

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University
Fall, 2010

Welcome to the Religious Studies Fall, 2010 Newsletter!

Contents:

A Conversation with Jim Moyer	2
Coffee, Conversations, and German Sermons!.....	5
Student Perspective: Laura Pearson.....	8
Inter-generational Storytelling.....	10
Hedrick Inducted Into MSU Wall of Fame	13
Religious Studies Student Workers	14
Publications and Presentations	15
A Word from Our Department Head.....	19

To Our Alumni:

Keep in touch!

Send us your e-mail address and let us know what you're up to!

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Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

A Conversation with Jim Moyer

Since 1970, Dr. Jim Moyer (pictured at right) has been a faculty member at Missouri State University, first in the History Department, and then in the Department of Religious Studies. In this time he has continued to hone his skills as an exemplary professor with a passion for students, especially those who need him most—first year students. In this issue of the Religious Studies Notebook, we sat down with Dr. Moyer to catch up with some of the things that he has been doing.



Religious Studies Notebook: Tell me about the John G. Gamme award that you were awarded in 2007. This was given by the Southwestern regional American Schools of Oriental Research, right? How many years have you been involved in that region?

Jim Moyer: In 2007 the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies awarded me the John G. Gammie Scholar's Award. It is named after one of the finest scholars in the region whose life ended too early because of cancer. The award was for \$2,000 and recognized my contribution to the Southwest regional meeting. I have served in several capacities over the years, including President of the Southwest Commission. In addition, I have attended the Southwest Regional Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Dallas for over 35 years, and read papers virtually every year.

RSN: You also played a role in getting the Central States regional SBL started as well, I believe.

JM: I did not actually begin the regional meeting, but after the first few years the leadership of the region fell to me at a very critical time when about ten of our finest scholars moved out of the region because of changes at Concordia Seminary and Seminex. I served a total of seven years, and expanded the disciplines, increased attendance, and moved from meeting on college campuses to meeting in hotels in larger cities.

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 2

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

RSN: You continue to serve as one of the leaders in organizing the Springfield Area Association of Bible Professors.

JM: Yes, I began the Greater Springfield Professors of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible group in 1978. I had observed that many of the local professors never went to national meetings outside their own religious setting. In many cases this was the result of lack of travel funds. I knew many of them personally and asked them if they would be willing to dialogue outside their own college/university. All said they would enjoy that, but they were not optimistic that many others would be willing to come. We tried a late afternoon and evening format on a Thursday in early fall with success, and we have continued to meet for 32 years. Eventually the New Testament group began separately, and then joined us so that we both meet together once a year. Various colleges and conveners have hosted us over the years. About 25-30 professors from as far away as Southwest Baptist University, Ozark Bible College, and College of the Ozarks and about 25-30 students have attended as well. Several of our graduate students have read papers there as well as a few of our undergraduate students.

RSN: In 2009-2010, you were one of the Provost Fellows. What were your responsibilities in that capacity?

JM: That year, I was chosen as a Provost Fellow for the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. I assisted graduate and teaching assistants, adjunct faculty, and new faculty both in weekly meetings and individually. I also led a monthly discussion of The Teaching Professor newsletter. Everything centered around improving both teaching and learning at MSU.

RSN: And now, you are chairing the committee on First Year Experiences here at Missouri State. What are the goals and scope of work in that committee?

JM: I have chaired the First Year Advisory Committee for the past two years. Our mission has been to enable our first year students to be successful college students and to increase the retention rate of MSU. This has included the expansion of IDS 110 from one to two hours, the inclusion of our Public Affairs themes, and the use of a common reader. This year the common reader has been *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson.

RSN: The First Year Experience is a major focus of the University. What are the challenges that students face in their first year?

JM: First year students need help to transition from high school to college, including handling independence, time management, studying extensively, reading textbooks, listening and taking notes, and developing critical thinking.

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 3

Religious Studies Notebook

*Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University
Fall, 2010*

RSN: Your interest in student success really shows up in your teaching, and has throughout your career. What are you doing now in your classes to assist students to succeed?

JM: I do whatever it takes to coach students to success. This includes supplemental instruction, review sessions, sharing lunches to encourage students and make them believe in their potential. I found very early in my career that I have authority to tell students that they can live up to their nearly unlimited potential. They believe me, and go out and do it.

RSN: What do you find most interesting about teaching?

JM: I love to see students blossom into successful students who can think for themselves. I am always trying new things that will improve my teaching and the learning of my students. Working with such a variety of students is interesting, challenging and rewarding. I am changing the world one student at a time.

RSN: Dr. Moyer, thank you for sharing your time with us, but most of all, for changing students' lives—*one student at a time!*

You are cordially invited to attend the

5th Annual Religious Studies Student & Alumni

Homecoming Potluck Dinner

Saturday, 23 October 2010

5:00 PM to 8:00 PM

at the home of John & Elizabeth Strong

1109 S. Pickwick, Springfield, MO

Since this is a potluck dinner, you are welcome to bring a dish to share, but please don't feel obligated to do so.

For more information, call Jane Terry at **417-836-5514**

*Keep in touch! Please send your e-mail
address to: JaneTerry@missouristate.edu*



Religious Studies Notebook

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Fall, 2010



Coffee, Conversations, & German Sermons!

Dr. Austra Reinis reports on the first two months of her full-year sabbatical in Germany

September 8, 2010

Greetings from Germany! After five years of teaching in the Religious Studies Department at Missouri State University, I am thoroughly enjoying the luxury of full-time academic research that my well-earned full-year sabbatical—and Fulbright Grant—are affording me. My goal is to research and write a series of articles on 16th and 17th century German Lutheran sermons on Martin Luther's Household Chart or Household Table of Duties (*Haustafel*). I expect my work to provide insight into how preachers used the sacred Christian text—the Bible—and the Protestant ritual of preaching to persuade ordinary folks to conform their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to a certain social structures—the hierarchical churches, states, and households characteristic of sixteenth-century Germany.

So what is Luther's Household Chart and why would anyone want to read old sermons about it? Martin Luther sought to reconceptualize not only how sixteenth-century German Christians related to and worshiped God, but also to reform the way they thought about and lived their everyday lives. Luther's Household Chart is a collection of Bible verses which spells out the respective duties of Christian pastors, rulers, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, young people, and widows. Luther appended this Household Chart to his widely-disseminated *Small Catechism* (1529), a booklet he wrote to instruct parishioners on the basics of the Christian faith. Luther's followers, beginning at the latest in 1556, began to preach sermons on the duties of the various social groups mentioned in Luther's Household Chart. At least 15 of these pastors published their sermons in the form of sermon collections which, over the years, found their way into libraries such as the Herzog August Library in the town of Wolfenbüttel in Lower Saxony.

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 5

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010



A two-month grant from the Herzog August Library allowed me to spend the months of June and July reading and excerpting eight of the fifteen volumes of sermons that I have identified. What did my day typically look like? I rose at 6:30am and, after a 30 minute walk for exercise, headed for the library. Of the library's two main buildings, the one

I worked in was originally built in the 17th century as an armory, that is, a building meant to house cannons and cannon balls and other such gruesome things. Today its vaulted main floor (*pictured above right*) houses part of the library's reference collection and its upper floor features a Rare Book reading room. At 8:15 or so I would be settled at my desk in the reading room with a laptop and a 400-year-old leather-bound volume of Lutheran sermons (*pictured above left*).

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 6

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

At 10:30, I would enjoy a coffee break with librarians and other scholars. Then I would work until 1 pm, take a short break for lunch, and head over to the library administration building, or on sunny days to the garden (*pictured below*), for a second coffee break. Over coffee I often chatted with the twenty or so other European, American, and yes, even Japanese (!) doctoral students and professors in residence at the library at any given time. At 2 pm or so I would return to the reading room and try to stay focused on my reading until around 6 pm, at which time I would return to my apartment for dinner, a 45 minute walk for exercise and sanity, and then, not infrequently, a glass of wine (Remember, this is Germany!) and conversation with my scholarly neighbors. On August 15, I moved to the next library on my list, the Research Library in the small Thuringian town Gotha. Here I have begun writing my first article, and hope, by November 15, when I move on to Luther's home town of Wittenberg, to write a second one.

When I return to Springfield in August 2011, I expect to use my new knowledge to inform and enrich the way I teach my REL 397, "Spirituality of Luther and Calvin," course (Fall 2011) and my REL 340, "Christianity," course (Spring 2012). If there is sufficient interest, I may also be able to offer a study-abroad experience on the topic "Luther, Bach, and the Fall of the Wall" in early Summer of 2012.

Austra Reinis

Dr. Reinis's sabbatical is being funded by a Missouri State University Sabbatical Grant and fellowships from Fulbright Foundation, the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel, the Research Library in Gotha, and a grant awarded jointly by the Evangelical Church of America and the Evangelical Church of Germany.



Religious Studies Notebook

*Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University
Fall, 2010*

Student Perspective: Laura Pearson Spends Spring Semester Abroad

One of our Religious Studies majors, Laura Pearson, as part of her Spring Study Abroad, traveled to the tropical Ile de la Reunion – an overseas department of France located 200 miles east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, through Missouri State University’s International Student Exchange Program (ISEP). Ms Pearson shares her experience with Religious Studies Notebook.



By the time I could see land out of the plane window, it had finally sunk in with me: there’s no turning back now. Forty-two hours of travel, days of packing, and months of applications had culminated in this moment, and I sentimentally teared up as I watched the harsh blue horizon of the sea give way to the bright green slope that is the north coast of La Reunion.

It was January, and I was as prepared as I possibly could have been for my semester abroad, knowing little more than the fact that I had a lot to learn. Once I connected with the other Ameri-

can students from my flight, rode in a somewhat sketchy-looking taxi to the University, and moved into my dorm room with its ocean-view balcony, I thus began the last leg of the longest day of my life. This seemingly abrupt transition was nothing in comparison with the changes I felt over the next five months living in La Reunion, France: a Creole island about 40 miles wide in the Indian Ocean, 200 miles east of Madagascar.

“Creole” meant one thing to me: different. I was different. For the first time in my life, I was the ethnic minority on this island that holds a beautiful mix of African, European, Indian, and Chinese cultures and heredity. Everything there is *mélange*, or mixed together – culture, race, religion, world view; over the generations, everything has come together and created a world very different from any other African land or French *département*, let alone Missouri. I felt like an outsider at first, but soon I mixed in with everyone else and my culture became identity more than I’d ever experienced living in the Ozarks.



Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010



All my classes were taught in French, and most were in the Anthropology Department – not a far stretch for a Religious Studies major. In fact, I came to realize pretty quickly that religion was so very tied into the everyday Creole culture that it was often hard to draw the line between the two. Right beside my dorm building, outside the walls of the university, was a mosque, and there was another one downtown on the main shopping boulevard. Hindu temples were everywhere, decorated in intricate figures and pastel

colors. Roadside crucifixes and incense-burning altars could be found next to major highways and along hiking trails in the more remote parts of the island, accessible only by foot. It was as rich an area in religion as anyone could ask for, and there was no rule that you had to choose only one.

Being 10,000 miles away from home taught me much about the world, but just



as much about myself. I discovered a passion for the outdoors that I later realized had been there all along, quieted by my air-conditioned, paved American lifestyle. I became more carefree – quite the accomplishment for someone who always likes to be busy. I broke my list-making addiction.

Continued on next page...

Laura Pearson, center, with friends Anne Sheriff (left, from Missouri) and Thomas Bach (right, from Germany) in Ile de la Reunion.

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

I learned how to live with patience: island time is always at least 15 minutes after the agreed-upon hour. Now take all of this and multiply it by four to have an idea of what backpacking in Madagascar is like.

There's a flip-side, though. Coming home was a much more difficult transition. I couldn't figure out why or how people USED so much STUFF. I hated feeling like I was the same as everyone else, all from the same culture, but so very disconnected from everyone. Nothing here had changed, but I had. It was like a challenge: reconcile this. Be two people at once.

The good news is that through all this change and challenge I've seen nothing but growth. It was never painful, but it did push me to open my mind not only to how vast and complex the world is, but also to how I want to live in that world. I have come away with one conclusion: I want to become the person I would ask others to be – an open-minded, understanding, curious, compassionate person striving always to reject apathy and use what I've been given to serve a community that stretches across borders, seas, cultures, and religions.



For more information on Missouri State University's Study Away opportunities, see http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/study_away.htm.



Inter-generational Storytelling

Two of our faculty members (Kathy Pulley and Lora Hobbs) and a graduate assistant (Nathan Dunn) reached out to the Ozarks community during the 2009-2010 academic year. Their goal was to recruit youth from three different churches to participate in their project, named *Inter-generational Storytelling from the Older to the Younger*. They wanted the youth to interview older female members of their respective congregations. The initial goal of this community project was to collect up to thirty oral histories from Ozarks women, and make their stories available on the Internet in both audio format and through hard-copy transcriptions.¹ Pulley says, "The outcomes went beyond our expectations. I did not expect everyone (the youth and the older women) to enjoy it as much as they did. Relationship-building occurred between unlikely conversation partners."

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 10

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010



Religious Studies faculty members and facilitators of the Inter-generational Storytelling project: Kathy Pulley, above, and Lora Hobbs, below.



After making initial contacts with the churches, and the youth and older members all agreed to participate, the faculty conducted a one-hour orientation session with the youth. They received instruction about how to do the interviews, how to fill out the necessary paperwork, and how to use the audio recorders loaned to them by the university. The second step was to pair them with one of the older women and arrange a time for the interview. Interview questions were provided by Hobbs and Pulley. The interviews lasted about thirty minutes and most were conducted in the homes of the older women. Following the interviews, the youth met together again for a focus group conducted by the professors involved. During the focus group, Pulley and Hobbs asked a series of questions, and overall the youth had only positive comments to report.

The outcomes were phenomenal. Hobbs says, "Some young people interviewed their grandparents. It was great to hear the grandchild report that though they had known their grandparents all their lives, they had never really asked about their grandparents' childhood or faith journey until this project. Other youth shared that they thought they had found a new friend, one who wasn't just another older person in their congregation to them anymore." Others interviewed women they had seen at church for years but knew nothing about them. One young man reported that he learned some valuable lessons about economics from his interview with a woman who had been a professor of finance. The older women reported that they were pleased to get better acquainted with their young interviewer. The women also appreciated the opportunity to tell some of their own stories, and their enthusiasm is noticeable in the voices of some of the interviewees.

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

Because of Pulley's and Hobbs' familiarity with and interest in Restoration churches in the Ozarks, a church from each of the three branches of the Restoration Movement (or Stone-Campbell Movement) were approached and all three graciously agreed to participate and assist as needed. They were the Billings Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the East Sunshine Church of Christ, and the Parkview Christian Church (Independent).²

This project promotes MSU's Ozarks Studies Program and its Gender Studies Program by providing additional archival materials and making those available to everyone on the Web; thus, beyond its value to the local church communities, it has value into perpetuity for researchers and other interested parties.

Inter-generational Storytelling is an auxiliary of a larger project created in the fall of 2008 by Hobbs for her class "Women and Religion." Through her successfully written grants, funded by the College of Humanities and Public Affairs (CHPA) and by the Provost's Curricular Grant Program, Hobbs was able to provide her students with an opportunity to interview women from various faith traditions. Because of the success of that project, the CHPA also supported the second grant funding the *Intergenerational Storytelling* project.³

Both Pulley and Hobbs agree that there was a lot of work that went into making the arrangements and the scheduling; however, in addition to learning much, they also left the project somewhat inspired. The youth (mostly high school-age, with a few college-age) were generous with their time, open to doing something completely outside their comfort zone (a one-to-one interview with someone over sixty), and eager to share what they learned from the project. In this case, crossing the assumed generational barriers proved to be much easier and enjoyable than anticipated.

Notes:

1. Go to <http://www.missouristate.edu/relst/ozarkswomen> and click on the Inter-generational Storytelling link at the bottom of the page to listen to the audio tapes, as well as read transcripts of the interviews.

2. Without the cooperation and support of leaders within each of these churches, our project would not have been successful, so our thanks to Micki Pulleyking (Minister of the Billings Christian Church), Mitzi Smith, (Director of the Family Life Center at East Sunshine Church of Christ), and Ryan Clements, (youth minister at Parkview Christian Church).

3. For more information about the "Women and Religion" class project, *Religious Lives of Ozarks Women*, go to <http://www.missouristate.edu/relst/ozarkswomen>. Also, a word of appreciation goes to Dean Victor Matthews and Department Head Jack Llewellyn, and to those who transcribed the recordings—Jane Terry and Marah Baldwin.

Religious Studies Notebook

*Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University
Fall, 2010*

Charlie Hedrick inducted into MSU's Wall of Fame

Dr. Charles W. Hedrick, who served as a distinguished professor of Religious Studies for 24 years (1980-2004) at Missouri State University, was honored this fall as one of MSU's Wall of Fame 2010 Induction Class.

Internationally known for his work in Coptic translations and the Jesus parables, Charlie Hedrick enhanced the scholarly reputation of both the department and the university. Hedrick has a passion for writing – publishing numerous books and innumerable articles – as well as editing and presenting research at conferences, all of which he has continued into his retirement. Throughout his tenure, he received many university teaching and research awards, and took journeys across the world to re-



search. He performed archaeological digs in Egypt, and on two occasions took students to dig in Israel. His international perspective was broadened by his work with the Army and at the Pentagon, and his students and peers say he was the embodiment of the public affairs mission before the university adopted it. Our department is proud of Charlie's service to the University and his continued excellence in research, and we know this award is well-deserved.

The Wall of Fame, which is located outside the ballroom in the Plaster Student Union (3rd floor), is a designated location for the University to recognize and honor employees who have excelled at Missouri State and significantly contributed to the success and positive collegiate experience of students. The intention of the Wall of Fame is to recognize those faculty and staff members whose impact on students is considered truly exceptional, who were known and respected by various segments of the campus community, who continuously demonstrated character and integrity, whose service resulted in meaningful change at the University, and who had a notable influence on students.

The inaugural group of inductees was in 2002 and included another Religious Studies faculty member, the late Dr. Gerrit tenZythoff.

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

Meet Our Religious Studies Department Student Workers!



Welcome to new student workers, **Crystal Wilson** (*above, left*) and **Lauren Yust** (*above, right*)
- and -

Welcome back returning student workers, **Sarah Riccardi** (*below, left*) and **Marah Baldwin** (*below, right*)

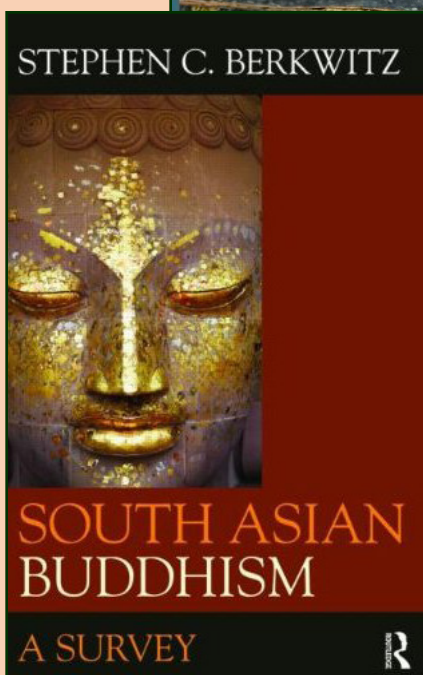
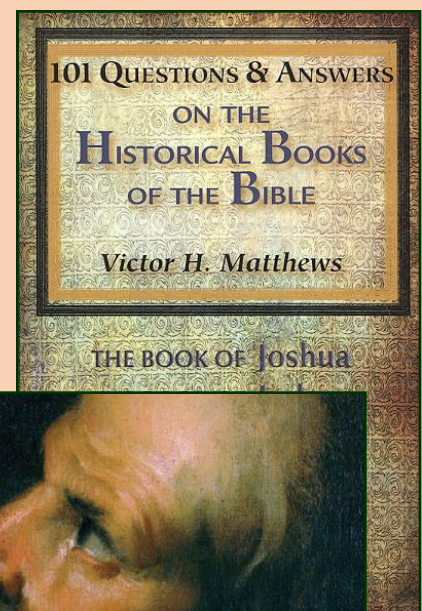
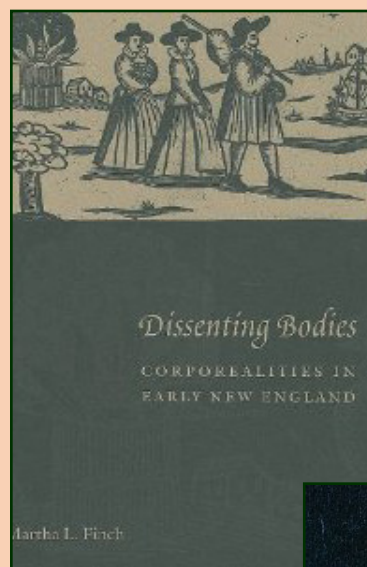
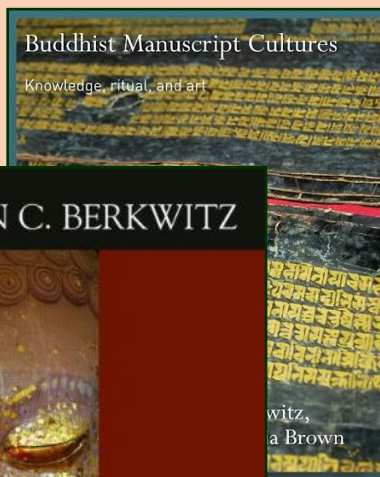


Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

Publications & Presentations



Books

Berkwitz, S. C. (2009, October). South Asian Buddhism: A Survey Routledge.

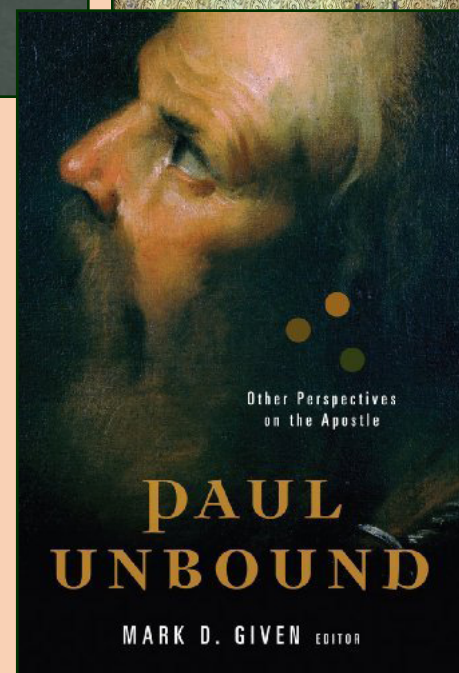
Berkwitz, S. C., Schober, J., Brown, C. (2009, January).

Buddhist Manuscript Cultures: Knowledge, Ritual, and Art Routledge.

Finch, M. L. (2009, October). Dissenting Bodies: Corporealities in Early New England Columbia University Press.

Given, M. D. (2009, October). Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on the Apostle.

Matthews, V. H. (2009, November). 101 Questions and Answers on the Historical Books of the Bible Paulist Press.



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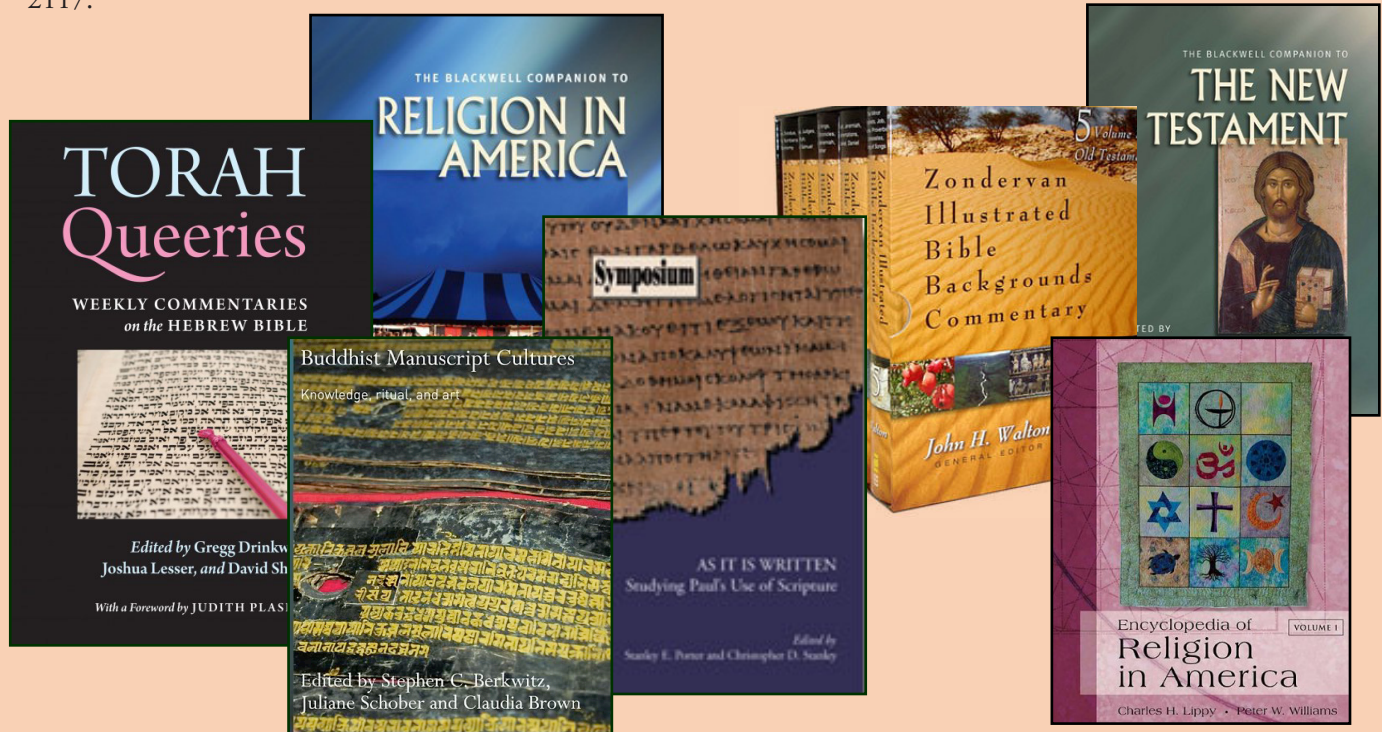
Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University
Fall, 2010

Publications & Presentations

Book Chapters

- Baynes, L. (2010). "New Testament Canons." In *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament*, 90-100.
- Belser, J. Watts (2009). "Parashat Shoftim: Setting Ourselves Judges" in *Torah Queeries: Weekly Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible*. New York University Press.
- Berkwitz, S. C. (2009). "Introduction; Rethinking Buddhist Manuscript Cultures" (1-15), and "Merit and Materiality in Sri Lankan Buddhist Manuscripts" (35-49), in *Buddhist Manuscript Cultures: Knowledge, Ritual, and Art*, Routledge.
- Given, M. D. (2009). "Paul and Rhetoric: A Sophos in the Kingdom of God" in *As It is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, SBL, 175-200.
- Matthews, V. H. (2009). "Habakkuk" in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary – Old Testament*, Vol. 5, 5, 164-177.
- Schmalzbauer, John (2010). "Popular Culture" in *The Blackwell Companion to Religion in America*, Wiley-Blackwell, 254-275.
- Schmalzbauer, John (2010). "Sociological Approaches" in *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, CQ Press, 2109-2117.



Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 16

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

Journal Articles

Belser, J. Watts (2009). "Crying Out for Rain: The Human, The Holy, and the Earth in the Ritual Fasts of Rabbinic Literature." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 13(2), 219-238.

Matthews, V. H. (2009). "Jeremiah's Scroll and Linked Zones of Communication". *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 39(3), 116-124.

Matthews, V. H. (2009). "Back to Bethel: Geographical Reiteration in Biblical Narrative". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128(1), 151-167.

Schmalzbauer, John (2010). "Social Engagement in an Evangelical Campus Ministry: The Case of Urbana 2006". *Journal of College and Character* 11(1).

Strong, John T. (2010). "Egypt's Shameful Death and the House of Israel's Exodus from Sheol: (Ezek 32:17-32 and 37:1-14)" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34/4, 475-504.

Presentations at National and International Conferences

Baynes, Leslie A., Society of Biblical Literature, "Enoch and Jubilees in the Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church," New Orleans, LA (November 2009).

Baynes, Leslie A., Catholic Biblical Association, "The Watchers Tradition in 1 Enoch's Book of Parables," Omaha, NE (August 2009).

Belser, Julia Watts, Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, "Rabbinics in Unexpected Contexts: Teaching Talmud to Non-Jewish Students," Los Angeles, CA (December 21, 2009).

Berkwitz, Stephen C., American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, "Colonialism and Conflict in "Christian Moderns," American Academy of Religion, Montreal, QC (November 7, 2009).

Berkwitz, Stephen C., *Sex and Texts: Representations of Sexuality in Asian Religious Traditions*, "The Erotics of Sinhala Buddhist Poetry: Power and Desire in Voyeuristic Verse," University of Colorado, Boulder, CO (October 16, 2009).

Berkwitz, Stephen C., Symposium on the Seethwaka Kingdom, "Moral Themes in Alagiyavanna's Jataka Poems," Colombo, Sri Lanka (June 21, 2009).

Finch, Martha L., Embodiments of Cultural Contact, "'As In A Mirror': Reflecting on Bodies and Cultural Encounters in Seventeenth-Century New England," University of Rostock, Rostock, Germany (September 24, 2009).

Given, Mark Douglas, Society of Biblical Literature, "Parenthesis and Peroration: The Rhetorical Function of Rom 12:1-15:13," New Orleans, LA (November 2009).

Given, Mark Douglas, International Society of Biblical Literature, "Parenthesis and Peroration: The Rhetorical Function of Rom 12:1-15:13," Rome (July 2009).

Continued on next page...

Religious Studies Notebook, Fall 2010 * Page 17

Religious Studies Notebook

Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University

Fall, 2010

Presentations at National and International Conferences

continued...

Matthews, Victor H., Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, "Conversation and Identity: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman," New Orleans, LA (November 23, 2009).

Pulley, Kathy J., Christian Scholars Conference, "Christian America Reviewed," David Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN (June 29, 2009).

Pulley, Kathy J., Women in Ministry, "Embodying God," Pepperdine University and the Lilly Foundation, Malibu, CA (May 12, 2009).

Pulleyking, Micki A., Christian Scholars' Conference, "Gender-based Disaffiliation," Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN. (June 26, 2009).

Reinis, Austra, "Workshop Sterbeprozesse," University of Aachen, "Die lutherische ars moriendi im ausgehenden 16. Jh. am Beispiel der Taetigkeit des Theologen und Pfarrers Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603)," Aachen, Germany (November 27, 2009).

Reinis, Austra, Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, "Give us this Day our Daily Bread: Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603) on the Lord's Prayer," Geneva, Switzerland (May 30, 2009).

Schmalzbauer, John A., American Religion in a Post-Secular Society, "Christianity in the Post-Secular University (Keynote)," Institute for the Study of Christianity and Culture/Michigan State University Department of Religious Studies, Lansing, MI (October 30, 2009).

Schmalzbauer, John A., Michigan State University Religion and U.S. Culture Colloquium, "Crossing Over to the Promised Land in Popular Culture," Michigan State University Department of Religious Studies, Lansing, MI (October 30, 2009).

Schmalzbauer, John A., "America's God' course at Duke University, "Media Memorialization of 9/11 and American Catholicism," Duke University, Durham, NC (August 26, 2009).

Schmalzbauer, John A., Exploring the Post-Secular, "Religion and Knowledge in the Post-Secular Academy," Yale University/Social Science Research Council, New Haven, CT (April 3, 2009).

Schmalzbauer, John A., Fostering Public Scholarship Forum, "Comments on Ecklund's Wagging Peace on the Science and Religion Battleground," Center on Race, Religion, and Urban Life (Rice University), Houston, TX (February 7, 2009).

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Religious Studies Notebook

*Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University
Fall, 2010*

A Word from the Department Head, Jack Llewellyn

Greetings once again to the all the friends of the Department of Religious Studies at Missouri State University! We are in the thick of the 2010-2011 academic year, a year that is already presenting us with new challenges, but new opportunities as well. As Dr. James Cofer takes over as Missouri State's tenth president, the University is working on a long-range plan to chart a course through 2016. A few years ago, Missouri State started on a process in which every department would be subject to a program review every five years. Now it is our turn, with Religious Studies doing a self-study this year, preparing for a visit by external reviewers in the fall of 2011. Though the reviewers will no doubt have recommendations that we can use to improve our academic program, I am confident that they will also conclude that we are already successful in many ways.

There are four specific successes that I want to bring to your attention in this column. Effective in the fall of 2009, Micki Pulleyking and Lora Hobbs were promoted to the rank of senior instructor. Micki started her academic career with a B.A. in Religious Studies from what is now Missouri State, before going on to earn an M.Div. at Harvard and a Ph.D. at Boston University. Lora was awarded B.E.S. and M.Ed. degrees at the University of Missouri-Columbia, before completing an M.A. in Religious Studies at Missouri State. Micki and Lora have a combined history of teaching full-time, and teaching very effectively, in the department for more than twenty-five years. The senior instructor rank was created just a couple of years ago to acknowledge the very important contributions that are made to Missouri State by faculty who are not on the tenure track. Micki's and Lora's promotions to that rank are richly deserved.



Continued on next page...

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Another great success in that same semester was that Austra Reinis was awarded tenure and promotion to the associate professor. Austra came to Missouri State in 2004, after spending two years teaching at the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon (that is, Beirut, Lebanon, not Lebanon, Missouri). She has a B.S. from the University of California, Berkeley, an M.A. from the University of Stockholm, an M.Div. from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. One of Austra's important accomplishments as an assistant professor at Missouri State was the publication of her book, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars moriendi in the German Reformation, 1519-1528* (Ashgate, 2007). As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, Austra is spending the 2010-2011 academic year on sabbatical in Germany, with a Fulbright fellowship, in addition to financial support from other sources. Though the rest of us back in Springfield are a little jealous of her, I should emphasize, especially in the current budget climate, that Austra is not on a paid vacation but is continuing to do the kind of important research that was one of the factors that led to her promotion.

The final success I wanted to highlight, effective this fall, is Stephen Berkwitz's promotion to full professor. Steve came to Missouri State in 1999, after earning a B.A. from the University of Vermont, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara. In addition to his fine teaching and important service, the past ten years have been very productive ones for Steve in the area of research. Among other things, he has written three books on his own, and edited or co-edited two more! The example I would highlight is his book, *South Asian Buddhism: A Survey* (Routledge, 2010), a classroom resource that developed in part out of courses that Steve has taught at Missouri State.

I don't want to prejudge the process of program review that the Department of Religious Studies is just beginning. I'm hopeful that it will yield insights that we can use to enhance what we do. But I think that you'll agree with me that this is a faculty we can be proud of. To congratulate these folks (well, not Austra, who'll be in Germany), please come to our Annual Student and Alumni Homecoming Potluck Dinner on Saturday, 23 October, at the home of John and Elizabeth Strong (1109 South Pickwick Avenue). I look forward to seeing you there!