) visas for scholars from abroad.

The History Project

The idea had surfaced during Jim Shannon's time (rather naturally, given Jim's Yale Ph.D. in history), but came to fruition in John's with his enthusiastic support: The Institute should compile an oral history archive.

Every historian knows that documents, while essential, don't tell the whole story. An institute that had made its mark in the world by its first-person method of discourse would be remiss not to apply the method to itself. The idea emerged when it did because all flesh is as grass. Put simply, some of the people with the memories of the early years were already dead, and none of those left was getting any younger. The past as known by those who had made it was slipping away.

The basic idea, to create an archive, blossomed as the newly appointed History Committee began its work. History for the sake of the future, the clarification of core values, the Board's self-awareness, education, recruitment, fund raising—all these potential out-

comes, and more besides, were listed, pondered, and found interrelated.

With good fortune that clamors to be called providential, the Institute found an interviewer who quickly came to know the Institute better than it knew itself. By the care and cleverness of her questions, Krista Tippett led everyone she interviewed to a deeper awareness of their own ecumenical insights and commitments.

Krista read thousands of pages about the Institute and by its constituents. While discerning and proposing patterns and order, she also demonstrated an uncommon knack for letting the material speak for itself. She conducted extensive interviews with 55 persons. Her reports showed a scholar's precision and a journalist's flair. In a speech to the Institute's 1997 spring luncheon, Krista said, "I have long suspected that the spiritual impoverishment of our culture and the splintered life of our churches is due at least in part to the way we devalue memory, seek quick fixes, mistake reinvention for progress, forget, move forward, move on."

Krista is a compelling example of the Institute's ripple effect. Since 1997 she has become a public intellectual of the first rank, receiving the 2013 National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama "for thoughtfully delving into the mysteries of human existence. On the air and in print, Ms. Tippett avoids easy answers, embracing complexity and inviting people of all faiths, no faith, and every background to join the conversation." Her program airs on 400 public radio stations and is downloaded around the world. She traces it back to Collegeville: "The genesis of *On Being* was an oral history project I conducted, in the mid-1990s, for a place called the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research. Those conversations ultimately made me question the way the whole subject of religion is discussed in American life."

Visas for foreign scholars

The other hallmark enterprise of John Stone's years—the Exchange Visitor Program—made use of his professional legal expertise.

The executive director's 1994 Annual Report describes the international flavor of the Resident Scholars Program between 1984 and 1994. In 1987 resident scholars hailed from four continents. In 1990-91 the Institute hosted its most international group up to that time. In 1992-93 that record was surpassed when ten of the 16 resident scholars came from abroad.

Thus the Institute's identity was grounded not only in its history but also in its international reach. Nonetheless, to continue the program it turned out that the Institute had to make its case to the United States Information Agency. The process of application for re-designation of the Institute's Exchange Visitor Program for scholars from abroad started in 1991 when Congress directed the USIA to reevaluate its regulations and procedures.

The Institute had received the Exchange Visitor Program designation in 1968. It had never hidden the fact that it seldom met the criterion of a minimum of five participants per year. The USIA had always granted a waiver of this requirement. The new regulations restated the criterion and, again, allowed the USIA to waive it. To comply with the new requests for information, the Institute cooperated on time and completely. Yet in the John Stone years the issue became a crisis.

Surprisingly, on October 19, 1995, the Institute was denied re-designation because it failed to meet the criterion for the minimum number of international scholars. Executive Director Patrick Henry immediately replied, reiterating the case for a waiver. On March 6, 1996, re-designation was denied again in a letter

containing the following sentence: "While you are correct in stating that the Agency has the discretion to waive the requirement of five exchange visitors per year for a given sponsor, such consideration is given only if the activity being conducted conforms to the Exchange Visitor Program Regulations." More letters and phone calls made it clear that the USIA was excluding scholarly research and dialogue in the field of religion from work that counts as appropriate for exchange visitors.

This exclusion was a direct challenge to the Institute's identity. Patrick wrote to the Board's Executive Committee on March 18:

It is important that we do everything we can to reassert and reestablish our claim that our Resident Scholars Program deserves exactly the same consideration as programs in any other scholarly field. At no time in my eleven years in this office have I felt more keenly the obligation that we in whose care the Institute is now have to those who will come after us.

The Institute then requested a hearing before the USIA's General Counsel.

In the end the discussion, thanks to expert and skillful legal help engineered by John Stone, forestalled the requested hearing and resulted in a letter from the USIA, dated June 18, 1996, that begins as follows:

Notice is hereby given that the Institute for Ecumenical & Cultural Research has been redesignated the sponsor of an Exchange Visitor Program in accordance with the administrative regulations issued under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (Public Law 87-256, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act). . . . The following official program description states the purpose of this program . . . :

"A program of the Institute for Ecumenical & Cultural Research to provide research opportunities in the field of religion conducted by the Institute for Ecumenical & Cultural Research for qualified foreign research scholars to promote the general interest of international educational and cultural exchange."

This meant the case for the Institute's program as scholarly research, and for the legitimacy of religion as a subject of such research, had been successfully made. And, as a result, the Institute could honestly say in its then-new brochure: "*We encourage applicants from abroad.*" The brochure also proudly listed the countries besides the United States from which resident scholars had come to the Institute—Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Egypt, England, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, People's Republic of China, Poland, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden.

THE JOYCE MCFARLAND YEARS (1998-2002)



Joyce H. McFarland, who joined the Board in 1983, had served scarcely more than a year when she found herself involved in preparations for the Institute's June 1985 Faith and Ferment Conference. When a very small Institute staff tried to keep up with the chores of making room assignments, preparing conference packets, acknowledging reservations, meeting with dining service personnel, and the like, Joyce came to the rescue and volun-

teered to do “anything that would make the conference run smoothly.” She made name badges, ran errands, delivered messages, and performed a wide assortment of other humble but necessary tasks.

Joyce brought to her responsibilities as chair not only an appreciation for detail and a willingness to pitch in at any level but also a trained and practiced intellectual expertise. She was an undergraduate at Mt. Holyoke College, where diversity was the norm, and everyone was accepted. Ever since then, she says, “I am not scared of ‘others,’ because those others are dear friends.” She completed a master’s degree in theology, with a concentration in spirituality, at the College (now University) of Saint Catherine in St. Paul, and in 1986 became a certified spiritual director.

Joyce says of her Episcopal tradition that it “is challenging and freeing, a place where I can ask questions.” She was instrumental in a reversal of nearly five centuries of history. In the early 16th century King Henry VIII declared the beginning of the Anglican Church and began destroying monasteries. At the end of the 20th century the Benedictine monks of Saint John’s Abbey leased five acres to the Episcopal Church in Minnesota for construction of a House of Prayer, just a few hundred yards from the Institute. Fund raising for the project, in which Joyce was a key worker, included an especially clever tag line: “Pay now, Pray later.”

When she became chair, Joyce saw her job as an extension of her commitment to connectedness as an ideal and a way of life. She said that she values highly “the trust, love, and respect I experience at the Institute—Board, programs, staff—the coming together of peers, with a special sense of acceptance and openness to one another—ordained, laity, academics, ‘ordinary’ folks—all of them com-

mitted to making meaning of the messiness of our times and our culture.”

The McFarland years, like those of all the preceding chairs, were full of activity, creativity, completion of ongoing ventures, and the beginning of new ones.

The Institute at Thirty and Kilian at Eighty

“The Institute at Thirty: Celebrating the Past—Listening for the Future,” to which everyone with any connection to the Institute was invited, took place during five days in June 1999. In anticipation, the Institute invited anyone in North America enrolled in a program leading to a post-baccalaureate degree to write an essay in response to one of four questions. Three prizes of \$1000 each were awarded for the best essays in response to each of the questions:

- How do I decide who is in the household of faith and who is outside?
- How does contemporary science act as catalyst for transformation of religious imagination?
- How does the theological voice contribute to the resolution of cultural dilemmas?
- What does institutional religion offer a person who is on a spiritual journey?

Fifty-four essays, from students at 40 different academic institutions, were submitted. Nine of the 12 winners came to “The Institute at Thirty.” In addition to their presentations, Bible studies were led by Fr. Tom Stransky; Kilian gave a talk, “Ecumenism: The Personal Journey of a Monk with the Vow of Stability”; Krista Tippett made the keynote address about the History Project;

Paula Koshiol, a high school religion teacher alumna of the College of Saint Benedict (1991) who had participated in several Institute programs, gave the sermon at the concluding service; and the concluding prayer was one used in the dedication program for the Institute, spoken again by the one who had said it in May 1968, Fr. Anthony Coniaris of Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church in Minneapolis. Finally, participants walked to the monastic cemetery to commemorate the deaths of persons associated with the Institute during the previous three decades. The whole event ended with a picnic in the cemetery. It is hard to imagine an occasion more resonant with Joyce McFarland's ecumenical identity.

That was not the end of public celebrations in the McFarland years. In 2001 the Institute collaborated with Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary to celebrate Kilian's 80th birthday (and 55 years as a monk and 50 as a priest).

Because Kilian had always looked forward, it was decided that instead of gathering his contemporaries for a retrospective scholarly party (the conventional way to mark such a milestone), attention would be paid to younger people, those born on or after January 25, 1959, the date on which Pope Saint John XXIII announced he would call an ecumenical council. These younger people were invited to write on one of four topics central to Kilian's work: Spirit, Renewal, Ecumenism, Poetry.

Prizes were awarded in each of the three essay categories and in the poetry category: a first prize of \$2,000, two second prizes of \$1,000 each, and two third prizes of \$500 each. In the spring of 2002 the winners were brought to Collegeville. In a whirlwind three days they got to know each other and Kilian

and to learn from a distinguished panel on the topic "What Are Religious Publishers Looking For?" Board member Krista Tippet moderated, and among the panelists was Donald Ottenhoff of the *Christian Century*, who two years later became the Institute's executive director.

The Board issues a public resolution

It is often said that 9/11 "changed everything." In a very specific way this was true of the Institute. The Board did something unprecedented in its 34-year history.

Two days after the terrorist attacks Jerry Falwell publicly said, on Pat Robertson's *700 Club*: "I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America—I point the finger in their face and say 'you helped this happen.'"

He viewed the attacks as God's judgment on America for "throwing God out of the public square, out of the schools." The ACLU and other organizations "which have attempted to secularize America, have removed our nation from its relationship with Christ on which it was founded." Therefore, "I believe that that created an environment which possibly has caused God to lift the veil of protection which has allowed no one to attack America on our soil since 1812." Robertson's subsequent prayer was in the same vein.

Falwell later that day said, on CNN, "I would never blame any human being except the terrorists, and if I left that impression with gays or lesbians or anyone else, I apologize." How could there have been any other "impression"?

Grant Grissom, vice chair of the Board, believed that Falwell's statement, and others like it that were reported in various places, presented a direct challenge to the values and mission of the Institute. He proposed to his colleagues that they take a stand together.

Much discussion ensued. There was no opposition, but several Board members noted the gravity of making a public statement of this sort, something the Board had never done. Several members said that it was important for the Institute to take a leadership role in opposing such interpretations of Christianity because there was not much evidence of public outcry.

There is a widely held conviction that groups cannot successfully edit documents. Discussion in Collegeville on October 11 and 12 was an exception. The proposed text went through several revisions and emerged sharper and clearer as a result.

It was noted that some readers might interpret the resolution to mean that the Board disallows any notion of divine judgment in history. But although it is true that the Bible often declares disaster to be God's judgment, if someone quickly and with total assurance blames others for trouble, and says that God is punishing all of us because of "them," something other than careful theological thinking is going on.

The resolution was e-mailed to hundreds of persons and institutions, including newspapers and magazines, forwarded to others in various Institute distribution lists; mailed to the president or dean of 240 seminaries; and published, with Board member names included, as an advertisement, paid for with gifts given to the Institute for that purpose, in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* and the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

Resolution against Bigotry and for Unity

In the midst of the profound religious reflection that has been generated by the trauma of September 11 and its aftermath, Rev. Jerry Falwell and others have sounded a strident, divisive note that should not go uncontested. Though Rev. Falwell has publicly apologized for his remarks, his original meaning continues to reverberate. The Board of Directors of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, Collegeville, Minnesota, believing that its own ecumenical mission and identity call it to challenge such distortions of Christianity, adopted the following resolution at its Annual Meeting on October 12, 2001:

By its mission statement, the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research "is committed to research, study, prayer, reflection, and dialogue." These practices, the antithesis of stridency, nourish attitudes of openness and renewal.

The world has been stunned by an act of terrorism that has slaughtered thousands. The terrorists assert that this is what God wants. Religions, including Christianity, can be hijacked by zealots whose hatreds masquerade as theological principle.

At this time of national trauma, some prominent Christians have blamed groups of which they disapprove for drawing divine wrath down on our country. The Institute's Board of Directors asserts its conviction that such bigotry is unworthy of followers of Christ, and is itself offensive to God and a threat to the common good. We call upon Christian leaders, particularly denominational officials, seminary faculty, and ordained clergy serving congregations, to publicly dissociate Christian doctrine and ethics from the prejudice and intolerance that such scapegoating reflects. In the spirit of our mission statement, by



Building Complete. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

which the Institute “seeks to discern the meaning of Christian identity and unity in a religiously and culturally diverse nation and world,” we call upon Christians to reaffirm that the love of God embraces all people. In all our speech and all our acts we Christians are accountable to God in Christ, who challenges us to love and serve our neighbor.

THE CAROL STILES YEARS (2002-06)



Carol McGee Stiles joined the Board in 1994. After a summer consultation the following year, she wrote that the consultation “was a forming, re-forming experience for me personally. I

know that we did our work faithfully. The task was accomplished with courage and integrity. I affirm once again the importance of including lay folk and people involved in every level of ecumenical activity in the process.”

In 1990 Carol had been asked to co-chair a four-year inquiry on the topic “Christian Hope Found Outside the Church.” Questions such as these arose: “Do I believe hope is a gift that cannot be conjured up? If so, where does it come from?” “Is community essential for hope, or can hope be individual?” “How is the church life-giving and life-taking?” “What is the connection between hope and gratitude?” “How can we bring the hope found outside the church back into the church?”

Carol herself is entirely up-front about the way she found such hope.

In 1984 I began my journey toward recovery from alcoholism. When first introduced

to the Twelve Steps, I felt quite confident, even superior to my peers. After all, I had a strong belief in God. Soon it became apparent that my understanding of God was inadequate for the business of recovery.

God is a “given” in the Twelve Steps. The challenge was to come to an understanding of just who God is for me and how God works in my life.

In retrospect, I see that my complete powerlessness (Step One) drove me to seek God in a more personal way than I had previously known was possible. I felt vulnerable and free at the same time. For the first time in my life it was apparent that God is understood by people in many different ways and that’s okay. God started to move out of the box.

My recovery continued with the help of many others who sit around Twelve Step tables. We gather for one common purpose: to recover from alcoholism. No one is an authority, and all discussion is in the first person. We come with our own experience, strength, and hope, to talk about what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now. I bring the God of my understanding to the table, and I must allow others to bring the God of their understanding.

By her third year on the Board, Carol had been elected secretary and treasurer. Her Presbyterian identity revealed itself time and again as she insisted, gently but firmly, that all be done in good order. And she kept reminding the Board of the extraordinary range of blessings and benefits that come to the Institute from its association with Saint John’s Abbey and Saint Benedict’s Monastery.

Visioning and transition

In the Fall 2002 issue of the Institute’s news-

letter with the lead story about Carol's election as chair was a box headed "Search to start soon." It read in part:

The pattern in recent years has been for a chair of the Board to serve four years. This means that Carol Stiles will oversee the most significant transition at the Institute in two decades. Patrick Henry and Dolores Schuh, CHM, have advised the Board that they wish to retire in 2004, when he will be 65 and she 72. Patrick will have served as executive director for 20 years, Dolores as executive associate for 32. The Board has appointed an executive director search committee.


Carol's election as chair followed directly on an extraordinary occurrence in the summer of 2002. In 2001, the Board had presented itself a challenge: a five-day consultation to consider the future of the Institute. All the members said they would try to attend. Had half the Board shown up, it would have been remarkable, almost unheard of in the annals of any nonprofit's board's "good intentions." In the event, 28 of 36 Board members—78 percent—attended.

Several participants who were veterans of visioning processes said that the clearest indication of this one's depth and accomplishment was the laughter. One afternoon several subgroups were each to present a skit. The Board was far from unanimous in its enthusiasm for such send-ups, but all were good sports and willing to give it a try. Butler Center became an improvisational comedy theater. The way people played off and to each other, the spontaneous riffs groups did on what previous groups had done, the thinking that was not just out of the box but out of the galaxy—all of this was quite startling to everyone and forged a notable degree and strength of bonding.

On the final day of the consultation the par-

ticipants crafted a vision statement that would play a major role in the search committee's description of the Institute and its program as the Board sought its next executive director. The statement includes this goal: "The Institute will be a midwife for the next phase of the ecumenical movement: identifying and understanding Christianity lived with authenticity in all its forms, and in multiple religious, cultural, and generational contexts."

It was a vision consistent with the life story of the Institute and with a phrase spoken by theologian Douglas John Hall, who had been the keynote speaker for that spring's "Kilian at 80" celebration. The Institute, in service to its goal, would not be wedged in place but instead "both bound and free."

The adventure story that started with Patrick Butler's question to Kilian was poised  for its next chapters.

Patrick Henry was a [Collegeville] Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research resident scholar in 1975-76 and again in spring 1984, and served as its executive director from 1984 to 2004. As author of this essay, Patrick writes, "It is a privilege to write the initial part of this brief history of the Institute's first half-century. In 1986 I quoted my mentor, the noted ecumenist Albert Outler, whose words resonated with a lifetime's passionate commitment to a movement he feared had slipped into the doldrums: What we need, he said, is to be 'imaginative and venturesome.' Those terms helped me then, and still do today, to understand why the Institute has been for me a wellspring of challenge and hope. In 1985 I said that we must 'be faithful to Institute traditions while imagining how we must innovate in order to remain what we essentially are'—and what we essentially are was there from the beginning. In 1987 I called the Institute's 20-year history 'the adventure thus far of Fr. Kilian McDonnell's bold idea that this century's ecumenical movement could flourish in the centuries-old atmosphere of Benedictine worship and work.' The adventure continues." Patrick and his wife, Pat Welter, live in Waite Park, Minnesota.



Family at Collegeville Institute. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

News of Collegeville Institute Program Participants & Scholars, Summer 2017

Tim Bascom's (Summer 2010) poem "What Your Neighbor Will Never Say" appeared in the *Christian Century* (October 26, 2016).

Rebecca Berru Davis (Resident Scholar 2014/15, 2015/16) reports that her exhibit *Picturing Paradise: Cuadros from the Peruvian Women of Pamplona Alta as Visions of Hope* was on display at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry from October 2016 – February 2017. *Picturing Paradise*, an exhibit linking art, faith, and justice, features embroidered and appliquéd fabric pictures called cuadros, created by the women of *Compacto Humano* and *Manos Ancashinas*, two art cooperatives located in Pamplona Alta, a shantytown on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. The exhibition places emphasis on the women as artists and the way their art reflects creativity, resilience, and hope despite the harsh conditions of their lives.

Charles Bobertz's (Resident Scholar Spring 1992) most recent book, *The Gospel of Mark: A Liturgical Reading*, was published by Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group (2016).



This book offers a liturgical reading of the Gospel of Mark, arguing that the Gospel is a narrative interpretation of early Christian ritual. Charles also contributed to *A Liturgical Companion to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, featuring essays by contemporary liturgical scholars and theologians (Liturgy Training Publications, 2016).



Renee Bondy (Summer 2014; Short-term Resident Scholar Spring 2016) writes a regular women's history column, "Memorabilia," for *Herizons*, the Canadian feminist magazine. Her article, "Swimming Upstream," which appeared in the Summer 2016 issue, outlines the history of women's swimwear.

Kathleen Cahalan (Collegeville Institute Seminars project director) and **Doug Schuurman** (Collegeville Institute Seminars participant) edited and authored parts of *Calling in Today's World: Voices from Eight Faith Perspectives* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016). The book explores vocation and calling as understood by differing faith perspectives from eight different religious traditions.



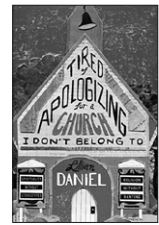
Sharon Chmielarz's (Summer 2006, 2008, 2016) book *The Widow's House* was named by Kirkus Reviews as one of the 100 (indie) best books of 2016 (Brighthorse Books, 2015). This thoughtful collection of poems explores loss, unpacks grief, and probes the emotional aftermath of experiencing the death of a spouse.



Nancy Corson Carter (Resident Scholar Fall 1977) published a chapbook of poems with photos, *Sunday Dinner at the Farm* (Finishing Line Press, 2016). Inspired by visits to her grandparents' farm in central Pennsylvania, the work maps a special place in her growing up years. Nancy writes, "I remember [my family's time] with you at the Collegeville Institute with such gratitude!"



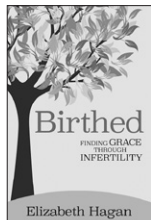
Lillian Daniel's (writing workshop facilitator) latest book, *Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To: Spirituality without Stereotypes, Religion without Ranting*, was published by Faith-Words (2016).



Jesse James DeConto's (Summer 2015) article "A Chapel Hill Church Redefines 'Open and Affirming'" was featured in the *Christian Century* (August 9, 2016).

David Giuliano (Summer 2011, 2013, 2014; Short-term Resident Scholar Fall 2014) writes regularly for the *UC Observer*. His essay "The Working Poor Are the Major Philanthropists of our Society" was published in the September 2016 edition. His blog *Camino de Cancer* is updated on the *UC Observer* site on the first Tuesday of every month. His essays and blog can be accessed at ucobserver.org.

John D. Groppe (Resident Scholar 1969/70) has been listed on the bicentennial literary map of Indiana: *1816-2016 Literary Map of Indiana: 200 Years - 200 Writers*. He was recognized for his poetry.



Elizabeth Hagan (Summer 2011) writes, "Thank you for giving me the courage to keep going with this project back in 2011 when I attended a summer writing workshop. I was so glad to thank and acknowledge the Collegeville Institute in my recent book, *Birthed: Finding Grace through Infertility*, a spiritual memoir about our family's journey to welcome children into our home" (Chalice Press, 2016).

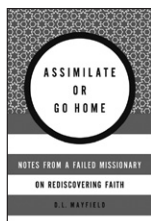
Sam Harrison's (Summer 2014) poem "Cold Ashes" was selected for inclusion in *The Orison Anthology*, which features the best spiritual writing of 2015 (Orison Books, 2016). *The Orison Anthology* is an annual collection of the finest spiritual writing in all genres published in periodicals the preceding year. "Cold Ashes" first appeared in *The Anglican Theological Review* 97, no. 4 (Fall 2015).

Heidi Haverkamp's (Summer 2011) article "Take and Eat? When Church Members Prefer Just a Blessing" was headlined in the *Christian Century* (July 26, 2016).

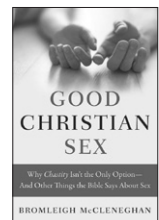
Patrick Henry's (Collegeville Institute executive director from 1984-2004; Resident Scholar 1975/76, Summer 1976, Spring 1984) essay "Worship and Ecumenism" was published in *Worship* (Order of Saint Benedict 90 [September 2016]).

Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew's (Summer 2012) piece "Dark Night of the Nursery" won the 2015 *Orison Anthology* award for creative nonfiction. It appeared in the inaugural edition of *The Orison Anthology*, which includes previously unpublished works of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry in addition to reprinted material (Orison Books, 2016).

Janet Kirchheimer (Summer 2010) reports that her poem, "Blessings," was published in the anthology *The Poet's Quest for God* (Eyewear Publishing, 2016).



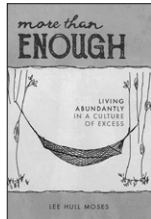
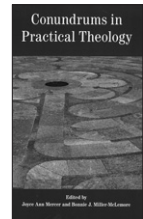
D. L. Mayfield's (Summer 2014) memoir *Assimilate or Go Home* was released in 2016 (Harper One, an imprint of HarperCollins). **Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove** (writing workshop facilitator) writes, "[her] voice aches like a psalmist's; it sings out like the prophets of old. This book is not the next hot new thing. It is ancient wisdom, distilled from the daily grind, rendered in the vernacular of American life."



Bromleigh McCleneghan's (Summer 2009, 2011, 2017) latest book, *Good Christian Sex*, was published by HarperCollins (2016). Bromleigh's blog is part of the *Christian Century* blog network. One such post—"Learning Hope from Elie Wiesel"—appeared July 5, 2016.

Michael N. McGregor (Fall 2011; writing workshop participant and coach) announced that his book *Pure Act: The Uncommon Life of Robert Lax* was a finalist for the 2016 Washington State Book Award in Biography/Memoir (Fordham University Press, 2015).

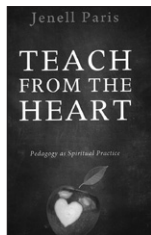
Joyce Mercer (Collegeville Institute Seminars) and **Bonnie Miller-McLemore** (Collegeville Institute Seminars and Resident Scholar Fall 2014) edited *Conundrums in Practical Theology* (Brill Academic Pub, 2016).



Lee Hull Moses (Summer 2009, 2010) is a regular contributor to the *Christian Century* print magazine and blog. Her article “Equipped for Your Needs: My Church’s Magical Supply Closet” appeared in the July 12, 2016, issue. Her most recent book, *More Than Enough*, was published by Westminster John Knox Press (2016). **MaryAnn McKibben Dana** (writing workshop participant) writes, “This book is for anyone who is ready to live more lightly on the earth but who feels frustrated that the ‘simple life’ seems anything but!”

Glenn Olsen’s (Resident Scholar 1978/79) most recent book, *Supper at Emmaus: Great Themes in Western Culture and Intellectual History*, was published by The Catholic University of America Press (2016).

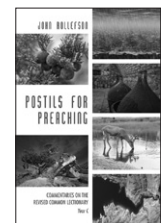
Lee Roger Owens’s (Summer 2016) blog is part of the *Christian Century* blog network. His post “Rereading Night and Rethinking Baptism” appeared July 7, 2016.



Jenell Paris’s (Resident Scholar Fall 2013) book *Teach from the Heart: Pedagogy as Spiritual Practice* was published by Cascade Books, an imprint of Wipf and Stock (2016). Jenell writes, “The birds, dragonflies, grasshoppers, and bees mentioned in this book are those of Stumpf Lake [adjacent to the Collegeville Institute grounds], along the walking trail that provided me an inspirational commute.”

Mary Lane Potter (Summer 2009; writing workshop facilitator) explores loss, God, and the complex relationship she has experienced between mysticism and feminism in “Tasting Manna.” This essay was published in the *SUFI Journal* 91 (Summer 2016), pp. 47-51, in a special issue on gender.

John Rollefson (Resident Scholar 1979/80; Summer 2012, 2016) writes, “I am delighted (and relieved) to announce the publication by Resource Publications (an imprint of Wipf and Stock) of *Postils for Preaching: Commentaries on the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A* (2016), *Postils for Preaching: Commentaries on the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B* (2016), and *Postils for Preaching: Commentaries on the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C* (2017).” John, a retired Lutheran pastor, and his wife, Ruth, live in San Luis Obispo on California’s central coast.



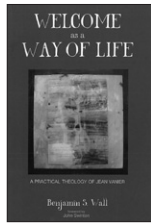
Gerald Schlabach’s (Resident Scholar 2013/14) article “The Virtue of Staying Put: What the ‘Benedict Option’ Forgets about Benedictines” was published in *Commonweal* (October 7, 2016).



Martha ter Kuile’s (Summer 2016) essay “A Christmas Vigil” appeared in the *UC Observer* in December 2016.

Marisella Veiga (Summer 2016) writes, “I am so pleased to have been a part of the Collegeville Institute last summer.” Her book *We Carry Our Homes with Us: A Cuban American Memoir* was published by Minnesota Historical Society Press (2016).

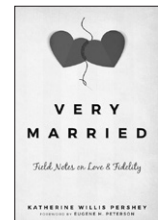
Isaac Villegas (Summer 2012, 2014, 2016) writes regularly for the *Christian Century*. His article “Why I Still Care about Denominational Politics: A Church for the Kids” appeared in the October 26, 2016, edition. His article “Death of a Caregiver” appeared in the February 1, 2017, issue.



Benjamin Wall (Spring 2012) writes, “I am very grateful to the Collegeville Institute and Saint John’s community. It was there that I was able to finalize my work on St. Benedict’s *Rule* and begin my constructive work on Jean Vanier. I am thankful for all the great conversations, mini-presentations, lectures, and all the encouragement, prayers, and love shown to me whilst my family and I were among you and others.” His first book, *Welcome as a Way of Life: A Practical Theology of Jean Vanier*, is a result of that residency (Cascade Books, an imprint of Wipf and Stock, 2016).

Katherine Willis Pershey’s (Summer 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015) latest book, *Very Married: Field Notes on Love and Fidelity*, was released in 2016 (Herald Press). **Eugene Peterson** (writing workshop facilitator and short-term scholar) writes, “[This book] is, without question, the very best book on marriage that I have ever read—and I have read many. If you read ten pages of this book and tell me that you set it aside out of boredom or lack of interest, I wouldn’t believe you. Try me. It’s incredible.”

Lauren Winner’s (writing workshop facilitator) latest book, *Wearing God: Clothing, Laughter, Fire and Other Overlooked Ways of Meeting God*, received third place in the Religion News Association’s Excellence for Nonfiction Religion Book category (HarperCollins, 2015).



Relocations and General Updates

Joseph Osei-Bonsu (Resident Scholar 1987/88) is bishop of the Konongo-Mampong Diocese, Ghana, and president of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference. As his country was preparing for elections in December 2016, he urged Ghanaians to make peace their number one priority during the election process. To read more, access: en.radiovaticana.va/news.

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May 26, 1968. At the dedication of the Institute: Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, OSD, Bishop (subsequently Cardinal) Jan Willebrands, Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, Eugene Carson Blake, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Aimee Mott Butler, Patrick Butler, Peter M. Butler. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

If you enjoyed this issue of *Bearings*, we invite you to receive digital updates from the Collegeville Institute (it's free). Subscribe today at **collegevilleinstitute.org/subscribe/**.

In Memoriam

- + **Ann Didier** – October 2016 – Board Member
 - + **Shaun O'Meara, OSB** – October 2016 – Resident Scholar and Board Member
 - + **John Timothy "Tim" Power** – September 2016 – Board Member
 - + **Mary (Molly) Bigelow McMillian** – February 2017 – Board Member and Honorary Life Member
 - + **John Stone** – December 2016 – Board Member and Chair, and Honorary Life Member
 - + **Hella Mears Hueg** – March 2017 – Board Member and Honorary Life Member
-



Overlooking Stumpf Lake. Photo courtesy of Saint John's University Archives.

Salute to the Collegeville Institute



Kilian McDonnell, OSB. Photo by Adam Konczewski

On the banks of Stumpf lake
one turns into Flynntown,
named after an early
university coach (originally
the name would change with
the name of each new coach);
At the end of the village
the scholars and pastors drive left
to a winding road,
image of the complexities
of the search,
of the never ending
quest for the right idea
written so William Faulkner
would be pleased.

Each family
in their own home
designed by Marcel Breuer:
think New York, the Whitney Museum,
think Paris, the UNESCO building.

Each thinks thoughts beyond
the dormitories in Flynntown.
They write books, articles,
thick and thin, blue and brown,
on themes this side
of never thought before.
They crumple the mold
inherited from yesterday's
prodigies, unsure
they can do the same.
The children bring noise,
laughter,
and pee on the floor.
So who's counting?

Diplomas are out,
achievements are in.
They discuss stone boundaries
not to be violated
and then trespass.

by Kilian McDonnell, OSB

The more than brilliant,
the bald, the flowing locks,
from Saint John's,
with soup stains
on the scapulars,
mix and discuss
what no scale can weigh.

The scholars gather for fish
and roulade baked too long
and bread baked
until it breaks open at the top.
The beer, a feral liquid that loosens
hesitant tongues.

The pastoral people,
face the broken masonry of lapses,
dismantle the lopsided
scaffolding,
and build, what cannot be built,
diamond skyscrapers
out of lumps of mud.

The windows
open on to trees,
invite owls, pileated woodpeckers,
and deer. And then
there are the wild turkeys.

Here only alphas,
occasionally a beta.
But in the end
it has to make sense
to someone, somewhere.

Who hides that unwritten code
that every person must break,
written from the deep places
of the soul; each cannot do it
alone, but with the wind,
and more than a nudge from heaven,
it's broken,
and one sees the naked kiss
between learning and beauty.

In its emphasis on the unity of God's diverse people, the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative work, and the inseparable relation between thought and action, the Collegeville Institute remains an energetic and growing institution of research and leadership formation that occupies a unique position in religious America.

***Please contribute to the Collegeville Institute's ongoing work as you are able.
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