the SPILLIKIN

Christ College Newsletter

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN 46383
Editors: Arlin G. Meyer, Elene Amundsen

Volume 5
Summer, 1988

A Note from the Dean

During the past semester I read E. M. Forster's *Howards End* with my Modern Fiction students as I have done with some of you in the past; and as I looked over the copy for this issue of *The Spillikin,* I was reminded of the central thematic passage in this novel: "Only connect! That was the whole of [Margaret's] sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human life will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die."

This passage came to mind because all the alums who contributed to this issue are looking for connections--connections between their undergraduate experiences and their aspirations and realizations, between their pasts and their presents, between childhood and impending middle age, between fictional worlds and real life experiences. As a result both of the human condition and twentieth-century culture (Graham Greene's analysis of human nature and contemporary society is, as Kathy Hindman points out, instructive), much of our lives and experience does seem fragmented and disjointed. But this should not prevent us from attempting to build, in Forster's words again, "The rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion."

As members of the human community, however, we need both to connect the disparate elements within our own lives and ourselves with one another. Alumni "editorials" and speeches have a way of sounding schmaltzy, but I have come to believe strongly in the connected-ness of human lives as they are bonded together in communities like Christ College. Such connections are also evident in the articles in this issue of *The Spillikin,* most explicitly in Keith Ludwig's testimony of the strong influence Marcus Riedel has had on him and others.

And I have witnessed these connections being strengthened and renewed at events such as last fall's Homecoming Symposium when Mel Piehl, Steve Schroeder, Gail Ramshaw, Pat Keifert, and Marie Failinger led those of us in attendance in a stimulating discussion of Religion and Politics. Or when Dan P. McAdams addressed the Christ College students and faculty at their spring banquet on the topic, "Intimacy and the Human Life Cycle." Or when other alums have returned during the year to lead our Thursday evening symposia. All of these connections are important to those of us who remain in Mueller Hall, our common home, and I trust they remain important to you however distantly you may be removed by time or place. Keep connecting with us in whatever way you can.

Arlin G. Meyer

Second Annual Homecoming Symposium

The topic for the Second Annual Christ College Homecoming Symposium is "Work and Home." Everyone works, and everyone has a home. (Some people work at home without pay, and even students have dorm rooms.) What is, or should be, the relation between these two spheres of life--particularly in light of rapidly changing work structures, employment patterns, and family life? In the spirit of Christ College, we don't really expect a definitive answer to this question, or to the host of related questions the topic raises, but we are hoping to provoke some thought and generate some lively discussion. While drawing on a bit of expertise from some alumni presenters, we are relying more on all the participants to share perspectives and stimulate conversation. The Homecoming Symposium, while not exactly a "tradition" yet, seems to be evolving into a blend of comfortable reunion with old friends (and even a few new ones) and lively intellectual forum. Come and join us.

--Mel Piehl

Homecoming Symposium
Christ College
Friday, October 7, 1988

10:45-12:00	Keynote Address by Dr. Sally Wilson
12:00-1:15	Lunch Break
1:15-2:15	Panel Presentations: Marcia Mainland Rotunda, Rebecca Pallmeyer, Dan Friedrich
2:15-2:30	Break
2:30-3:45	Small-group discussions by all participants
3:45-4:00	Break
4:00-4:30	Latchnote Address by Pastor David Schreiber
4:30-5:00	Concluding general discussion
5:15	Reception at the Meyers 1610 Chicago Street

[Please use the enclosed reply card to express interest so we can plan the Symposium realistically.]

Our new banner was designed by Debbie Petersen (College of Business, 1988) as a project in her Graphics Design class last semester.

Personal Reflections: Thanks, Marcus!

This year, Marcus Riedel retires from the teaching position he has held in Christ College for so many productive years. For CC, his retirement is unfortunate; it is the "flip-side of the coin," the negative side which CC now faces and must learn to accept. However, lest everyone run for their boxes of Kleenex, let me suggest that we can reduce the pain of watching Marcus retire by seeing first how much his presence benefited those in CC--especially me.

During my four years in CC, Marcus taught many of the courses that I took. Already in the first semester of the freshman program, he was my seminar leader. I remember his class very well, mainly because he gave me a C- for a paper I wrote. Needless to say, that grade was enough incentive to learn me to write real good. Seriously, though, Marcus didn't just correct my papers that semester. Unbeknownst to me, he also introduced me to the art of interpretation, an art which encompasses not just writing skills but also thinking skills.

I remember one class session in which everyone kept complaining about the paper due that Friday. Marcus told us to write down anything that came to mind about the text we were studying. Afterwards, we were to organize what we had written down. Most of my notes fell into a pattern of their own so I didn't need to do much in order to organize them. Therefore, this small exercise really taught me something I should have known already--that I could trust my own mind.

I really admired Marcus' teaching style. Always over-prepared for class, Marcus rarely if ever gave hour-long lectures, as he preferred an informal, conversational atmosphere. This atmosphere encouraged us not only to express ourselves but also to develop our own opinions about a topic. When we covered difficult material, Marcus' teaching ability proved invaluable. To explain something, he could use a continuum of terminology ranging from very technical to very simple. If a complicated theory came up, he could *always* rephrase it using progressively simpler terms *without* any loss in meaning. If you doubt his ability, ask him sometime about Emmanuel Kant. Not only does he fully understand Kant's philosophy, he can translate it into an understandable form for others!

Although Prof. Maxwell is to be blamed for my interest in linguistics, Marcus is certainly responsible for my addiction to philosophy. Through his course, "Philosophy of Mind/Artificial Intelligence," and a year-long independent study with him on Wittgenstein, Marcus really awakened and encouraged the philosopher in me. Though I may never again study philosophy formally, its incredible wisdom and analytic method will always provide me with the best intellectual tools I could ever want. I have Marcus to thank not only for showing me these tools but also for demonstrating how I might use them effectively.

During his years at CC, Marcus certainly affected many other students besides me in similar ways. Not surprisingly, he affected many of his fellow teachers, as well. (One of my computer science professors always admired Marcus' ability to present a difficult theory to non-philosophers, or to summarize a lengthy class discussion quickly and accurately.) Indeed, I cannot imagine anyone who comes into contact with Marcus not being affected in some way, large or small.

If I know Marcus at all, he will be busier than ever in his "retirement." He no doubt has a longer to-do list than any other mortal. And given his incredible energy, he will probably complete it all, too. After all, how many retired people do you know that regularly go scuba-diving or downhill skiing?! In conclusion, I can only hope that he finishes his book and lets me proofread it . . . I need a chance to give *him* a C- for something! Seriously, though, I can only thank the man that meant so much to me, intellectually and personally. Thank you, Marcus!

-- Keith Ludwig

Keith Ludwig ('87) is a second-year graduate student in linguistics at Northwestern University.

Baby Zen

I make no more allusions to the books of literary, religious, or philosophical giants. They don't live with me anymore.

Oh, they come to visit once in awhile. Like inlaws for a week in the winter. But now I live with children.

So the grandest allusion I will make is from a child's book of verses.

It seems to me that children, especially your own, teach you more about life and living than all the philosophers you can read in four years.

I have two of them, both boys. One is two, the other is five months old.

They teach me every day what it's like to learn. How great things can be accomplished a little bit at a time, like learning to walk and to speak. They teach me what great power you have over others who follow you and they teach me how little power you have to change things that are encoded in our own genetic makeup.

But most of all, kids remind you what it's like to enjoy all the little things in life you stop noticing. Like finding the moon in the night sky, seeing an elephant for the first time, blowing a bubble, eating ice cream . . . They teach you what is really important. Through them you again experience living as if it were the first time.

As we become adults I believe this lesson is the first we forget. At graduation, most people, especially those with liberal arts degrees, still look at life as children. We have ridden a moving sidewalk through the American education system. Then we are let out into a vast field of dandelions one spring afternoon.

So we drift off here and there and pick up things to do until we light on one particular dandelion that suits us. Mine was an advertising dandelion.

Then we start having goals: more money, more responsibility, more credit, more fun.

We work so hard at these things we forget what it's like to be a kid. We forget what it's like to have nothing but time, even though that's all we really have now.

Take my line of work, for instance. Five people were fired today. We lost a multi-million dollar account. It could have been me but it wasn't. This time. Last year the agency for which I worked went bankrupt. One day a job, the next, a locked door.

It's not like you expect. You don't just graduate from your chosen goal of the week to bigger, better things. If you expect your life to run like a television program, just when you begin to get interested in the show someone is going to change the channel.

So you live for the important things. Finding the moon, blowing a bubble, eating ice cream and spending the time enjoying the world. I think you figure that out when you are about 31 and you have two kids. That's as far as I have gotten.

Which brings me to my allusion from *A Child's Garden of Verses:* "The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."

Why do we read this to kids when we should be reading it to each other?

-- Bill Heerman

Bill Heerman ('79) writes copy and develops creative concepts for Tully-Menard Advertising in Tampa, Florida. After graduation from VU he went on to get a Master's Degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of Florida. He resides in St. Petersburg with his wife, Lisa ('79), and two sons, Luke and Alex.

God, Grace and Graham Greene

I first encountered Graham Greene at the tag end of my master's program at Louisiana State University in the summer of 1967. I was impressed at that time by a certain sameness of setting in his novels and determined to focus my doctoral thesis on the how and why of its function. Thirteen years later I completed *The Ambiance of Graham Greene's Fiction: The Functions of Milieu in his Novels.* As you can see, my committee had a lot of trouble agreeing on the appropriate term for what I was discussing, for Greene's setting (or milieu or ambiance) is more than time and place. It is a peculiar kind of atmosphere with a particular political and spiritual quality. However, I think that it is this very special ambiance which has allowed Greene to achieve popularity in spite of his thematic insistence on ideas that have not been in vogue for some time but ideas that should have significant interest for us: sin, God, grace, Christianity.

If we were to compare an itinerary of Greene's travels with an historical chronology of political hotspots around the world, we might suspect that Greene has some kind of propensity for being in the wrong place at the right time: London during the *blitzkrieg,* French Vietnam as the United States begins its involvement, Papa Doc's Haiti, Latin America under military dictatorships. And further, that Greene must somehow enjoy physical discomfort: jungles, heat, disease, insects, mud. Indeed, Greene has written that he *does* suffer from boredom, that he has purposefully sought out danger: Russian roulette as a young man, for example. But there is more to it than that.

Greene is, I believe, interested in communicating a particular kind of religious experience, a kind which he feels has been largely lost by the western world in the twentieth century. In *Another Mexico,* a book documenting Greene's travels through Mexico in the 1930 s, Greene writes that he "loathed" Mexico because of its "idolatry and oppression, starvation and casual violence," but here he found that one "lived under the shadow of religion--of God or the Devil." In modern western civilization, he felt that one found "just the drugstore and the Coca-Cola, the hamburger, the grace-less [my hyphen and underlining], sinless, empty chromium world." Returning to England he found that "Mass in Chelsea seemed curiously fictitious; no peon knelt with his arms out in the attitude of the cross, no woman dragged herself up the aisle on her knees. It would have seemed shocking, like the Agony itself. We do not mortify ourselves. Perhaps we are in need of violence." Because of the emphasis that Greene placed on civilization's exclusion of God, I even considered titling my study: "God Lives--in Squalor."

Greene uses violent, primitive settings to present a religious theme most directly in *Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter,* and *The End of the Affair.* As blends of religious allegory and contemporary thriller, these novels have been dubbed by critics, such as A. J. M. Smith, "theological thrillers." But in most of his later novels the religious theme is more muted. In these Greene is not directly concerned with demonstrating the power of a strong, religious faith or sainthood; rather he is concerned with the innate need of *all* men for *some* kind of faith because of the ultimate collapse of the vacuum we call neutrality; he is concerned with the perpetually narrowing island of options for an alienated, uninvolved man. When the vacuum collapses in upon itself throwing its inhabitants into the disparate winds without and when the island disappears leaving a man battling the currents, Greene is concerned with showing the shadow of God's pursuing grace and the direction it provides.

The ambiance within which Greene places his characters provides a sense of the uncertainty of everything and provokes the feeling that the world is running amok and that man can do nothing by himself to bring it safely to a halt. Intitially this feeling provides the rationale for being *dégagé* but finally it generates a powerful desire to identify and believe in

ANNUAL HOMECOMING OPEN HOUSE

Christ College invites you to attend an Open House in Mueller Hall on Saturday, October 8, at approximately 11:30 a.m. The Faculty hopes to see many of you at that time.

some supernatural force that transcends the confusion of the temporal world. Perhaps this is the only way a mid-twentieth-century writer can deal with the spiritual without being laughed off the bookshelves: by tying the spiritual closely to the experiential. Certainly, this method makes for enjoyable and powerful reading.

But I think that while I, like H. C. Webster, believed in the nature of the world and the faith that Greene presents in his novels as I read, I have only begun to really appreciate the truth of his fiction since we have lived on the farm. When an animal sickens and dies or injures itself in some totally unexpected and bizarre way, or when our peaceful, little creek becomes a raging torrent and overflows its banks depositing mud and dirt in barns and tons of gravel on the lawn while digging up and carrying off my potatoes from the garden, I have a very concrete comprehension of the concept of a world out of my control and the need for some compensating spiritual force. Like some other writers, notably Robert Frost, Greene means more to me as I continue to grow in experience. Try him; I think you'll like him!

--Kathy Hindman

Kathy Behrenbruch Hindman ('65) has a Ph.D. from Penn State and teaches English at Mansfield University. She and her family live on Two-Bit Ranch, their small farm in Wellsboro, PA.

Two Small Pieces

Narcissus

Narcissus, you must know
as they found the broken mirror
at the bottom of the river:
white shards like razors,
fish scales, and needles
the reflections small and specific.
Narcissus, a piece is missing.

The Poem

No one knows the perfume
of the hidden magnolia that you see.
No one understands the words
you gather for it, like pollen.
The air ferments with your secrets.
I sleep like a scattered seed.

-- Rene Steinke

Rene Steinke ('86) has completed two years of graduate study at University of Virginia and will enter the Ph.D. program in Creative Writing at University of Illinois--Chicago this fall.

A Wintry Night in Dublin

James Joyce's "The Dead" (from *Dubliners*) makes me think of Christ College. I have read and seen "The Dead" and on both occasions was reminded of the spirit of CC. You see, despite the title and, no doubt, Joyce's intent, I found the story invigorating. The message the story seemed to convey was, in a nutshell, that life can be meaningful and exhilarating, but it takes effort. CC conveys a similar message. By emphasizing the importance of studying the humanities, CC informs us of the value of expending energy for the sole purpose of personal enrichment. That is a message rarely heard after leaving the Valpo campus.

The message CC conveys stands in stark contrast to the predominant philosophy of my profession. In the law school and law firm environs, personal enrichment is out, professional enrichment is in. The importance of developing one's self personally is given only lip service. We are told that we should spend a tremendous amount of time and energy each week in devotion to the singular purpose of professional advancement. And we do. As a result, our jobs become challenging not so much in the tasks they require us to perform as in the self-development outside the profession they preclude.

At this point in my career, I am startled by the monolithic existence of some of my colleagues. They live in professional microcosms, their worlds devoid of the subjects of a liberal arts education. No art, no literature, no philosophy; nothing more enthralling than law cases and birdies on the ninth hole (they do have time to play every third month or so). My fear is that some day I may no longer be startled.

It seems as if a lot of people succumb to that rather flat and trivialized existence. This can be expected when jobs unceasingly require tremendous time and energy. But it is certainly sad when jobs, and little else, define a human's existence.

Fortunately, CC encouraged us to make a commitment to personal enrichment. For most of us, that was a few years ago. Working people need to remind themselves that job advancement does not equal personal development and that, if not watched, the former may well become the antithesis of the latter. In other words, we need to re-commit ourselves to the values CC taught us years ago.

The message is simple but difficult to put into practice. For evidence of the difficulty, we need only look around us. People who deny (consciously or subconsciously) the importance of personal development, whether in terms of the mind, body, or spirit, are as numerous as snowflakes on a wintry night in Dublin. The reality of the working world invites us to join them. Fortunately, we have a scheduling conflict. The wise people of CC have asked us to join them in experiencing more enriching lives. We would do well to accept the invitation.

-- Mark Duesenberg

Mark Duesenberg ('84) is a 1987 graduate of Harvard Law School. After practicing law for a year in Kansas City, he has accepted a position with the Justice Department in Washington D.C.

Romantics Beware!

When a CC senior contacted me recently to inquire about the publishing field, I recalled my own plunge into the book business four years ago. A few months after graduation, in an effort to do something related to my liberal arts degree, I skimmed a couple of library books on the publishing industry and wrote to the American Association of Publishers. I thought, naively, that publishing had to do with reading and writing books like those on my own shelves. In a somewhat haphazard fashion, I made index cards for publishers of my favorite books and those listed in *Literary Marketplace* as publishers in the humanities or social sciences, and sent my resume to thirty publishing houses in Boston, New York, and Chicago.

A few form letters trickled in with an annual report or two. One editor responded with a frank two-page letter urging me to keep up my spirits and learn how to type. She added, "Publishing is the poorest paying of all fields that attract educated people, worse even than teaching; as a business, it is a female white ghetto." Despite her warning, I persisted and landed a job as editorial assistant in the publishing department of a major college textbook publisher in New York. As a senior development manager at the same house, I now manage the development of psychology and sociology textbooks from prospectus to final draft manuscript, acting as the author's primary contact with the publishing house and monitoring the manuscript reviewing process.

Looking back, I recognize the group of publishers I originally contacted as an unlikely hodgepodge. Book publishing is actually divided into several virtually unrelated industries, defined by their different markets and sales outlets. Trade books, which are sold retail to the general public through regular commercial bookstores, may be fiction or nonfiction, hardcover or paperback, highbrow or lowbrow. Educational publishers publish elementary, high school, or college textbooks designed solely for classroom use and sold by sales representatives who knock on teachers' doors. Professional publishers specialize in reference books for the major professions; businesses and libraries buy these books. Scholarly presses publish books that are meant to advance the frontiers of academic scholarship. These books are purchased by libraries and small numbers of intellectually-minded individuals. Only scholarly publishing and the "quality fiction and nonfiction" part of trade publishing come close to the glorified stereotype that many book lovers and literary types hold about publishing. Romantics, beware: publishing is more often about business than books. This is certainly true of college textbook publishing, an explicitly commercial industry.

With profit margins that are significantly higher than most American businesses in general, college textbook publishers are prime takeover targets, and few remain independently owned. Many people express concern that the trend toward consolidation of publishers and takeovers by corporations in unrelated industries bodes poorly for the publishing industry. In my own case, the publisher I work for was sold in 1986 by a major broadcast company to a large publisher with holdings in insurance companies and theme amusement parks. I have noted firsthand that when revenues are hawkishly watched over by a parent corporation, quantitative rather than qualitative considerations begin to rule publishing decisions. For example, since the largest enrollments are found in introductory survey courses, textbook publishers flock to offer books for this overpublished market, neglecting the rest of the curriculum even when publishing upper level titles strengthens a publisher's reputation among customers in the long run. The takeover trend affects other types of publishing as well, especially trade publishing.

Even before merger mania, of course, publishers were concerned with profits. Given my idealistic preconceptions about the nature of editorial work, that it had to do with reading and writing good books rather than making decisions about the best way to increase sales, I found the quantitative orientation of college publishing disconcerting. However, I can wholeheartedly say that a liberal arts background prepared me well for making the editorial and business decisions I face every day. In sizing up market trends, authors, and manuscripts, editors have to be able to think strategically and communicate their priorities effectively. These skills are often well-developed in book lovers, but ironically, commercial publishing isn't necessarily a book lover's haven.

-- Jane Knetzger

Jane Knetzger ('84) is a Christ College Scholar with majors in Humanities and French.

Book Briefs

Alums frequently request from me and other CC faculty recommendations for their personal reading. In previous issues we have reviewed a number of books written by CC alumni. For this issue I asked each faculty to write a brief review of a book he would recommend for your summer reading. AGM

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Richard Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (Pantheon, 1985), 332 pp.

Reinhold Niebuhr was, along with Paul Tillich, the most influential American Protestant theologian of the mid-twentieth century. For me personally, as for many others, his pungent writings showed how classic religious teachings could illumine the most urgent contemporary social and political issues.

What I didn't know, or knew only vaguely until I read Richard Fox's superb biography, is what a fascinating characater Niebuhr was, and what a personally and intellectually dramatic life he led. With insightful analysis and lucid prose, Fox traces Niebuhr's evolution from his parochial German-immigrant religious background (sound familiar to anyone?) to national and worldwide influence, especially during the dark days of the 1930s and 1940s.

Like most good biographers these days, Fox is psychologically sophisticated, and his interpretations of Niebuhr's relations with his father and his theologian-brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, are brilliant and persuasive. Although Fox himself is not religious, he struggles not to reduce religious experience and worldviews to psychology or sociology. In my judgment he does not always succeed, and I found his account of Niebuhr's political thought richer than his treatment of his spiritual life. He underplays, for example, what was in some ways the greatest personal test for Niebuhr--the years after he suffered a debilitating stroke in 1952.

The fact that you begin to argue with an author like this is one sign that he or she has had an impact one you. If you like to see religion and politics embodied in the lives of real people, as I do, this kind of first-rate biography is one of the best ways to put flesh on ideas.

--Mel Piehl

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Graham Swift, *Waterland* (Washington Square Press, 1985), 270 pp.

Waterland pleasures the mind as much as the imagination and may remind most alumni of their Christ College education. This out-of-the-way English novel is nearly a humanities curriculum--a sprightly meditation on the nature and uses of history, a winsome philosophical disquisition on the explanation of explanation, and so much evocatively examined esoterica (e.g., the sex life of eels) that Swift as scholar fairly merges with Swift as artist. Cambridge alumni may especially enjoy the novel's setting in East Anglia where Swift does for the fens what Fowles does for the Devonshire seaside in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* or Bronte does for the Yorkshire moors in *Wuthering Heights*. Swift thinks "The Fens are flat so God can see," and he turns them, forever draining and forever at the risk of flooding, into his metaphor of life. I hasten to add that Swift's intellectual reflections on nature, man, and history are loaded into a gothic family saga of beerbrewers, tamped down with an exquisite murder mystery, and shot through a lurid tabloid story of a baby snatched from a shopping cart by the mad wife of a redundant professor. Curious? Enroll now.

--Richard Lee

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Ronald Hayman, *Sartre* (Simon and Schuster, 1987), about 560 pp.

Existentialism? What was that? It was what there was before the Me Generation and its descendants Postmodern and Punk. Between 1948 and 1968 existentialism was the best-known and most accessible personal philosophy for anyone seeking to articulate his/her disaffection with Cold War culture. An intriguing picture of this philosophy and its epoch can be found in a biography devoted to one of existentialism's architects, Jean-Paul Sartre. Ronald Hayman's study of Sartre has some flaws (too many details about Sartre's vacations with Beauvoir and other lovers) but mostly succeeds in portraying the passionate ideas of individualism's last defender.

--Bill Olmsted

John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 1981)

John Boswell won the American Book Award for History for this magisterial study of a vitally important subject. Though the book is now eight years old, it is even more timely now than it was when it first appeared. But timeliness is not its principal virtue by any means. The book is simply the best work of intellectual history that I have read in the last decade. And I rather suspect that it will unsettle, even overturn, some of the attitudes and beliefs of the readers of this review. Ranging across a time span of over fourteen centuries, Boswell demonstrates that intolerance of homosexuality did not become the dominant attitude of Christianity until the time of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is a book of enormous erudition, but it is written with elegant energy. As one of my thesis advisors, Paul Robinson, wrote in the *New York Times Book Review*, "John Boswell restores one's faith in scholarship as the union of erudition, analysis, and moral vision. I would not hesitate to call his book revolutionary, for it tells of things heretofore unimagined and sets a standard of excellence that one would have thought impossible in the treatment of an issue so large, uncharted and vexed. . . . Improbable as it might seem, this work of unrelenting scholarship and high intellectual drama is also thoroughly entertaining." You should find this book thoroughly absorbing even if you do not ordinarily enjoy reading history.

-- Mark Schwehn

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Joseph A. Sittler, *Gravity and Grace: Reflections and Provocations* (Augsburg, 1986)

The late Joseph A.Sittler's (1904-1987) *Gravity and Grace* was a happy result of collaboration with editor Linda-Marie Delloff. The book offers a brief but sufficient glimpse, I think, of a quickly diminishing breed of pastoral theologian. Not the polished academic's theologian's theologian, as Martin Marty observed in a tribute to Sittler, but a human being relating faith to life and life to the faithful community. Sittler gently brooded over the workingman widow's grief and her probably impossible hopes and the intricate cadences, which he knew and recited by heart, in a Wallace Stevens poem. And Sittler did so with a critical openness that attended to the connectedness of things without sentimentality. He stands and stood within our common human predicament, our interior lives going "round and round and round, with deepening ambiguities." At the same time, to use Eudora Welty's word (and to put in an oblique plug for her *One Writer's Beginnings*) "confluence" for naming the coming together of the strange events and responses that shape a human life, Sittler affirms in *Gravity and Grace* the founding and funding of the world and ourselves by Grace. I do not make a strong claim that you should read a Sittler or a Welty now. But wait and remember their names and works when you search for a pattern in the threads of your own story or stories.

-- Warren Rubel