Crossings: A Newsletter of The Crossings Project

Fall 2004

A Crossings Point of View by Michael G. Cartwright

We register that change has occurred in different ways. We discover new faces in unexpected places. Faculty and staff personnel come and go and we notice the face of a new colleague in the office down the hall. Or we find ourselves noticing new uses for old spaces. That first child leaves home for college, and suddenly an empty room – that just a few weeks before displayed the scattered effects of an 18-year old child’s activities – stands as a visible reminder of a major transition in a family’s life.

For those of us who have been working The Crossings Project for The past two years, the University Chapel is the primary space that displays the many different changes in campus ministry that have come about through the Lilly grant over the past two years. We are fortunate that the Lilly grant provided funds for enhancements to the University Chapel, and we are blessed that Sr. Sandra Schwitzer O.F.M. designed furnishings that are elegant in their simplicity. The table, pulpit, lectern, and “Jerusalem Cross” specially made for the Chapel by Weberding Furniture Company provide highly visible images of these changes. Along with the light assembly above the circular pattern of ceramic titles installed by Marten Construction Company, these furnishings have created a worship space that is centered and welcoming.

Some new faces have also appeared. This past year, Sr. Jennifer Horner O.S.B. joined the Rev. Dr. Lang Brownlee as co-chaplain of the University. The two of them now form the core of the “new ecumenical campus ministry team” that includes a Resident-in-Ministry (Micah Weedman) and our first Undergraduate Christian Ministries intern (Anthony Stone) as well as the prospect of five new Chapel Stewards and Christian ministries teams. United Methodist Youth Leader Scholars participate in Covenant Discipleship groups and students from a variety of Christian traditions take Christian Vocations courses.

With the completion of all the planned enhancements to the Chapel, we have completed the “Restructuring Campus Ministries Initiative” of The Crossings Project. As a result, we are now in a position to engage the tasks of vocational mentoring in ways that we could not have done before. Some students share in leading evening prayer, while others have stepped forward to give and receive hospitality in the context of “allelelon house,” a new intentional Christian community that has been established in one of the sets of duplex apartments on the Northwest edge of campus. With the changes in the chapel, we now have suitable space for activities associated with the growing Christian Vocations Community at U Indy, and the purchase of new resources has made it possible for the University Chaplains to introduce Taize worship on campus.

In the midst of marking changes by paying attention to new faces and visible spaces, we should not forget that these developments have been made possible because of the contributions of persons who work behind the scenes. For example, V. P. for Student Affairs David Wantz and other university administrators led the planning team that worked with students and campus ministry leaders to assess the needs and then worked with architects to design the layout of the new chapel. The new brochure for the University Chapel was
made possible thanks to the wonderful photography of Susie Fleck (spouse of D. Wantz), and the design work of Jeannine Allen in the Office of Publications.

The upcoming Dedication of the Chapel Fountain that will take place at 4:45 p. m. September 8th provides an opportunity to recognize another one of these contributions. Thanks to Ken Piepenbrink, we have a new fountain that has been created from the polished black granite that came from the altar in the old Schwitzer chapel. Thanks to the hard work of Orvelle Lafara and others on the Physical Plant Staff, the fountain is now in operation. Please join us for the Dedication Service during Evening Prayer on Sept. 8th at which time we will recognize the contributions of friends and colleagues who have made it possible for us to achieve this set of objectives.

PROJECT UPDATES

**Extension and Restructuring:** This summer, we submitted the second annual report of *The Crossings Project*. As part of that report, we requested a one-year extension of our Lilly Endowment funded grant through June 30, 2006. Having passed the “mid-point” of this venture, we thought it was time to restructure our initiatives. In doing so, the Steering Committee and Executive Director have tried to take into account what has worked well as well as to learn from missteps that have occurred during the first two years.

With the completion of the chapel enhancements (see page one), it made sense to the Steering Committee to merge the “Pre-Theology” and “Restructuring Campus Ministries” initiatives into a single initiative that we are calling “Theological Explorations.” We have also chosen to streamline some of the other programmatic initiatives and pursue new opportunities that we have discovered since the initial planning for the project took place in the spring and fall of 2001.

*The Crossings Project* “mission statement” is “to create opportunities for programs and mentoring relationships that promote vocation exploration in the context of ‘Education for Service.’” The new project brochure depicts mentoring relationships between faculty and students as well as provides information about the seven remaining initiatives of our theological exploration of vocations endeavor. This restructuring of the project also takes into account the results of the “review” of the Lantz Center for Christian vocations that took place this past year.

**Christian Vocations Curriculum Review Process:** When Sr. Jennifer Horner was hired as the Director of the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations in the summer of 2003, one of her primary charges for the next year was to plan and implement a review process for the CVOC curriculum. After becoming familiar with the CVOC curriculum and engaging the students in the CVOC courses, she established a CVOC Review Committee and began the review process. The committee was made up of the following faculty and staff: Toni Peabody (Social Work), Paul Gabonay (Career Services), Cheryl Larson (Parish Nursing), Dr. Stephen Graham (History), Micah Weedman (Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs) and Sr. Jennifer Horner. Dr. Alan Kolp, a professor from Baldwin-Wallace College served as the external consultant. Dr. Kolp's observations, insights and recommendations served the committee well as they came to their own conclusions and recommendations. The Curriculum Review report (full report is available on request) that the committee submitted in May 2003 included the following recommendations:

- **To revisit the "vision" of the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations.** It is recommended that the name of the Lantz Center be changed to the Lantz Center for Christian Vocation and Formation. This describes the purpose of the Lantz Center more accurately. Along with the name change, the mission statement of the Lantz Center will read as follows: "The mission of the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations and Formation is to foster a curriculum that sustains a community of Christian formation, vocational exploration, mentoring relationships and Christian Service."
- **To restructure the sequence of CVOC courses to allow students to address exploration and formation questions concurrently.**
• To develop retreats that build community and deepen the spiritual journey of participants.
• To find a new meeting space that is more conducive to the focus of the CVOC courses.
• To re-introduce the University community to the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations
• To develop a formal mentoring program on campus.
• To establish Vocational Exploration grants for undergraduate students.
• To develop patterns of collaboration between the faculty and staff of the Youth Ministry and Pre-Theology programs, Career Services (and others, as necessary) and the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations to enable communal discernment with students in these programs.
• To foster ways to build a Christian Vocations Community that goes beyond the bounds of coursework.
• To continue to find ways to engage students in the CVOC Service Learning Course and to continue to support the Appalachia Service Project course.
• To find ways for the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations to collaborate with schools and departments of the university, as well as area churches, as they explore ways of engaging vocational exploration and spiritual formation in their area of interest.

These recommendations will be discussed by both the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board of the Crossings Project this fall. However, the implementation of the curricular recommendations will begin immediately so that they can be acted upon by faculty curriculum committees during the 2004-2005 year.

**Crossing Thresholds:** This fall five more United Methodist Youth Leader Scholars are enrolling at the University of Indianapolis (bringing the total number of UMYL Scholars currently in this leadership development program to fourteen). The four members of the class of ’08 are Lyndsay Davies from Harlan UMC, Ben Freeman from First UMC in Crown Point, IN, Lauren Christine Nale from Yorktown UMC, and Laura Steed, from First UMC of Marshall, IN. In addition Laura Davies ’07 from Harlan UMC has also joined this company of United Methodist Leaders on our campus. See photos below in order listed.

Forty-eight first-year students participated in the annual *Threshold Christian Vocations Retreat* held Aug. 20-22, 2004 here at U Indy. Led by Sr. Jennifer Horner, Rev. Lang Brownlee, Micah Weedman and selected students, this is the largest number of students to have participated in the four years that the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations has offered this opportunity for students to reflect about their “callings” at the beginning of their college careers.
Crossing Intersections for Service: Faculty, staff, and students at U Indy have been engaged in service long before we received the Lilly grant. The Crossings Project has made it possible for us to highlight some of these contributions in more appropriate ways. This past spring, we honored Jennifer Fogo ’85 & ’87, Assistant Professor in the School of Occupational Therapy, and Dr. Charlie Guthrie, Associate Professor of History two faculty with the first “basin & towel” recognitions for excellence in service. (The plaque is located in the second floor hallway just outside the University Chapel). These two faculty are also the focus of the first two published narratives in a new resource entitled Profiles in Service, which is an outgrowth of the work that Dr. Jim Fuller, Rebecca Blair ’80, and others have done to create an “archive” of narratives about “education for service.” . . . Although not yet ready to make available via web-site, we are working toward that end. In fact, this past summer, a U Indy student served as a “research fellow” for The Crossings Project. In addition to doing oral history interviews and writing narratives about current U Indy faculty, Hannah Corbin’s responsibilities included copyediting the “initial drafts” of 35 narratives – a key step in moving these narratives toward the stage where we can release them for public access . . In the meantime, we have taken steps to create a set of mini-grants that will be available beginning in October 2004 to support student service initiatives as well as to provide funds for vocation exploration for students. Such funds have already been available to students in the Christian Vocations program. In fact, Heather Foltz ’06 and Jamie Evans ’07 received supplemental grants for vocation exploration opportunities this past summer in field placements in the North Indiana and South Indiana annual conferences of the United Methodist Church.

Crossing the Commons:

a) Upcoming Retreats and Faculty Seminars: This past spring we surveyed faculty and staff about the kinds of opportunities for reflection about vocation in the context of “education for service.” After reviewing the results of the survey, we are planning to offer two “EduServ Retreats” during Semester II (tentatively scheduled for February and April 2005). EduServ Faculty Seminar III has been scheduled for Semester II. More information will be announced in October.

b) Intentional Christian Community Begins @ U Indy: After a year of careful planning a group of four students are in the process of founding the first “intentional Christian community” at the University of Indianapolis located at 1128 National Ave. Micah Weedman, Resident-in-Ministry with the Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs, will serve as Director of the community. After a period of searching conversation and personal discernment, Hannah Corbin ’06, Laurel Curts ’05, Heather Foltz ’06, and Greg Schneider ’05 (see pictures on next page) were selected for this venture. With the active cooperation of the staff in the Office of Residence Life, arrangements were made for the students to live in two adjacent apartments. With the assistance of a faculty mini-grant, Micah Weedman put together a budget for the intentional community. He also developed a syllabus for the three-credit hour course that students will be taking. This course is being offered through the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations.
All of this is taking place at a time when other “intentional Christian communities” are being formed elsewhere in the USA. Earlier this summer, Laurel Curts ’05 and Michael G. Cartwright attended the “New Monasticism Conference,” a gathering of intentional communities held in Durham, North Carolina at St. John Missionary Baptist Church in the Walltown neighborhood. For more information about the “marks” of the New Monasticism see Laurel Curts or call Micah Weedman at 791-7397.

This venture has been christened “allelon house” – a name that recalls St. Paul’s use of the Greek reciprocal pronoun “one another” in his various letters to the earliest Christian communities. On Monday August 30th at 4:45 p.m. the students signed the “rule of life” for their community in the University Chapel at the first evening prayer service of the 2004-2005 academic year. For a copy of the intentional Christian community’s rule of life and other information about “allelon house,” see *The Crossings Project* website.

**Crossing into Community Partnerships:**

**a) Vocation Exploration during 2004 Spirit & Place Festival:** This fall, we will work with three other community partners to host an event during the 2004 Spirit & Place Festival that invites students as well as other citizens of Indianapolis to explore the practice of giving and receiving hospitality in three distinct settings: a church-related university, a monastery, and an agency that serves the needs of homeless neighbors. The event will begin at 9 a.m. in the Atrium of the Schwitzer Center before participants adjourn to the University Chapel where they will hear the Rev. John Hay, Jr. speak about the practice of Christian hospitality. At 10 a.m. participants will board a bus to go to Our Lady of Grace Monastery where they will have the opportunity to learn about how hospitality is practiced by a community of Benedictine Women. Shortly after 12 noon, participants will re-board the buses to go to Horizon House, where they will have the opportunity to share a meal with homeless neighbors... Due to limited space (bus transportation and the luncheon), the number of participants will be limited to 90 persons. The cost per person is $10. Copies of the brochure for the “Exploring Spaces for Hospitable Callings” event, which contains information about registration for this special opportunity, are available from *The Crossings Office* (e-mail lstead@uindy.edu or call 788-2106).

**b) Vocation Exploration through African-American Christian Ministries @ U Indy:** As part of the conversation about extension and restructuring of *The Crossings Project*, the Steering Committee discussed various possibilities for community partnerships. After conversations with other faculty, staff, and administrators, the Executive Director determined that the best way forward was to invite persons on and off-campus to join in a multi-pronged endeavor that we have designated “Exploring the Strengths of African-American Christian Ministries @ U Indy”

In early August, we hired a consultant (Mr. Jeff Trask from Champaign-Urbana, IL), who met with key leaders on campus to discuss how we will proceed. We have also convened a Planning Committee that will carry out a needs assessment with students during the month of October. Brenda Bassi and Lang Brownlee are serving as “co-chairs” of this committee. Other members include Jim Fuller (History), Pat Jefferson-Bilby (School for Adult Learning), Paul Washington-Lacy (Career Services), and Lela Mixon (Career Services).
Consultation of African-American Christian Ministries: The needs assessment will assist us in our planning for the “Consultation on African-American Christian Ministries” which will be held on Saturday Nov. 6, 2004. The consultation, which will include U Indy faculty, staff, and students as well as Indy-area pastors, will have the following agenda.

- to hear needs assessment report
- to discuss what we are discovering about diverse needs of U Indy students with respect to the African-American Christian tradition, and the needs of students from historic Black Church backgrounds as well as persons from other experiences
- to learn about what is happening on other campuses and dream about what kinds of activities and involvements might take place on this campus

In the meantime, we are proceeding with other plans that we trust will enrich the University of Indianapolis in a variety of ways, including theological exploration of vocation (for a clear example of the latter, see the new resource “The Sound of the Genuine” Crossings Reflection #4 by the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, one of the great African-American sages of the 20th century).

African-American Spirituality: In part, this venture is an outgrowth of scholarly work that Michael G. Cartwright has been doing with leaders in the field of African-American Christian Spirituality. Dean Cartwright was invited to join the African-American Spirituality Group, a group of pastors, scholars, and laypersons who have been charged with the task of planning a series of spiritual formation retreats and pilgrimages to be offered through Upper Room Ministries in Nashville, TN.

Showers Lectures for 2005 will be given by the Rev. Glandion Carney (Chaplain of the Christian Legal Society, an ordained minister with The Christian Reformed Church and consultant with The Salvation Army)(photo not available) and the Rev. Dr. Eugene Blair (UM pastor from Detroit Annual Conference and former dean of the Upper Room in Nashville, TN)(see photo above) on the topic of “African American Christian Spirituality – Celebrating the Gifts, Exploring the Depths” on the afternoon and evening of Feb. 22, 2005.

We anticipate that this occasion will draw widespread interest from historic Black Church leaders as well as Christians from a variety of Christian groups in the Midwest as well as throughout the country.
We are also pleased that it appears that from 2005 to 2006 the University of Indianapolis will be
the host for an international colloquy about African-American Spirituality. The initial “Gathering
of African-American Sages” will be held in conjunction with the Showers Lectures, but thereafter
this group will meet twice a year. The co-chairs of this consultation will be Rev. Glandion Carney
and the Rev. Dr. Eugene Blair. U Indy will host two additional “gatherings of African-American
Sages” during the 2005-2006 academic year at which members of the African-American
Spirituality Group would gather to discuss the work of persons who have made significant
contributions to African-American. These conversations, which will be open to U Indy students,
faculty and staff, will provide unique opportunities for theological exploration of vocation.

New Resources Available:

The new brochure about The Crossings Project (mailed at the same time as the newsletter)
displays the mission statement and provides basic information about what has transpired during
the first two years of the project as well as plans that we have made for the next two years.
The “premier issue” of Profiles in Service is a new resource that has been created for use with
first-year students at U Indy as well as with other groups at the university (all fulltime faculty and
staff of the university should have received a copy of this booklet in early August; additional
copies available on request). We are also pleased to present three new vocational reflections for
use by faculty, staff, and students. Crossings Reflections #4 -- “The Sound of the Genuine” by
Howard Thurman (see discussion of “African-American Spirituality” above), Crossings
Reflection #5 -- “Looking Up Out-to Jesus—and Where Others May Not Look” by the Rev. Dr. L.
Lang Brownlee, and Crossings Reflection #6 -- “I Am My Father’s Daughter” by Sr. Jennifer
Horner O.S.B. Earlier this spring we released Occasional Papers #1 from The St. Brigid of
Kildare Methodist-Benedictine Consultation sponsored by The Crossings Project. All of these
resources are now available on the Crossings Web-page as well.
The *Crossings Calendar*:

**Semester I**
- **9/8/04**  Dedication of Chapel Fountain and Celebration of Completion of First Initiative
- **9/10/04**  First Crossings Project Steering Committee Meeting (2\(^{nd}\) Friday of each month at noon)
- **9/13-9/15**  MGC to attend African-American Spirituality Group Planning Meeting in Detroit, MI
- **9/24/04**  Crossings Project Advisory Board Meeting
- **10/11-10/13**  M. Cartwright and Sr. Jennifer Horner will attend the Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation Conference at IUPUI.
- **10/15-10/17**  M. Cartwright and Kathleen Hacker will attend the Annual Meeting of the Lilly Fellows Network of Humanities and the Arts, St. Olaf University in Minnesota
- **11/13/04**  9 a.m. to 2 p.m. “Exploring Spaces for Hospitable Callings” bus tour

**Dates for Next Semester**
- **2/22/04**  Showers Lectures on African-American Christian Spirituality