

March 17, 2004

To: Extraordinary friends

From: Esther Meek

Re: Longing to Know

Little did I know, last time I wrote, that *Longing to Know* would lead to our family's moving out of state!

Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Geneva College

The recent release of Ken Myers' *Mars Hill Audio Journal* #66, with his interview of me regarding *Longing to Know*, prompted Geneva College to interview me for a position I had applied for in their philosophy department. They had already expressed interest in my work, and in the prospect of future collaboration. Last Monday I interviewed; Tuesday they offered me the position.

When the President extended the offer, he said, "The decision was not only unanimous, but it was ecstatic. We think you are a perfect fit for Geneva. Consider this your external call."

Geneva has a longstanding and stellar reputation for commitment to spiritual and cultural transformation. I can't think of another institution with whom my personal vision would resonate so harmoniously. Geneva is actually hoping that I will help widen circles of influence.

My family's supportive response has been gracious and confirming. We plan to move sometime this summer, and I begin my responsibilities in August. I look forward to teaming with wonderful new friends in a common mission, as well as continuing to write and speak.

Longing to Know...and Worldviews

This weekend I give a paper at the Midwest Regional Evangelical Theological Society meetings in Lincoln, Illinois. I hope to show the central dynamic of Michael Polanyi's epistemology, featured in *Longing to Know*, is a most helpful tool for understanding, appreciating, and working with worldviews.

Esther at Emmanuel

March 28 I speak at Emmanuel EP Church's Emmanuel Nights, here in St. Louis. The topic is "*Longing to Know...and You*." I will be presenting the tools of knowing. In group conversation we will apply them to anything from knowing God to good business, from church outreach to artistic experience. If you are in the area, please come. Call the church office, 636-458-2913.

Knowing from the Body

April 1 I guest lecture in Dr. Becky Becker's *Thinking With The Body* interdisciplinary class at Truman State University, and enjoy conversation with Starr and friends.

Kansas City, ho!

April 30 I speak at a women's retreat at Overland Hills PCA in Kansas City. My friends, Jon Dunning and Russ Ramsey, now on staff at OHPC, hope to put together another event or two that features the message of *Longing to Know*.

Esther meets Ravi Zacharias

I have a green light from RZIM to bring me in to discuss my work, and we are working out a time, perhaps in June. I look forward to this strategic honor, and to connecting with others in Atlanta.

I saw Emmy Lou Harris

My time in Nashville a few weeks ago was amazing and so delightful.

- Kevin Twit of *Indelible Grace* proved a steady, attentive road manager who knows how to get the job done. He blessed me with his service. Thanks to him and other self-appointed agents, I addressed 2 campus groups, 2 pastors gatherings, 2 artist/coffee houses, a faculty gathering and a philosophy club. It was wonderful to talk about knowing and begin friendships with students, artists, educators and pastors.
- For the pastors, I compiled a one-page list of ways that *Longing to Know* aids pastors and churches in their mission. It was wonderful to invite them to participate in this vision.
- I spent time with former-students-now-pastors, Mike Graham and Brian Habig, with “grandstudents” over coffee, and with music friends MPJones and Cason Cooley.
- My circle of recording artist friends expanded delightfully. At week’s end I enjoyed their company as together we attended an awesome Buddy Miller concert, with a surprise backup appearance by Emmy Lou.
- I enjoyed connecting newly with Craig Brown, church planting pastor for East Nashville; my sweet and talented hostess, Katy Bowser of Art House East; and Dr. Andrew Johnston, Dean of Students at Belmont University.
- And I got to say thank you once again to Dr. Steve Bond, editor at Broadman & Holman Publishers, whose request for a proposal and generous coaching birthed *Longing to Know*.

I look for further contact with people in Nashville. A Vanderbilt senior traveled up to St. Louis for further conversation. A group of pastors is considering a similar trek. And I just plain want to go back again.

Words that made my heart sing—from my former colleague in philosophy at Southwest Louisiana, Dr. John Vigorito (dip in as you have time and interest!):

“Last week I decided to pick up *Longing To Know* again and read it from cover to cover. I guess at last I was ready.... For some time now, I've been reading and thinking about religious faith, especially vis-a-vis the modernist and post-modernist world views with their metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions. But my approach has been merely critical and negative, designed to note the limitations of these secular world-views--their assumptions and presuppositions. To paraphrase Kant, I was concerned only to note their limits in order to "make room for faith." What my thinking lacked was a developed, positive epistemic framework for understanding faith. I believe one of your accomplishments in *Longing To Know* is what you've done along these lines.

“As I read your book this time, Esther, all sorts of bulbs were popping. For example, I thought of how nicely the Meek-Polanyi thesis could address the exaggerated debate between the so-called cognitivist and conatist concerning faith and belief. ...

“But what I truly admired was your uninhibited inclusion of your faith in a solid academic work. By the time I had reached to two-thirds point in the book, in each chapter I was looking forward to the section where you would apply your material to Jeff and God. ... What I looked forward to was your treatment of the material in relation to God. I found myself rooting for you. "You show them, Esther! ... Show 'em how much sense it makes. Hit 'em again!" As you can see, if I were what's-his-name accompanying David into Saul's camp, I too would have offered to run the old guy through. I probably wouldn't have asked permission.

“...And the chapters in Book V are equally good. It's great the way you use John the Baptist (my name-saint, by the way) to exemplify the continuing possibility of doubt. Likewise, Chapter 21 (p. 171) where you discuss returning to study the clues even after you have grasped

the pattern. At that point I thought of "faith seeking understanding." And then in Chapter 23, your beginning image—experiencing the sea change as hope. I could go on.

“Considering the work as a whole, I think your conception was truly creative—taking a dry philosophical subject and interweaving it with your faith, the yeast that makes the bread rise. "The Philosophy of Knowledge For Ordinary People." What an appropriate sub-title. I'm sure most "ordinary" people would have had to stretch to grasp what you were doing. And probably they, like me, missed a lot. But then, that fits perfectly with your epistemic account of the activity of knowing. Everyone is able to come away with a few more clues. And the tone, the personality of the work perfectly matches your thesis. None of the pseudo-intellectual asides that characterize Ordinary Language philosophy.

“In fact the personality of the work is Esther Meek—a down to earth Philly fan (or did I detect that you're being turned into a Cardinal fan?). Your family examples were delightful. Every so often I'd call out to Betsy–Starr speaks Spanish and has been to Belize... Stacey has been to Beijing.... And that wonderful story of Stephanie—"Once you can read, you can't not read." ... And the warm stories about Jim, especially the very powerful one when he faced the prostate cancer operation. And your emotional reaction at his father's funeral. In short, on every page—your strong Christian faith. In short, Esther, I think it is a truly fine work. I can understand and applaud the positive response you've received.”

With you in longing to know,
Esther