# BEARINGS

for the Life of Faith

Spring 2016

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On the cover: *Mary, Throne of Wisdom.* Photo by Carla M. Durand. The original sculpture, donated to Saint John's Abbey by Mary and James B. Mabon, is 36" high, carved from a single block of wood, dated mid-12th century, and from the Burgandy region of France. (Side view courtesy of Saint John's Abbey.)


# BEARINGS

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# Editors' Note

The familiar story of King Solomon and the two mothers is often lifted up as a quintessential example of wisdom. The two women who came to stand before the king had each recently given birth to a son, and they both lived in the same dwelling. One of the mothers had accidentally rolled onto her child in the night and killed him. She had put the dead baby upon the sleeping breast of the other mother and had stolen that woman's living child. Whose child was dead and whose child was alive?

That's what King Solomon had to decide. He did so by demanding that a sword be brought to him. He said that he would cut the baby in half, so each woman would get an equal share. The woman whose "heart yearned for her son" cried out, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means slay it." The other declared, "It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it."

From there, the decision was easy—the real mother was obviously the one who loved her son so much that she was willing to give him up in order to save his life. King Solomon was wise, then, in his decision to draw his sword. That startling act revealed the truth.

It's been said that Aristotle defined wisdom as "doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time." One thing we can notice about this definition is that it's not enough to have good intentions. Wisdom is linked with doing. Nor is there only one way to be wise. Wisdom is contextual, situational. It comes from a rich and rooted way of living well right here and right now.

If we hold Aristotle's definition to be true, then we must *practice* wisdom—both in the sense that we must act and that we must try and try again. Not only does wisdom require an active persistence, it also requires a certain kind of stillness—a taking of time to know in deep and satisfying ways. Wisdom cannot be rushed or forced. It arises from being grounded and from grounded beings.

This issue of *Bearings* explores the topic of wisdom through a variety of lenses—from reading the Bible's Wisdom books to studying wisdom in the laboratory, from the wisdom a body can gain in worship to the role of technology in advancing or distracting us from the next breakthroughs in human wisdom. We hope the explorations of wisdom in this issue will surprise you with new takes on an ancient topic, and that they will help you to see the next right thing to be done in your own life.

While many of us are familiar with the story of King Solomon and the two women, it might come as a surprise that the story begins with "two harlots came to the king and stood before him." Why are we told that the women are harlots? Perhaps it's because the story shows that this fact doesn't matter. Wisdom requires paying attention to what *really* matters. When we don't do that, we are doomed to increase pain and suffering. But when we act wisely love is revealed, lives are saved, and each day is enough for a lifetime.

*An Interview with Amy Plantinga Pauw*

# Negotiating Ordinary Life: What Proverbs and Ecclesiastes Teach Us about Wisdom

*Amy Plantinga Pauw is the Henry P. Mobley, Jr. Professor of Doctrinal Theology at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. She is the general editor of the 36-volume theological commentary series* Belief *(Westminster John Knox), for which she wrote a commentary on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (2015). The Collegeville Institute interviewed her about her work on those two wisdom books.*

***Bearings*: While many of us could give decent definitions of intelligence and reason, wisdom seems fuzzier. How would you define wisdom? And why is wisdom necessary for human flourishing?**

Intelligence and reason can be brought to bear on any area of human endeavor, from curing cancer to robbing a bank. Wisdom, by contrast, is practical know-how, aimed at human flourishing. It is "slow knowledge," accumulated communally over time. All cultures seek and pass down wisdom. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes insist that the human wisdom we need to live well has its source in God's wisdom. To be wise is to live according to the grain of God's universe.

**Why does Proverbs focus so strongly on the relationship between wisdom and community?**

Wisdom is about following a life-giving path; we depend on those who have walked ahead of us, and our attempts to stay on the path of wisdom guide those who will come after us. Yet Proverbs knows that some paths are wicked and deadly. Choosing the right path and staying on it requires imagination and discernment.

The proverbial form is itself a good example of this relationship between wisdom and community. Proverbs are a communal genre, the verbal distillation of common experience. But knowing the "word fitly spoken" (Prov. 25: 11) for a particular situation requires discernment. Do you say, "Too many cooks spoil the broth" or "Many hands make light work"? The challenge of staying on the path of wisdom is ongoing.

**We often think of wisdom as something that comes with age or something that shows up in the political realm—Solomon as a wise king, Lincoln as a wise president. However, both Proverbs and Ecclesiastes focus significantly on the ordinary and the daily. Why?**

Wisdom is about negotiating ordinary human life, so all people need wisdom to live well. Wisdom's traditional associations with wealth, age, and social standing reflect the reality that people with large amounts of social capital are in special need of wisdom. Their wisdom is important because what they do has such a big effect on others. But Ecclesiastes is quick to puncture the illusion that wisdom and power always go together: "Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who will no longer take advice" (Eccl. 4:13).

**Many readers probably know that Woman Wisdom—Wisdom personified as a woman—appears in Proverbs. Why is this figure important and what is essential for us to know about her?**

Most of Proverbs consists of concrete advice about everyday matters such as relationships, money, sex, alcohol, and work. But in the first nine chapters there is a larger-than-life female figure who personifies God's wisdom. She was present with God at the creation of the world, and all our earthly efforts to be wise are to be guided by her. Proverbs accords her cosmic power and authority. As she proclaims, "by me kings reign and rulers decree what is just" (Prov. 8:15).

**"To be wise is to live according to the grain of God's universe."**

She is also portrayed as more valuable and beautiful than anything else we seek. "Nothing you desire can compare with her" (Prov. 3:15). Staying close to Woman Wisdom is not a burdensome duty but the gateway to joy and abundant life.

Given the exalted depictions of Woman Wisdom in Proverbs and elsewhere, it is no surprise that the earliest Christians made connections between her and Jesus. Being with God at the beginning, communicating revelation or divine knowledge, offering spiritual food, being accepted by some and rejected by others—these attributes of the figure of Woman Wisdom in the first nine chapters of Proverbs all resonate with Christian affirmations about Jesus.

**You note that there is an "intellectual ecumenism" to Proverbs. Can you expand on that idea?**

Carole Fontaine uses this phrase to describe the willingness of Israel's sages to share wisdom across boundaries of culture and religion. Egypt and Mesopotamia were the motherlands of wisdom in the ancient Near East, and there is general agreement that Israel borrowed wisdom teachings from its neighbors. For example, in the "Words to the Wise" section of Proverbs (Prov. 22:17-24:34), scholars have discovered direct literary dependence on a much older Egyptian wisdom text known as *Instruction of Amenemope*. While the biblical prophets call Israel to separate itself from and reject the ways of its neighbors, the wisdom books model a critical acceptance of the insights and teachings of others.

**How do Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job force us to "wrestle with the ambiguities of human experience"?**

The horizon of the biblical wisdom books is creaturely existence. Earthly problems have to be dealt with here, not deferred to some life in heaven. The sages of Proverbs think that wisdom, hard work, and righteousness are conducive to human flourishing. But they acknowledge that these things do not always seem to "pay off." Those who work hard sometimes go hungry; the wicked and foolish sometimes get rich. "The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice" (Prov. 13:23). Ecclesiastes and Job are even more skeptical about the earthly fruits of wisdom and righteousness. They are excellent guides when life on the ground stops making sense.

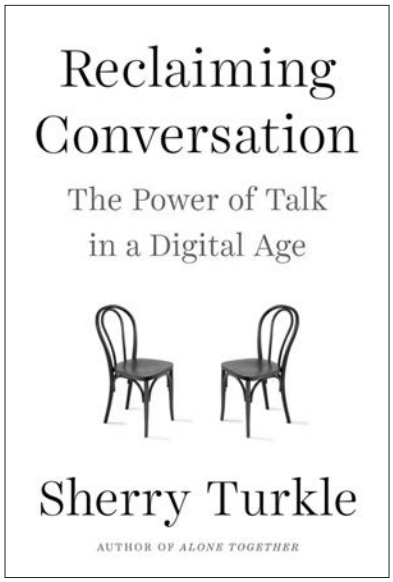
**Ecclesiastes often presents a bleak view of the world and humanity. In the face of that kind of a world view, how does Qohelet, the author of Ecclesiastes, recommend we find hope? Where can we find joy?**

The word *hebel*, often translated as "vanity," occurs a remarkable 38 times in Ecclesiastes. By the time Qohelet is done, almost everything that human beings strive for and seek meaning in will be declared *hebel*—empty, futile, fleeting. So Qohelet definitely calls into question "purpose-driven" human lives—lives that are always on task, always in pursuit of some overarching goal. We are not our own makers and keepers, and we cannot use fame, wealth, or earthly accomplishment to bestow ultimate meaning on our lives. The best we can do is to acknowledge our limits and live each day to the fullest. God's gifts of food, family, and work are given for us to enjoy. Qohelet is agnostic about what we can ultimately hope for, but there is meaning and joy in the rhythms of ordinary life.

**"Wisdom is about negotiating ordinary human life, so all people need wisdom to live well."**

**"Staying close to Woman Wisdom is not a burdensome duty but the gateway to joy and abundant life."**

# BOOKREVIEW | Saving Conversations




***Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age.***
By Sherry Turkle. Penguin
2015, 436 pp.,
$17.00 paperback.

It didn't matter that it was 12 degrees below zero. I climbed into my protesting car and drove to the gym. Dashing inside, I peeled off my layers of clothes and started to walk around the university's indoor track, cellphone in hand. A tall man, whom I recognized from church, waved and smiled as he jogged past me.

My phone rang. Lost in conversation, I hadn't noticed the man from church coming up behind me. As he ran past he touched my shoulder and said, "You know, walking is a good time to put your phone down." I went from anger to embarrassment to the slow realization that had I seen someone walking and talking on his or her cell phone, I would have been thinking the same thing. However, there was a reason—a good reason—why I was talking on my phone. One of my best friends had moved to New York, and one of the things I missed most was our "walk and talks." We walked together a couple of times a week and had conversations about everything—families, finances, dreams, frustrations. When my friend moved away we tried to stay connected via email, but our hectic lives kept us from being very good at it. So we had decided to do one of our beloved "walk and talks" the only way we could—she would walk in New York, and I would walk in Minnesota while we talked on our cell phones.

**"However, there was a reason—a good reason—why I was talking on my phone."**

This event happened while I was reading Sherry Turkle's book, which highlights how complicated the bond between technology, relationships, and conversation can be. Turkle talks about how technology can help us connect with people who are thousands of miles away. She also discusses how people turn to technology to "save" them from boredom, uncertainty, or the awkward task of starting up conversations with strangers.

One of the strengths of Turkle's book is that we hear from real people—usually young people—about how and why they use technology. For example, many of the people she interviewed said that technology has gone a long way in helping them to avoid awkward situations. In addition, many said they love

technology because it helps them plan—and edit—what they want to say and, thanks to the delete key, say it exactly the way that they want to say it. One of the reasons people are drawn to this is because many kids—and their parents—work very hard on getting everything right nowadays. One college student said, "When you talk in person, you are likely to make a slip." The student goes on to say that "our culture has 'zero tolerance' for making mistakes." So why enter into a spontaneous conversation where things could spiral out of control?

One of the trends that Turkle discusses is that some families are now turning to cell phones for family arguments. In this kind of "family meeting 2.0," families work through their problems by texting instead of having face-to-face conversations. One woman told Turkle that her family does this because these kinds of exchanges "minimize the risk that family members will say something they might regret," and allow families to "do away with many of the 'messy and irrational' parts of a fight."

**"[S]ome families are now turning to cell phones for family arguments."**

Turkle notes another trend: when people continually turn toward technology, they do not learn how to experience solitude and boredom. They never allow themselves to get bored or to daydream. Instead, they depend on an ever-present device to keep themselves occupied. Turkle writes, "When we reach for a phone to push reverie away, we should get into the habit of asking why. Perhaps we are not moving toward our phones but away from something else." The something else might include anxiety, or an idea that will take hard work. Or we might come face to face with who we really are. For some people, that can be terrifying.

**It's a big risk "to sit down with each other and just see what happens."**

Technology not only helps people plan what they want to say and keeps them busy, it also helps them to plan their exits. Who knows how long a face-to-face conversation might last or how boring it might get? Turkle quotes 26-year-old Trevor, who says, "it still takes a lot to risk having to sit down with each other and just see what happens." When Turkle asks some 13-year-olds why they don't just sit down and visit, the kids say that "keeping the exchange online means 'you can always leave' and 'you can do other things on social media at the same time.'"

No matter how much they loved technology, most of the people Turkle interviewed knew how important and vital deep conversations can be. Conversation is where we learn empathy, where we collaborate on big new ideas, where we process what is going on around us—in our lives and in our world. And yet many people can't seem to tear themselves away from their devices. They know they should, but they don't want to. Not yet, many of them say.

So what can we do? Turkle says that we can remember that our phone is a "psychologically potent device that changes not just what you do but who you are." We can slow down and protect our quiet time. And we can "create sacred spaces for conversation."

That's one of the things we try to do here at the Collegeville Institute. On the first night that writers arrive for a new writing workshop, we point to the no cellphone signs around the main room. We invite the participants to be present and to talk about things that matter. Many of them accept the invitation, and they say it changes their lives. It reminds them that this kind of talking—deep, face-to-face conversation—is vital to their own human flourishing. And they want to do it more often.

The night after my walk and talk, I heard my cell phone ding and cursed the fact that I had accidentally left it in our bedroom instead of putting it on the kitchen counter the way I usually do. My husband must not have heard it, because he didn't stir. Opening my eyes, I looked at the clock: 5:24 a.m. I was sure it was a notification that my son, who was in his first year at college, had almost used up all of our data for the month. In my mind I grumbled, "He should be asleep. He should quit using his phone so much."

I knew I wasn't going to fall back asleep, so I got up, grabbed my phone, and quietly left the bedroom. The message on my phone was from our son: "I've never been so homesick in all of my life." My son had struggled with homesickness for years. He once told me, "It's just that home is such a good place to be." His first year in college had been going better than any of us could have imagined. What had happened?

**"[M]any people can't seem to tear themselves away from their devices. They know they should, but they don't want to. Not yet."**

My kids can text while they look me in the eye—a technique Turkle says is called "phubbing." But I had to use the delete key six times to construct my simple text: "You okay?"

It turns out my son had the stomach flu and had been throwing up for hours. He was lying on the hard, cold floor of his dorm's bathroom. I told him how much I wished I could be there for him. Then I texted him a few lines from the lullaby I had made up for him and his sister.

"Thank you," he wrote back. "I love you."

My son was sick. I couldn't be there for him. And yet I could.

What technology means for us and for our relationships is complicated, but until artificial intelligence (or something like it) becomes a reality, technology isn't good or bad in and of itself. As Turkle wisely indicates, it's like our relationship with food. It's the choices we make that matter. Will we use it to connect to other people? Or will we use it to disconnect from them? It's up to us. □

*Reviewed by Betsy Johnson-Miller, who works at the Collegeville Institute and teaches at the College of St. Benedict / Saint John's University. Her writing has appeared in* Alaska Quarterly Review, Prairie Schooner, Portland, *and* Cortland Review.

# A Kingdom Not of This World

*by Marjorie Stelmach*

Because they blend with the grey-olive needles of hemlock and fir,
you can tramp the boreal forest for years without a sighting,

and so, to a birder, the golden-crowned kinglet's a treasure. Their call
is a high-pitched whisper: *tsee tsee.* If you do come upon one,

it's sure to be feeding, stalled at a twig-tip in hummingbird hover,
snatching at *manna* too small for our vision. It's as if they lived

on imagination. That they live at all is a miracle. So small, you'd think
they would freeze in the thirty-below of a twelve-hour darkness:

if they lapsed in their dawn-to-dusk forage, they'd starve in an hour. Well,
as the nuns used to sing in their cheerful way, *it's a mystery of faith:*

little burning bushes, unconsumed.

Our local kinglet is less exalted. Ruby-crowned, it winters here
in Southeast Missouri where temperatures rarely dip below zero.

Shaped like a tear-drop. Mostly gray—its ruby crown hidden
except in mating. So, like the goldens, they take patience—

*rarely sighted,* as my field guide puts it. It's as if they migrated
into and out of this plane of existence, although true birders

discern their call. Myself, I've neither seen nor heard one.
Maybe because I mostly read books, which calls for a different

order of trust. I would claim the material world has its drawbacks:
requiring literal sightings, an ear attuned to inaudible voices,

the faith that, each spring, you'll witness returns, new matings,
new fledglings, despite global warming, reduction in habitat,

aging vision. But here in *Birds of Missouri* they're shown displaying
their audacious crowns in glorious color, and I choose to accept

the word of the author that they exist out there in their hiddenness.
Which is why, deep in the woods, I pause to listen,

should one of them whisper.

*Marjorie Stelmach's fourth volume of poems is* Without Angels *(Mayapple 2014). Recent work has appeared in* Boulevard, Cincinnati Review, Gettysburg Review, *and* Image, *among others. Marjorie attended the Collegeville Institute's* Believing in Writing *workshop in summer 2011.*

*Glory Window, Chapel of Thanksgiving.* © Rosemary Washington / Rosemary.Washington.wordpress.com

# The Wisdom of the Body

*Bonnie Miller-McLemore*

*One of the ways that practical wisdom—or* phronesis*—has been defined is "doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time." In their book,* Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters *(William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), authors* ***Dorothy Bass, Kathleen Cahalan, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, James Nieman,*** *and* ***Christian Scharen*** *explore practical wisdom in a variety of settings, including community life, prayer, family, and pop culture. In this excerpt from the book, author Bonnie Miller-McLemore examines how the different gestures we make when we worship shape our knowledge of God and ourselves, forming us in wisdom.*

Arriving at the [Saint John's] Abbey Church a little early, I watch as the monks enter and bow toward the altar where a wooden cross is suspended from the vaulted ceiling—toward God, I suppose. God's presence seems palpable in the stained glass light and quiet. I do not know what is involved in bowing or what it means for each monk. But I seldom feel so low-church Protestant as when I don't bow before turning into the wooden pew to lower my seat and find the right page for Morning Prayer. I would feel awkward and insincere bowing. It is not a practice I have learned. It is not bodily familiar to me. I have even *incorporated*—literally taken into my body, my corporeal repertoire—a modern bias against actions like bowing. But I also feel irreverent and careless not bowing, almost as if I slight God and miss a chance to mark my reverence in movement. I have gained new respect for bowing and I am curious. What does it mean to bow to God and to each other as a repeated life-long body practice for these Benedictine monks?

This question has preoccupied me because of other worship experiences of late. A few years ago I quit attending the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation where my membership resides. Sporadically I attend other Disciples churches in Nashville. More regularly I worship in an Episcopalian congregation. I am struck by body habits and postures different from those so familiar to me after a half century of faith formation among Disciples. My bodily sense

**"What does it mean to bow to God and to each other as a repeated life-long body practice for these Benedictine monks?"**

of disconnect is especially acute during the Eucharist (what Disciples call communion or the Lord's Supper). What does it mean to process forward and hold out your hands to receive the Eucharist from a priest versus sitting and passing a communion plate, taking bread, and then serving your neighbor?

I am sure I am not the first to ask this. I only note it as another powerful instance in which I have felt the body, and knowing theology and God, come into keen play. Even if I wanted to make the Episcopalian congregation my home, compelled by its liturgy, music, preaching, and mission, my body resists, especially at communion or, in this case, Eucharist. I am not sure I will ever entirely overcome a sense that it is not quite right to process forward and exemplify in my body a theology with which I do not entirely agree—that one goes to the altar to receive, one by one, hands outstretched, Christ's body and blood from a priestly mediator of God's grace. Occasionally Disciples process forward for communion (free church worship allows for diverse practices). But when we do, the minister or congregant holds out the bread and we tear off a piece; no one places it in our hands.

Even this tiny difference in bodily action is ripe with meaning. As with bowing, I learn from and appreciate the Episcopalian practice all the more. I see meaning in cupping your hands before another. This posture overflows with potential. With your hands waiting to receive, you could be begging, pleading, hopeful, expectant, dependent, or grateful—each gesture loaded with a host of theological connotations. On more occasions than I anticipate, I am moved (to tears) when the priest or those assisting raise the bread or wine, lock their eyes on mine, and tell me, "the body of Christ, the bread of heaven," "the blood of Christ, the cup of salvation." I know I have been given a serious gift, a startling blessing, a physical taste of the intangible. I steal a sideways glance at the half circle of random adults and children around me at the front of the sanctuary, all of us standing together, waiting with empty palms awkwardly turned up as the priest and those assisting start this round of distribution. I see with a little embarrassment what a strange pose we have struck. Rarely do people display their neediness and desire to be filled (loved?) so overtly and patiently.

I make space in my pew one Sunday morning for a woman who tells me after the service how the congregation has become a good place for her husband, a lapsed Catholic, and herself, a Lutheran. I tell her how much I have been drawn myself, finding the church a home for worship, but caught and constrained somehow during Eucharist as someone raised in another tradition. She says she understands. "When my Lutheran mother visited, I had to prepare her." A little surprised, I ask, "What was so different?" I think of Lutherans as liturgically similar to Episcopalians; they go forward to receive the Eucharist after all. How could this be so disorienting? "We never drink from a common cup in my home congregation," she responds. "We use individual cups."

**"I see meaning in cupping your hands before another."**

That this difference seems disruptive to her and so slight to me reminds me again that I am not alone in finding my faith embedded in the smallest of movements with their multiple, highly elusive, seemingly negligible meanings. Christian faith becomes

deeply entangled right here, in these minute body actions and less so in the big conceptual frameworks laboriously worked out over the centuries by church leaders, scholars, and Christian denominations. We say and perceive more than we know or understand through our bodies. This might surprise theological educators who put such stock in our big words and ideas. This doesn't negate the value of systematic doctrinal reflection. But the devil, so to speak, or the divine, is in the corporeal details.

Our bodies know, our bodies remember, our bodies learn ways to embrace and be embraced by God. Bowing and eating are a small part of a whole constellation of habitual actions that make up the life of faith. Are some postures better than others? What do we confess in our small body motions? Do we lose something when we lose certain body postures in a tradition? How do we prevent ritual movements from becoming petty, trivial, or meaningless? When I join the monks for Morning and Evening Prayer, I wonder about bowing, a body movement Disciples do not practice. Monks and other Roman Catholics bow to God when they enter (or to the cross or the consecrated Host? or is it all the same?), when they praise the Trinity during worship, and when they leave. Saturday and Sunday evening, at the start and close of the Sabbath, the monks process in together and bow to the altar and to each other before turning to their seats. What does it mean over a lifetime to bow each time they glorify God? And what about bowing to each other? I notice some monks make eye contact; others do not. Does that matter? Some of the older monks are stooped. Is it from bowing?

**"Our bodies know, our bodies remember, our bodies learn ways to embrace and be embraced by God."**

Our early encounters of church and faith are remarkably sensate. When religious studies scholar Susan Ridgely Bales studied children's understanding of first communion in three Roman Catholic congregations in North Carolina, she discovered that what seven-to ten-year-old children believe and experience is not quite what adults or the wider church have in mind. One of the more striking findings from interviews and observations of African American, Anglo, and Latino/a communicants is the impact and centrality of sensory experience. To her surprise, her conversations with children in the weeks leading up to and following first communion did not center on white dresses and parties, much less transubstantiation or joining the Catholic Church universal, but on the "taste of Jesus' body," what she calls a "theology of taste." Taste preoccupies children in the days before first communion and in the hours after it. Six weeks before the service, a nine-year-old expresses a common sense of sensory anticipation: "I can't wait to taste the bread and wine." After the service, another nine-year-old remarks, "I just wanted to get the bread; that's all I wanted to do." Others make similar comments when asked about the meaning: "You're eating something very special from a very long time ago;" "You get to eat stuff and you get to come closer to God." One child even explains her understanding of transubstantiation through taste, saying that the real bread tastes better than the practice bread.

Taste is only one of five senses that shape

bodily Christian knowing. It is perhaps the least noticed by scholars, ministers, and adult parishioners. But its power is real. The communion elements matter. A grandson of a colleague told his grandfather one Sunday visit after worship, "your bread tastes better than ours." My own children moved from a church that broke freshly baked bread each week to one that passed around tiny, tasteless, mass-made wafers. They immediately saw problems with such a reduced sample of divine bounty. "Where's the bread?" I also see what I would call a *theology of sensory movement* in Bale's account. Children yearn for inclusion in the community. They see membership as gained not through "abstract information" but by sharing in the "sensorial knowledge" that members demonstrate. So they are hyper-vigilant about movement. They want to teach "their bodies to move as the adults moved during the liturgy." They want to "get it right" in front of the congregation.

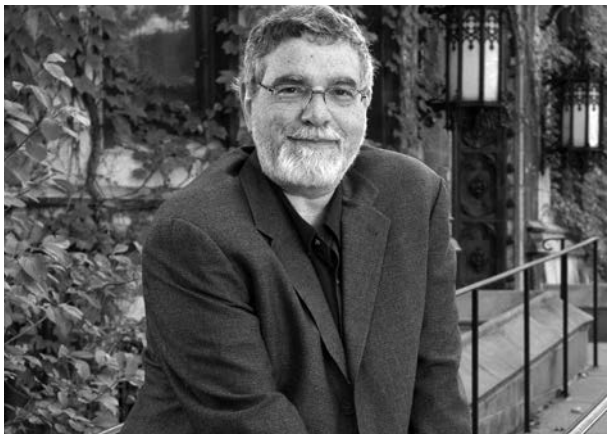
Are these findings all that unique to children? Adults like to think we are different from children, but in many respects this desire hides important connections and deprives us of childhood wisdom. Most of us do not remember clearly our early sensory experiences, which are reshaped and reinvented through memory and later by experience and learning, but our theology partly resides in body memories nonetheless. When I was in fifth grade I was baptized by immersion. I don't remember going under or coming up. Try as I might, I can't picture the minister in the baptistery or recall the temperature of the water, much less details of the baptism classes. But I do remember anticipating what new life would feel like, the weight of the white robe clinging to my body and dragging me back down as I stepped out, wet hair, a group picture, and my pondering whether I felt different. I remain convicted that Christian baptism requires visceral experience that sprinkling can hardly achieve.

We are naïve when we assume adults leave sensate experience and knowing behind, even though Western doctrinal and intellectual history implies that such detachment from bodies is possible and even admirable, even a sign of intellectual and spiritual maturity (and a mark of true science and morality). In fact, there is something to be learned from children and studies of children. Children of all ages are active rather than passive learners; they make their own interpretations right alongside those offered to them by adult teachers and parents, utilizing "information from all areas of their lives to develop their own understandings." Adults are not that different. Like the children in first communion, adult belief is grounded in sensual experience even though this escapes our notice. Sensory understandings that formed us as children linger longer than most of us realize and continue to mark our theology and knowledge of God.

Doctrinal debates that have grown up around the interpretation of [the Words of Institution said during communion]...are many and complex. For the moment, I set such arguments aside. I simply want to ask what it means to encounter God through Christ's body and what our bodies teach us, if anything, in our yearning to know God. Our theology is grounded in our bodies. We have no other way to know God than through our bodies. How do bodies—bodily knowledge—inform, shape, and transform our Christian knowing? Given the main claims of Christianity, we can hardly help but wonder at the aberration of theology as a purely cognitive or intellectual exercise performed at great distance from what actual bodies know or might tell us about faith, theology, or God. There is wisdom in bodily knowing that scholars and ministers have underestimated. 

# The Wisdom Project

## Can science *really* tell us anything worth knowing about wisdom?


Dr. Howard Nusbaum

Dr. Howard Nusbaum thinks so. "Wisdom is not a magical thing," says Nusbaum, principal investigator at the University of Chicago's Wisdom Research Project. "It's about solving certain problems and thinking about situations in a specific kind of way."

Funded by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, the Wisdom Research Project takes an interdisciplinary approach to studying wisdom. Researchers use everything from brain scans to personal narratives to help them test their hypotheses about wisdom and problem solving, as well as about the processes and mechanisms that play a role in wisdom, memory, attention, learning, and emotion.

One of their areas of study is the relationship between wisdom and meditation. Nusbaum explains that meditation involves certain practices, such as taking control of our own minds. "Many people seem to believe that consciousness just flows along and they have no ability to change the direction of that flow," he says. In meditation, however, one seeks to control the flow. That control can help us choose how we "direct attention to our thoughts and to the world." In addition, meditation involves a level of self-calming and may help us to develop "epistemic humility," the understanding that "while we may know a lot, we do not know everything, and there is always more to be understood and learned in the world." Since it can be hard to reflect deeply on a situation if one is anxious or driven by physiological states, "meditation may be an aid in developing the ability to reflect more deeply, to persevere in working at intellectual struggle, and to control impulsive responses that could overshadow a wise consideration of a situation." A paper recently accepted for publication demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between wisdom and the long-term practice of meditation.

Linda Stone, a member of the Wisdom Research Network, argues that traits like perseverance and curiosity are critical to gaining wisdom, since they help us to persist when tackling life's difficulties instead of giving up. Other researchers have found a connection between important psychological processes and sleep. Not only does sleep help us to generalize "from experiences, allowing us to use knowledge from one experience to help with a novel situation," it also "promotes insight into certain kinds of problems," Nusbaum says.

**"Wise decisions reflect a deep social concern instead of a simple focus on the material."**

While we often associate wisdom with the mind, there appears to be an important rela-

tionship between wisdom and the body. For example, Patrick Williams and his University of Chicago colleagues have found that "years of ballet practice are related to increased wisdom," Nusbaum says. He has been told by some psychiatrists that "you cannot be anxious if you do not tense your muscles." If we can get our bodies to relax, we reduce our anxiety. Nusbaum is quick to point out that though relaxing and reducing anxiety are not the same as wisdom, these things may "open the door for wisdom to operate." When we are anxious or driven by our physiological states, we "cannot reflect deeply on a situation."

Nusbaum believes that an important question we should be asking is, "What is the relationship between wisdom and human flourishing?" He says that "from Aristotle's perspective, there is a close coupling" between the two, but not in the ways we might think. "Flourishing does not necessarily mean health, prosperity, and pleasure. Rather, it seems to refer to a broader sense of social connection." Wise decisions, then, require a deep social concern rather than a simple focus on the material.

While this is a far cry from the notion that wisdom comes with age, these findings should give us hope. According to Nusbaum, we would all do well to remember that "wisdom is not an all or nothing thing. Each of us, with the right experiences, may become a little wiser." □

*Baby Barn Owls.* Photo by Jim Robinson, via Flickr Creative Commons license

# Voices of Wisdom

On my wall hangs a painting I commissioned, which includes this wisdom from Frederick Buechner: "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Do not be afraid."

I love this quote, but I also despise it. I love the promise that beautiful things will happen. I hate the reminder that terrible things will happen. If it were up to me, it would go like this: *Here is the world. Nothing bad will ever happen to you. Do not be afraid.* That makes more sense, right? That the reason we need not fear is because there's nothing to be afraid of.

But that's pretty much the exact opposite of what Buechner means, and what the scriptures reveal. There is absolutely no biblical promise that we will be spared hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword.

The promise we do have is this: *Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God.*

This is wisdom. Hard and holy wisdom.

***—Katherine Willis Pershey, Associate Minister of the First Congregational Church in Western Springs, Illinois***

***S. Michaela Hedican, Prioress of Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota:***

Mary Benet McKinney, OSB, a Benedictine sister from St. Scholastica Monastery, Chicago, Illinois was noted throughout the country as an accomplished facilitator. When I had the chance to experience her in action I could see why. She left me with a piece of wisdom that has been with me ever since: "Whenever you make decisions affecting people's lives, talk to the people whose lives will be affected."

This gem of wisdom has been a guide for me for many years as I have served in a variety of responsibilities. It takes time to talk to the people who will be affected by a decision and I have found that it is always worth it. If one chooses not to reflect with those who are being affected by a decision beforehand, more often than not, one will have to take time after the decision is made to share explanations and clear up misunderstandings.

In studying the *Rule of Benedict* as part of the Monastic Studies program at Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, I came to realize that Benedict lived by this adage. Perhaps that is why his Rule has lasted over 1500 years.

From his chapter on Summoning the Brothers to Counsel, to his chapters on Assignment of Impossible Tasks and The Good Zeal of Monks, Benedict makes sure that all have a voice in a decision and that their insights are taken into consideration. What a wonderful stance from which to serve others.

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AP Photo

# Pope and Patriarch in Cuba

*Peter A. Huff*

Raised in the last days of the King James era, I marveled as a child at the mysterious phrases and idioms I encountered in my black leather and gold trim Bible. One arresting verse I especially remember fixating on was Paul's admonition to "Salute one another with an holy kiss" (Romans 16:16). Ours was a rather affectionate home with an acceptable level of hugging and kissing, and surrounded in church and school by World War II veterans, I witnessed a fair amount of saluting, too. But the apostolic imperative to salute and kiss, made even more curious by the injection of the note of holiness and the unusual indefinite article, sorely taxed the capacities of my young, very twentieth-century, imagination.

A recent salute and kiss, accompanied by visual and verbal trappings of holiness, if not the reality of sanctity itself, may have stumped a significant number of very twenty-first-century imaginations, both young and old. Just weeks ago, Pope Francis and Russian Patriarch Kirill representing two massive churches—nearly two-thirds of the world's Christian population—met for the first time, officially bringing to historic conclusion a

one-thousand year streak of non-communication and non-recognition. For many observers, the ritual embrace and cheek kissing, not to mention the démodé ecclesiastical attire (including Kirill's kouloulion topped with a now internet-famous foldable cross), may have appeared to be something on the order of an outtake from a House of Romanov docudrama. The mainstream media, desperate for a credible angle on the event, couldn't help classifying the whole affair as more evidence of Vladimir Putin's attempt to reprise a neo-czarist regime. One member of the press corps even (unintentionally) referred to the Patriarch's cassock as a cossack.

Ecumenical encounters often make the news, but we're never quite sure what exactly the news is. Pope and Patriarch kiss. What does it mean? Why is it important? Too often we reduce the phenomenon, coached by our masters in the media, to clichés: (1) ecclesiastical nice guys on paid vacation or (2) clerical naïfs abroad, over their heads in the machinations of some political mastermind. In fact, reductionism has been the master scheme of the study of religion as a whole for well over a hundred years. The media learned this modus operandi from the academy. Whatever religious people say they're doing, we know it really boils down to something else: sex, power, status, ambition, or revenge. Many of us schooled in this approach have had to relearn the hard way how to speak again with a genuinely theological voice. In most cases, it takes a Barth-like encounter with the strange world of the Bible or the church to jar us from our dogmatic slumbers.

So then how to exegete an ecumenical kiss? Here's an angle less taken: Living apostles with power to bind and loose in heaven and on earth repair the Body of Christ. That the churchmen met in Cuba is profoundly significant—as they said, "at the crossroads of North and South, East and West." And that they released a 30-point Joint Declaration addressing topics such as religious persecution, modern martyrdom, global poverty, creation care, cultural genocide, the crisis of the family, and the right to life is of even greater importance. But the real headline here, I think, is this: Pope and Patriarch give the unity of Christians the right kind of lip service.

And the subheading is like unto it: Roman church advances century-old ecumenical agenda. Coming on the heels of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the Cuba kiss reminds us that the Vatican's strategy for the restoration of Christian unity has long been—at least since the time of Leo XIII—first mending the relationship with Eastern Christianity and then attending to the multiple and multiplying rifts of the Christian and post-Christian West. When Leo introduced "separated brethren" into Catholic parlance, he was speaking primarily of fellow Christians in the Orthodox churches.

**" . . . officially bringing to historic conclusion a one-thousand year streak of non-communication and non-recognition."**

A striking passage from a book published just months after John XXIII announced a new council for the modern age confirms this view of the ecumenical past. In *The Riddle of*

*Roman Catholicism* (1959), Jaroslav Pelikan, whose pilgrimage from Reformation West to Orthodox East is one of the fascinating personal stories of the Vatican II era, accurately captured the theological consensus on the eve of the council. "The ecumenical council being summoned, presumably for 1961," he said, "will take up points of difference between Orthodoxy and Rome. Yet Protestants cannot be indifferent to the outcome of the council, even if it should turn out that they are not directly involved."

**"Living apostles with power to bind and loose in heaven and on earth repair the Body of Christ."**

The surprise, of course, was the extraordinary degree to which Protestants *were* directly involved in the council—and the degree to which historians, theologians, and journalists have for decades interpreted Vatican II as the church's response to very Western questions of Reformation and Enlightenment. In many ways, the past 50 years can rightly be summed up as a Catholic reckoning with Protestant principle. At the papal level, though, the ecumenical aim has remained consistently *ad orientem*—from Paul VI's reconciliation with Constantinople's Athenagoras at the conclusion of Vatican II to the showcasing of Patriarch Bartholomew's ecological wisdom in the beginning of Francis's *Laudato Si'*. Standing between these landmarks we find the most beautiful expression of Catholic eastern aspiration: the Slavic Pope Wojtyła's "the Church must breathe with her two lungs!"

Come June of this year, the much anticipated Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church on the island of Crete—what in effect could turn out to be the East's Vatican II—will dramatically overshadow the modest embrace and declaration of Francis and Kirill. The costumery of the Orthodox representatives to Crete alone will make the garb of the Pope and Patriarch in Cuba seem decidedly low budget. Dynamism on both sides of the ecclesial equation, though, will likely enhance ecumenical prospects. An Orthodox renaissance on par with Rome's Franciscan revolution could be just what we need to lead kissing cousins into "an holy" alliance of full fraternal unity. □

*Peter A. Huff is Director of the Saint John Paul II Center for University Ministry and Professor of Theology at the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. He has held endowed chairs at Xavier University and Centenary College and has also taught at Saint Anselm College and the University of Puget Sound. His books include* The Voice of Vatican II *(Liguori Publications, 2012) and* Allen Tate and the Catholic Revival *(Paulist Press, 1996). He was a Collegeville Institute Resident Scholar in the Fall of 2007.*


Rendering of St. Elizabeth, patron saint of Košice, Slovakia, by Milan Spak. Used with permission. Milan, a native of the Slovak Republic, created this piece while serving as a Collegeville Institute artist-in-residence during fall 2015. The drawing depicts St. Elizabeth bringing a basket of food to the poor. Notice the town of Košice in the bottom right hand corner.

# Night Vision

*by Mara Faulkner, OSB*

Almost blind from birth  my nephew
had never seen the silver trail of a beaver kit
cross the moonlit lake  deer materialize
from the evening trees  their leafy hides
their willow sapling legs  had never
had *never*  seen a star.

But now a little instrument
pulls in all available light  cunningly
magnifies it a million times
for him.

Will I ever see anything
the way he did
that first night
after a quarter century of dusk?

Probably not.
But even in the safety of this poem
I won't claim—romantic nonsense!—
I'd trade a lifetime of heedless looking
for his first brilliant glimpse.

Still tonight  hungry for stars
I make a wish for both of us.

For him what he's never had—
Eyes opening every day
without surprise to a beloved face
and closing every night on stars
he's had the time to learn to take
for granted.

And for myself the opposite—
Though I've seen stars
the blind gene blundering
through the generations binding father
to daughter  to son
is in me too

**and night will come**
**when the lake I see tonight**
**the woods  the deer  the beaver kit**
**the stars**
**go gray**
**then black.**

**Then may I have gone out**
**beyond the city lights  the haze of naming**
**and see  not cross-stitched constellations**
**or human analogs  briefly twinkling**
**but fires so potent**
**that even a hundred million years after**
**they've burned to ash**
**they will blaze**
**in my memory's darkness.**

*Mara Faulkner, OSB, is a member of St. Benedict's Monastery and taught literature and writing for many years at the College of St. Benedict and Saint John's University. She has published four books, most recently* Still Birth *(Finishing Line Press, 2013), a poetry chapbook.*

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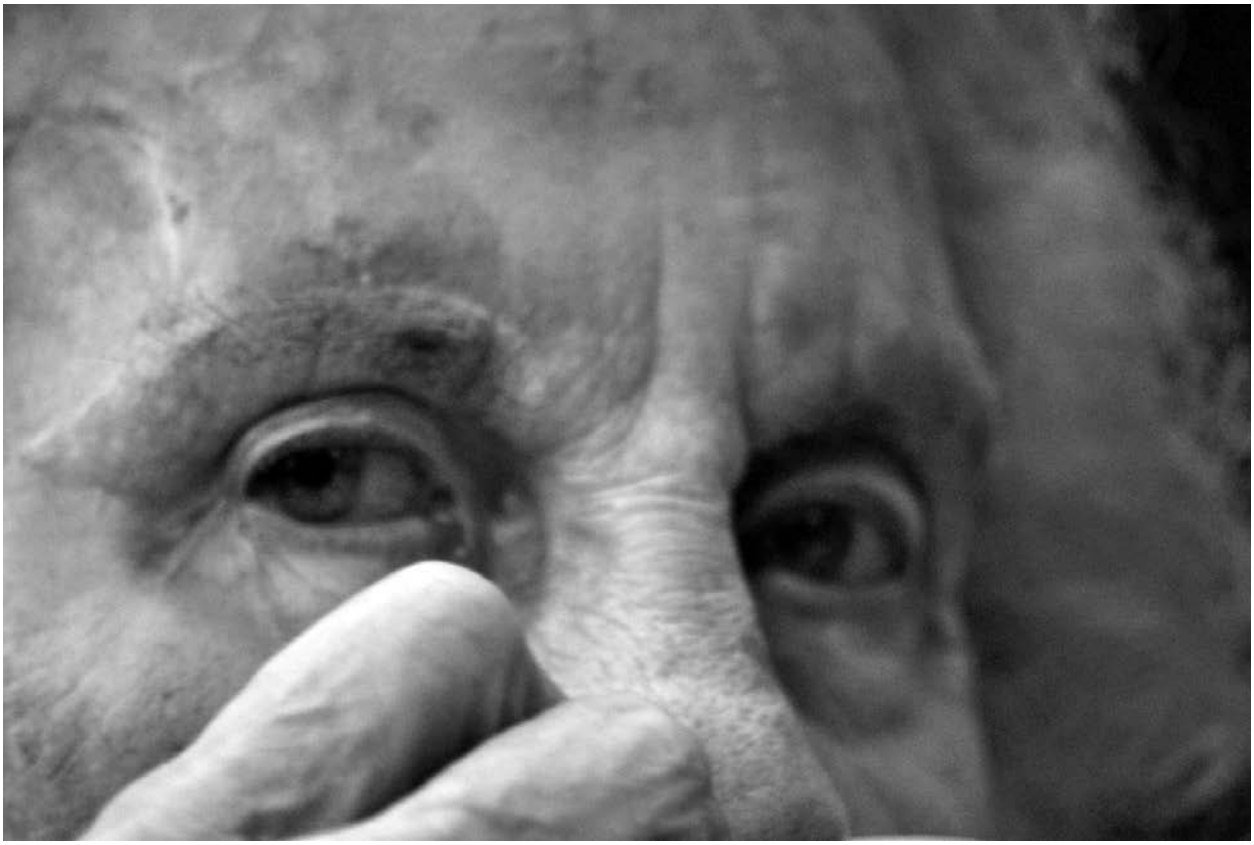


*Wisdom.* Photo by Jon-Eric Melsæter, via Flickr Creative Commons License

# *Collegeville Institute*
# ***Board Profile***

## Kita McVay

*United Methodist—Minneapolis, Minnesota—Board Member since 2013*

Peanut butter and jelly. Abbott and Costello. Paint and brushes. Business and theology. Wait, business and theology? Although some may question this pairing, Kita McVay, a business professional and theologian, knows that the integration of work and faith makes sense.

Kita first worked as a commodities trader and manager and later moved into the banking industry. Early in her career she was inspired by the story of Bob Piper, former Collegeville Institute board member and chair, who earned a degree from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities while continuing a prominent business career. Kita says, "The possibility of having a theological education as an underpinning for both my business and personal life held tremendous attraction." A graduate of Barnard College, she eventually enrolled as a student at United, where she received both a master of arts degree in theology and later an honorary doctor of divinity degree.

In 1990 Kita became a member of United's board of trustees. She served 17 years on the board, including five as its chair. When an unexpected leadership gap took the school and board by surprise, she was first chosen to serve as United's interim president and then served as president from 2005-2009. "That was a most satisfying, challenging—and fun—experience," Kita says. "I love the seminary, its commitment to intellectual rigor and open inquiry in service to an ever renewing church, the people who work tirelessly to live out its principles, and the great care with which it prepares students to lead and serve."

Today, Kita is a director and officer of Minnwest Corporation, and a director of the McVay Foundation. In addition to her Collegeville Institute board membership, she is a trustee and past board chair at Hamline University, a member of the Minnesota Orchestra board,

and a director of the Abbott Northwestern Hospital Foundation. She recently completed service as trustee of the Forum for Theological Exploration in Atlanta.

Kita first learned about the Collegeville Institute during her early days at United. "People spoke of the Collegeville Institute with warmth and enthusiasm, as a place they loved being part of," she says. But it wasn't until board members Gary Reierson and Mary Bednarowski prevailed upon her to make a visit and talk with executive director Don Ottenhoff that she began to understand what it was all about.

"Without renewal, the faith, the tradition, and the church become irrelevant and atrophy. At the Collegeville Institute scholars and practitioners can retreat to work on materials and resources that deepen our understandings of what has been and what is possible. That this work occurs in an exquisite place of beauty and peace, where spiritual practices abound and participants are welcomed into community, deepens the potential for growth and insight," Kita says. She adds that "ecumenism, which is the original grounding principle of the Collegeville Institute, holds the core conviction that an abundance of practices, traditions, and expressions of faith can live together within the abiding truths of the Christian faith. That grounding is the sine qua non that animates all that occurs here."

Kita's favorite scripture passage is John 1:5: "The light shines in the darkness for the darkness did not overcome it."

She observes that this passage has a direct relationship to the Wisdom literature as, for example, in its similarity with Wisdom 7:29-30: "She is indeed more splendid than the sun, she outshines all the constellations; compared with light, she takes first place, for light must yield to night, but over Wisdom evil can never triumph." She contends, "While the Gospel uses the male noun Logos (Word), it is clear that the powerful description of the Logos referring to Jesus aligns directly with that of Sophia/Wisdom."

Kita says, "For me, that means that Jesus exemplifies much of what I understand as wisdom. Empathy, compassion, concern for the other, refusal to rush to judgment, and openness to difference are essential components of practical wisdom."

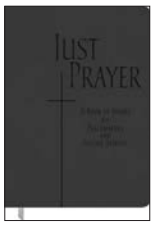
Kita observes that wisdom deepens as one experiences the vagaries of life. While at the age of 40, life options still seemed endless to her; turning 50 brought an awareness of limits. "In place of boundless potential came a sense of knowing something worth sharing about humankind and getting along in the world. That awareness came over me unexpectedly, like a revelation, and I have taken comfort in it."

In her leisure time, Kita enjoys weekends on the family farm in Mora, Minnesota, riding horses and still occasionally helping with some of the cattle work. With her husband, Jim Johnson, she spends "many hearty, delightful days" skiing and hiking in Montana. Kita likes to play the piano and loves the ballet. Her favorite author is Karen Armstrong, whose sweeping study of religious impulses throughout history bring deeper perspective to Christian theology.

Kita and Jim live in Minneapolis. She has two adult daughters and two grandchildren. Kita happily reveals, "I became a grandmother in 2015 and it is, just as everyone told me it would be, utterly grand." □

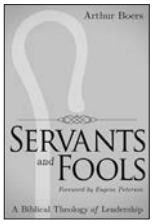
*Stella Maris Chapel Mary.* Photo by Paul Middlestaedt.

# *News of Collegeville Institute* **Program Participants & Scholars,** Spring 2016




**Alison Benders** (Summer 2013) writes that her recently published book *Just Prayer: A Book of Hours for Peacemakers and Justice Seekers* (Liturgical Press, 2015) "is patterned on the ancient monastic prayer practice of the Divine Office/Liturgy of the Hours, and is based on the psalms, with references for music, reflection questions, and supporting resources."

**Bruce Benedict** (Summer 2015) writes, "I thought you would enjoy hearing a finished version of a song I wrote—*You are Blessed*—while at *Words for Worship: A Liturgical Writing Workshop with Michael Joncas and Susan Briehl*." The song can be found on iTunes and is available for download on the digital album *The Beatitudes* from Hope College Worship (hopecollegeworship.bandcamp.com).

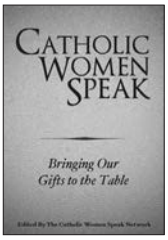



**Arthur Boers'** (Summer 2010, 2011) latest book, *Servants and Fools: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*, was published by Abingdon Press (2015).

**Susan Sytsma Bratt** (Summer 2011) writes, "I worked on an essay during my week at the Collegeville Institute using the metaphor of immigration for the denominational shift I made from the Christian Reformed Church to the Presbyterian Church USA. That essay was published in *Women in Ministry: Questions and Answers in the Exploration of a Calling* (Cascade Books, 2015). I continue to write and publish short pieces for *Blog of The Twelve, Perspectives* journal, and *Fidelia's Sisters*, the Young Clergywomen's Project online magazine."

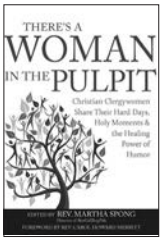
**Taylor Brorby** (Summer 2014) focuses on the still ongoing oil extraction from the Bakken shale formation in western North Dakota in his recent work. He has edited *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America* (Ice Cube Press, 2016), an anthology of creative writing on fracking. In addition, he has published a collection of his poetry, *Ruin: Elegies from the Bakken* (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2015). Taylor writes, "Thanks to the many of you who have read through these poems, offering suggestions for revisions—you've helped make them stronger."

**Kathleen Cahalan** (Collegeville Institute Seminars project director) and **Laura Fanucci** (Summer 2009 and Collegeville Institute research associate) co-authored *Living Your Discipleship: 7 Ways to Live Your Deepest Calling* (Twenty-Third Publications, 2015). This practical guide explores seven aspects of discipleship: follower, worshiper, witness, neighbor, forgiver, prophet, and steward.




**Catherine Cavanagh** (Summer 2007; Fall 2007) reports, "I have been writing regularly for the journal *Weavings* since my first Collegeville Institute writing workshop with Mary Nilsen. My article 'Be Still, and Breathe' is in the issue *Yearning for God* (Volume XXX, Number 4)." In addition, Catherine contributed an article to *Catholic Women Speak: Bringing our Gifts to the Table* (Paulist Press, 2015). She writes, "I want to thank all of you at the Collegeville Institute for what you have done to make me a better, more confident, more thoughtful writer. Coming to you provided a turning point in my life, one that I will always be grateful for."

**Joan Chittister, OSB** (Summer 1976) offers both heartwarming stories and thought-provoking reflections about sharing life with a fuzzy friend in her book *Two Dogs and a Parrot: What Our Animal Friends Can Teach Us About Life* (BlueBridge, 2015).

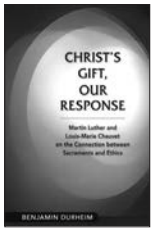



**Julie Craig** (Summer 2012, 2013), **Ruth Everhart** (Summer 2012, 2013), **Elizabeth Evans Hagan** (Summer 2011), **Deborah Lewis** (Summer 2013), **Bromleigh McCleneghan** (Summer 2009, 2011), **Suzy Garrison Meyer** (Summer 2011), **Katherine Willis Pershey** (Summer 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015), **Julia Seymour** (Summer 2015), and **Stacey Simpson Duke** (Summer 2008), all contributed to the anthology *There's a Woman in the Pulpit: Christian Clergywomen Share Their Hard Days, Holy Moments & the Healing Power of Humor*, edited by Martha Spong (Skylight Paths Publishing, 2015).

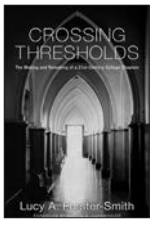

**Zach Czaia** (Summer 2015) writes, "My first book of poems, *Saint Paul Lives Here (In Minnesota)*, was published by Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, in 2015. One or two of the poems were discussed during the *Poetry, Prose and Prayer* workshop last summer."

**Jesse James DeConto**'s (Summer 2015) essay, "Las Bandas Niños," describes how one Latino church—Iglesia Hispana Emanuel in Durham, North Carolina—empowers young musicians. The article was published in the *Christian Century* (January 20, 2016).

**Ben Dueholm** (Summer 2014) blogs regularly on christiancentury.org. Recent posts include: "Theological work to be done, but by whom?" and "Trumpism without Racism?" (February 4, 2016).

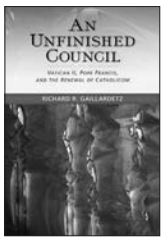



**Benjamin Durheim**'s (Fall 2015) book, *Christ's Gift, Our Response: Martin Luther and Louis-Marie Chauvet on the Connection between Sacraments and Ethics* (Liturgical Press, 2015) is, Ben writes, "in the first place, ecumenical." Focusing on two theologians who represent two Christian communions—Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism—Ben aims to build a new bridge for theology in sacraments and ethics.



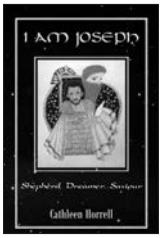

**Laura Fanucci** (Summer 2009 and Collegeville Institute research associate) was interviewed by *Relevant Radio* about her book *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting* (Liturgical Press, 2014). The interview can be heard at relevantradio.streamguys.us.

**Lucy Forster-Smith** (Summer 2010, 2015; Spring 2011) has published her memoir *Crossing Thresholds: The Making and Remaking of a College Chaplain* (Cascade Press, 2015).




**Richard Gaillardetz**'s (Fall 2015) most recent book, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis and the Renewal of Catholicism*, was published by Liturgical Press (2015).

**Ken Garcia**'s (Summer 2013, 2014) essay, "Diego and Our Lady of the Wilderness" (*Gettysburg Review*, Summer 2014), was listed among the "Notable Essays and Creative Nonfiction of 2014" in the 2015 edition of *The Best American Essays* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company). Ken worked on his essay during his time in Collegeville.




**Cathleen Horrell** (Summer 2012; Spring 2016) has published her book *I Am Joseph: Shepherd, Dreamer, Savior* (2015). It is available on most sites that feature ebooks.


**Jamie Howison** (Summer 2008, 2012, 2015; Spring 2009, 2011) and Steve Bell have published *I Will Not Be Shaken: A Songwriter's Journey Through the Psalms* (Signpost Music, 2015). The book combines Jamie's pastoral and theological reflections with Steve's psalm-based lyrics and songwriter anecdotes.

**Pamela Carter Joern** (Summer 2007, 2014) received a 2015 Nebraska Book Award in the "Fiction: Short Story" category for her third book, *In Reach* (University of Nebraska Press, 2014). She polished one of the stories in this collection, "Fire on His Mind," during the Collegeville Institute workshop she attended in 2007.

**Richard Lischer** (Summer workshop facilitator 2010, 2011) writes regularly for the *Christian Century*. His article "Writing the Christian Life" was featured in the September 2, 2015 issue.

**Michael McGregor** (Fall 2011; Summer writing workshop participant and facilitator) wrote the introductory essay on Robert Lax in *Poetry* magazine's December 2015 issue. The introduction precedes the magazine's 20-page spread on Lax. It can be accessed at poetryfoundation.org. Michael's essay "Poetic Man of God" appeared in *Notre Dame Magazine* (Winter, 2015-2016). It describes how Michael met Lax on the Greek island of Patmos. It can be found online at magazine.nd.edu.

**Joe McHugh** (Fall 2014) writes, "As a result of my short-term residency last fall, I was able to finish and publish "Touching God's Wilder Side," (*Patheos*, August 21, 2015) and "Praying Luke's Stories" (*St. Anthony Messenger*, January 2016)."


**Catherine MacLean** (Summer 2013) co-authored *Preaching the Big Questions: Doctrine isn't Dusty* (United Church Publishing House, 2015) with John Young. Catherine writes, "I had the deep pleasure of being part of *Posts, Tweets, Blogs, and Faith: Writing for the Digital Public Square* in the summer of 2013. It was a truly wonderful time."

**Barb Matz** (Fall 2013), former artist-in-residence, has several pieces in the exhibition, "Art Inter/National . . . here and abroad," at the Boxheart Gallery in Pittsburgh, PA. Barb writes, "I am sure my experience at the Collegeville Institute and Saint John's contributed in many ways [to my involvement in this exhibit]. Thank you." Exhibit details can be found at boxheartgallery.com.


**Bill Mills** (Summer 2013) writes, "My new book, *Come Follow Me*, was published by Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies Press (2015). I miss our time together at Collegeville. I'd love to return again someday."

**Lee Hull Moses** (Summer 2009, 2010) writes regularly for the *Christian Century*. Her article "Names with Faces" describes how FaithAction ID cards provide a means of identification for people who aren't able to access government-issued IDs. It was the featured cover story for the January 20, 2016 issue. Her blog post "Virtual church on a snow day" appeared in the magazine's online edition on February 2, 2016. Both essays can be accessed at christiancentury.org.


**Heidi Neumark**'s (Summer 2011; short-term scholar) most recent book, *Hidden Inheritance: Family Secrets, Memory, and Faith*, was published by Abingdon Press (2015). **Richard Lischer**, summer writing workshop leader, writes, "There is much to be learned from [Heidi's] story, much to be repented, and much to be felt. A book not only to be read but absorbed."

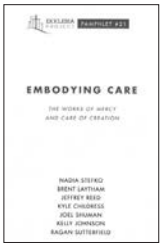
**M. Sophia Newman** (Summer 2015) writes, "I have published a piece on Thomas Merton and climate change that reflects the work I came to Collegeville to do. A small grant from the International Thomas Merton Society supported it at the start, and it was quite timely for the COP21 Climate Summit in Paris." The article, "Climate Change and the Legacy of Thomas Merton" (December 1, 2015), can be accessed online at religionandpolitics.org.

**Nancy Nordenson**'s (Summer 2013, 2014) essay, "Two-Part Invention," published in the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* (Summer/Autumn 2015), was named a Notable Essay in the 2015 edition of *The Best American Essays* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company).

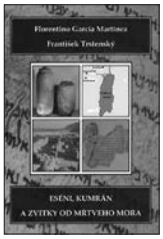
**Cari Pattison** (Summer 2011) contributed a personal testimony to Shannon Nicole Smythe's *Women in Ministry: Questions and Answers in the Exploration of a Calling* (Cascade Books, 2015).

**Richard Penaskovic**'s (Spring 2001) article, "Simone Weil: A Reluctant Convert," was published in the July 2015 issue of the *New Blackfriars* journal. His article, "Inter-Religious Dialogue in a Polarized World," appeared in *Pathways for Inter-Religious Dialogue in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by V. Latinovic, G. Mannion and P. Phan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Since 2013, Richard has served as the editor of the "Karl Rahner Papers" for *Philosophy & Theology: Marquette University Journal*.

**Jeffrey Reed** (Summer 2015) contributed the chapter "Give Drink to the Thirsty" to *Embodying Care: The Works of Mercy and Care of Creation* (Wipf & Stock, 2015). *Embodying Care* is Pamphlet #21 in the *Renewing Radical Discipleship* series of the Ekklesia Project.



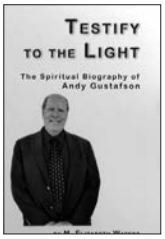

**Andrew Taylor-Troutman**'s (Summer 2011, 2012) most recent book, *Earning Innocence: A Novel*, was published by Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers (2015).




**František Trstenskỳ**'s (2013/14) book, *Eséni, Kumrán A Zvitky Od Mŕtveho Mora (The Essenes, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls)*, written with Florentino García Martínez, was published by Verbum (2015). Written in his native Slovak, this scientific book provides basic information about the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the excavations of Khirbet Qumran, which are among the most exciting and greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century.

**Gail Tyson**'s (Fall 2014) essay, "Field Notes from My Life"—worked on in the 2014 *Writing Spirit, Writing Faith* writing workshop—appeared in *Kindred* issue #10 (Fall/Winter 2015). Other recent work has appeared in *ArtAscent*; *Pilgrimage*; *Stone Voices*; *Still Point Arts Quarterly*; and *Jung Society News*.


**Natalie Vestin** (Summer 2013, 2015) writes, "Much of the content of my nonfiction chapbook, *Shine a light, the light won't pass* (MIEL, 2015), was inspired by my participation in the *Poetry, Prose and Prayer* writing workshop with Michael Dennis Browne. I'm so grateful for the time and space you've provided." The chapbook focuses on science, faith, and the moving body.




**Betsy Waters'** (Fall 2012, 2014, 2015) book, *Testify to the Light: The Spiritual Biography of Andy Gustafson*, was published by Zion Publishing (2015). Betsy writes, "I want to thank the Collegeville Institute for its support of my writing."

# Relocations and General Updates

**Taylor Brorby** (Summer 2014) was appointed the new Reviews Editor at *Orion*.

**Martin Dojcar** (Spring 2012; Fall 2014) is serving as editor-in-chief of the journal *Spirituality Studies*. The journal was recently indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. The first issue was released on May 1, 2015, while the corresponding blog was kicked-off on July 1, 2015.

**Peter Marty** (Spring 2008) has been named publisher of the *Christian Century*. As a pastor-writer, Marty says, "For all my love of parish ministry, I dwell in other worlds as well, one of which is writing, and one of which is the academic world."

**Richard Penaskovic** (Spring 2001) was named Emeritus Professor upon his retirement from Auburn University in 2014 after teaching religious studies for the past 30 years.

# For updates

*Bearings* asks you to keep us up to date on your publications, professional accomplishments, and transitions. We also invite you to write letters to the editor. To submit personal updates online, visit: collegevilleinstitute.org/faith-and-writing/participant-publications-and-work/submit-publications. Or e-mail us at **staff@CollegevilleInstitute.org** or:

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# With Every Song

*by Michael Dennis Browne*

**How do we tell You, how profess**
**These blessings we receive from You?**
**Longing be lifted by all tongues;**
**How shall we praise You save with song?**
**How shall we praise You save with song?**

**When we grow wearied on the road,**
**When shadows fall and spirits fail,**
**Be with us as we journey on;**
**How we have loved You is our song.**
**How we have loved You is our song.**

**We are Your people of the Word,**
**Joyfully gathered in Your name;**
**Help us remember we belong,**
**O strengthen us with every song.**
**O strengthen us with every song.**

*Michael Dennis Browne is a poet, librettist and professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota. He has published numerous books of poetry, has received numerous honors and awards for his teaching and writing, and has written many texts for music with composer Stephen Paulus, including the libretti for the church opera* The Three Hermits, *and the post-Holocaust oratorio* To Be Certain of the Dawn. *The lyric* With Every Song *was written to the tune of the Old One Hundredth, and was commissioned from the Minnesota chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Michael has facilitated the Collegeville Institute's* Poetry, Prose and Prayer *writing workshop since 2006.*

# In Memoriam

**+ Sondra Stalcup** – December 2015 – Board Member
**+ Irma Wyman** – November 2015 – Resident Scholar

*Owl, Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle.* © Rosemary Washington/Rosemary.Washington.wordpress.*com*

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