



SPIRIT RUSTLINGS

The Program in Christian Spirituality
at San Francisco Theological Seminary
Spring Newsletter 2009

Samuel Hamilton-Poore, Director

Elizabeth Ford Friend, Interim Program Manager

In This Issue

From The Director: Happy Birthday, Dear Calvin
Profile of a Friend: Deborah Arca Mooney
PCS News
Sacred Quest
Upcoming Events
Alumni Rustlings
Resources
Spread the Word
Support for PCS
A Closing Poem

From the Director:

Happy Birthday, Dear Calvin

By Sam Hamilton-Poore

Dear Friends in the Spirit,

I realize that for many people the term “heart” has as much to do with the person of John Calvin as, say, “humility” has to do with Donald Trump. This is an unfortunate and unjust reading of Calvin, and one that many scholars have been seeking to redress in the last 20 years.

At the core of Calvin’s theology is a compelling, life-transformational *experience* of “mystical union” with Christ—a gift from God through the Holy Spirit that restores the image of God at the heart of humanity. “Heart” is the right word, because for Calvin our experience of “mystical union” is centered in the heart—and embraces the mind and the body, affections and will, worship and action. Our *pietas* (Calvin’s preferred word for “spirituality”) impacts the ways we live and move in the world, and how we deal with our family, friends, neighbors and enemies. In other words, Calvin offers a passionate theological

vision of the human heart in wholeness—of life lived vibrantly in the presence of the mystery we call God.

Since 2009 marks the 500th anniversary of Calvin’s birth, it’s worthwhile to cite a few passages from Calvin’s writings that speak to our “mystical union” with Christ and *pietas*—a love for God that grows from our experience of God’s beneficence toward us in Christ.



Christianity is not a matter of the tongue but of the inmost heart. [The gospel] is not apprehended by the understanding and memory alone, as other disciplines are, but it is received only when it possesses the whole soul and finds a seat and resting place in the inmost affection of the heart. *Institutes* III.vi.4.



We grow together with Christ into one body, and he shares his Spirit with us, through whose hidden operation he has become ours. Believers receive this communion with Christ at the same time as their calling. But they grow from day to day more and more in this communion, in proportion to the life of Christ growing in them. JC: CO XV, 723-24

Calvin's seals
1545-47

Not only does [Christ] cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grows more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us. *Institutes*, III.ii.24

Listen also to these words from Elsie McKee, who summarizes Calvin’s “spirituality”:

What was Calvin’s pastoral piety? Intensely personal but never individualistic. Woven through with the great doctrines of justification by faith and regeneration of life, the glory of God and providence. Undergirded with prayer, proclaimed in word and shared in sacraments, sung in psalms. Embodied in action and demanding respect for the neighbor and solidarity with those who suffer in spirit, mind, or body. Not an easy or comfortable piety; it asks for one’s all. Sturdy and down to earth, lived in the mundane context of daily work, yet always conscious of the presence of the transcendent God and the high calling of living before God. An energizing, lifelong response to God’s liberating claim, God’s righteous mercy, God’s compelling love, a belonging that is all our joy. “We are not our own...We are God’s!”

Elsie Anne McKee, “General Introduction,”
in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*
(Paulist Press, 2001); 34-35.

It is my hope that the Program in Christian Spirituality may embody something of Calvin's own "sturdy and down to earth" spirituality—one that is constantly awake and responsive to the "presence of the transcendent God" among us, and in solidarity with all who suffer.

Profile of a Friend:

Deborah Arca Mooney

For ten years, Deborah Arca Mooney graced the SFTS Program in Christian Spirituality with her warmth, professionalism, and hospitality. In March 2009, she and Tim (DASD '00) moved to her hometown of Denver, where she now works with Patheos, a new Web site for religion and spirituality, and where Tim is serving as Temporary Supply Pastor of People's Presbyterian Church.



Deborah with a statue of St. Francis
(A farewell gift from the PCS community)

What aspects of working with the Program in Christian Spirituality were most life-giving for you?

The first week I came to work at SFTS, I remember attending my first weekly PCS staff meeting. I was quite surprised when we began the meeting with a reading of a poem followed by a time of reflection and sharing. I thought, well now, this is different from the corporate world! Those weekly staff meetings with prayer, listening, sharing, savoring and planning continued to be some of the most life-giving experiences of my work. Other life-giving aspects included creating space for people to have healing, life-changing and transformative experiences; singing in chapel; the community of the January DASD; the wild and wonderfully creative work of the Youth Ministry & Spirituality Project; learning and practicing a different rhythm of work; deep and sustaining friendships with my

colleagues.

How has your experience at the Seminary influenced your work and life?

I am a completely different person now than I was ten years ago. My generous colleagues in the PCS and SFTS taught me a new way of being a person of faith,

a new way of working, a new experience of community and helped form me in a new identity as servant and minister. At SFTS, God went from a once-a-week reality to a moment-by-moment reality ... a reality that has become so deeply ingrained and powerful, completely reshaping how I see the world and make decisions.

How have you brought the practices of contemplative listening into various aspects of your life?

Just last week, I hit a place of overwhelm -- the big move to Denver, a new intense job, settling into a new house, re-engaging with my family -- it was all consuming. In that moment, someone in my life told me to “just push on”...and yet my instinct was completely different. I knew I needed to slow down, be quiet and just listen. So I listen to myself differently as a result of my time at SFTS. I also see my role at the church where Tim is a pastor as that of a listener. This church has gone through a good amount of conflict and they are entering into a season of healing. I find myself listening deeply to the stories people are sharing with me and I sense that is a gift I can offer this community. I also seek to listen to the young people in my life with a sense of wonder and openness to the experience they are having as youth. It’s been harder to practice contemplative listening at my new job, where everything is moving at super-speed, including me ... so you can pray for my capacity to slow down and listen deeply in a corporate, start-up, high-energy environment!

What dreams do you have for your new work?

I am excited about many things in my work at Patheos. I am excited about the opportunity to bring the voices of the brilliant scholars and practitioners I know (and have yet to know) to the World Wide Web. I am excited to invite people into a religious experience as part of learning about what it means to be Protestant. I am excited about the discussions that are already happening on this Web site that touch on what it means to be a person of faith in a pluralistic world. I hope that we will create a space where people’s longing for honest religious conversation and exploration is met and their appetite is whetted so that they then seek out a church (or a mosque or a temple, etc) to express their faith concretely. I am excited for you to visit www.patheos.com and let me know what you think, and what you’d like to see there! I’m excited about the possibilities for religious exploration on the web. My brain is exploding right now and that is fun!

What song expresses your experiences of God’s movement in your life today?

Life’s been so full since arriving in Denver, I haven’t gotten to sing or listen to music much lately! But two songs come to mind at this moment: “Rocky Mountain High” and the spiritual we sang in church today, “Thank You, Lord.”

That sums up what's happening with me and God right now! Tim also wrote a song about our new house called "Oh, This Home" -- about loving and creating a home for family and friends -- and that, too, is very much a part of God's invitation right now.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I feel extraordinarily lucky to have spent such formative years at SFTS and particularly in the PCS. PCS wasn't just our small staff at SFTS however ... it was all of you, in community, seeking to love God and the world more and more fully. To have been -- and continue to be -- a part of that community has been a blessing beyond words. Michael Hryniuk talked about our ministry happening "one heart at a time." Contemplative listening is about one heart at a time. It's about listening well in each moment ... moment to moment. It's not easy. Thank God for the community that supports and nurtures that way of being in the world.

You can reach Deborah at arcamooney@aol.com.

PCS News

Doctor of Ministry: Pastor as Spiritual Leader

The Program in Christian Spirituality is pleased to announce a new D.Min. concentration in the "Pastor as Spiritual Leader." For more details on this D.Min., click on http://sfts.edu/programs/pcs_dmin.asp. This concentration builds on the assumption that prayer, discernment and contemplative listening are foundational to a pastor's ability to serve his/her people with energy, intelligence, imagination, love and freedom. Marjorie Thompson, author of *Soul Feast*, will join Beth Liebert, Susan Phillips, Sophia Park and Sam Hamilton-Poore on the teaching staff—as will Jana Childers (homiletics), Scott Sullender of the Lloyd Center (pastoral care), Laurie Garrett-Cobbina (administration) and Charlene Jin Lee (education) in 2011.



Together in the Mystery: Supervision Training for Spiritual Directors

Together in the Mystery: Supervision Training for Spiritual Directors celebrates its first two graduating classes this summer, the first in Oregon in June, the

second at San Francisco Theological Seminary in July. The program consists of an introductory three-day contemplative seminar, conducted over a long weekend in a retreat-like setting, followed by a year of supervised practice that culminates in a second three-day seminar. This second seminar features soon-to-be graduates presenting supervision information and demonstrations for their peers. This year presentations include such topics as using the labyrinth in supervision, group supervision and employing the arts in supervision.

Together in the Mystery will begin a seminar in Jacksonville, Fla., in 2010, and one in San Francisco just before the Spiritual Directors International conference that meets there in 2010. Please contact Rebecca Bradburn Langer, D.Min., and Maria Tattu Bowen, Ph.D. for further information through www.togetherinthemystery.org

DASD & D.Min. Application Deadlines! The deadline to apply for the Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction January 2010 term is Aug. 1, 2009, (for housing priority) and Sept. 15, 2009. The deadline to enroll for the Doctor of Ministry: Pastor as Spiritual Leader January 2010 term is Aug. 31, 2009. Call or e-mail the DASD program office for more information and an application today. E-mail: dasd@sfts.edu or phone: 415-451-2838, or download an application at www.sfts.edu/dasd.

Sacred Quest

By Kari-Ann Grant

January 2009

Anza-Borrego Desert of California

The following is an excerpt from portions of a multi-part poem about an incredible Sacred Quest I took part of at the beginning of January. The last bit is from a brief reflection of the experience I encountered around the beginning of Easter.



Photo by Sheila Denton

... As the days and nights of my time in the desert wane,
I say thank you to the council of past rocks. I am overwhelmed
By their ability to listen, absorb, and offer words of wisdom.

We head back and are both feeling hungry.
That thing about the hunger sensation going away
Didn't happen for either of us--
--the interesting thing though, is, I had no desire to eat
While I was spending that time in solitude.
He makes some jokes; I laugh.

We have taken part of a sacred act; many have gone before,
Many will come.

I am awed.

What do I say about this experience?
This really happened. What happened?

We stand in a circle for the final ceremony
And receive gifts from each other.
It is here that we are again reminded:

Love always prevails, Love is and is eager to wrap us in her arms, we have the ability to smile, to laugh—and to let those outweigh the worry we might feel, we can choose alternative stories, we are able to live, rise up, or come into who we are as beautiful, loved children, we can take time to release stress or guilt or shame so that we might be restored, refreshed, renewed. We are offered balance, awe, wonder, clarity, healing, wholeness...

May your journey, too, be full of moments of inspiration, joy, recovery, overcoming obstacles, acknowledgement, hope, and unending love.



The Sacred Quest is a wilderness rite of passage that helps people mark transitions in their lives—both the publicly recognized ones, such as marriage, a new job, or elderhood, as well as the internal ones, such as embracing the courage to face what is real, learning how to grieve, or claiming the safety of experiencing one's feelings. The experience offers a particular lens on discerning God's movements through the Nature of oneself and the rest of the beloved creation. The Program in Christian Spirituality is offering this wilderness experience in October 2009. (See below for details.)

Photo by Beth Ford Friend

Upcoming Events

Before The Cradle and Beyond the Cross Studying and Praying the Gospel of Luke ~ A Retreat for Preachers

July 27-31, 2009 at SFTS

This second annual event for preachers blends sermon planning for the 2009-10 lectionary year with contemplative practice and reflection. Each day begins and ends with contemplative worship and includes both a scholarly and prayerful approach to the Gospel lectionary texts from Advent to Easter. Co-led by the Rev. Dr. Sam Hamilton-Poore and the Rev. Dr. Herman C. Waetjen, Emeritus Professor of the New Testament at SFTS, along with worship leaders Rev. Beth Ford Friend (DASD '06), Stephen Iverson and Michael McCarty. Additional spiritual directors will lead small groups. For more information or to register, visit www.sfts.edu/pcs/events or contact us at dasd@sfts.edu or 415-451-2838.

Companions on the Inner Way Retreat: "A New Harmony: The Spirit, The Earth and The Inner Soul"

Aug. 9-14, 2009 at Zephyr Point, Nev.

A guided retreat with J. Philip Newell will be offered this Aug. 9-14 at Zephyr Point, Nev., on Lake Tahoe. The format will include lecture and dialogue, spiritual reading in small group community, times of individual and corporate silence and contemplation, worship and communing with God through movement, art and nature. For more information, contact Joan Currey: jecurrey@gmail.com / 415-235-1027, or visit <http://www.companionsontheinnerway.org>

Sacred Quest

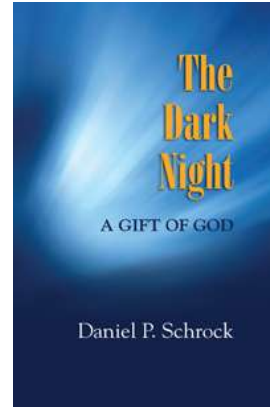
**A holy adventure to deepen relationships with self, others,
creation and God**

Sept. 30-Oct. 12, 2009, San Anselmo campus and the Mendocino Wilderness

Join us for a Sacred Quest. Guided by Nancy Wiens (DASD '97) and Pat Bailey (DASD '05), this extraordinary holy adventure provides time for silence and personal integration in a wilderness experience to discern how God is present in your life and rediscover your gifts, talents and call to service. It is our hope that you emerge to serve your community with renewed energy, imagination, clarity and love. For more information, contact dasd@sfts.edu or 415-451-2838.

Alumni (and Others!) Rustlings ~ News from Fellow Pilgrims

The Rev. Dr. Dan Schrock (DASD '99) has authored *The Dark Night: A Gift of God* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2009). One of the first places Dan was introduced to the dark night (a.k.a. dark night of the soul) was at SFTS. He was fascinated enough that he eventually wrote this book, intended for spiritual directors, pastors, contemplatives, and other ordinary Christians who find themselves in a dark night. He roots the experience of the dark night in scripture, but also explores how it can express itself in one's vocation, marriage and family life, and even in the life of a congregation. He proposes that the dark night is one way God creates shalom in the world. You can contact him through his Web site, www.danschrock.org.



Mark Yaconelli (DASD '97, MA '96) has published a new book, *Downtime: Helping Teenagers Pray* (El Cajon, CA Youth Specialties; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008). In the introduction, Mark writes, “With *Downtime*, I’m seeking to offer a different kind of prayer book—a book with the same rhythms and spirit of prayer I’ve experienced within my own life and glimpsed in the experiences of other seekers who have shared their inner lives with me. You’ll see that this book—like prayer itself—is an intentionally unpredictable mixture of stories, ideas, methods, theological ruminations, meditations, Scripture passages, quotes, and testimonies ... My hope is that this book will encourage

you to find ways to give young people the downtime they need to discover the prayers God is already praying within them.”

Kang Hack Lee (DASD Staff) successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., in March. Congratulations, Kang Hack! Kang Hack and his family will be returning to South Korea at the end of June, where he will be serving as associate pastor at Dail Presbyterian Church and teaching in a Presbyterian seminary. You can reach him at leekhch@yahoo.com.

Kang Hack’s temporary address in South Korea is:

Moowon-maeul 609-401

Hangshin 2-dong, Dukyang-gu, Koyang-si, Kyunggi-do

South Korea, 412-724

Please submit your own or others’ “rustlings” to us at pcsfriends@sfts.edu!

Resources

If you are interested in contributing a short article (100-400 words) to *Spirit Rustlings*, please let us know! We are looking for book reviews, poems and reflections on your application of the DASD.

Also, please share with us any resources you have found helpful in your spiritual accompaniment of individuals and congregations. Tell us about books, curriculum and events you have found to be useful and inspiring.

Spread the Word

Our research has proven that “word of mouth” is the way most students hear about our programs. For that, we say thank you! Please continue to help us spread the good news about the PCS in your communities of faith:

- Forward this e-newsletter to those who may be interested.
- Print our ads in your church newsletters (we can e-mail camera-ready art to you upon request).
- Order bulletin inserts and our new brochures for use at your churches at pcsfriends@sfts.edu.
- Invite Sam Hamilton-Poore to lead a retreat and speak about the program in your area!

Support for PCS

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of the Program in Christian Spirituality: Please send your gift to the Program Manager, PCS, 105 Seminary Rd., San Anselmo, CA 94960. Checks can be made out to SFTS.

Seeking Scholarship Funds for PCS: Each year, there are several students in our diploma programs who would benefit from financial assistance for their tuition and board. Thanks to generous gifts from the most recent graduating classes, a DASD Scholarship Fund has been started. If you would like to contribute to this fund please mail your gift to the Program Manager, DASD/Scholarship Fund, 105 Seminary Rd., San Anselmo, CA 94960. The checks can be made out to SFTS.

A Closing Poem

By Patricia D. Ford

Moment by Moment

Moment by moment, self-surrender
Seek silence, solitude, simplicity

–to stirrings of grace
–unclutter your space

The wisdom of the pure heart says
In times of suffering, submit;
In times of strength
Act on intuition and faith

–be content and obey
–walk humbly in God’s way
–be gentle in your living
–be compassionate, forgiving

Live in perfect faith,
Discover God
Find God in the gentle breeze
Grow in faith, hope, love,

–become wise,
–under every disguise
–or in the wind’s mighty gust
–believe and trust

May God’s kingdom come
May God’s will be done
Find a fount of peace, joy, contentment, love
Moment by moment, self-surrender

–in me
–in me
–in this very place
–to stirrings of grace

The *Spirit Rustlings* e-Newsletter is published by The Program in Christian Spirituality at SFTS twice a year.

Please forward this newsletter to others who might enjoy it. You may subscribe or unsubscribe by e-mailing: pcsfriends@sfts.edu

