

MARQUAND READER

Volume 8, Issue 8: Week of November 15, 2010

A newsletter furthering the educational mission of Ecumenical Daily Worship at YDS.

THIS WEEK IN MARQUAND

Services begin at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome!

Monday, November 15: *Women in the Word & World:* Prof. Janet Ruffing preaching
Tuesday, November 16: *Transformed by Renewed Minds,* Rev. Aaron Miller preaching
Wednesday, November 17: *Sung Morning Prayer: Beyond All Praising*
Thursday, November 18: *Songs and Prayers of Taizé*
Friday, October November 19: *Community Eucharist,* graduating student Evelyn Wheeler preaching and Julie Kelsey, Assistant Dean of Student Initiatives, presiding

Taizé

Former Chapel Minister, Johanna Johnson ('09 MDiv), had on several occasions spent time with the faith community in Taizé, France. Her article below, first published in the Marquand Reader in March 2008, shares some of what she found in the brothers' practice.

The sound of ringing bells fills the air around a tiny village on a hill in Burgundy, France, beckoning hundreds, even thousands of people to prayer. The many languages represented among this crowd, representing countries all over the world, are silenced as they file into the sanctuary. Each person grabs a small songbook as they enter, and then takes a seat on the floor. At one end of the dimly lit and slightly downward sloping room are red banners sweeping from the floor to the ceiling and hundreds of candles – an



atmosphere at once breath-taking and calming. On the hour, the over 100 brothers of Taizé come into the space and take their seats, and the service begins.

In August 1940, Brother Roger arrived in the village of Taizé all alone at the age of 25, with the goal of creating a community where reconciliation would become a reality every day, and where simplicity and kind-heartedness would be lived out as essential Gospel realities. From the beginning, the community Brother Roger formed served as a haven for many in need, including refugees (many of them Jews during World War II), orphans, and prisoners of war. Today, because of its international and ecumenical nature (the brothers come from over 25 different countries and Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian backgrounds), it serves as a concrete sign of reconciliation between divided

Christians and separated peoples. The community welcomes hundreds of thousands of primarily youth from around the world for stints ranging from a weekend to a few months, and there are sometimes as many as 5000 visitors in one week.

What is so striking about a service of Taizé is both the beauty and the simplicity of the service. There is no central person leading. Participants are at once praying alone and in community. Especially noteworthy about a Taizé service is the *silence*, which happens in every service. Lasting from five to ten minutes, it offers ample time to find yourself in a place of meditative reflection and prayer. Besides the silence, much of the service is sung, for as the songbook states, "Song is one of the most essential elements of worship." The many beautiful songs of Taizé are written in multiple languages to accommodate the vast diversity represented in the community. They are short and meant to be repeated many times; the few words, often from Scripture and expressing a basic reality of faith, are quickly grasped by the mind, and as they are repeated, the whole being comes to know them deeply. The simplicity of the songs lets them stay in our hearts through the day so that prayer need not stop after we leave the space.

Join us in Marquand this Thursday as we worship in these ways first fostered on a hilltop in Burgundy, and enter into this time of song and silence, prayer and meditation.

Trans/gender Awareness Week at Yale

For the fourth consecutive year, Marquand hosts a worship service in tandem with Trans/gender Awareness Week at Yale. In previous years in chapel, we have hosted services of stories and songs, exploring "trans" liturgical resources and styles (including space formation, symbols, and transgendered pronouns). Last year, we were blessed to be led in worship by Rev. Erin Swenson, the first known mainstream Protestant minister to make an open gender transition while remaining in ordained office. This year, we will be joined by Rev. Aaron Miller, an ordained minister in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC). Rev. Miller is currently the Associate Minister for Pastoral Care at MCC New Haven and serves as a chaplain at Yale New Haven Hospital. He is also on the Board of the Love Makes a Family PAC. Rev. Miller is an out advocate for Transgender civil rights who speaks at churches and events throughout the state. He is also a YDS alumnus ('08 MDiv).

Trans-awareness week at Yale provides an opportunity for all of us in Marquand to think about sex and gender diversity and its relation to the Christian life and, particularly, worship. For some, this service will be one of many they have attended exploring trans identity as a sacred reality and holding up the Christian witness and theological insights of trans people. However, for others it will be their first service that explicitly addresses trans- issues and language. We have found it useful to offer the following glossary of terms associated with trans-gender awareness (which has been authored by successive generations of Marquandites), and some further resources for reading.

Transsexuals are individuals who have a gender identity (the sense of being a man or a woman) different from their anatomically prescribed sex. They sometimes seek medical treatment to change their physical attributes to correspond with their gender identity; this treatment may include hormone therapy, electrolysis, and surgery, among other options.

Cross-dressers wear clothing usually associated with the gender "opposite" to their anatomical sex. Cross-dressing may be part-time or full-time, in the privacy of a person's home, in public or in multiple



venues in between. Their difference from transsexuals is that the cross-dressers' self-identity regarding gender remains the same as their anatomically prescribed sex. They usually do not seek medical treatment. Cross-dressers may be attracted to either same-sex or opposite-sex partners, or both.

Intersexed (or hermaphroditic) individuals are born with genitals that show characteristics of both sexes or are opposite to their genetic sex. Such people constitute 2,000 of all US births annually. Many such people are surgically "corrected" in infancy, and some grow up to feel like they have had an essential part of themselves taken away without their consent; these surgeries also often diminish later sexual sensation and enjoyment.

Transgenderists live as members of the other sex, but without the need or desire to alter their bodies that transsexuals experience. Some live permanently as members of the other sex, while others assume gender identities outside of the male-female two-gender model — this latter is sometimes called **Third Gender** lifestyle.

Androgynes, Gender Benders and Gender Blenders merge the characteristics of men and women in various ways that are sometimes subtle, sometimes shocking, sometimes neither.

Drag Queens and **Drag Kings** present larger-than-life images of men and women in public performance, exaggerating certain sex-gender stereotypes for entertainment, making a living, attention, or self-gratification, among other motivations.

Transpeople / Transgendered People are group nouns that are often used to describe all transgendered and transsexual people (all the above). **Transgender** or simply **trans** is the umbrella term for all the above human identities, relationships and performances.

Bisexuals are not the same as transgendered people. Bisexuality is a sexual orientation (like heterosexuality or homosexuality), not a gender status. They are individuals who are neither "straight" nor "gay" but are attracted sexually to male and female gender identities. Many bisexuals do not see gender characteristics (male, female, etc) as strictly prescribed and so, not surprisingly, they are often the partners of transpeople.

If You Would Like To Read More, Here Are Some Resources:

Books:

Currah, Paisley and Shannon Minter, *Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policymakers*.

New York: The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2000.

Mollenkott, Virginia, *Omnigender: A Trans-religious Approach*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2007.

Stryker, Susan and Stephen Whittle, eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Tanis, Justin, *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2003.

Wilchins, Riki Anne, *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender*. Milford, CT: Firebrand Books, 1997.

Online:

Trans/gender Awareness Week at Yale: <https://sites.google.com/site/transweek/>

The Marquand Reader is edited by the chapel staff and issued every Monday when classes are in session. It highlights the week's services and other special opportunities and events. Additional articles by the Chapel Staff and the faculty in Liturgical Studies will explore historical, liturgical, and denominational topics, in order to further the educational goals of Marquand Chapel. Contact one of the chapel staff if you have any suggestions, comments, or questions.

The Marquand Chapel Team:

Adele Crawford, *Interim Dean of Chapel* * Colin Britt, *Acting Director of Chapel Music*

Christa Swenson, *Liturgical Coordinator*

Kyle Brooks, Christian Brost, James deBoer, Alex Peterson, *Chapel Ministers*

Mark Miller, *Gospel Choir Director* * Michael Sansoni, *Chapel Choir Director*

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