Stations of the Life of Christ
Images for Faithful Worship and Practice

Westmont College
Fall 2005

A proposal to the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship
Submitted by Andrea Stout, Stephanie Williams, and
Michelle Wolff, students in Art 129: Art and Worship, Fall 2004
I. SUMMARY
The Stations of Christ’s Life project is intended to generate a series of fourteen images interpreting moments in Christ’s life that speak to our identity as a Protestant liberal arts college. Rooted in the word, understood in art historical perspective, used in public worship, and placed around campus, we aim to create images that invite more intentional practices of visual piety, practices that are congenial to Protestant sensibilities but rooted in a pan-Christian devotion to the imitation of Christ.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Stations of Christ’s Life was developed by students taking Art 129: The Arts in Christian Worship (see the attached syllabus).

We envision fourteen students from Westmont’s art department, working under the supervision of a visiting artist. Each student will each choose one of fourteen moments in the life of Christ, beginning with the Annunciation, and ending with the Ascension. We have chosen the following stories from Christ’s life (Baptism, Temptation, Miracle at Cana; Mary and Martha, the Woman caught in adultery, Tempest; Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Cleansing the Temple; Thomas’ Doubt, Supper at Emmaus, Miraculous Draught of Fish) for their narrative coherence, and because of their resonance with themes in the life of a college student.

You will notice that the stories of Christ’s passion are not listed above. This is intentional. Participants will research where Stations of the Cross are available in Santa Barbara and Montecito since these narratives are already well represented in our wider community. The Westmont community will be pointed to those cycles for imagery of the Christ’s passion.

Preparation for the production of each image will include textual analysis, lectio divina, research into historical and contemporary evocations of the theme, and the diligent use of a sketchbook/notebook. Each artist will be encouraged to select at least four friends with which to reflect on the meaning of the text. Emerging from prayer, contemplation, study and conversation, each artist will seek to interpret a key aspect of their story in visual form, and choose a meaningful location for their image on our campus. There are no restrictions on style, medium, or placement—in fact, we believe that stylistic diversity will be a healthy part of the exploration encouraged in this project. The only restrictions will be that the resulting pieces should be 1) physically accessible to the entire community [i.e. no pieces for the women’s locker room] and 2) be able to remain intact for at least the remainder of the school year. Students will need to get permission from our campus architect for any installations that might alter the campus environment.

For each piece, the artist or a member of his/her study group will write a brief, one-page devotional for the use of the community based on some realization that took shape during the process of study and creating. These devotionals, along with an explanatory ‘map’ will be included in a small, xeroxed devotional booklet.

Each piece (or a part of each piece in the case of an installation) will be photographed for projection during our common Chapel worship and reproduced on a four-color postcard. The back of the postcard will include the scriptural reference, the name of the artist, and a sentence or two excerpted from the accompanying devotional. These postcards will be available in the art department and the Campus Pastor’s office for a small fee (to recover some printing costs), for all members of the campus community. Thus, the completed pieces will be available in the original on campus, via projection in chapel, and via reproduction in the devotional booklet and postcards.
III THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Westmont believes that worship is at the heart of all we do as human beings created in the image of God. While we gather three times a week to worship in community, we also believe that we worship and glorify God in our studies and in our fellowship. As students in the art department, we are eager to try new ways to worship through our art and also wish to encourage our college community toward a wider visual vocabulary of praise, lament, and proclamation.

Over the course of our semester of reading, visiting churches, and discussing our findings, we came to appreciate the lively, integrated and theologically grounded visual practices in the Catholic and Orthodox Christian traditions. We also came to appreciate the significant differences between those practices, and what is accepted and found useful in a Protestant community.

Whereas the emphasis in the Orthodox visual tradition is on Christ’s incarnation, and the emphasis in the Catholic visual tradition is on Christ’s suffering, the traditional Protestant emphasis is on our atonement through Christ—a doctrine symbolized by one image, the empty cross. Seeking to amplify the imagery of faith on our campus in ways consonant with the evangelical tradition, we decided to use the format of the “Stations of the Cross” to emphasis aspects of Christ’s earthly ministry—creating the “Stations of the Life of Christ” to encourage us in our desire to imitate Christ—a desire shared by all Christians. We will also link this cycle of images to local “Stations of the Cross” available in Catholic Santa Barbara—building a healthy connection to our fellow Christians, about whom many of us are fairly ignorant.

We have intentionally embedded these images in study and contemplation of the word, individually and in small groups, in order to give these images deep roots in our community and in our current worship and devotional habits. The resulting images—even if they turn out to be very abstract or surprisingly interactive—will very likely be more easily received if it is clear their genesis is in scripture and community.

IV. PROJECT DIRECTOR/SUPERVISING ARTIST

Project Director: Lisa J. DeBoer, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Art History will act as project director. Lisa has long been interested in the intersections of art and worship, and has been teaching a course in this area for several years. During the fall of 2002, Lisa supervised a previous Worship Renewal Grant that offered art students a chance to grapple with the complexities of art for worship and generated three works of art for the campus on the theme of worship.

Supervising Artist: Marie Schoeff, MFA. Marie Schoeff is a local artist and educator interested in the intersections of art and spirituality. Marie teaches regularly at Santa Barbara City College, and has worked on an interim basis in Westmont’s Art department, as a sabbatical replacement. This has given Marie a good understanding of our students’ religious backgrounds and practices. Marie, and her husband Dane, also an artist, are members of Trinity Episcopal Church, where they have contributed to the life of their congregation though their art.

V. TIMELINE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2005</td>
<td>Recruit 14 artists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of September 5</td>
<td>Meet with artists to thoroughly introduce project, distribute sketchbooks, distribute themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of September 12</td>
<td>Ben Patterson to introduce Lectio Divina, students choose small group companions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of September 19</td>
<td>Lisa DeBoer to introduce ways to find historical imagery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks of October 3, 10</td>
<td>Supervising Artist meets for one-on-one consultations with student artists</td>
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VI. PROGRAM CRITERIA

A. How will your proposal effect concrete renewal? That is, what tangible difference will this proposed program make in the worship life of your congregation or community?

Based on what we learned from our previous worship renewal grant, we can predict learning in at least four ways. First, the student artists will learn to identify their assumptions about art, religious art, and their community. They will also be empowered by this experience to seek out future ways of using their talents appropriately for the worshipping church. Second, roommates and those in the small group with the artist will learn about artistic methods and materials—thereby gaining a greater appreciation for the role of images in interpreting the content and experience of Christian worship. Robert Wuthnow, in his recent study *All in Sync*, clearly demonstrated the positive impact that simply knowing an artist has on the artistic sensibilities of ordinary Christians. Third, those in the wider community will learn that artists have something to contribute to the church, and that many can learn to benefit from this gift. Finally, the art department, the project director, and the supervising artist will learn new things about the challenges of integrating the visual arts into protestant worship that will be of great use in our future teaching and creating.

B. How does your proposal provide for a component of theological reflection on the history, theology and practice of Christian worship?

The proposal itself has grown out of a semester of focused study on the theological roots of Christian imagery. In the introductory sessions, led by Lisa DeBoer, Ben Patterson and our supervising artist, participating students will learn why this particular project emerged from our class discussion. In the process of study, reading, contemplation and conversation, students will be forced to think about the theological implications of their text, about the relationship between theology and imagery, and about the nature of our work in community. In the reflective conversation at the end of the semester, students will be invited to name and “own” what they have come to realize about worship, about art, and about their own habits and practices.

C. How might your program provide help, inspiration, or resources to other congregations or communities?

Again, based on our previous experiences, we believe the main contribution to other congregations or communities will be the sensitivities and skills learned by the core participants (artists and small-group members) who are our next generation of church leaders. We also hope that by linking the *Stations of Christ’s Life* to various *Stations of the Cross* in Santa Barbara that we will shape students’ attitudes toward their Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ, and perhaps initiate new relationships between Catholic clergy and Westmont.

VII. INTENDED OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT, DISSEMINATION

A. Please describe how you anticipate this project will renew worship practices in your community.

In addition to the points listed above, our hope is that students will learn how to incorporate visual aids into public worship and personal devotion as they encounter these images in chapel, on campus, and via reproduction. Images help interpret our faith and anchor our memories. Even though many Protestants ardently believe they don’t use religious images—all Protestants do, in fact,
use images. A project like this is a great way to introduce more self-conscious, theologically and scripturally based interactions with visual interpretations of the faith, an awareness that students can take into the rest of their lives.

B. Describe a process for assessing your program. How will you know if you have met your goals?

Building on what we learned with our 2002 grant, we believe that the best demonstrations of learning come though thoroughly documenting the conversations that happen along the way and then reflecting those conversations back to participants for comments and conclusions. Throughout the duration of the last grant, the project director sought to provide a “meta-commentary” on what she observed in each working group. The participants’ questions, arguments, challenges, frustrations, and breakthroughs were all recorded for future reflection. Learning needs to be named in order to be owned. We believe that successful documentation of what is being learned, while it is happening, is the most organic and effective way of generating tools for good assessment. That documentation, in conjunction with e-mail dialogue and conversational feedback from all participants, will provide the raw materials for the project’s evaluation.

C. Describe how the results of your work could be shared with others.

Most immediately, the booklet, the postcards, and the works themselves will be shared with the members of the campus community. We’ve also discovered that printed “reminders” of the 2002 project have been very useful in helping others understand what was learned over the course of that semester. While we no longer keep a stock of pamphlets from the “Genesis” project at the three campus locations where the art works resided, we do use them in the art department. Soon our stock will be finished. We also hope that students will choose to send these postcards to friends and family beyond the campus community. We also hope the devotional brochures may be of use to alumni, parents, and visitors.

VIII. BUDGET

A. Budget Breakdown

**Artist’s Honorarium**
Supervising Artist’s Compensation $4,000.00

**Materials**
Sketchbooks for 16 people: $160.00
Materials for 14 pieces $2100.00

**Assessment Support**
“Food and Reflection Funds” $200.00

**Dissemination**
1500 xeroxed Devotional Booklet for free distribution on campus $750.00
500 Postcard reproductions of each piece Design and printing costs (Ventura Printing) $3,500.00

**Total** $10,710.00

B. Budget Narrative

**Artist’s Honorarium: $4,000.00**—A project such as this requires an experienced educator who is also sensitive to the intersections of artistic and spiritual growth. Our honorarium for the
The supervising artist estimates an average of 3-4 hours a week of student contact time. We used Westmont’s pay-scale for adjunct instruction for a sense of what would be fair compensation for the time and expertise necessary for a successful project.

**Materials: $2260.00**—A sketchbook will be the best way for students to track the results of their study, contemplation and research, as well as collect the patterns, images and movements the stories are beginning to evoke. At approximately $10.00 each, the sketchbooks for the students, as well as one for the supervising artist and the project director will come to $160.00.

Estimating an overall average of $150.00/piece for each work and for any presentational supplies (i.e. a plexi box for a piece placed outdoors), we have allotted $2100.00 for materials and display apparatus, for a total of $2260.00.

**Assessment Support: $200.00**—Learning from our last grant, we discovered that the best way to have a good conversation that honors all involved is over food. The project director and the supervising artist can entertain students in the dining commons at a reasonable rate, and can also consult with one another over the occasional lunch. Final discussions with a handful of students are also best done off-campus, over a simple meal.

**Dissemination: $4250.00**—Since there are approximately 1200 students at Westmont, we estimate that 1500 devotional booklets and 500 postcards of each object will allow everyone access to physical reminders of these works. The Xeroxing of 1500 devotional booklets will run approximately $750.00. The four-color postcards, handled by Ventura Printing, will cost approximately $3500.00 for design and printing. Postcards will be available through the art department and the campus pastor’s office.

**IX. SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1) 5 people who helped develop this grant  
2) Letter from Campus Pastor  
3) Letter from Art Department Chair  
4) Letter from Provost  
5) CV for Project Director  
6) CV for Supervising Artist  
7) Mission Statement for Westmont College  
8) Mission Statement for Campus Pastor’s Office  
9) Mission Statement for Art Department  
10) Annual budget for Chapel Program  
11) Art and Worship Syllabus