
NumeNews

Newsletter of the Carleton College Department of Religion

Vol.1, No.1 Fall Term 2003

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

Welcome to NumeNews, the Carleton Religion Department's newsletter! We have initiated this newsletter as a way to keep in touch with our alumni, and hope you will find this first issue informative. We hope to publish one issue each term and to include in each issue some combination of news about current faculty and students, events on campus, and changes taking place within the Department. We also hope to include a section of news from alumni. So, if you have information that you'd like to share with us – professional accomplishments, personal news, or just greetings – please send them to Jill Tollefsen, Administrative Assistant for the Religion Department (email: jtollefs@carleton.edu). If you have ideas about articles or other features you'd like to see in the newsletter, we hope you'll let us know.

A word about the title: "Numen," based on the ancient Greek and Latin roots, refers to a divine being and is the root of the word "numinous," made famous in Rudolf Otto's classic work on religious experience, *The Idea of the Holy*. Credit for coming up with the idea for this title goes to Cori Sparks, a current senior Religion major, who won the "name the newsletter" contest.

So, enjoy your first issue of NumeNews and, as native Minnesotan Garrison Keillor says, "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch."

Louis Newman



Welcome to New Faculty!

Susan Bales



Originally from Philadelphia, Susan received her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina last year. She taught at Wake Forest for a year before coming to Carleton as a two-year Andrew Mellon Post-doctoral fellow.

A major aspect of Susan's research is children's interpretations of their religious experiences. She has most recently focused on children's perceptions of their first Communion. What started as a project about communion dresses in her senior seminar became an interest she followed through graduate school. It culminated in an ethnography of the children in Faith Formation classes at two Catholic parishes in North Carolina, one African American and the other split Anglo/Latino.

This year Susan is teaching New Religious Movements (REL 342) fall term, Introduction to African American Religion (REL 135) in the winter, and Religions in the Borderlands (REL 248) in the spring.

Lori Pearson



Growing up around the United States, including Wisconsin and Colorado, Lori noticed diversity in the practice of Christianity from an early age. From a Protestant household, Lori was intrigued by differences between the religious practice of her family and her Catholic friends,

See Pearson, pg 4



What We've Been Up To.....

Paula Arai: For three weeks this summer, Paula was in Japan doing some follow-up research relating to her book, *Polishing the Heart: Japanese Zen Buddhist Women's Healing Rituals*, an ethnography of twelve 50 to 70 year old women. It is based on her extensive consultations with these women while she was on a Fulbright during 1998-99. She returned this summer to confirm if her analysis of the women's healing process was "on target or not." This fall, she has a Targeted Opportunity Grant to write a rough draft of the book.

Louis Newman: During his sabbatical last year, Louis says he, "finished one old project, began another, and generally caught up on lots of reading." He completed a college textbook on Jewish ethics (*An Introduction to Jewish Ethics*) that is to be published this spring by Prentice Hall and has begun work on another book, which "will probably take the form of a series of short essays." The working title is *Turning, Returning, Responding: On the Concept of Repentance in Judaism*, and it will explore "the various dimensions of repentance (theological, moral, psychological) as they have evolved over the course of Jewish tradition, but with some attention to parallel concerns in Christianity and Islam." Post-Christian Missions," for a book of religious-literary studies edited by Eric Ziolkowski, which will be published by the University of Delaware Press.

Roger Jackson: Roger is currently involved in two major projects. The first is an annotated translation of medieval Indian Buddhist tantric songs, entitled *Tantric Treasures*. Written in the doha verse form of rhyming couplets, these poems are considered by Nepali and Tibetan Buddhists to convey mystical teachings in an accessible form. They also have influenced thought and literary styles among Indian Hindus and Muslims. The book will be published early next year by Oxford University Press.

For thirty years, Geshe Sopa, a Tibetan monk and emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin, has worked to translate *The Crystal Mirror*, a text Roger describes as a Tibetan book of comparative religion. Roger is working as general editor on the project. Tuken Choki Nyma completed the original work in 1802, but no full translation exists to date. The book contains accounts of religious ideas and practices of countries throughout Asia, including India, Tibet, Mongolia, and China. Wisdom Publications of Boston will publish the book, which Jackson expects to be finished in one to two years.

Michael McNally: Michael has been working on annotations and an editors' intro to *Arts of Tradition: Sacred Music, Dance and Narrative Among Michigan's Anishinaabe, 1930-1960*. Publication is expected in 2005 by Michigan State University Press.

Anne Patrick: Anne's main project this coming year is a book whose working title is *Coming To Terms: Essays In Feminist Moral Theology*. Although she has already published some essays that will be included, she is concentrating this fall on new research and writing on the topic "Vocation, Virtue, and History." She has also recently completed final revisions for a different essay, "David Henry Hwang's *Golden Child* and the Ambiguities of Christian (and Post-Christian) Missions," for a book of religious-literary studies edited by Eric Ziolkowski, which will be published by the University of Delaware Press.

Shahzad Bashir: Shahzad's new major research and writing project focuses on the religious treatment of the human body in literature and art produced in Persianate Islamic societies during the late medieval period (ca. 1300-1500). In conjunction with this project, he recently finished an article entitled "Shah Isma'Ul and the Qizilbash: Corporeality and Religious Alterity in Timurid and Early Safavid Iran." The article stems from a presentation made at the Fourth International Round Table on Safavid Studies held in Bamberg, Germany, in July 2003. It discusses bodily practices associated with the Turkoman tribesman who brought the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) to power in Iran at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Commonly referred to as Qizilbash (Redheads) due to their distinctive scarlet headgear, these Turkomans regarded the Safavid king as a manifestation of god and historical sources claim that they would sometimes literally devour the bodies of the king's enemies to demonstrate their religious fervor. The article contrasts this alleged cannibalism with highly corporeal rituals also attested for the Qizilbash milieu and argues that we need to read the surviving sources with a greater emphasis on the nuances than has been the case in scholarship published to date. The article recommends that the types of religious practices ascribed to the Qizilbash should be seen as a part of a highly corporealized religiosity that constituted an Islamic religious alterity in the region and period in question.

New Department Display Case Items!



This fall, the display case in the Religion Department lounge contains material art important to many of the faiths covered in the department. Presently, the case contains the following items:

- A Miniature Qur'an (1" x 1", readable)
- Tibetan Buddhist hand drum and bell
- Japanese Buddhist prayer plaques
- Mezuzah & Kiddush cup
- bit of healing dirt from New Mexico
- small figure of Dr. Jose Gregorio Hernandez (see below)
- bundle of cedar used for healing and purification by the Ojibwe people
- pair of white lace Communion gloves
- votive candle
- prayer wheel
- Japanese Buddhist rosary

Come by and take a look!

IN MEMORIUM

Betsy Maitland, wife of Carleton professor emeritus of religion and former Chaplain David Maitland, passed away on October 16, 2003, after suffering a stroke the previous weekend. Betsy was born Elizabeth Burton Green. She graduated from Smith College in 1943, and she and David were married in 1945. They have two children, daughter Todd and son Jim.

Cards and letters may be sent to the following address:

Professor David Maitland
Carleton College
One North College Street
Northfield, MN 55057

Alumni Update

Dan Hilario '02 : After a brief time at Officer Candidates School in United States Marine Corps, Dan decided to continue his graduate education. He is currently pursuing an M.S. in Sports Health/Clinical Exercise Science at Texas Tech University. He says, "I know it's not exactly what most Carleton religion majors usually do after graduation, but it is somewhat of a 'calling' for me, [but] I haven't ruled out the idea of working towards my Ph.D. in religion in a few years."

Sheila (Anderson) Rawn '00 : Sheila is currently at Luther Seminary in the Master of Divinity program and hopes to be a parish pastor "in a rural congregation or three."

Barbara Ellard '02 : Barbara is working as an English teacher at a Catholic high school. She says, "I haven't churned out any mystics just yet, but the kids have stopped muttering 'I don't get it,' under the breaths. Their upcoming assignment is to write about a 'religious experience,' and I THINK they found it reassuring to know that after four years and a bachelors degree in religion I still am not sure how to define it."

Emily Bennett '01 : In her second and final year at Yale Divinity School, Emily is working toward an M.A. in Religion with a concentration in Philosophical Theology. She hopes to enter a Ph.D. program next fall.

Hannah Giffin '02 : Hannah is working as a Social Services Case Manager at a non-profit agency in Washington, D.C. and applying to start an M.Div. program next fall.

Katie Lackritz '03 : Katie is currently in Burlington, Vermont where she attends medical school at UVM.

Jessica (Grubbs) Saleem '01 : Jessica recently had a baby boy named Soruv (which means "divine" in Hindi). In November she will return to her position as a fundraiser for Hunger Solutions Minnesota, the state food shelf and food bank association.

Emily Johnson '01 : Emily says, "I am living in an apartment with Karin Sommer (also a religion major) in the East Village of New York City. I am enjoying the city life immensely." She teaches second grade in the South Bronx.

Sarah Calhoun '01 : This fall, Sarah moved from the East Coast to Madison, WI, where she is now earning an M.A. in the department of Languages and Cultures of Asia, mainly focusing on Theravada Buddhism.

Suraj Prasannakumar '01 : Suraj is currently living and working in Niger, West Africa.

Brett Dipman '03 : Brett is currently teaching English to "screaming kindergarteners" in Bundang, South Korea.

Dr. Jose Gregorio Hernandez: (left)

A popular religious icon on Venezuelan buses is a figure of Jose Gregorio Hernandez, a doctor who served the poor. Following the advent of the automobile in Venezuela, he was one of the country's first road fatalities, dying in a car accident in 1919. His cult of followers believe that by paying respect to Jose Gregorio Hernandez they will have special protection from fatal road accidents. (cr.- text from case).



Tibetan Hand bell and drum: (right)

The *damaru* is used in Tibetan Buddhist rituals. It is played with the right hand along with the bell, which is held in the left hand. It serves to summon buddhas and bodhisattvas. It symbolizes compassionate spiritual methods, and evokes the great bliss of enlightenment. (cr.- text from the display case).

Pearson (Cont. from pg.1)

and found herself at odds with certain aspects of her own tradition.

These issues became an intellectual focus for Lori in college at St. Olaf. Looking to frame questions concerning challenges to the authority and nature of Christian doctrine, Lori began to study German Protestant thought and philosophy, focusing particularly on the 19th century, a time of great change in the methods, assumptions, and goals of Christian theology. This focus continued through graduate school at Harvard, where she wrote her dissertation on theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) and his efforts to affirm difference, plurality, and discontinuity in Christian tradition, beliefs, and practices.

Lori is off this term after having a daughter, Celia, this summer. She will teach Introduction to Religion (REL 110) in the Winter, and Introduction to Christianity (REL 122) and Jesus, Paul, and Christian Origins (REL 221) in the Spring. Down the road, Lori hopes to teach a class on issues of race and racism in American Christian theology.

Outside Leighton, Lori loves to hike, an interest sparked by her time on the east coast. Cooking and playing the flute are also two of her passions.

Anne Sinclair '03 : Anne is in Vermont where she lives and works with 10 young women, aged 13-17, at a therapeutic wilderness camp for at-risk youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. She says, "It's a lovely place that I think does good work, and though not directly related to my religion major, I feel that every once in a while I am exposing a small group of girls to a world beyond American Christianity."

Jake Eberle '02 : For the past year Jake has been working as a line cook at Palomino (in downtown Minneapolis) by day and studying at Le Cordon Bleu culinary school (Mendota Heights) by night. In November he will be done with his classes and will go to Europe for his externship, where he will be studying under Chef Alain Couturier at his restaurant, La Roche Le Roy, in Tours, France.

Karin Sommer '02 : Karin has been living in New York City for the past year, working with rare books at the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library at Columbia University. She recently moved into an apartment in the East Village with Emily Johnson '02.

Jacob McKnite '03 : After spending the summer after graduation canvassing for Greenpeace and Save the Children in Minneapolis, Jacob has started a year of service with Americorps. He is tutoring, mentoring, and running after-school programs at a North Minneapolis public elementary school.

Kristin Holt '00 : Kristin works as a legal assistant at a law firm in Washington, D.C., helping finance affordable housing projects all over the U.S. She plans to go back to school in a year or two and continue studying "religion-related things."

Beth Anderson '01 : Beth is currently working as a counseling assistant and records clerk at Bellevue Christian High School in Clyde Hill, WA. She assists 11th & 12th graders with college planning and also organizes college information nights for parents and students. She says, "A return to the academic life (i.e. grad school) is definitely in my future once I narrow down my interests and goals." This summer, she married Matt Hinckley '01 (a geology major).

Kacia (Brink) Lee '00 : Kacia lives in south Minneapolis where she works as a patent paralegal. She married Willy Lee '97 in 2001.

Adam Koren '03 : Adam says, "I'm about to move out of my parents' house in Oak Park, IL, and I'm looking at what I'm going to do next. What I'd really like is a spiritual community with some exciting energy to it, a place where I can live nearby, work there, and be a part of it."