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### ***From the Interim Director***

For many EFM groups, September marks the beginning of a new year. Such a beginning provides opportunity for members to connect and re-connect as spiritual autobiographies are shared, lessons are discussed and theological reflections begin. There is a cycle, a rhythm, encountered in EFM and that rhythm can provide comfort and security over time.

It may appear that a lot of changes are taking place within the program. EFM has an interim director, a new assistant director and even a new trainer in residence. In January, the School of Theology will welcome a new dean. What do such changes mean for EFM and for those invested in and committed to the program? I believe the answer depends on us – all of us – students, mentors, coordinators, trainers, program staff and program supporters. Do we view these changes as frightening challenges or exciting opportunities? Do we respond to change with resistance and withdrawal, or courage and conviction? I suggest we might be served well to examine our present situation and contemplate the future using the familiar framework of theological reflection.

We should ask ourselves what it is like to live in a world that may appear uncertain. We should acknowledge the things that can go wrong. We should also take seriously those things that get our attention and assess our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Perhaps change will be called for by us and by others. While asking these probing questions, I believe we will discover the potential that awaits us. A period of transition such as the one we find ourselves in the midst of can call out the creative energy in all of us. Faith is often strengthened and renewed during periods of significant change. And the writer of Hebrews reminds us that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

In the days ahead, I encourage you to become aware of the rhythm of your life. It may be ordered by your family and work commitments. It may correspond to the rhythm of the daily office. Perhaps the EFM cycle of study impacts your rhythm as well. Identify the pattern of energy in your life, highs and lows; then remind yourself that God is

present throughout. Just as God is present for each of us, God is present for all of us. God will sustain us through all of the changes in our lives.

*Johnna Camp*

### ***Trainer in Residence***

EFM welcomes Sissie Wile to the Mountain as our TRAINER IN RESIDENCE. Wile is an EFM graduate, has mentored for 13 years, and became a trainer of mentors two years ago. In addition to her work as trainer, she will work closely with the Director and Assistant Director to support the training network and will be involved in the on-going development of the program and its marketing.

Wile comes to us from Meridian, MS, where she and her husband, Fred, own their own business. They are the parents of Daniel Wile and Hailey Allin. Sissie previously worked for IBM as a systems engineer and taught computer information systems courses in a community college setting for eight years.

In addition to holding a B.A. from Vanderbilt, Wile is a labyrinth facilitator and a graduate of the Haden Institute's program for spiritual direction. She currently serves as a board member of the Phil Hardin Foundation. Sissie brings a combination of wisdom and spirituality to the program, and her gifts are a true blessing to us. If you would like to send a word of welcome to Sissie, her e-mail address is [swile@sewanee.edu](mailto:swile@sewanee.edu)  
Mentor Training Schedule

"Help! I need to get to mentor training." If this thought has passed through your mind or out of your mouth, we have just what you are looking for. We have on the EFM website a published schedule of training events. We update it regularly.

What follows is a two-question quiz. If you get both questions right you gather frequent training points that will allow you to upgrade your seating at the next mentor training event.

#### **Question One:**

*True or False:* When a mentor training (Basic or In-service) is listed at a particular location, the mentor training is only listed once, even if there are two or more basic training events offered.

#### **Question Two:**

Which of these website addresses (URL's) will get you to the current training schedule?

- A. [www.ineedEFMtraining.org](http://www.ineedEFMtraining.org)
- B. [www.cometothissiteforEFMrecognition.net](http://www.cometothissiteforEFMrecognition.net)
- C. [www.sewanee.edu/EFM/efmtraining/ntltrngsched.html](http://www.sewanee.edu/EFM/efmtraining/ntltrngsched.html)

Good luck!

### **EFM Mentor Releases Third Book**

Cynthia Davis, who mentors an EFM group in Albuquerque, NM, has just released the third book in the [Footprints From the Bible](#) series. This trio of Biblical fiction novels has been well received by laity and clergy alike. Told in first person format, Cynthia has a gift for making the Old Testament come alive and sing.

The latest book in the series, *Miriam's Healing*, is a story that will speak to anyone who has felt that God does not care about pain and suffering. Miriam has to come to terms with her doubts about God, who seems not to hear the despair of the chosen people, and decide how to respond to her brother who claims to be the Deliverer sent by God. Cynthia is available for book signings and speaking engagements. For more information, check out the website [www.FootprintsFromTheBible.com](http://www.FootprintsFromTheBible.com).

### ***From the Assistant Director***

I collect things, mainly books (especially those that I hope one day to read), receipts (which I most often forget why I saved), my past appointment calendars (just in case I become famous and my biographer needs to know what I did when and where) and quotations. Some might denigrate my collector's spirit by charging me with being a pack rat. I prefer "collector." Of all my collections, the most useful has proved to be my quotations collection.

For example, in the last month I have noticed that James Thurber has said, "It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers." Or Rowan Williams, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote recently, "I don't think reflection is ever a luxury or an optional extra – it's part of being human, of being a Christian human being and what distinctive perspective Christianity brings to the human condition." David Kolb, a towering figure in experiential learning, tucked this gem into a summary paragraph in his book *Experiential Learning*, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience."

The careful reader will notice that a common theme runs through these recent collections. All have to do with knowing. No doubt my attention fixed on these quotations because of my taking a staff position with EFM. I have been involved with the program all my adult life: first as mentor, then trainer and the coordinator for the Diocese of Oklahoma. I have written for the program and consulted with it, all while holding the quiet vow that I would never serve on staff. To be on staff would mean living once again on the Mountain (I attended the college from 1963-1967). Indeed, God has a sense of humor! I now have a basement apartment in Sewanee.

Present plans project my being in Sewanee for a year while my family remains in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I continue as Director of the Deacon Formation Program of the Diocese of Oklahoma. I plan to work a significant number of days a month in Tulsa. I also plan to travel to dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church promoting and learning about the program. I see such visits as opportunities to listen for the interests and needs church

leaders have in adult theological education. I want to listen for passionate expressions of the educational mission of all Christians. I seek to hear people speak their soul-deep hopes for what well-informed and formed adult Christians can mean for the continual transformation of church and society.

My desire is to visit as many dioceses as possible. Wrangle me an invitation and I will do what I can to come listen to the dreams people have for adult theological education and its place in furthering the mission and ministry of the church.

I close with a quotation from Roberta Bondi: "For me, theological reflection is a three-way conversation among our ancestors in the church, my everyday experience and God. The conversation calls me to bring the whole of who I am -- intellect and emotion, memory and hope, action and contemplation, wounds and prayer -- in order that I may live out our common calling to love God and neighbor." She gives voice to why I have come to serve you as the EFM Assistant Program Director.

*Rick Brewer*

[www.sewanee.edu/EFM/efmhome.html](http://www.sewanee.edu/EFM/efmhome.html)

EFMers by nature are seekers, but sometimes we need to find the ANSWER. Do you have a friend who is moving and would like to know if there is an EFM group in his or her new location? You'll find on the [EFM Website](#) the name of a coordinator who will be able to help. Do you want to recall an article from the spring edition of the EFM Newsletter, but you can't find your copy? It's on the [EFM Website](#). Mentor training forms and training schedules are there as well. The first four lessons of the text from each year and two Common Lessons from Year C are included. This will help any student who has not received the materials by the time class begins. There is a listing, including pictures, of the EFM Home Office Staff. The [EFM Website](#) is a wonderful resource, and it is continually being expanded. Add the [EFM Website](#) to your Favorites folder, and check it often to see what is new. If you have suggestions for additional topics that would be helpful to you, please let us know.

*E-Hint:* You can capture the EFM logo for publicity use by accessing the EFM homepage, right-clicking on the EFM logo and saving it to your file.

Common Lesson Year C for the 2004-2005 Cycle of Study

Common Lessons (CL) are so named because they provide for common reading experiences within and among EFM seminar groups. When one comes into an EFM group, often she or he finds that people are reading from different texts. We call such groups multi-level groups. Common lessons were invented to serve three purposes. First, they provide students in a multi-level group six opportunities throughout the year to read the same material. Second, they each address an aspect of the common life of the seminar. And, third, the Common Lessons provide a way for groups across the EFM network to read the common material, much like the Common Lectionary does for Sunday morning worship. As one of the EFM trainers says, "The Common Lessons are the glue that holds the groups together."

To accomplish the three-fold purpose, we have four cycles of Common Lessons, cleverly named A, B, C, and D, respectively. Each cycle builds around a theme. For the 2004-2005 cycle (the year we are beginning) the network is using Common Lessons C, which keep the theme, "Our Faith in the World." The following rationale organized the six CL's:

- Spiritual Autobiography - Pictures: Lesson One asks you to imagine your life as a photo album and to look at your story in the context of family, friends, neighbors and society. The purpose is to help you see your life as it connects to the larger picture of the world.
- Thinking Theologically - the Wide Angle Lens: The theme works well using the Wide Angle Lens Method because it urges you to begin with a larger picture, examine it closely, and then turn outward again to the world.
- Life in Christ - Liturgy and Society: Each third common lesson provides an opportunity for reflecting and deepening spirituality on a personal and communal level. In Year C, the focus is on ways to relate worship and prayer to both personal and communal dimensions.
- Theological Frameworks -Theology and Worship: The theme plays out in this fourth common lesson by exploring the relationship of theology and prayer. The intent is to relate forms of prayer to personal piety and to the worship experienced in church community.
- Looking into the Future - Developing Your Personal Ministry: In this lesson we provide material to help explore what ministry means for you. The lesson emphasizes what it means to extend your personal sense of vocation and ministry as an action of, in, and for your community.
- Closure - Our Faith in the World: The lesson supports the closing of nine months of work together. The focus offers ways to step out in faith into our individual worlds, without the weekly support of seminar gatherings.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus!" or so goes the line from the film classic *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*. The goodies present in the Common Lesson and Supporting Materials notebook are gifts for your use. May you find in that Big 'ol Book loads of presents!

### ***Sewanee Calls New Dean***

The Rev. Dr. William S. Stafford, vice president and associate dean for academic affairs at Virginia Theological Seminary, will become dean of the School of Theology January 1, 2005. Stafford succeeds Dr. Allan M. Parrent, who has served as interim dean since February 2003.

"We are delighted that Dr. Stafford has accepted the appointment to be the dean of the School of Theology. He brings outstanding experience as a priest, a teacher, a scholar, and a seminary leader. Faculty, staff and students here look forward to working with him," said Vice Chancellor Joel Cunningham in announcing the appointment.

A native of San Francisco, Calif., Stafford earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Stanford University, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He received his master of arts, master of philosophy, and doctor of philosophy degrees in the history of Christianity from Yale University. He has done post-doctoral study at the University of Strasbourg and Durham University in England.

Widely recognized as an educator and scholar, Stafford has authored *Domesticating the Clergy: The Inception of the Reformation in Strasbourg 1522-1524* and *Disordered Loves: Healing and the Seven Deadly Sins*. His articles and book reviews have appeared in "Church History," "The Catholic Historical Review," and "Anglican and Episcopal History," among other publications.

We look forward to welcoming Dr. Stafford and his wife, Barbara Vail Stafford, to Sewanee in January.

### ***THE DESERT: SOURCE FOR A NEW AMERICAN SPIRITUAL RENEWAL?***

What's behind the popularity of "The DaVinci Code" and "The Passion"? Is America in the midst of an unprecedented spiritual awakening that is beyond the control of organized religion? That is the bold claim of EFM mentor and author Phyllis Strupp in her new book, *The Richest of Fare: Seeking Spiritual Security in the Sonoran Desert*. Strupp believes that it is difficult for many to gain spiritual insight into current events since neither science nor religion presents a worldview that reconciles knowledge of the physical world with spiritual wisdom.

Spiritual geniuses such as Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Mohammed were inexorably drawn to the desert. Featuring 56 color pictures and stories of the Sonoran Desert, *The Richest of Fare* explores the common ground between science and spirituality in such controversial areas as human evolution, psychology, and war. Despite its controversial approach, the book offers an encouraging view of American spirituality over the past century and its role in today's world.

Phyllis has been involved with the EFM program since 1998. Her EFM experience has had significant impact on her perspective and writing. Interviews, reviews, and book excerpts can be viewed at [www.desertspirituality.com](http://www.desertspirituality.com).

EFM Newsletter  
e-Volution

You may have noticed changes in the newsletter format. The transformation will continue in your next newsletter – in fact, it will most likely arrive in a different way. The next edition will be in an electronic format and will be sent via e-mail.

In order to make this transition as smooth as possible, we ask that you help us update our database by sending us your current e-mail address. Please send us your name (as it appears on your newsletter mailing label) along with the e-mail address to which you would like to have your next newsletter sent.

E-mail the information to: [efmnewsletter@sewanee.edu](mailto:efmnewsletter@sewanee.edu)  
We will take care of the rest. THANKS.

### *Save the Date*

Next year EFM will celebrate 30 years of ministry. Mark you calendars now to gather in Sewanee for EFM's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, June 3-5, 2005. Plans are being made for workshops, lectures, presentations and seminars around a variety of topics. There will be opportunities for worship, and of course, lots of food and fellowship. Time will be devoted to celebrate the past, examine the present, and dream for the future. More information will be shared in upcoming newsletters, and will be posted to the website. Save the date: June 3-5, 2005.

To view the complete schedule of mentor training opportunities, visit the EFM website. You can find us at:  
[www.Sewanee.edu/EFM/EFMhome.html](http://www.Sewanee.edu/EFM/EFMhome.html)