Being Born Again and Again and Again

FACULTY FOCUS

by Stephanie Ford, Visiting Assistant Professor in Christian Spirituality

So what is a Baptist with a Catholic education doing in a Quaker seminary? That’s a good question. I asked myself almost the same thing about three years ago while writing a seminar paper on the Inner Light for a Benedictine monk. Indeed, the Spirit moves in mysterious ways. Looking back, though, I see how all of this ecumenism opened my eyes in ways that being a Baptist in a Baptist context would not have. Catholics call such ongoing spiritual formation, “continuing conversion.” A recent bumper sticker I saw puts it even more simply: being “born again and again and again.”

My natural habit is to pray in the mornings with my journal, the lectionary Psalm, a candle, and a cup of coffee. But my spirituality may also be glimpsed when I give to hunger causes, recycle my Diet Coke cans on behalf of God’s creation, or listen carefully to the heart of another person. I have a tendency to sing popular love songs on the radio to God when I am driving and to pray while jogging; I regularly experience God’s presence in children. These everyday things reveal my spirituality.

But spiritual formation also takes thoughtful attention to one’s faith tradition. I have found some treasures in our own “backyard” of Christian heritage. In my study at Catholic University, I found diamonds among the medieval writings of mystics like Mechthild of Magdeburg and John of the Cross. And then, I became excited about the spiritual riches among Friends. From Isaac Pennington to Lucretia Mott, there was a wealth of spiritual abundance to recover. Thomas Kelly’s timeless writing, *A Testament of Devotion*, spoke directly to my worries around efficiency and accomplishment. Kelly writes, “[A]mazing simplification comes when we ‘center down,’ when life is lived with singleness of eye, from a holy Center where the breath and still of Eternity are heavy upon us, and we are wholly yielded to Him.”

Perhaps, like me, you feel a bit of apprehension about how the church will “meet” the challenges of this new
millennium. And so we should. Still, I am convinced that spirituality provides great hope to our weary, wary hearts. Prayer is, as the Anglican spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill said, the closest thing to “absolute action.” Prayer does change the world, and thank God, it also changes the prayer-er. Ministers of all stripes — be they pastors, social activists, teachers — must grow roots deep into their life in God and then be willing to listen deeply to the cries of contemporary longing. There are no simple answers, but “way will open” through the inward tendering of the Spirit.

And this is the heart of my call: to encourage students at ESR to grow their own unique spiritual roots in God. For only from this grounding can true ministry emerge. And even then, as Jesus pointed out so well, there is the need to pay attention to the weeds and predators of the spiritual life, which for modern seminary students, may be ego inflation and on the flip side, the inward violence of perfectionism. Writing an unforgettable sermon week after week or being the perfectly insightful counselor is not what Christ meant in his call to perfection, or wholeness. Spiritual authenticity invites the minister to seek a deeper wellspring of divine sustenance and hope.

I am grateful to be teaching at Earlham School of Religion for several reasons. First, I have been given the grace of following Ann Miller, a wonderful teacher and mentor. Another is the first-rate spirituality curriculum developed at ESR long before other Protestant seminaries. A third is that the Quaker ideal of noncompetitive concern for others to be alive and well at ESR. This “habit” speaks to me about this institution. Finally, I count it a privilege to worship regularly with Friends who practice what I believe is the first movement of all prayer, that is listening to the Spirit within. In this Quaker community, I believe my conversion will continue to deepen.

**Living the Questions**

**STUDENT FOCUS**
by Diane M. Datz

God and I are not strangers. I persevere in the uncertainty of life’s challenges because I know God desires my well being. When I am consumed by untempered emotions, God restores my tranquility. I plead for mercy and compassion and find God guiding me into acceptance of things I cannot change. God fills me with peace when I pray for healing or reconciliation. I trust that God is All in All because I am the recipient of God’s grace. With patience and prayer, nothing is wasted in God’s creation. All things eventually work their way to good. This is how I know God.
I am not so faithful when God speaks to me in times of my prosperity. When all is well, spiritual amnesia clouds my faith. I drift from dependence on God to confidence in myself as the source of accomplishment. I do not deliberately turn my attention away from God, but my prayers of gratitude lack the humility of my prayers for deliverance. Confidence and pride are not inherently bad, but they inflate my ego. I become self-important. Standing on self-reliance, I forget my faith. Arrogance marches to the front of my parade. When there is abundance, I congratulate myself for creating a well-ordered life.

I was content before ESR. My children approached adulthood with responsibility and fierce family loyalty. The weight of my parental obligation finally shifted to confidant and mentor. Hospice nursing challenged me and brought spiritual presence to my work. I rolled into the comfort of my middle years anticipating freedom. Then God interrupted my tidy existence with a disconcerting call.

The idea of seminary challenged the stability I had entrusted to my own safe-keeping. The thought became a waking obsession and recurrent dream, imbedded in my consciousness like a child demanding attention. When God’s vigilance left me nowhere to hide, I began a litany of “pick-someone-else” prayers. But, every morning I awoke to the insistence of God’s call. Family and friends discussed seminary as if the decision had been made. I stopped trying to convince God and said yes. I did not go quietly.

My conversations with God took on the toughness of Teamster negotiations. I wanted to see the contract and read the fine print. I demanded the details of this new assignment – who, what, when, where, why, and how? God answered with silence and I bargained for a toehold on security. I’ll apply to seminary, but I need to know that the kids will be okay. I’ll go if I have a sound financial plan. I was continually filled with doubt. Why are you calling me, a ritually bound, steeped-in-the-sacraments Episcopalian, to Quaker seminary?

God’s invitation precipitated a life crisis. Unwilling to sever their ties in San Antonio, my children chose to live with their father. I feared the consequences of mothering by e-mail and long distance carrier. I did not want to retire my career when my name and expertise in hospice care were gaining national recognition. I grieved the loss of friends, colleagues, and church family, some of whom I had known for twenty years. With nothing more than God’s fragile promise that all would be well, I moved to Richmond.

I am sometimes asked what I am doing at ESR. My nervous laugh masks my inability to provide a coherent answer. Before seminary, I knew many things. Here I find only speculation.

I have exchanged security for God’s hidden vision. Occasionally, I have glimpses of gifts that lie buried beneath my inexperience and lack of confidence. I want to sink deeply into the unknowing, but I am restless with uncertainty. I can run from my discomfort, but eventually I must come to rest in the love of God.

Only in stillness, can I redefine myself in terms of being rather than doing. At ESR, I am finding the courage to stop seeking answers. I am learning to live the questions.

Diane Marie Datz is a first year student at ESR. She has worked as a hospice nurse and is a student and teacher of Celtic spirituality.
John Punshon, the Geraldine Leatherock Professor of Quaker Studies, is leaving ESR. He leaves a legacy of friendly scholarship, dry English wit, and abiding faith. I had the opportunity to interview John one Tuesday afternoon following Common Meal. The conversation was wide-ranging and fascinating – following are the highlights.

Why ESR?

JOHN: Well, the short answer is that I was invited to come. The longer answer is a bit more complicated. For one, Britain’s too small – it suffers from being the home of Quakerism. There is not enough contact with other Friends worldwide, especially in the Third World. Part of that is residue from British colonialism, I suspect. But I was aware of a larger Quaker world which I wanted to study. I wanted to get to know these long-lost cousins – the 100,000’s of them.

I felt that coming to ESR would give me an opportunity to do that. It would be a chance to develop my own thinking and writing, in a way I would not be able to do in England. You see, I am a practical Friend, not a “theological” Friend or “historical” Friend. My study is not limited to an area of specific expertise, and so I wanted to research Friends in a broad way that being in the States would allow.

Also, I sensed very much the same outlook as Wilmer Cooper – I caught and shared his vision of normative Quakerism. That is a Quakerism formulated around certain abiding principles practiced among most, if not all, Friends.

So, was it what you expected?

JOHN: Yes and no. Personally, I found myself enjoying the States more than I anticipated. In fact, I would say I am now ½ American. Had I stayed twenty years instead of ten, I would probably remain here, as a naturalized citizen. I mean America’s crazy in all sorts of ways, but I am impressed with this American experiment in republicanism. I’ve learned how America works, with its sense of checks and balances in government and personal generosity on the part of the people. This giving to charity – it’s the done thing. On a large scale. It is expected. And it is marvelous.

And I like Richmond. I’m a small town person and I like living in a small city that very much has a rural feel. I am surprised at how much I’ve come to love the Indiana weather and landscape.

Professionally, I’ve traveled a lot. I have found that immensely pleasurable. I’ve been especially welcomed by Indiana Yearly Meeting. In fact, I have dedicated my new book to them – they gave me a home. Some of the times I’ve enjoyed most are traveling around the Midwest, bringing a summer Sunday evening message to a little Friends church tucked away in a cornfield.

“I was aware of a larger Quaker world which I wanted to study...

I felt that coming to ESR would give me an opportunity to do that.”
book is the direct outcome of those accommodations. I don’t write easily. Each sentence is work. And as I look back, it is clear that the reason I came to ESR was to write this book.

Tell me about the book.

JOHN: It is titled *Reasons for Hope: The Faith and Future of the Friends Church*. It’s claim is that while Friends have the faith of evangelical churches, which are growing, we have the growth pattern of liberal churches, which are declining. This is a critical anomaly. I propose that churches flourish when they know who they are. We are not flourishing because we have an unclear identity. We have to know what we are and what we believe that sets us apart. I believe that we have to recover our Friends distinctives. Otherwise we are a pale imitation of other churches – most of whom know who they are and what they believe.

There is a fair amount of historical background in the book, especially concerning the Holiness movement which I think has more in common with early Quakerism than we realize. However, the Holiness movement lost out to creeping Fundamentalism in many cases. This contributes to our loss of identity.

What are you looking forward to in retirement?

JOHN: Occasional visits to the U.S. (laughs) Seriously, I’ll be back to speak to North Carolina Yearly Meeting in August and I’ve already got numerous other visits planned.

I am looking forward to getting back in touch with family. That’s the primary reason for moving back.

And I am anticipating getting some rest. I stayed a year longer than I planned. However, that extra year means I now qualify for what is it you call it, oh yes, Social Security.

I will be doing some writing. I will be updating *Portrait in Grey*. And I will become more intentionally contemplative. I am looking forward to that opportunity.

Do you have any final thoughts on your time here?

JOHN: Yes, in some way I wish I was just beginning because I am excited about the *ESR Access* program. I feel it is the way to go. It will help bring new life to the institution and Friends.

Finally, I am grateful to everyone who brought me here. It’s been an enjoyable time—a period of constant joy.

Francis Forster (ESR ’00) writes that she had “a fine CPE experience in New Orleans and an equally great time now in San Francisco. The McFarland Institute in New Orleans operates in 5 different CPE settings: the Police Department, a Community Based unit, and 3 different hospitals. I was in the Community Based unit; two classmates worked in parishes, one at a charity hospital, one was starting a ministry for people who work on the Mississippi River (she is the only female riverboat captain), and I worked at Project Lazarus, an assisted living place for people with AIDS.” Her experience in San Francisco is also good. She’s in a hospital setting and works on two floors per CPE unit; currently neurosurgery and neurology and birthing and babies. Her group includes “a Rabbinical student, a Zen Buddhist lesbian priest, a Unitarian-Universalist, a German theologian, a Catholic, and a couple of Protestants.” You can reach Frances at 415-564-5303, 332 Carl Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, frances@infocom.com.

Alumni/ae news is always welcome. Please send it to ESR Reports, 228 College Ave, Richmond, IN 47374 or billbr@earlham.edu

ESR Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>EC/ESR Commencement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26-28</td>
<td>ESR Alumni/ae Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1-2</td>
<td>Earlham Board of Trustees Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 11-25</td>
<td>ESR Faculty and Staff England Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 6</td>
<td>Launch ESR Access Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 20-21</td>
<td>Joint Faculty Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 28-29</td>
<td>Alumni/ae Council Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 29-30</td>
<td>ESR Board of Advisors Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1-2</td>
<td>Annual Pastors Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 19-20</td>
<td>Annual Ministry of Writing Colloquium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does one replace a Friend who has become a near Quaker icon as he won the admiration of Friends around the U.S. during the past decade? That was the challenge facing Earlham School of Religion this year with John Punshon’s pending retirement. As ESR attempted to discern God’s leading, we discovered an Angell to replace an icon.

After a broadly announced invitation for nominations, consultations with numerous Friends, and challenging schedules for candidates invited for campus interviews, ESR is pleased to announce that Stephen W. Angell will join the School of Religion on July 1, 2001 as the next holder of the Geraldine Leatherock Chair in Quaker Studies.

**Steve grew up a Quaker in Pennsylvania and New York, graduating from Westtown School in Westtown, Pennsylvania, in 1970, and from Boston University with a B.A. in Mathematics in 1974. He then moved to Washington, D.C., becoming an intern with the Friends Committee on National Legislation from 1975 to 1976, and joining the Friends Meeting of Washington (Florida Avenue). He worked for improvements to the criminal justice system as an activist and congressional lobbyist from 1977 to 1980, working on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the American Friends Service Committee (Middle Atlantic Region).

A desire to explore his Quaker faith more fully led Steve to the Earlham School of Religion in 1980, where he discovered a deep love for historical studies in religion under the guidance of Hugh Barbour, Wilmer Cooper, and Michael Birkel. He assisted Hugh Barbour with the project of getting theological works by William Penn back into print, eventually writing a master’s thesis on one of those works, *An Address to Protestants*. Graduating with an M.A. in Quaker Faith and History in 1982, Steve went on to Vanderbilt University for further graduate studies. Steve received his Ph.D. degree in Church History in 1988 after completing a doctoral dissertation on a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Henry McNeal Turner.

While at Vanderbilt, Steve met Sandra Ward, artist, quilter, and theologian, who most recently worked in a low cost veterinary clinic ministering to pets and their owners. Steve and Sandra were married under the care of Nashville Friends Meeting in 1984. In subsequent years, opportunities led Steve and Sandra to South Dakota, Ohio, and then eventually to Tallahassee, Florida, where they have lived for the past eleven years with their two dogs and two cats. During that time, Steve has taught religious studies at Florida A & M University, an historically black university. Steve and Sandra have also been active members of Tallahassee Monthly Meeting and Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

Prior to accepting the Leatherock appointment, Steve was Clerk of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Tallahassee Monthly Meeting and Clerk of Southeastern Yearly Meeting. Steve’s hobbies include hiking, gardening, and singing sacred harp music.

Says ESR Dean, Jay Marshall, “During the interviews, three things in particular impressed me. I was impressed with Steve’s ability to work with texts as a religious historian. I think that his obvious skill at conducting primary research will be an asset to the ESR curriculum, and also to students who work closely with him. Secondly, his success in publications, and equally important, in earning peer respect as a Caucasian, unprogrammed Friend in an African-American, strongly evangelical tradition, bodes well for the work we expect the Leatherock scholar to fill as a public Friend who travels and ministers broadly among the diverse body of Friends. Finally, I appreciate genuine humility on those rare occasions when I encounter it; I was really taken with Steve’s unpretentious demeanor. Our faculty has undergone a major transition in the past three years. In Stephen Angell, ESR has added another exceptional piece to an excellent cast of teachers and scholars.”

**Angells Of ICONS**
Bill Ratliff (Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling) recently returned from his fall 2000 Study Leave. The focus of his leave was finding out what happens to a person’s religious faith as a result of having lived in another culture. He went to Birmingham, England, and to Edinburgh, Scotland, where he interviewed five Quakers and five Methodists in each place who had lived in another culture and returned home. “I heard a lot of wonderful stories of people’s lives,” said Bill, “and the way their faith has changed and grown. An added bonus was living with Quakers in each place and attending several different Quaker Meetings. I plan to interview persons in the country this summer, and hope that a book for faith communities will eventually emerge.”

Jay Marshall (Dean) has represented ESR at several locations across the country. In November, he was one of five ESR representatives to the National Friends Pastors Conference in Atlanta, GA. He used that trip as an opportunity to worship with Atlanta Monthly Meeting. He has spoken in meeting for worship at Whittier First Friends (CA), Dublin (IN), Richmond First Friends (IN), Cedar Square (NC), Springfield (NC) and Center (OH). In the latter three, he spoke on multiple occasions for renewal or revival services. He has spent time with Orange Grove (CA), Hartford (CT) and Greensboro First Friends (NC) in preparation for the launch of ESR Access. While at Hartford, Jay was the guest speaker at Quarterly Meeting. His work has also extended beyond the Religious Society of Friends, as he led a weekend event at Plymouth Congregational Church (IA) addressing the topic of Law and Love in the Old Testament. This trip to Iowa also provided an occasion to host a lunch with Iowa Friends pastors.

Brent Bill (Instructor in Religious Creative Writing) has accepted a position as associate director with the Alban Institute’s Indianapolis Center for Congregations. The Center, which is funded by Lilly Endowment, is dedicated to helping Indianapolis-area congregations find solutions to pressing practical problems by connecting them with resources from around the city and across the nation. The Center and the Alban Institute will also share what they learn with congregations nationwide. Brent will continue to edit ESR Reports and direct the Annual Ministry of Writing Colloquium.

Joanna Scofield (Director of Academic Services) is one of the contributors to Building Consensus: Conflict and Unity: A guide for deciding together. “Practical peacemaking is carried on in many ways, and consensus decision-making is a very important part of this endeavor,” said John Punshon. “This book envisions a much wider application of the traditional Quaker business process, and suggests ways in which all kinds of groups can take decisions without voting, without personal manipulation and with respect to the wisdom of everybody. An impressive achievement.” Also contributing are Monteze M. Snyder, Cheryl Gibbs, Susan A. Hillmann, George Watson and ESR graduate Trayce N. Peterson. Copies can be ordered for $15 plus shipping and tax from the Earlham Bookstore, Drawer 7, Earlham College, 801 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374-4095.


David Johns is returning to his alma mater as ESR’s new Assistant Professor of Theology. As the month of March concluded, Earlham School of Religion completed the daunting task of three faculty hires this academic year when it announced it had invited David to join the faculty. In this particular search, ESR sought someone who could contribute broadly to its curriculum. With David Johns’ hiring, the school succeeded in meeting that goal.

David grew up in north-east Ohio in the Church of God (Anderson) and stumbled onto Friends as an undergraduate at Malone College. “I was attending a Friends college but really did not pay attention to that fact until I began studying theology and church history.”

David attended ESR in the mid 80’s and earned an MA in theology. While in Indiana, he served as a minister in the Religious Society of Friends pastoring in both Indiana and Western Yearly Meetings. After graduating from ESR, he returned to Ohio and worked as a reference librarian at Malone College and as an adjunct professor in their religion and philosophy department. David earned an MLS degree from Kent State before beginning his doctoral studies in theology at Duquesne University.

“My theological interests seem to return again and again to the intersection of theology and the spiritual life of the faithful community. In my view, theology is a devotion of the mind and as such it is a vital part of following the invitation to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.” David wrote his ESR thesis on Douglas Steere’s ecclesiology and his doctoral dissertation on mysticism and ethics in the writing of Friedrich von Hügel.

David is a recorded Friends minister in Wilmington Yearly Meeting and over the past several years has worked at Wilmington College, first as Campus Minister and most recently as Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy. After successful teaching experiences in those locations, the move to teaching graduate education at a Quaker seminary where persons explore and wrestle with questions of ministry is a natural next step in David’s professional development.

He is active in the Quaker Theological Discussion Group and his work has appeared in such publications as Quaker Religious Thought, Friends’ Quarterly, The Journal of the Friends Historical Society, and Quaker Life.

David and Terri Johns have been married 16 years and have four children: Christopher, Cameron, Nicholas, and Natalie. Terri enjoys gardening, hiking, reading, and playing hand bells; David enjoys writing, hiking, playing guitar, and lively conversations over a good cup of coffee.

Says ESR Dean, Jay Marshall, “There are several reasons David is an excellent choice for this faculty position. As a center of Quaker scholarship and ministry preparation, it is important that ESR have someone committed to teaching theology as a Friend. David is one of about three people I know who is bold enough to suggest that Friends would benefit from an attempt to produce a systematic theology, and who is willing to undertake that task. I also appreciate the fact that David emphasizes the connectedness of theology and worship. It seems to me that, as Friends, worship and/or practice are the natural places where we might find common ground for theological expression.”
Jay Marshall (Dean) recommends *Attitudes Toward Interactivity in a Graduate Distance Education Program*. “It is a recent choice, as part of a reading list designed to help think through the issues ESR needs to address as we integrate on-line courses into our curriculum. A quantitative study, this book highlights instructional roles in promoting efficient interaction. Outside the normal fare of theological education, *Intellectuals* by Paul Johnson offers fresh research describing the personalities and lifestyles of persons such as Rousseau, Shelley and Marx, whose works significantly shaped social thought and practice. Most enlightening is the enormous distance that usually existed between their intellectual arguments and their personal practice.”

Bill Ratliff (Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling) recommends *A Chaplain’s Companion*. “I have enjoyed getting acquainted with this manual of prayers, rituals and customs for the major religions and a few of the less well-known ones. It is made for use in visiting the sick and dying. It is small and lies flat when opened, so is user-friendly in hospital and nursing home settings. Compiled by Judith Joseph, a Quaker chaplain, each section has been reviewed by a person of that faith. I like it enough that I have ordered copies for our bookstore and am recommending it in my pastoral care classes. Individual copies can be ordered from JCJoseph, Ltd., 2865 S. Eagle Road, Newtown, PA 18940-1546; email solace@jcjoseph.com.

Steve Spyker (Director of Information Technology) recommends *Give Me That Online Religion* by Brenda E. Basher. “I thought I was pretty web-savvy, but until I read this book I really had no idea how heavily the Internet was being used for religious expression and practice. According to Basher, ‘using a computer for online religious activity could become the dominant form of religion and religious experience in the [twenty-first] century. If so, religious expression and experience will change dramatically.’ Brasher is neither an unquestioning champion of technology, nor a hand-wringing doomsayer, but is a knowledgeable and sympathetic observer of religious practice. She has an M.Div. from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, a Ph.D. from University of Southern California, and teaches religion and philosophy at Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio.”

Tim Sied (Associate Dean of Distributed Learning) offers Winifred Gallagher’s *Working on God*. “Gallagher, a reporter of behavioral science, set out on a personal journey to revisit her own spiritual roots while seeking to envision the future of spirituality in the new millennium. Gallagher calls modern seekers ‘neogaustics,’ people who, in spite of their scientific reasoning, find that there is something ‘deep and vital’ that is beyond themselves. In *Working on God* she discusses her experiences in Zen meditation centers, retreats in a convent, Torah study in synagogues, and Sunday services at her church. While many people are fashioning their own New Age religion as if they were picking what they like at a buffet and leaving parts not to their liking, Gallagher ultimately concludes that people need to experience the fullness of their own religious tradition. The future of spirituality may very well be found in our own spiritual past.”
One of ESR’s new initiatives this year has been the development of a distributed learning program, known as **ESR Access**. A feature of the strategic plan in which this program was proposed was the addition of an administrative faculty position. The person filling this position would assist teaching faculty in the creation of on-line courses and be a primary administrator of the Access program. When the faculty discussed the qualifications connected with this hiring, three criteria quickly emerged: experience with graduate theological education, appropriate technology skills, and ministry experience. In naming those particular qualifications, we quickly narrowed the universe of qualified applicants! So it is with even greater pleasure than usual that ESR introduces its new **Associate Dean of Distributed Learning**, Timothy W. Seid.

Tim Seid, the son of an evangelical pastor, first attended Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, from which he and his bride-to-be, Suann, graduated. Out of his growing interest in biblical studies, Tim next entered Grace College and then Wheaton Graduate School, from which he received an M.A. in New Testament. After spending a year at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, again receiving training in pastoral ministries, Tim was accepted into the doctoral program in Early Christianity at Brown University.

While at Brown, Tim became interested in the application of computer technology to the humanities. He learned to write computer programs to assist research and teaching, and did the electronic typesetting for a number of publications and books. By this time, Tim and Suann had grown their family to five children, all girls (Abby, Heidi, Emily, Lauren and Tabitha).

After graduation from Brown with a Ph.D., Tim was called to be the pastor of one of the few programmed meetings in New England Yearly Meeting, Smith Neck Friends Meeting. After several years, the family joined the Religious Society of Friends. While serving in that capacity, Tim also worked for Kinko’s as a Computer Services Manager, was a freelance content specialist for Digital Learning Group (an on-line textbook company), and held an appointment as Visiting Scholar at the Scholarly Technology Group of Brown University.

As a continuation of his academic work, Tim developed a hypertext website, *Interpreting Ancient Manuscripts* that describes the process of analyzing the ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, comparing and collating them, and then their presentation in the modern critical text of the Greek New Testament. His academic abilities are also clear in the publications “Synkrisis in Hebrews 7” in *Rhetoric and the Scriptures*, several entries in the recently published *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, and a forthcoming article “Samuel Fisher: 17th Century Quaker Biblical Scholar,” in *Quaker Religious Thought*.

He is currently working on a commentary on Hebrews in the series “The Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity” to be published by Westminster John Knox Press.

“Technological skill. Theological education. Ministry experience. Says ESR Dean, Jay Marshall, “We are blessed to have someone with this combination of experiences and skills on our faculty. ESR’s move into distributed learning will progress more easily and more quickly thanks to Tim’s work among us.”
"I realized ... that I was always writing about forgiveness. The first book was about self-forgiveness, the second book was about forgiving someone else, and the third book was about asking for forgiveness. As I write, I feel that kind of forgiveness working in me..."

So says Elizabeth Cox, who is coming to ESR October 19 and 20, 2001 as the keynote speaker of the annual Ministry of Writing Colloquium.

Elizabeth is the author of three novels (Familiar Ground, 1984; The Ragged Way People Fall Out of Love, 1991; and Night Talk, 1997) and the newly released Bargains in the Real World, a collection of short fiction.

She also writes poetry, essays and short stories. Her short story “The Third of July" was included in Prize Stories 1994: The O. Henry Awards, and “Land of Goshen" was cited for excellence in Best American Short Stories. Night Talk received the 1998 Lillian Smith Book Award for fiction and was nominated for the 1999 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

Elizabeth grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee, graduated from the University of Mississippi, received her M.F.A. from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and currently teaches one semester a year at Duke University.

Joining Elizabeth on the program are a variety of writers and editors who will lead workshops. Among them are David Citino (Professor of English and Creative Writing at Ohio State University and the author of eleven books of poems), C. Michael Curtis (senior editor of The Atlantic Monthly, editor of God: Stories, American Stories: Fiction From The Atlantic Monthly, and Elizabeth Cox’s husband), Scott Holland (Assistant Professor of Peace Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies and Director of Campus Ministry at Bethany Theological Seminary and contributing editor to Cross Currents: The Journal for the Association of Religion and Intellectual Life), and Gregory Wolfe (editor of Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion and co-editor with his wife of Circle of Grace: Praying with — and for — Your Children). Other workshop leaders will be announced as the colloquium nears.

Registration forms and more information can be obtained by writing to Brent Bill, 2001 Ministry of Writing Colloquium, c/o ESR or checking the ESR website.

The Dean’s Word continued from page 12.

book has been the realization that manual labor has become a sacred prayer time that heightens my communion with the divine and nourishes my spirit as much as any indoor ritual ever does. Tilling soil. Splitting wood. Moving stones. In the midst of the sweat, grunts and groans, these activities have become spiritual disciplines. For a while, I suspected these were meaningful activities because they put me in touch with the basic elements of God's creation. Things like

the feel of granite stones bulldozed by glaciers to my backyard, the sound of an ax splintering its way through a log, and the smell of freshly turned soil, contribute to my renewal. However, I have since discovered the real reason these activities are so important to the well being of my faith. These are activities that do not demand my mind's full attention, thus releasing it to choose how it will occupy itself for that period of time. Without fail, it engages in dialogue with the Divine. Unresolved matters get lifted again and again, held in the Light of Christ in conversational prayer. Waves of pleasure that come from the physical exertion are translated into refrains of thanksgiving and appreciation. By the time these activities are concluded, I have prayed from the depths of my heart and feel as though I've been made new all over again. This human vessel is refilled, ready to re-engage the opportunities that surround me and to pour out freely as

prompted by the Spirit.

Happily, I have met several kindred spirits along the way, though I don't expect that what has become spiritual practice for me will lead to a radical new movement anytime soon. For some, an “earthy spirituality" will never look pious enough, and manual labor will always look like work! But one day, should you call my office and be told that I am out digging in the dirt, chances are “it is well with my soul!”

Blessings, Jay
Earthly Spirituality
by Jay Marshall

Someone once said I had an “earthy spirituality.” That may be one of the nicest things anyone has ever said about me. It resonates as one of the truest descriptions one could offer about me. Climbing the abstract mountain to engage in theological debate is enjoyable, but at the end of the day, I want a “wash and wear” spirituality that can stomp through the mudholes of life. My faith, and the disciplines that nourish it, must be able to survive, even thrive, in actual practice. Spirituality is faith in practice, in my estimation.

For the record, I think ESR’s intentional effort to integrate concerns for spirituality throughout the curriculum is one of the school’s many strengths, and one of the things that sets ESR’s educational program apart from its peers. Repeatedly, students attribute the depth and richness of our classes to the contributions that arise from Quaker spirituality.

In my own life, I have learned that having an “earthy spirituality” is about more than the practicality of faith. The fact of the matter is that I frequently and easily encounter God in common, “down to earth” activities. One of the greatest liberations on my spiritual journey occurred while reading a book titled, “Prayer and Temperament.” Building on the Meyers-Briggs system, the authors of the book related those personality types to prayer practices. Their work helped me discover that I most easily engage in a conversational prayer that is peppered with questions and sprinkled with debates that lay open the deepest levels of my heart and soul. My prayer occurs in the midst of activities, to the point that life on the run borders on prayer without ceasing. These were tendencies about myself that I already knew, though I didn’t fully understand or appreciate them until I read “Prayer and Temperament.”

Perhaps the greatest discovery since reading that book was that the depth and richness of our classes to the contributions that arise from Quaker spirituality.

“The abstract mountain to engage in theological debate is enjoyable, but at the end of the day, I want a ‘wash and wear’ spirituality that can stomp through the mudholes of life.”

Continued on page 11.