



Intersections

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

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID SCHREIBER



Welcome from the Associate Director

Welcome to the 10th issue of *Intersections*! So far, 2006 has been an eventful time at the Louisville Institute. With the Christian Faith & Life and SGPL Consultations, and Writing Week in Washington, D.C., we have a great deal to share with you. This issue also features a fascinating interview with board member, David Schreiber, and the list of 2005 SGPL Grantees. Enjoy this issue of *Intersections*.

Bill Brosend

David Schreiber joined the Louisville Institute board in 2000 and will conclude his term this spring. He is lead pastor of Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he has served for nearly 15 years. This summer, he will celebrate 25 years of ministry.

LI: Tell us a little about your background. What led you to a career in parish ministry? What has been most rewarding to you as a parish pastor?

DS: There's really not a Damascus Road in my story. I've known this was my calling as far back as I remember. My parents were both quite involved in a mission start congregation, so I was always dragged around to the school gym set-ups and tear-downs, the house meetings, etc. I'm sure I sensed a purpose and joy in all the fellowship, but I'll never forget standing in a circle in a frozen, barren field in the middle of nowhere, the pastor at the center in his robes with a shovel and all the adults taking a turn digging a little hole. I didn't understand what was going on,

but when my Dad came back from his turn and took my hand, I looked up at him and saw he was weeping—it was the first time I had ever seen him cry. I was stunned to realize

how important this “church stuff” was to him...and to me. My later educational journey, including a Lutheran boarding high school and seminary, was a discernment of the call I had felt since those early years as well as discovering the spiritual gifts and

developing the leadership skills needed for parish ministry.

I suppose that's why one of the rewards of parish ministry that still has particular resonance with me is the inter-generational character of the Body of Christ and how faith is so often more “caught” than “taught.” In the midst of all the myriad activities, in all the day-to-day koinonia of a congregation, and yes, at the occasional ground-breaking ceremony, I get to see the “lights go on” in the eyes of

[Continued, page 8](#)



THE LOUISVILLE INSTITUTE

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

[BACK TO TOC](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Interview with
David Schreiber..... 1
Sabbatical Sendoff 2
Christian Faith &
Life Consultation 3
Grant-Related Publications 3
Writing Week..... 4
2005 SGPL Grants 6
Alum Updates..... 9
Feedback 11

SABBATICAL SENDOFF

Gather sixty pastoral leaders who will soon depart on long-anticipated sabbaticals. Add three of the finest preachers and teachers of preaching in the nation. Mix in the leader of the organization whose support makes it all possible, and members of the selection committee that awarded the grants.

Meet for inspiring worship, splendid lectures, wonderful small groups, and fabulous hospitality. Wow! No wonder the evaluations were glowing.



Top: Guest Speaker:
Craig Dykstra
Right: Grantees (L to R):
Beverly Wilkes Null,
Bridget Haase, Paul
Burrows, John Rollefson

The seventh annual Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders consultation was a splendid success. Of course, with speakers and preachers like Brad Braxton, Fred Craddock, Craig Dykstra and Barbara Brown Taylor, ample time for conversation in and out of small groups, and the fine hospitality for which the Louisville Institute is well known, not a lot was left to chance.



Top: Grantees (L to R):
Nancy Ferree-Clark, Jill Edens,
Elaine Pyles-Harding
Left: Guest Speaker (L): Fred
Craddock, Louisville Seminary
President (R): Dean Thompson



Grantees were divided into two cohorts because of space limitations, meeting together on Wednesday to hear Craig Dykstra, Vice President for Religion of Lilly Endowment, Inc., speak about “The Pastoral Imagination.” Earlier in the week Fred Craddock shared the twenty-four things he has learned about preaching, and Barbara Taylor read from her forthcoming memoir, *Leaving Church* and

talked about the impact the preacher’s “sources” has on the preaching act and on congregational discourse.

Later in the week Brad Braxton told us to “Get up!” and led vigorous discussions

on the nature of the gospel and the task of preaching.

As one grantee summed it up, “Inspiring, well-organized and informative, filled with fellowship and crowned with southern hospitality!”

2006 CHRISTIAN FAITH & LIFE CONSULTATION

Our Christian Faith and Life Consultation occurred on February 9-10, 2006, in Indianapolis, bringing together the 2004-05 and 2005-06 cohorts in our CF&L program along with a number of talented pastors from around the country (including future Board member Kevin Armstrong), most of whom have also been grantees. In addition to Jim Lewis and Bill Brosend, Board members Bill Cahoy and Roberto Goizueta also attended. We agreed with Lilly Endowment to organize the consultation around the following orientating question, namely: "How might human life be shaped in a Christian way?" We elaborated on that basic question as follows:

1) In our readings and conversations, what are we learning about the shape of living today? What wisdom from the Christian tradition seems most helpful and most needed to enable us to live with integrity and fullness in our time?

2) What are the implications for our work? What is most needed for church life? Pastoral leadership? Pastoral life? Educating and forming people in faith? Theological education? The academic/scholarly life?

Both pastors and academics submitted written work in advance on these issues, and a lively engagement of both groups in a common conversation characterized the consultation. Craig Dykstra set the tone for the consultation

with opening remarks about the indispensable role of both pastors and community in shaping Christian life. He acknowledged that the notion of Christian life is deeply troubled in contemporary U.S. culture. He also observed that the very meaning of "Christian" is deeply contested in this culture and that access to the resources of Christian faith and practice is limited in significant ways. But, he also voiced great hope in the younger generation, describing a number of Lilly Endowment initiatives to reach high school and college youth with the challenge of theology and the appeal of ministry. After his remarks, three panel presentations, two small group discussions, and any number of "sidebar" conversations moved the conversation along and contributed to the development of new friendships.

Several major themes emerged in these various discussions, including the following:

1) Given the challenge of diversity and the existence of conflict in society and in congregations, the shaping of community is a central pastoral task. "Shape" is both a noun and a verb; shaping Christian life is an activity into which we invite people.

2) Although Christianity is deeply disestablished and countercultural, such diverse developments as the rise of the

[Continued, page 5](#)

GRANT-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

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

Balancing Acts: Obligation, Liberation, and Contemporary Christian Conflicts

Henry G. Brinton

CSS Publishing (2006)

International Priests in America

Dean R. Hoge

Aniedi Okure

Liturgical Press (2006)

Shaping the Christian Life: Worship and the Religious Affections

Kendra G. Hotz

Matthew T. Mathews

Westminster John Knox Press (2006)

ELUSIVE TOGETHERNESS:
CHURCH GROUPS TRYING TO
BRIDGE AMERICA'S DIVISIONS

Paul Lichterman

Princeton University Press (2005)

[Continued, page 5](#)

LOUISVILLE INSTITUTE/CATHEDRAL COLLEGE OF PREACHERS WRITING WEEK

The Cherry blossoms were at their peak, the sun was brilliant all week, museums beckoned, Garry Wills spoke about his new book at the National Cathedral, and 24 writers managed to shut out the glorious distractions and write, talk about their writing, and grow in their understanding of writing as a pastoral and spiritual practice.

Nine invited writers were joined by fifteen applicants (chosen from among 55 who submitted writing samples) under the leadership of Nora Gallagher (*Practicing Resurrection*) and Lauren Winner (*Real Sex*) for a week at the Cathedral College of Preachers convened by Louisville Institute associate director Bill Brosend. Following an optional Eucharist in Bethlehem Chapel at the Cathedral or Morning Prayer in St. Augustine chapel at the College, the day was devoted to writing, then small groups, Evensong at the Cathedral, and more writing. Cathedral College staff commented on the intensity of the group, but it was an intensity born of the joy of being freed to write without interruption.

Ms. Rebecca G. Baggett

Rev. Dr. Michael J. Battle
Virginia Theological Seminary

Ms. Debra Bendis
Christian Century

Ms. Elaine Blanchard
Methodist University Hospital

Rev. Arthur Boers
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
Saint John the Baptist
Episcopal Church

**The Rev. Margaret
Bullitt-Jonas**
Grace Church

Mr. Alan Cutter
Lakeside Presbyterian Church

**Ms. MaryAnn
McKibben Dana**
Bukre Presbyterian Church

Ms. Sara Fritz
The Faith & Politics Institute

Ms. Nora Gallagher

The Rev. Cathy H. George
St. Anne's in-the-Fields Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Edward G. Horstmann
Immanuel Congregational Church

Mr. Russell S. Jones
Pastoral Counseling and Growth Center



Top: (L to R) Writer/Mentor:
Nora Gallagher, LI Associate Director;
Bill Brosend, Writer/Mentor: Lauren
Winner
Right: Group Meeting Time
Bottom: Participants: Porter Taylor, Rosa
Lindahl-Mallow, Alan Cutter



Very Rev. Tracey Lind
Trinity Cathedral

The Rev. Rosa Lindahl-Mallow
All Saints Episcopal Church

Rev. Michael L. Lindvall
The Brick Presbyterian Church

Ms. Rochelle Yolanda Melander
The Word in Season

The Rev. Susan K. Olson
Yale University

The Rev. Dr. Lee Anne Reat
St. John's Episcopal Church

Ms. Victoria B. Rentz

Ms. Clare Robert

Dr. Thomas R. Steagald
First United Methodist Church

Bishop Porter Taylor
The Episcopal Diocese of Western North
Carolina

Professor Brad Wigger
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Ms. Lauren Winner

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Little Wyman
Ecclesia Ministries

Evaluations were candid, and pointed helpfully to ways the Institute may enhance the experience in the future, at the Cathedral College and in Collegeville, MN. They were also filled with gratitude. As one writer put it, "This was an incredible blend of challenge, support and space to respond to an aspect of my vocation that I did not even know was valued. It was a time of spiritual growth, vocational development, and deep personal satisfaction." ✦

GRANT-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Continued from Page 3

Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community
Scottie May

Beth Posterski

Catherine Stonehouse

Linda Cannell

William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
(2005)

Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis
Melanie M. Morey

John J. Piderit, S.J.

Oxford University Press (2006)

What's Theology Got to Do with It? Convictions, Vitality, and the Church

Anthony Robinson

Alban Institute (2006)

Real Stories of Christian Initiation: Lessons for and from the RCIA

David Yamane

Sarah MacMillen

Liturgical Press (2006)

2006 CF&L CONSULTATION

Continued from Page 3

Religious Right and the popularity of *The Da Vinci Code* have provided a surprising opening for widespread discussions of religion. 3) Writing for a broad audience is an important task for both pastors and academics. 4) The churches need to be entrepreneurial, in order to develop new institutions for this new day. 5) Seminaries need to improve their connection to congregations. 6) Christian life is shaped, among other things, by praise, beauty, mysticism, justice, prayer, and a variety of Christian practices.

Although we are still learning, the Christian Faith and Life Consultation modeled the kind of conversation we hope to foster when bringing academics and pastors together for the good of the church. We hope to continue convening such conversations and to enable others to do so. ✦

Rev. Devon Anderson
*Deep and Wide: Crossing Boundaries
of Generation in Worship*
St. John's Episcopal Church
Minneapolis, MN

Dr. Lyle Arakaki
Rekindling the Passion
Japanese Seventh-Day
Adventist Church
Honolulu, HI

Ms. Aimee L. Baer
*The Changing Face of Parish
Leadership*
St. John Neumann Church
Cincinnati, OH

Rev. Enrique Brown
*Refreshment of Spirit:
Renewing a Heart for Service*
Saint Paul's-Rock Creek Parish
Washington, DC

Sr. Kathleen Bryant
Being Contemplative in a Digital World
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA

Rev. Paul Burrows
*The Rule of St. Benedict as a Spiritual
Guide for a Diverse Urban Parish*
Church of the Advent of
Christ the King
San Francisco, CA

Sr. Jeanette Bussen
Gathering at the Global Well
Sisters of St. Joseph
Baden, PA

Rev. William G. Carter
*Psalms Without Words: Renewal
Through Rhythm, Text, and Tune*
First Presbyterian Church of Clarks
Summit, PA
Clarks Summit, PA

Sr. Margarita Castañeda
Living the Impossible Dream
St. Mary of the Assumption
Staten Island, NY

Rev. Peg Chamberlin
Parish and Ecumenical Ministries: The Connection
Minnesota Council of Churches
Minneapolis, MN

Mr. Larry Christensen
*The Arts and Spiritual Formation in Individuals
and Faith Communities*
St. John's Lutheran Church
Des Moines, IA

Rev. Scott Curfman
The Quest for Disillusionment
Innovis Health
Fargo, ND

Rev. Dale Davis
*Bridging the "Picture" of Tradition
with the "Picture" of the Future*
Irondequoit United Church of Christ
Rochester, NY

The Rev. Robert Dotzel
St. Columba's Cell
Lutheran Campus Ministry
Iowa City, IA

Rev. David Dragseth
*A Soulful Restlessness: Hearing God's
Call in the Bounty of Vocations*
Lake Park Lutheran Church
Milwaukee, WI

Rev. Dr. Jill R.M. Edens
Promises, Patterns, and Passages
United Church of Chapel Hill, UCC
Chapel Hill, NC

Dr. Jim Egli
Creating Communities of Hope
The Vineyard Church
Champaign, IL

2005 SABBATICAL GRANT FOR PASTORAL LEADER GRANTEES

The SGPL grant provides pastoral leaders with sustained periods of time for reflective encouragement with their life and work and issues related to contemporary religious leadership. In 2005, the program provided grants of \$10,000 and \$15,000 for eight- or twelve-week sabbaticals, respectively.

The Rt. Rev'd Thomas C. Ely
The World Mission Vocation of the Bishop
The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont
Burlington, VT

Rev. Nancy Ferree-Clark
*Becoming a Transformative Church:
Three Models of Servant Ministry*
Congregation at Duke University Chapel
Durham, NC

The Rev. Canon Marie
Moorefield Fleischer
No Longer Mine Alone
Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
Raleigh, NC

Rev. Elizabeth A. Giller
*Ministry and Motherhood:
Call, Challenges, and Choices*
St. Mark Lutheran Church
Toledo, OH

The Rev. Gerald E. Gjerde
*Refreshing the Worship Leader, Renewing
Congregational Worship*
First Lutheran Church, Maquoketa, IA
Maquoketa, IA

Fr. Edward J. Griswold
Preaching as Spiritual Discipline
Saint Mary's Church
Colts Neck, NJ

Sr. Bridget Haase
God Passing By: Scripture, Storytelling and Sabbath
The Boston Home
Dedham, MA

The Rev. Michael E. Johnson
Companions on the Journey
East London Anglican Ministries,
Diocese of Huron
London, ON
Canada

Rev. Michael Kasting
Restoring the Joy in Ministry
Trinity Lutheran Church
Oregon City, OR

Rev. Thomas E. Kauffman
*Trinitarian Balance:
Learning to Dance with Partners*
Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA
Toledo, OH

Dr. David R. Kimberly
*The Visual in Worship: Integrating
Nicea II (787) and Saddleback (2006)*
Faith Community Fellowship
Massillon, OH

The Rev. Canon Lucinda Laird
And Know the Place for the First Time
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Louisville, KY

Mr. Tom Lin
Renewing, Reconciling and Reconnecting with Family
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
San Leandro, CA

The Rev. Thomas E. Macfie, Jr.
*Contemplative Prayer, Sacred Texts
and the Work of Human Hands*
Otey Memorial Parish Church
Sewanee, TN

Mr. Ronald Matthews
*Bridging the Gap: Learning from
Modern Day Good Samaritans*
Salem Church of Christ
Salem, OH

Rev. Cynthia A. Maybeck
*Separating Darkness from the Light:
An Exploration of Healing Ministry*
Trinity Church
Northborough, MA

Rev. Michael Mills
*Be Still and See: Cultivating a Spirituality
of Visual Discipleship*
Advent Lutheran Church
Toronto, ON
Canada

Fr. Edward Murphy
12 Step Spirituality
Part of the Solution (POTS)
Bronx, NY

Rev. Robert E. Nolt
Paul in Athens: Ministry Across a Cultural Chasm
South Central Mennonite Conference
Hesston, KS

Rev. Dr. Samuel Ogunboye
Spiritual Practices
Celestal Church of Christ Emmanuel Parish
Toronto, ON
Canada

Rev. Thomas Ott
*Beyond Professional Care Giver:
Equipping the Saints for Ministry*
United Church of Christ, Congregational
Webster, NY

Rev. Julie Peeples
Oceans of Pain, Ocean of Grace
Congregational United Church of Christ
Greensboro, NC

Rev. Leslie K. Penrose
Looking Back & Exploring Beyond
Community of Hope United
Church of Christ
Tulsa, OK

Rev. Dr. Stephen Poos-Benson
*Ancient Future Worship,
Ancient Future Pastor*
Columbine United Church
Littleton, CO

Rev. Elaine Pyles-Harding
*No More Silencing of the Lambs:
The Effects of Silence on the
Secondary Victims of the Culture
of Black on Black Violence Against
African-American Males*
City of New Haven Board
of Education/Church of
New Beginnings
New Haven, CT

The Rev. Grace Ellen Rice
*How the Holy Spirit Vitalizes
Multicultural Congregations*
Culmore United Methodist Church
Falls Church, VA

Fr. Eugene G. Robertson
A Necessary Case of "Heart-Burn"
Sts. Joachim & Ann
Catholic Church
St. Charles, MO

Rev. Janice M. Robinson
*Racial Reconciliation:
A Continuing Journey*
Grace Episcopal Church
Silver Spring, MD

Rev. Mary Redner Robinson
*Seeking the Master Carpenter/
an Apprenticeship with
Hammer and Nails*
Children's Hospital Boston
Boston, MA

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID SCHREIBER

Continued from Page 1

very young children all the way to seasoned adults as they discover the joy and ultimate meaning in a life centered in Christ and freely given to others.

LI: You are the first pastor to serve on the Louisville Institute Board. What has that experience been like?

DS: In a word, *inspirational*. It was an honor to be asked, and at the beginning I was awed (and I should confess a bit intimidated) by the immense breadth of experience and knowledge of the academics on the Board. The Louisville Institute has been blessed with some incredible people....and here I was, unfamous, unpublished....“just” an average parish pastor....so, in one sense, the experience was personally inspiring as I got to know these gifted colleagues on the Board, learning much from them as well as from all the reading of grant proposals and reports. It seemed to me I was receiving much more than I was contributing, but it was most gratifying to see the Louisville Institute and the Lilly Endowment

recognize and seek the peculiar wisdom and valuable voice of parish pastors in strategic grant-making.

What truly inspired me, however, was seeing the deep affection these scholars had for the church, and in particular as expressed in the local congregation. Though I benefit as a pastor from the excellence of objective research and study of North American Christianity, I am inspired by the passionate and profound commitment to the health and vitality of Christ’s church that is very much alive in the academy and is at the heart of the Louisville Institute’s mission. At each and every Board meeting, we hold before us the very best of the creative and thoughtful work of scores of faithful academics and scholarly pastors. It is impossible to leave the meeting without being “in-Spirited” with an infusion of hope and confidence for the church and her leaders, teachers, pastors, and scholars.

LI: During your time on the Board, you have been heavily involved in the Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders program. What should the readers of Intersections know about that program? Have you seen any changes over time in the reasons pastors want or need sabbatical? In the way they use their sabbatical time? What contribution do you believe the SGPL program makes to the church?

DS: When I first came on the Board, I remember getting a lot of blank stares from pastors when I would describe our program. It’s fair to say that for a good many of us, sabbaticals were relegated to the tall-steeple, town-gown, endowed fantasyland of eschatological dreams.... The landscape is now absolutely transformed, thanks, I believe, to the SGPL and the subsequent Lilly Clergy Renewal program. The experience has simply proven to be so overwhelmingly positive for everyone involved, and that word has gotten around. More denominations are encouraging, sometimes even requiring, sabbatical policies to be written into call documents.... congregations that never would have even considered “allowing” their pastor to “leave” are at least becoming aware of the tremendous mutual benefit these experiences afford both parish and pastor. As the practice of sabbaticals is becoming a more healthy rule rather than exception, I’ve noticed less desperation and unrealistic desire to “fix” what is broken in one’s person and ministry, and a more healthy sense of balance, of building on strength, or focusing on a particular passion. How can faithful, healthy, balanced pastoral leaders not benefit the church!

I’m glad the SGPL program is also open to pastoral leaders in non-congregational settings, as well as non-ordained leaders in congregational settings, since both of these groups rarely have had sabbatical opportunities

Continued, page 10

[BACK TO TOC](#)

2005 SGPL GRANTEES

Continued from Page 7

Rev. Mary Robinson-Mohr
*Learning From the Lands
That Have Nurtured Faith*
St. James Presbyterian Church
Bellingham, WA

Rev. John Rollefson
A Time of Refreshing
Lutheran Church of The Master
Los Angeles, CA

Pastor Ingrid Schultz
Proclaiming Jubilee
First United Mennonite Church
Vancouver, BC
Canada

Rev. Richard M. Silbereis
*Muchos Rostros, Muchas Voces, Un Solo Cristo:
Many Faces, Many Voices, One Christ*
The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
Hartford, CT

Rev. Birgit Solano-Richante
Rooted in Prayer
Good Shepherd Church/
Iglesia Luterana "El Buen Pastor"
Weehawken, NJ

Rev. Kent B. Stillson
*Faith Matters: A Mainline Voice
in the Print Media*
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Spearfish, SD

Rev. Travis Tamerius
Hearing the Grass Grow
Christ Our King Presbyterian Church
Columbia, MO

Rev. Yvette Tisdale
What Makes the Church Creative & Alive
Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal
Church
Nashville, TN

Rev. Mary Lynn Tobin
*Beyond the Glass Ceiling:
Female Pastors of Large Churches*
Davis Community Church
Davis, CA

The Rev. Dr. Joseph J. Tursi
Being in the One God
Saint Peter Lutheran Church, ELCA
Southport, NC

Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis
A Leave to Listen
First Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton
Edmonton, AB
Canada

Rev. Herman Van Niejenhuis
Ground - works
Covenant Christian Reformed Church
Sioux Center, IA

Rev. Dr. Beverly Wilkes Null
*Christian Work and Christian Life
Finding the Balance*
Illinois Great Rivers Conference of
The United Methodist Church
O'Fallon, IL

Fr. Patrick J. Wingo
*Visionary Leadership in a Conflicted Church:
A Study of the Ministry of
the Right Rev. Furman Stough*
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Birmingham, AL

Rev. George E. Young
Pastoral Leadership
Holy Temple Baptist Church

Alum Updates

C. Michael Hawn (Christian Faith & Life 1998) was appointed Director of the Sacred Music Program at Perkins School of Theology, SMU in June 2005. He wrote [Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally](#) (Eerdmans, 2003), which was related to his Louisville Institute funded research in 1998-99. He was also the music director for worship at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Feb. 2006.

Lara Medina (Dissertation Fellowship 1997) recently released [Las Hermanas](#) in paperback. Her book is published by Temple University Press (2005)

Lynn Neal (Dissertation Fellowship 2001) recently published [Romancing God: Evangelical Women and Inspirational Fiction](#), which was released in February 2006 from The University of North Carolina Press.

Normal Phillips (Sabbatical Grant for Pastoral Leaders 2002) finished [Violated but not Forsaken: Triumph of a Rape Survivor](#) during her sabbatical. The book was released in Spring 2005 from ANT Publishers.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID SCHREIBER

Continued from Page 8

and yet have so much to give to the church. Bill Brosend has done a marvelous job of expanding the scope and applicant pool of the SGPL, with minorities and evangelicals, for example, and the Institute has developed the website into an excellent informational tool. Another particular blessing of the SGPL is our insistence on convening the grantees together in Louisville before their sabbatical begins. It's a wonderful "grace event" for them to be honored and be given permission to take this Sabbath time for themselves, but it is also an incredible synergistic gathering of folks loaded with what Craig Dykstra calls "pastoral imagination." It is a unique opportunity for purposeful networking, not to mention a solid learning opportunity on "how to have a successful sabbatical."

LI: As a pastor, I know that you have recently returned from a sabbatical funded by Lilly Endowment's Clergy Renewal Program and that you have participated for several years in a pastors' peer group that involved

spiritual direction. How have these experiences influenced your ministry?

DS: Prayer is so critical to doing this work faithfully and effectively. For heavens sake, it's critical to being a disciple, period. Every pastor knows that, and we preach and teach it to others with passion, but so many of us struggle mightily in the actual doing of it, especially — and ironically— in growing, vibrant parishes. When I have reported on the sabbatical in various congregational or denominational settings, I have almost always used the categories of "prayer - worship - family - study" to speak about lasting personal impacts. I begin speaking about my personal prayer life, about my spiritual journey as a pastor, about always being rigidly disciplined about intercessory prayer (after all, it's my job!), but struggling with varying degrees of success through the years with disciplined quiet time and personal prayer. The peer group I have been a part of for the past several years has helped tremendously, chiefly because a central part of our covenant together involves spiritual direction and prayer. We are all pastors of rapidly growing parishes with all kinds of organizational and leadership issues— to be sure, it helps to work on those issues together—but the lasting impact of our peer group was being accountable to each other in prayer and in sharing the same Spiritual Director who guided us in our own

discipleship. By the way, I am a huge advocate of this for clergy circles. Study groups, pericope groups, ministeriums, denominational clusters, even self-selected peer groups that gather around a passionate cause or learning focus, all can provide some benefit, sure; but they absolutely miss a potential transformative character without this component.

This sabbatical afforded me the time and setting, then, to deepen and solidify my practice of centering prayer and *lectio*, of firmly establishing patterns that I had been working on with my Spiritual Director. I learned with my heart what my head always knew—that for me to be a faithful and effective leader, I must be spiritually healthy myself. I am too busy not to pray; I have too many critical responsibilities not to take the time to simply be quiet before God and to let the Spirit love, fill, renew me. My parishioners are no different, of course, but I suspect they may detect a greater passion and even integrity in any of my teaching or exhortation about this now. The actual study focus of my sabbatical, by the way, had a wonderful and immediate impact on me and my parish, but there is no question about the spiritual dimension being the greater and, I trust, more lasting impact.

LI: The Louisville Institute seeks to bring pastors and academics together for the good of the church. As a pastor, why does that task seem important to you?

DS: Now you'll get me preaching! My text would be Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12; you know, Saint Paul's image of the Body of Christ, that we have different functions and gifts, but that we are absolutely indispensable to one another, for the proper and healthy functioning of the body. Perhaps it's been too easy for both the "arm" and the "leg" to remain focused on their immediate context or perceived audience. What the Louisville Institute is doing is holistic medicine, it is improving systemic health and body mechanics by facilitating working together, while respecting and affirming the different functions. In recent years, for example, several research and book projects from the academy have not only been merely improved, but significantly shaped by having pastoral leaders involved in the grant project, at the Louisville Institute's suggestion. Sometimes we are even able to network grant projects with "Louisville pastors" with the kind of pastoral imagination that would greatly benefit the academic grantee. The end result—a better project—is for the good of the church.

I said earlier that I was inspired by deep affection for the church I have seen in the faithful academics that the Louisville Institute brings into its orbit...I should also say that I am amazed and inspired by the numbers of vital, creative, deeply thoughtful, "scholarly"

pastors we bring together, although many perhaps would not consider themselves "scholars." We want these pastors to know that our other grant programs are also open to them. We are learning from these pastoral leaders that there is indeed a hunger for works and projects beyond the "cookbooks" that seem to sell so well. We have also learned that there is indeed magic in the actual bringing together of faithful academics and scholarly pastors. There is a palpable presence of the Spirit, a mutual respect and appreciation for each other's ministry, and always significant learning from each side. Any observer of these convenings would be quickly and forever disabused of mythologies of either detached ivory towers or simple country parsons....and yes, every once in a while the mythology disabused happens in one of the participants...for the good of the church!

It has been an incredible privilege for me to serve on the Louisville Institute Board. I have learned much, met amazing people, read treasured books I never would have known, and along the way, I hope, been a voice and advocate for the "average" parish pastor. I won't miss the 50 pound box of SGPL proposals plopped on my desk in October, or plowing through last-minute General Grant proposals in the midst of Advent or Lent, but I will miss meeting the gifted servants of the church they represent. And I will miss indeed the collegial fellowship with both staff and Board members. It has truly been a joy. ✨

Give Us Your Feedback...

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

Write us at:

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Intersections Newsletter
1044 Alta Vista Road
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Or email us at:

info@louisville-institute.org

Alum Updates...

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



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



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

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