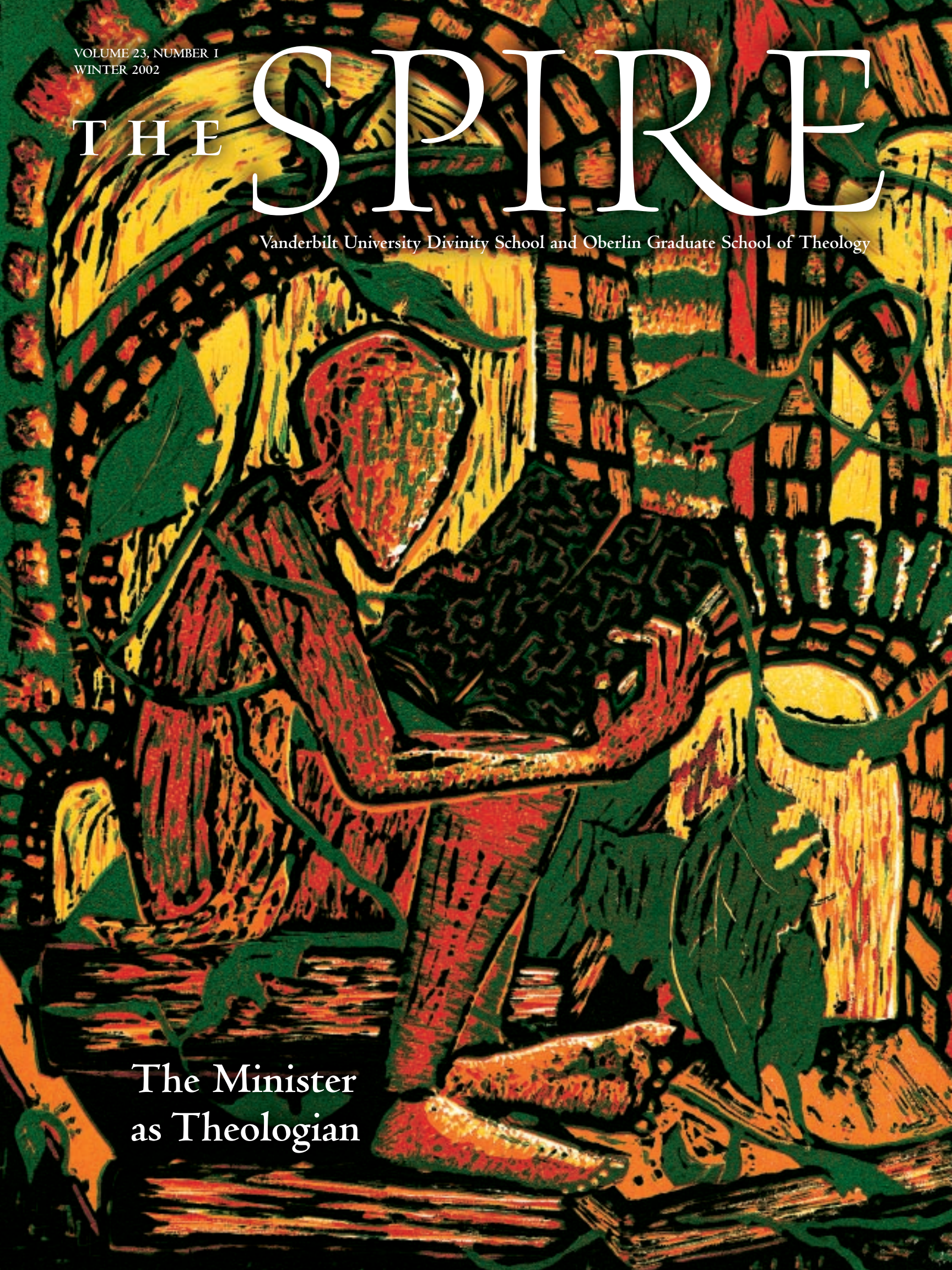


VOLUME 23, NUMBER 1
WINTER 2002

THE SPIRE

Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Oberlin Graduate School of Theology

The Minister
as Theologian



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL
announces the
2002 ANTOINETTE BROWN LECTURE

Adam, Eve, and the Genome: Feminist Theology Looks at the Human Genome Project

by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite

PRESIDENT OF CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AND PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AND CULTURE

Thursday, March 14, 7:00 p.m.
Benton Chapel

“Women are needed in the pulpit as imperatively and for the same reason that they are needed in the world—because they are women. Women have become—or when the ingrained habit of unconscious imitation has been superseded, they will become—indispensable to the religious evolution of the human race.”

—Antoinette Brown (Blackwell)

Adam and Eve
1526
by Lucas Cranach, the Elder
German painter and engraver
(1472–1553)
oil on canvas
117.1 x 80.5 cm (46 1/8" x 31 3/4")
Courtauld Institute Galleries of London



The Antoinette Brown Lecture at Vanderbilt University Divinity School commemorates the life of the first woman in the United States to be ordained to the Christian ministry. Born on May 20, 1825, in Henrietta, New York, Antoinette Louisa Brown began to speak publicly at the services of the local Congregational church when she was nine years old. She was graduated from Oberlin College in 1847 and completed the course requirements in the theological seminary in 1850; however, her degree was not granted. Ordained on September 15, 1853, she was awarded an honorary master of arts degree from Oberlin in 1878 and an honorary doctorate of divinity degree in 1908. A writer and speaker for women's rights, temperance, and the abolition of slavery, she was among the pioneers of the women's rights movement who lived long enough after the suffrage amendment was enacted to cast her ballot in the presidential election. Brown preached her last sermon when she was 90 years old and completed her tenth book at the age of 93. She died on November 5, 1921, in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Benefactor Sylvia Sanders Kelley, BA'54, established the annual lectureship in 1974 with a gift to the Divinity School. At the invitation of a committee of students, distinguished women theologians address the University community on the critical concerns confronting women in ministry. As the 28th theologian to deliver the Antoinette Brown Lecture, Professor Thistlethwaite will explore the relationship between feminist theology and genetic determinism and argue for the protection of vulnerable populations from abuses resulting from the capacity to code each person's genetic material.

THE SPIRE

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F E A T U R E S

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An excerpt from the recently published book, Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change, documents a conversation about the Lawson Affair of 1960.

On the front cover: In the linoleum block print titled *The Minister as Theologian*, artist Rashida Marijani Browne, MTS'99, has interpreted the mission statement of Vanderbilt University Divinity School by representing an androgynous figure studying in the garden of a cloister. Ancient texts serve as an improvised chair and footrest for the student theologian who reads from an open book of wisdom. Upon carefully examining the labyrinthine design of the book's pages, one discovers a community of interlocked androgynous figures. A vine shoot takes root from the book and grows throughout stilted arches. Although the vine's leaves appear to be eroding, the leaves actually bear the outlines of human figures who receive nourishment from the book. A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Browne was graduated from Xavier University in Louisiana where she earned her baccalaureate in fine arts. The Divinity School alumna currently teaches drawing and photography in the studio art department at Montgomery Bell Academy, a college preparatory school for young men, in Nashville.

Readers' Forum

From the Editor

While preparing the winter issue for publication, the editorial staff in the Office of Alumni Publications & Communications and the Divinity School received two awards which we are pleased to announce to our readership.

In October we learned from Patricia A. Pierce, director of the Opportunity Development Center at Vanderbilt University, that *The Spire* had been chosen to receive an Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiative Award at the ODC's 15th annual awards program. Upon accepting the award, we were recognized for opening the pages of *The Spire* to writers and artists of African and Asian heritage and for creating a public forum that encourages the exchange of diverse ideas.

The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) informed us in December that our publication was the recipient of the Award of Excellence for editorial design in the District III competition. The committee of judges selected Christian Holi-han's cover illustration titled "A Partnership in Ministry" to receive this honor, and the summer 2001 issue of *The Spire* that featured Christian's rendering of the ministerial partnership between theological education at Vanderbilt University and philanthropic foundations was displayed at the District III conference in Atlanta during February.

As I compose this column, I am contemplating an excerpt from the speech delivered by University Chancellor Gordon Gee during the ODC awards program: "Remember that when you are at Vanderbilt, you participate in a community. Remember that whatever your background or identity or point of origin, you have a voice within this community. I will honor and protect that voice. But remember as well that diversity is not a pro-

gram but a process. We must all work together on a daily basis to ensure that justice and fair opportunity exist in all areas of University life."

The Chancellor's references to *community*, *diversity*, and *justice* are words that recur in the mission statement and commitments of the Divinity School—words that acquire flesh through the actions of an administration, faculty, staff, and student body dedicated to improving the human condition. In this issue of *The Spire*, you will find evidence of the School's commitment to justice and fair opportunity by reading Brandon Gilvin's essay about the campesinos of Nicaragua and by viewing Adam Saylor's photographs that document the plight of these Central Americans. Lee Mitchell's article on his internship as chaplain at a correctional work center offers an alternative to treating addiction, and the profile of Kaye Nickell and her ministry to a congregation of 13 members examines her decision to leave the role of emergency room nurse and begin the journey of student theologian.

As I reflect on Chancellor Gee's statement about community, I am reminded of a quotation by the 20th-century German-born American political scientist and philosopher Hannah Arendt who remarked, "For excellence, the presence of others is always required." Any recognition *The Spire* has earned this academic year may be attributed to the support from a community that encourages me in my work as editor—a community whose members' names do not appear always in the masthead.

I am grateful to Nicholas Zeppos, vice chancellor for institutional planning and advancement and professor of law, under whose auspices *The Spire* is published; Anthony J. Spence, executive director of

alumni communications and publications, who resists micromanagement and who encourages editors to become immersed in the life of the University; James Hudnut-Beumler, dean of the Divinity School, who demonstrates a genuine respect for the publication's 26-year-old tradition and who offers sound, constructive criticism; Douglas Knight, chair of the graduate department of religion and professor of Hebrew Bible, Alice Hunt, associate dean of academic affairs, Lloyd Lewis, assistant dean for student life, Christopher Sanders, director of alumni/ae and development, and Trudy Stringer, president of the alumni/ae association, who generously provide ideas for stories and who understand the demands of the writing life; Judy Orr, director of creative services, Donna DeVore Pritchett, artistic director, and Jenni Bongard, graphic designer, who have conceived and developed an aesthetic appropriate for the Divinity School and who patiently grant me extensions as each deadline approaches; Tom Fox, director of University printing services, and Brian Waack, associate director, who tolerate with good humor my limited understanding of printing technology; Samantha Fortner, Web assistant, who launches *The Spire* into cyberspace and who has the remarkable gift of explaining Web technology in terminology a layperson can understand, and Ljubica Popovich, associate professor of art history, who for the past five years has selflessly imparted to me her encyclopaedic knowledge of religious art and architecture.

For the presence of these 15 individuals and the contributions this "community" makes to *The Spire*, I remain thankful.

—VJ

Hands on Wisdom

We are pleased that the article "Shared Wisdom" and the photograph of Divinity School student Andrew Barnett truly capture the "hands on" effort of The Remnant Trust. We have disseminated copies of *The Spire* to our board members. It is refreshing to see such a professional publication come out of academia.

Kris Bex
President, The Remnant Trust, Incorporated

Church & State

The articles published in the summer 2001 issue of *The Spire* are timely and truly important issues. "Constructing a Critically Cooperative Relationship: Religion, State & Faith-Based Charity" by Christopher Sanders could not be more appropriate, and the essay "The Paradox of the Thistle" about the work of the Reverend Becca Stevens was outstanding.

Betty D. Begley
Nashville, Tennessee

The Hand of God

The article on Becca Stevens, "The Paradox of the Thistle," prompts involvement. Herbert Marbury's examination of troubled texts drove me to the dictionary for the meaning of "pericope." The emergence of the story of Dinah seems to be flourishing. My daughter in Barcelona gave me Anita Diamant's *Red Tent*, and a friend in San Francisco sent a clipping about Primo Levi's *Search for Roots*, noting Jacob's prank at the expense of Esau.

For the future, would you explore further "the image of the hand" in Jewish iconography and elsewhere in religion? In painting, the two-finger gesture seems to imply benediction, but what is the meaning of the palm-forward gesture?

Pat Burton
Nashville, Tennessee

Editor's Response:

The image of a hand or an arm issuing from the heavens is a direct translation, in visual terms, of the scriptural reference "the hand of the Lord," a metaphor for the power and will of God. Emerging from stylized clouds and with the palm open and fingers pointing downward, the hand represents in Judaica and in Christian art the act of God speaking. Because the voice of pure spirit cannot be depicted except by imagery, the hand, therefore, represents the gesture of speech.

The image of the hand of God is particularly prevalent in scenes of the Akedah, or the binding of Isaac, recorded in Genesis 22.11-12. As examples, consider the one-inch-high onyx pendant, provenance unknown,

from the private collection of antiquities collector Sholomo Moussaieff. In the upper left corner, the hand of God extends from the sky as Abraham turns from Isaac and the sacrificial altar and sees the ram. One also may observe that in the monochrome painting entitled "The Offering of Isaac" by the 15th-century Northern Italian Renaissance painter and engraver Andrea Mantegna, whose technique of painting in varying tones of a single color often imitates sculpture, the hand of God in the upper right stays the hand of Abraham.



Onyx Akedah Pendant



The Offering of Isaac
Andrea Mantegna
(1431-1506)

Translation

If my native tongue
were Hebrew,
I would pour black ink
on white paper
and with my fingers
paint the letters:
hey, bet, tav, pe
(swirl, dash, dot, line)
to mold a poem.

In the same language
that drew pictures
of a brother's dry blood,
dark-eyed lions in dens,
and fiery bushes that speak,
I would draw a story
in three dimensions
like thick ink
rising from paper.

Black removed,
white exposed:
hey, bet, tav, pe.
Language breathes,
waiting for translation.

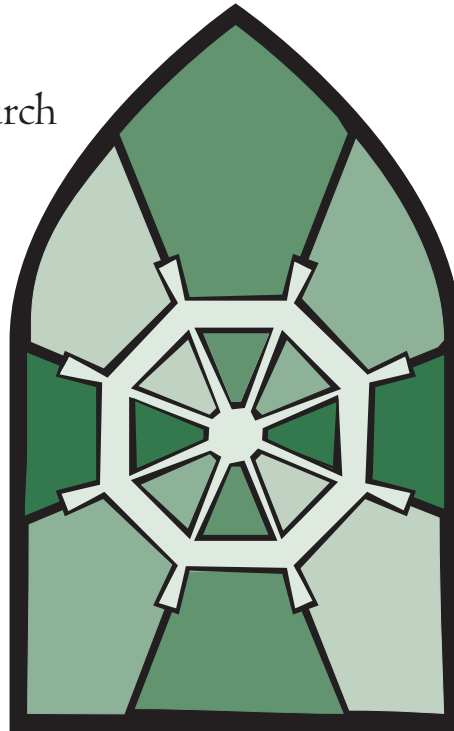
—Darian Elise Duckworth

A native of Jackson, Mississippi, the poet is a sophomore at Vanderbilt University where she is studying mathematics and English. "Translation" was inspired by the course "The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpretations" taught by M. Shai Cherry, assistant professor of religious studies.

From the Dean

Disembarking the HMS Church

I have discerned that much of what I read regarding the so-called crisis in the leadership of today's church focuses on what might be termed "sociological determinants of success." The average church membership is too small to be successful; the average salary of beginning and experienced pastors is too low to attract and retain quality people to the gospel ministry. I don't wish to deny that salaries could be higher and that more members would be nice; however, the events of September 11 should put us in a different frame of mind to talk about the possibilities of religious leadership on the contemporary scene.



Ministry has had nothing to do with the number of congregants or your salary. You have been helping people understand where God is during this tragedy; you have been helping people grieve, love, trust, wake up, and live. This is what ministry involves; it's about enabling people to come to terms with God in a way to accept the full fruits and limitations of the wonderful lives they have been given by God.

Rick Dietrich, a colleague at Columbia Theological Seminary, relished his work in theological education for laity. After 20 years in the parish, he developed a rather trenchant critique about the way clergy start to think about their jobs after a while. Rick said the clergy, given the institutional features of church life, begin to think their job is to harness people to the shipboard jobs of the HMS Church. The whole point of being a church member, then, becomes what job you can do at the church. But people should not come to us just to fill up empty hours or crowd another set of voluntary activities into their lives to make them feel better about how they spend their lives. Almost no one gets on a ship just to perform a practical service job, but as I think about it, we do have cruise

expectations within the laity such that the church is thought to be the only place you can be a Christian, just as if a cruise or vacation is the only place you can be yourself at peace.

Leadership in the church involves making one statement: "We are in this together; I'm in this with you." We aren't Captain Stubing from the Love Boat. Church members don't work for us; we aren't CEOs. Most of the literature that is written about leadership is written for business executives and would-be CEOs. Ministry is not about being the chief executive officer of a company where leadership means cutting jobs and slashing profit estimates. It isn't like military leadership where one's job is commanding authority. Servant leadership, as practiced by the disciples of Jesus, is not doormat leadership. It is helping people to do what God wants them to do with and through the expenditure of their lives in faith obedience.

The difficulty of being a leader in today's church is that what people want is a cruise ship leader, or a CEO, or a commanding presence in the pulpit. While personal magnetism and a sense of authority are assets to ministry, they are not the substance of the leadership that today's church needs. Your

job, when they ask for stones instead of bread, is to transform their hearts so that they will want bread, the bread of heaven. This means transforming first and foremost our understanding of ministry.

Ministry is nothing more than service, and we need a shared and renewed theological sense of ministry in our churches. Helping create that sense in the communities and congregations where we serve is the first task in ministry. Contemporary Christian churches and their pastors tend to break in one of two directions when they enlarge their definition of ministry beyond what ministers do: the liberals interpret ministry as service to others while conservatives interpret ministry as bringing people to a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

We need a definition of ministry for all time that is non-clerical, dynamic, and theological. Let me suggest one such definition of ministry. It comes from two of the great theologians of the last century, Daniel Day

"We need a definition of ministry for all time that is non-clerical, dynamic, and theological."

Williams and H. Richard Niebuhr. They defined ministry as the "increase of the love of God and love toward neighbor." It may sound familiar. It should. It's taken from Jesus' summation of the law. In fact, Jesus derived that definition of what it meant to be God's righteous people from Deuteronomy in which the Ten Commandments themselves, if thought to be too many, could be reduced to two simple principles. We could do worse in our churches, and we have.

Once we can agree on the task of ministry, a task that is shared, not borne by you alone, then you can lead without extraneous expectations. The job is hard enough with extraneous matter. And that's why you must aspire to more than management of the mysteries, to a priesthood of a church where everyone already knows what's occurring. Instead, you must be evangelists, servants of the good news, leaders of a new way. That's the challenge of leadership: to be servants of the Gospel who lead human beings to love God and neighbor. To achieve this leadership, you need to create a culture, not fill an opening.

—Dean James Hudnut-Beumler

Around the QUADRANGLE

The Call to Serve

To promote diversity within an academic environment and to provide opportunities for students' spiritual and personal development, 18 representatives from Vanderbilt University Divinity School have accepted leadership roles for the 2001-2002 academic year.

Photographs by David Crenshaw, BA '87



Scott Fritz, secretary of the Student Government Association; Jason Shelton, director of the Divinity School choir; Nancy Emrich, coordinator of worship; Kaye Harvey, cochair of the United Methodist Student Organization; MarLu Scott, coordinator of worship; and Matthew Charlton, cochair of the United Methodist Student Organization are among the students working to ensure a sense of community at VDS.



Officers of the Student Government Association include William Young, vice president; Hollie Woodruff, chair of public relations; Robert Phillips, president; and Annette Grace Zimondi, treasurer.



While fulfilling requirements for the master of divinity degree, these students also are serving on committees at VDS: Brandon Gilvin, representative to the Honor Council; Charles Turner, cochair of the Vanderbilt chapter of Black Seminarians; Heather Godsey, coordinator for the Office of Women's Concerns; Josh Tinley, chair of the Political Action Network (PAN); Michelle Jackson, cochair of the Black Seminarians; Will Judd, chair of Eco Concerns; Eric Schlegel, coordinator of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Concerns (GABLE); and Erika Callaway, coordinator for the Office of Women's Concerns.



REYTON HOGE

James Hudnut-Beumler was installed as the 15th dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School during the fall convocation. Among those joining in the celebration were his wife, the Reverend Heidi Hudnut-Beumler, their daughter, Julia, and their son, Adam. The text of the dean's installation address may be read on pages 12-14 of The Spire.



REYTON HOGE

Associate Professor Renita J. Weems responds to a question from alumnus Roderic L. Murray III, MDiv'69, DD'71, following the October community breakfast on "Preaching and Teaching Difficult Biblical Texts."

New Staff Appointments at VDS

During the 2001 fall semester, the Divinity School welcomed new staff members to the Office of Alumni/ae and Development, Cokesbury Bookstore, the Refectory and Faculty Reading Room, the Admissions Office, and the Registrar's Office.



REYTON HOGE

Amy Ward Edwards, BS'78, MEd'80, of the United Methodist Publishing House, is serving as manager of the Cokesbury Bookstore located in the Divinity School. A native of Dalton, Georgia, Edwards studied special education and psychology at George Peabody College for Teachers before earning her master's degree in elementary education and educational psychology from the University. She completed postgraduate courses in educational psychology at the University of Maryland and taught in the Metropolitan-Davidson County Public Schools System before accepting a position with the United Methodist Publishing House.

"I am glad to be on campus again," says Edwards, "and I consider working in the bookstore to be my ministry."



DAVID CRENSHAW

Vanderbilt University's Division of Institutional Planning and Advancement announces that **Christopher Kelly Sanders, MDiv'95**, has been appointed director of alumni/ae and development for the Divinity School. A doctoral student in historical studies in the Graduate Department of Religion at the University, he previously served as senior manager for human resource development at Dollar General Corporation.

Sanders, a native of Hodgenville, Kentucky, was graduated in 1992 from Centre College in Danville where he earned a baccalaureate in religion and government. He attended the Divinity School as a Dollar General Scholar and received the Elliott F. Shepard Prize in church history.

"I am honored to be able to work with the friends, faculty, staff, students, and graduates of the Divinity School and the Graduate Department of Religion," says Sanders. "Our historic commitments to scholarship, dialogue, and social issues are helping us imagine the future of theological education today."

He succeeds Cathy H. Snyder who has been appointed vice president for institutional advancement at the Watkins College of Art and Design and Film School in Nashville.



DAVID CRENSHAW

The 2001-2002 academic term marks not only the 25th year **Antoinette Hicks** has served Vanderbilt University but also her return to the quadrangle where she is manager of the remodeled Refectory and Vanderbilt Faculty Reading Room. To provide a centrally located place for faculty and students to gather and exchange ideas, the Refectory was reconfigured during the summer to feature a dining area and a reading room with wireless access to the Vanderbilt network.

The Refectory also serves as one of the settings for Salon V, a series of informal afternoon conversations on interdisciplinary subjects hosted by the Office of the Chancellor. "The Greeks had the agora," remarks Dean James Hudnut-Beumler. "They deliberately constructed public places where people could meet to discuss ideas, and now the Reading Room is a public place that will encourage collegial relationships among faculty and students from all the schools in the University."

"I am delighted to be reassigned to the Divinity School," says Hicks, who also has worked in Vanderbilt Catering, "and the new Reading Room will offer opportunities for building community relations across campus."



DAVID CRENSHAW

When prospective students make inquiry about applying to Vanderbilt University Divinity School, one the first individuals with whom they'll become acquainted is **Jamison Fee, MDiv'99**, who returned to campus this fall as assistant to the director of admissions. He succeeds Brian Heuser, MTS'00, who has enrolled in the doctoral program at Vanderbilt's Peabody College.

A native of Nashville, Fee was graduated in 1994 from David Lipscomb University where he studied early American history. He and his wife, Melissa, MSN'99, a lecturer in the School of Nursing and practitioner at the Vanderbilt Page-Campbell Heart Institute, are parents of a five-year-old daughter, Sydney, and a two-year-old son, Wallace.

If Fee is not corresponding with applicants to VDS or fulfilling his responsibilities as a parent, he may be found in his workshop designing and building wooden cabinets or learning the craft of building traditional wooden boats.



DAVID CRENSHAW

Scheduling classes, coordinating registration, and calculating students' credit hours are among the responsibilities of **Keith Cole**, registrar for the Divinity School. He assumed the duties of the office upon the retirement of Aline Patte, who served the School for 24 academic years.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, Cole earned his baccalaureate in music and theatre from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, before matriculating at Scarritt Graduate School in Nashville where he was awarded a vocal scholarship for pursuing a master's degree in church music. He was graduated in 2000 with the master of divinity degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, and he has studied abroad in Iona, Scotland, and in Taizé, France.

Cole has served as minister of music for churches in North Carolina, Illinois, Georgia, and Tennessee. His partner, John Semingson, is director of music ministries at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville.

Notes from the Lecture Halls

Eminent Algerian-French philosopher and literary critic Jacques Derrida, acknowledged by the *New York Times* as “perhaps the world’s most famous philosopher—if not the only famous philosopher,” delivered the Chancellor’s Lecture in Vanderbilt Law School’s Flynn Auditorium on October 25. The pioneer of the Deconstructionist movement, Derrida presented a paper titled “Perjury” which probed a range of topics relating to memory, fidelity, and religion, framed within an account of the life of his friend Paul de Man, the controversial semiologist. Raising questions about memory as an ethical obligation infinite at every moment and the ultimate compatibility of marriage and Christianity, Derrida continued to explore language and culture in the vein of his watershed works *Writing and Difference*, *Of Grammatology*, and *Margins of Philosophy*.

An overwhelming crowd from both the Vanderbilt and Nashville communities—which far outnumbered the available space—attended the lecture by the philosopher who serves as director of studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and professor of humanities at the University of California in Irvine. During his

visit to the University, he also met with professors and graduate students in the philosophy department to answer pointed questions about his complex theories.

Derrida’s lecture was sponsored by the Divinity School, the Department of French and Italian, the Department of Philosophy, the Law School, and the Chancellor’s Lecture Series.

—compiled by Gayle Rogers, BA ’01



NEIL BRANE



NEIL BRANE

The Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality invited South African AIDS educator Christo Greyling to the Divinity School in November to discuss the role of the church in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A hemophiliac who tested HIV positive in 1987 while at seminary, Greyling was instrumental in developing “I Have Hope,” an AIDS peer group model selected by the South African National Population Unit as the best practice model for peer group-based HIV/AIDS prevention programs. He presents this model throughout the continent and also hosts Africa’s only national HIV/AIDS radio program.

“HIV/AIDS is doing exactly what apartheid previously did,” contends Greyling. “A section of the population is marginalized; families are torn apart; people infected are stigmatized and discriminated against by their community and their families; and women and children, who are vulnerable and powerless, are affected most. These conditions are worsened by poverty, patriarchy, and violence.”

During his presentation, Greyling stated that his personal vision for AIDS education is “to see the Church of Christ actively demonstrating the unconditional love of Christ through effective prevention, care, and support programs.” An estimated 4.7 million South Africans—one in nine—are HIV positive, the highest number of any country in the world.

Laurie Zoloth-Dorfman, president of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities explored the ethical complexities surrounding human stem cell research during an October public lecture sponsored by the Cal Turner Program in Moral Leadership for the Professions, the Center for Genetics and Health Policy, and the Divinity School.

“According to the Talmud, all knowledge is permitted for teaching and learning; however, this does not mean that all knowledge has to be applied,” Zoloth-Dorfman informed the audience in Light Hall. “Stem cell research introduces two challenges for the Academy: How do we morally justify all knowledge? Considering the gravitas of stem cell research, do we need to articulate a theory of virtue for our research?”

Zoloth-Dorfman also holds an appointment at San Francisco State University where she is an associate professor of social ethics and director of the program in Jewish studies. The response to her lecture was given by Brigid L. M. Hogan, the Hortense B. Ingram Chair in Molecular Oncology, professor of cell biology, and senior fellow in the John F. Kennedy Center at Vanderbilt University.



WOODIE S. KNIGHT



DAVID CRENSHAW

Internationally known Islamist John L. Esposito addressed the origins and political ramifications of Islamic radicalism in a lecture titled “Politics and Islam: Radicalism or Reform?” The founding director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and professor of religion and international affairs at Georgetown University, Esposito was invited to the University in conjunction with a new interdisciplinary course—Ancient Origins of Religious Conflict in the Middle East—taught last fall by Susan Ford Wiltshire, professor of classics and chair of the

classical studies department, and Robert Drews, professor of classics and history.

Esposito is among the scholars who translated and provided an interpretation of the handwritten letter composed by a hijacker of the first American Airlines plane that hit the World Trade Center. He has edited *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* and *The History of Islam*, two volumes that have been recommended to help the public understand the complexities surrounding the events of September 11.

The lecture in Furman Hall was sponsored by the Department of Classical Studies, the Department of Religious Studies, the Graduate Department of Religion, and the Divinity School.

Reclaiming the Birthright of Giftedness

“The blizzard of the world has crossed the threshold and has overturned the order of the soul,” stated Parker J. Palmer when delivering the 2001 Cole Lectures in October. The author, educator, and social activist employed this quotation by contemporary composer Leonard Cohen to illustrate the effects of transgressions in the international community since September 11.

In his lecture titled “Divided No More: Spiritual Formation in a Secular World,” Palmer also discussed ways to recover from the “individual blizzards” that create incongruity between the inner and outer stages on which we conduct our lives. He encouraged the student theologians in the audience at Benton Chapel to rely on the texts from wisdom traditions as vehicles of truths and to reject cheap relativism and self-help spirituality.

“We arrive on earth made in God’s image, and we are endowed with a birthright of giftedness,” Parker argued. “We do not arrive deformed, nor are we raw material for a pragmatic template. You will learn about spirituality by drawing yourself to the lives of oppressed people because the only power they have is the power of the soul. As theologians, you must help people reclaim their birthright of giftedness so they will live divided no more.”

Philanthropist Edmund W. Cole, president of Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad and treasurer of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust, endowed the annual Cole Lecture Series in 1892. His gift provided for the first sustained lectureship in the history of the University.



PETER HEGE

Parker J. Palmer greets guests in Benton Chapel following his delivery of the 2001 Cole Lectures.



DAVID CRENSHAW

On November 8, 2001, the eve of the 63rd anniversary of Krystallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, historian Peter Hoffmann began the closing lecture for the 24th annual Holocaust Lecture Series at Vanderbilt University by quoting from Psalm 74:

“The enemy has destroyed the sanctuary. Your foes have roared within your holy place; they set up there emblems there. At the upper entrance they hacked the wooden trellis with axes. And then with hatchets and hammers, they smashed all the carved work. They set your sanctuary on fire; they desecrated the dwelling place of your name.”

Hoffmann informed the audience in Wilson Hall that theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his colleagues had recited the psalm together when they learned of the massive, coordinated attack on Jews throughout the German Reich and the desecration of the synagogues on November 9, 1938. The William Kingsford Professor of History at McGill University in Montreal, Hoffmann provided a detailed chronology of the German resistance to the persecution of the Jews from 1933 to 1945 and discussed the reasons why recognition of Germany’s resistance to Nazi crimes was muted after World War II. He was among the eight lecturers who were invited to the University to address the theme of the 2001 series, “Resistance to the Holocaust,” which was examined in film, song, lectures, and discussions.

Established in 1977 by University chaplain emeritus Beverly Asbury, Vanderbilt’s annual Holocaust Lecture Series is the nation’s longest-sustained forum on the subject.

Tribute to a Mentor

Amy-Jill Levine, the Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies and director of the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, received a mentoring award from the Committee for the Status of Women in the Profession at the 2001 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Denver, Colorado. She was introduced at the SBL meeting by Marianne Blickenstaff, MA'01, doctoral student in New Testament and administrative assistant to the Carpenter Program and Kelly Miller Smith Institute. The following excerpt is from Blickenstaff's introduction:



At the 2001 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Vanderbilt University Divinity School Professor Amy-Jill Levine (left) received a mentoring award from the Committee for the Status of Women in the Profession. Pictured with Levine are Bernadette Brooten, Brandeis University; Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Harvard University Divinity School; Mary Ann Tolbert, Pacific School of Religion; Phyllis Bird, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary; Elizabeth Castelli, Barnard College; Agneta Enermalm, Lutheran Theological Southern University; and Heather McKay, Edge Hill College of Higher Education.

Amy-Jill Levine's mentoring style is exemplified by the fact that her door is open always. Whether she is preparing a lecture, grading papers, writing a presentation for the Catholic Diocese, researching an article, taking her children to their violin lessons, editing a contribution to the *Feminist Companion to the New Testament Series*, or making travel plans to Chicago by way of Glasgow, she is willing to give her full attention to whatever joys and concerns her students bring. She coaches, counsels, confronts, and empowers. She is among the individuals to whom a student may turn during a crisis and the first to knit a sweater to welcome a newborn child.

Professor Levine models feminist scholarship and collaboration in her teaching as she encourages students to work together and to share information and constructive criticism. Her collaborative model extends to the community outside the University's walls as she tries to engage people from the "real world" in discussions of cutting-edge biblical study on topics such as women's roles in religious organizations, homosexuality, and Jewish-Christian relations. Because of her popularity as a guest speaker, there are always more than a few auditors from the community who attend her classes.

She encourages timid students to submit papers to be read at professional meetings, and she is in the audience to cheer them during their presentations. She edits these papers with the same high standards she expects of well-established scholars. A syllabus for her course always requires a paper of publishable quality,

and no one is more proud than she when a student's paper is published.

She models excellence in her own work by publishing in a wide range of scholarship that includes the New Testament, Hebrew Bible, Hellenistic Judaism, Christian origins, intertestamental and apocryphal writings, early Rabbinics, gender studies, and feminist criticism. Her vast network of colleagues and friends has proven to be a valuable resource for students who wish to engage in a dialogue with other scholars or for graduates looking for employment. As many students will attest, A.-J.'s lectures and seminar discussions are full of wit, and her enthusiasm for all she does is contagious.

But her mentoring includes more than scholarship. Teresa Hornsby, PhD'00, an assistant professor of philosophy and religion at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, says, "A.-J. expends an extraordinary amount of energy toward transforming the grungy graduate student into the persona of a professional. She offers practical advice on interviewing for jobs, purchasing designer clothing on a graduate student budget, and choosing a good martini gin. A.-J.'s annual trip with students to a local outlet mall to shop for professional wear is always an anticipated event."

She was nominated for this award because she serves as an example of how one maintains a balance among commitments to teaching, scholarship, family, and community service. "Because of the model she has set for me, I take my new role as a mentor very seriously," explains Hornsby. "I try to follow her example by replying to every student's e-mail or phone call, addressing every grammatical or stylistic error, taking time to listen although my desk is piled high with papers, being hard when necessary—but soft when necessary, and by maintaining a clear and professional boundary between teacher and student. Even now, A.-J. remains my mentor; in moments of panic I can send an e-mail and receive an immediate answer on questions ranging from Second Temple Judaism to publishing."

The Importance of Ancestors and Cousins: An Encounter with British Methodism

—FROM THE TRAVELOGUE OF
ANDREW C. THOMPSON, MDiv'01

On April 2, 1739, John Wesley took to the open air and preached outdoors to a large crowd in Bristol, England. It was his first experience with "field preaching." He later remarked about the incident that he had "submitted to 'be more vile'" by abandoning social convention and taking the gospel to hearers outside the confines of a church. If one were to be insistent on a particular date and place, then this event can serve to mark the genesis of the Wesleyan Methodist Revival. Wesley had long been involved in the serious pursuit of discipleship that had earned him and his Oxford colleagues the Methodist moniker, but it was not until that pivotal spring day in 1739 that he was won over to a method of evangelizing that allowed his movement to become widespread.

It was with an interest in this movement that a contemporary group known as People Called Methodists recently journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean to explore Wesleyan roots and to join in a dialogue with their British Methodist cousins. Led by Professor Doug Meeks, the Cal Turner Chancellor's Professor of Wesleyan Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, the group included 24 students and alumni/ae from the School. From May 14-25, 2001, these pilgrims covered an amount of territory in southern England that would have made Wesley proud. And while the Vanderbilt travelers did not have to make their way on horseback, they logged plenty of miles by plane, train, and bus.

Along with Professor Meeks, participants included students Kaye Harvey, Katrina Laude, Doug Crews, Jared Wilson, Renata Alexandre, Ray Howland, MarLu Scott, Wade Griffith, Sherill Clontz, Matthew Charlton, Donna Parramore, Tammy Broeckelmann, Marcy Thomas, Robert Phillips, Cherie Booker, Gloria Penn, and Aaron Madondo. The alumni/ae participants on the trip included Hap Hewgley, MDiv'00; Paula Hoos, MS'75, PhD'82, MDiv'01; Tim Eberhart, MDiv'00; Becky Eberhart, MDiv'00; Bob Coleman, MDiv'86; Marc Overlock, MDiv'87, JD'87; and I.

The official title of our trip was "British Methodism in its Social Context" and involved a blend of the historical study of early Methodism and an investigation into the current work and ministry of the British Methodist Church. We were able to explore our own Wesleyan roots as well as to see how an authentic Wesleyan theology and sense of mission is continued in British Methodism today.

Methodism was born in Oxford, so it was appropriate that our journey began there as well. It was at Oxford University that John Wesley, his brother, Charles, and colleagues such as George Whitefield were educated. And it was at Oxford that these men would adopt the practice of holy living that would first earn them the label "Methodist" for its methodical approach to discipleship.

We were soon viewing magnificent buildings, such as Christ Church College where both Wesleys studied and Lincoln College from where John earned his fellowship. The experience of walking the streets of the city gave us a chance to breathe in the history that surrounded us. Here was the jail where the Oxford Methodists first began visiting prisoners; there was the room at Lincoln College where John first began hosting nightly Bible studies and prayer meetings.

After hoofing through the streets of medieval Oxford on our first full day, we stopped to enter the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, the University Church of Oxford. The church is impressive for the history it claims, and the more of that history that I heard, the more awed I became. You only have to close your eyes to imagine the number of eminent politicians, scientists, and theologians who have passed through the doors during the past 500 years. This is the church where Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer were tried for heresy in the reign of Mary Tudor. It was from the University Church's pulpit that Cranmer shouted defiantly at Mary's officials, "And as for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy, and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine," and thus claimed final allegiance to the Church of England shortly before he was burned at



Wade Griffith, MDiv'03, and Andrew Thompson, MDiv'01, stand before a portrait of John Wesley.

the stake. And this was also the church where the Wesleys worshipped and where John, as a fellow of Lincoln College, had the privilege of periodically delivering university sermons.

I tried to picture Cranmer's 16th-century audience as it was surprised by his eleventh hour recantation of his earlier confession of heresy. I tried to see Wesley, slight in build and stern in demeanor, as he chastised the faculty and students of the university as "triflers," who displayed "pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience and peevishness, sloth and indolence, gluttony and sensuality." In his final university sermon, "Scriptural Christianity" (1744), Wesley matter-of-factly defended himself as only having communicated the judgment of the gospel in "plainness of speech." The site where these pivotal moments occurred holds all the intangible gravitas of a place that has seen great figures and great events throughout the centuries. Sitting in the pews and running my hands over the gray stone columns were powerful moments not only for this student of Methodist history but for anyone with an interest in the history of Christianity.

Thompson serves as associate chaplain at Lambuth University in Jackson, Tennessee, and is a certified candidate for ordination as an elder in the North Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Do We Need a New Religion?

BY JAMES HUDNUT-BEUMLER, PH.D.,

Dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School and The Anne Potter Wilson Distinguished Professor of American Religious History

On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, within the first hour following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Dean Hudnut-Beumler declared the Divinity School a sanctuary for members of the University community who could have been subjected to reprisals. Two days later, when he was installed as the 15th dean of the School, Hudnut-Beumler reflected upon the theological questions that confront religious leaders and faith communities, especially in those hours marked by "the silence of our confusion," a phrase Associate Dean Alice Hunt employed during the evening's invocation. We are pleased to publish the text of his installation address from the fall 2001 convocation in this issue of The Spire.

The program for tonight's service labels this a "Service of Worship and Celebration." It is both, for we worship God in this moment when we have come face to face with our insecurity, and we celebrate the good we know through human communities like this School, families, friends, and congregations. But if I had one more word I could add now to the program's title, it would be "remembrance," for in the words of Psalm 116, "Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of God's faithful ones."

Faithfulness has taken diverse and inspiring forms in the last three days, from incredible acts of putting the lives of others before one's own, to final cell phone calls made to tell someone in the fleeting moments of life, "I love you." And so we remember that the greatest gift the creator has provided us as human beings is one another. That gift, however, was rejected on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. The Holy Scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam repeatedly remind us that God's love and love of neighbor are supposed to go together. In the days ahead, we must work hard to remember that lesson when our love of neighbor is tried by our natural desire for revenge.

At a time like this, our faith commitments are tested. Religion is about the big questions: Why? Why are things the way they are? How are we to live? And religion is about the big issues: love, justice, hope, consolation, evil, humanity, and the Holy, and even about the spirit of vengeance that lives close to the surface of every human heart.

Reporters, making assumptions, have kept me busy with questions that began with a print journalist asking me at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, "Can you explain this religious attack on America?" While I have been at pains to explain that even religiously con-

nected and motivated terrorism does not constitute a "religious" attack, I know what she and others have meant. The question behind the question is, "What do Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have to do with all of this?" It is about whether our religious traditions, and those of others, are a genuine help or a part of the problem, and you and I know the answer is that they are both.

This Divinity School is a wager on the part of the University that good religious leadership, in service of good religious understanding, is of value to our world. But these are days to ask what makes for good and bad religion. Or, to put it another way, are our faith traditions up to the job of living together, or do we need a new religion? Osama bin Laden said that the attack of September 11 was God's retribution on America. The Divinity School is not responsible for his bad theology, but today I ask us to examine our own religion.

The subject of this address is a question posed first in 1909 by Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard. He argued that it was time for a new religion for the 20th century, one which was "in harmony with the great secular movements of modern society—democracy, individualism, social idealism, the zeal for education, the spirit of research, the modern tendency to welcome the new, the fresh powers of preventive medicine, and the recent advances in business and industrial ethics." In some ways we look back on the 20th century and are forced to admit that the new religion was tried. People believed in progress and social experimentation, in the new, in science, and what happened? Well, events good and bad happened: penicillin and the Holocaust—the end to Jim Crow and Apartheid—Hiroshima and the greatest totalitarian states in history—all aided by the

new religion of scientific and social "progress."

At the beginning of the 21st century, we face the same kind of question. In what should we believe? Contemporary Americans express great interest in spirituality but less interest in organized religion. In social conversation, you may have heard someone say, "I'm very interested in spirituality, but I'm not religious, or anything like that." I know I have. Still others have continued to remain observant, but wonder if everything their religious leaders say should be given equal weight. That's where the Divinity School comes in: our mission is to help find a way through a culture that alternatively seeks instant faith in the Davis-Kidd bookstore's New Age section and tries to avoid modernity by escape into fundamentalist enclaves.

Do we need a new religion? My answer comes in three parts: no, we don't; but that does not mean the old religion by itself will suffice; instead, we must find our places in living traditions.

Sometimes people want a new religion because they find the available traditions tainted by patriarchy or ethnocentrism. The historic religions come with such baggage, don't they? Why not jettison the unwieldy and freighted package for just the God we need?

And as we have just seen, there are also those in the religious world who would have you exchange the uncertainties that a thoughtful person entertains for the predictable certainty of a small deity that behaves as human beings might wish. But that God will not satisfy, let alone save.

Is not that the prophet Isaiah's point—that a god of your own making can't really help you?

One of the roles of a divinity school is to help people to appreciate the relevant wisdom that is already there. Religious traditions with deep roots remind us that human beings haven't changed as much as modern culture wants us to believe. Shakespeare still makes sense after 385 years because foolish rulers, jealous spouses, and noble people who suffer despite their honor still populate our world. In a like way, the Bible still speaks to us because we know deep down that it is still wrong to bear false witness, that family matters even when it is painful, and that adultery still hurts. Like people in the Ancient Near East, we still wonder why evil-doers prosper. Every vital historic religious tradition is witness to a long struggle by

"The Divinity School does not exist to prop up any museum idea of a golden era in religion, but rather to help form religious leaders and foster religious understanding for today."

human beings with elemental questions such as "Why am I here?" and "How are we to live?" If we choose to wade into those deep waters, there is something to be said for going accompanied by our elders.

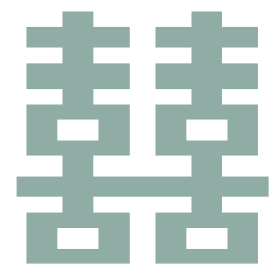
But will the old religion suffice? No. While I've suggested that there is something good about being in a religious tradition that constitutes a multigenerational conversation about what is true, what is good, and what is required of us, I must also suggest that someone else's religion will not do. The Divinity School must be positive toward traditions by opposing traditionalism. As Jaroslav Pelikan

has suggested, a tradition is the living faith of the dead, but traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. Fundamentalists of the various faiths represent a refusal to be faithful in the here and now unless the here and now changes to suit their archaic world-views. The Divinity School does not exist to prop up any museum idea of a golden era in religion, but rather to help form religious leaders and foster religious understanding for today.

In our time, we need to learn from the mistakes of the past and develop a certain humility about the religion we hold. Never believe people who know too much about God. After Jerry Falwell made his famous mid-'80s pronouncement that AIDS was God's retribution upon gay men for their lifestyle, William Sloane Coffin said, "Doctors don't know very much about AIDS. You can be sure that Jerry Falwell knows even less."

Are religious traditions ugly practices to be used over others as ethnic armor? I hope not, but today it is not so easy to be sure. I am probably at Vanderbilt as a Presbyterian because I heard someone tell the "What should you be if you're not Presbyterian?" joke once too often. The joke goes, "What should you be if you're not Presbyterian?" Answer: ashamed. I've heard Lutherans and Baptists tell it on themselves, too, but not here. One of the great aspects of the Divinity School is that no one who has spent much time with our faculty and students can think there is only one good way to be faithful.

If it is foolish to make a new religion and dangerous to embrace uncritically the old-





time religion, what shall we do? The answer comes in the form of a critical and imaginative embrace of tradition. And Vanderbilt Divinity School has a role in making that possible.

At the Divinity School we like to say that we believe in constructive theology. We believe in constructing our theologies with all the tools and materials available—recognizing the value of past contributions, together with those of our own time. Here then, students, we will teach you about the past, but we, the faculty, will covenant with you to think about and work toward new outcomes in the future.

“As Jaroslav Pelikan has suggested, a tradition is the living faith of the dead, but traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. The Divinity School must be positive toward traditions by opposing traditionalism.”

Religious traditions are strong in a way that religious experimentation is not. On the other hand, every cherished feature of the traditions we collectively represent in this room began as what looked to contemporaries as unnecessary experimentation. Luther’s choice to stand on justification by faith alone looked like a rejection of 15 centuries of church history. John Wesley’s methods seemed like dumbing down Anglicanism to reach the masses. Thomas Cranmer’s beloved liturgy was thought too low. Rabbinic Judaism started as an alternative to the dominant temple-centered rite. Benedict’s rule that redeemed monastic life from being a rich boy’s camp experience was thought too stringent.

The point of the history lesson is that sometimes the best ideas at first appear to be breaks from the tradition. Max Weber called these “prophetic breaks.” He observed that these breaks were initiated by those within traditions who believed that the way religion had been routinized in their world no longer preserved the best features of the tradition. Using the sacred materials of the past, these prophets suggested a way forward for the future. Early generations of leadership at Vanderbilt Divinity School hoped this would become a school of the prophets. They

carved the words “Schola Prophetarum” in stone and placed the stone as a lintel above the School’s entrance. They claimed a constructive agenda; one in which both teachers and graduates of the school were to say, like the prophet Micah of old, today’s religion is not all it should be, but there is a better way possible if you will learn to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” Jesus in his time, Martin Luther King Jr. in his, and our own Sallie McFague—each sought to construct a better way out of the basic commitments shared by the people each addressed. The ideas we hope to teach you, students, are the power of tradition and the need to be prophets in your own time—to break with the routine when necessary to do what is right.

I have reason to have hope for the future of faith traditions because I have seen them change already in my lifetime. My father was the product a divinity school education, Yale, in his case. I remember asking him about a disturbing comment that one of my Sunday school teachers had made. It was about fourth grade kids going to hell if they didn’t accept Jesus as their personal savior. He told me God was bigger than people imagined him to be. Yes, back then we called God “him.” But that just proves the point. God was—God is—bigger than we imagined.

The first time I came to Tennessee was in the mid-1960s. I got out of the car at a Texaco station outside Chattanooga and saw an old drinking fountain still marked “whites only.” I learned that good religious-type people had truly thought that keeping the races separate in this demeaning way was ordained by God. They couldn’t imagine it could be different, but at the same time some religious leaders were working hard on the implications of the Genesis story—that we are all made in the image of God. One of my older colleagues at Columbia Seminary put it this way: “Segregationists taught me the Gospel and the Gospel taught me that segregation was wrong.”

Faithful study of one’s tradition and a nurtured spark of creativity make for living traditions that can meet the challenge of new

times—even now when we think everything has changed. Abraham Joshua Heschel called this potent combination the “prophetic imagination.” I pray that the students who are starting their studies at this School will develop “prophetic imagination,” for the world needs leaders who see events as they might be and who help others reach what can only be imagined.

What are the conditions that our imagination is too small to understand now, yet may change in our lifetimes? Here’s a hint:

An important section of our School’s catalog begins as follows: “The Divinity School is committed to the faith that brought the church into being, and it believes that one comes more authentically to grasp that faith by a critical and open examination of the Hebraic and Christian traditions.” Thus, this School is faith-positive but open, and because of that first commitment, others follow:

- that this education isn’t just open to those whose churches sanction them to come, but is open to seekers and some rebels, too.
- that we believe whoever serves God by leading God’s people is not conditioned upon centuries-old understandings of human social hierarchies of gender, race, and sexual orientation.
- that the human species is not the only beautiful creation.
- that racial and cultural differences are givens to understand, not liabilities to vanquish, even after September 11.
- that ministry is finally much bigger than doing professional work in the church to keep the church as an institution going, but rather it is about ideas as big as love of God and as difficult as love of neighbor.

And by attending to these commitments with hope, we shall not create a new religion, but rather aspire to do new works in and through a living faith—works of justice, mercy, compassion, understanding, and wholeness. And through the wisdom, power, and guidance of a God greater than we can imagine, may this be so. Welcome to Vanderbilt Divinity School and to the important work that lies before us.

—delivered Thursday evening, September 13, 2001, in Benton Chapel

A Holy Sorrow

BY JENNIFER CASALE

Associate English Professor and poet Kate Daniels traveled to Ground Zero and Saint Paul’s Chapel in New York City on Friday, November 9, 2001, to deliver a sheaf of poems and prose composed by Vanderbilt University students and faculty in response to the events of September 11. Among the messages of support sent to the families and friends of the victims, the rescue personnel, and citizens of New York was the following letter written by sophomore Jennifer Casale, editor of the Vanderbilt Review, the University’s annual literary magazine. A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Casale is pursuing a baccalaureate in English with an emphasis in creative writing.

On the night of September 11, I sat down on my bed and wrote a letter. This is a letter to my children, and if I never have children, this is a letter to the children of this country:

Today the world changed. The United States was paralyzed this day—this day that my hand brushes this paper—this day that I force ink from a pen and into words that can never describe this event for you—this day that I sit here on my bed

at midnight, more aware of each syllable in the words “freedom, death, hatred, terrorism, and fear” than when I rose from this bed this very morning. This day is the most important, most devastating day in the history of the United States of America. This is the eve of something historical and evil, but I pray that this also may be the dawn of something better, that tomorrow comes to find this nation wounded and bent, but not broken.

I watched children in Palestine dance in the streets and throw candy as they celebrated this tragedy, and I want to weep at this sight. I pray with every grain of hope one can harvest on a day such as this that those children be the first generation in the history of their great struggle to throw down their guns and end the destruction and the suffering—that they be the first to set aside differences and put one foot into the waters of human compassion.

I can’t erase the image from halfway around the world of those children eating candies in a street, each sweet taste, each smile, each shout of joy, their arms spinning wildly—while people leaped from windows, fathers died, mothers burned, thousands of families heard of loved ones lost, smoke and dust billowing through the streets, brave firefighters and policemen killed, terrorists holding razor blades and knifing airline attendants, people screaming and making final phone calls, the fires, and the papers—the image that needs no replay—the second plane diving into the tower, and the papers, millions of papers falling; it looked as if God were crying; the sky was crying; New York was crying; I was crying. And those dancing

children—they are so innocent and ignorant of all this as they fall asleep tonight, their bellies full of sugar. And halfway across the world, here, children are falling asleep motherless, fatherless, parentless, and vulnerable.

And this man calls this his “holy war,” but I find nothing holy in this, nothing holy except the reaction, the lives given, the blood drawn and donated, nothing holy except the deep sorrow each American and people all over the world feel right now at the sight of such careless and pointless human suffering. And the only holiness found in the reaction is at the very core of it all, the only holiness in any of this is the proof we have shown today as a nation, as people, that there is good in this world—that there are good people willing to walk this dark night through the streets of Manhattan and search through debris for bodies—good people who will lay them on clean white sheets, who will lift them from this nightmare, carry them in their arms—good people who will be angels tonight.

And you will study this day in school—this day that I just saw end—and you will ask me about it, and I will give you this letter, for these are the only words I know to say, and these are the only lines I know to write this day. This day hangs heavy with significance and the painful awareness that this is historical and real. This is a point of change. I can tell you of the past and of this day as best I can, but of the future and what lies ahead, I cannot. I do not know. I believe this is what prayers are for.

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Reflections on a Dry Rainy Season



ESSAY BY BRANDON GILVIN, MDIV3
 photographs by Adam Collin Sayler, MDiv3

As part of Vanderbilt University Divinity School's initiative in global education funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, 16 representatives from the School traveled to Nicaragua in August 2001 to study the relationship between the church and government in this Central American country. The delegation included Trudy Stringer, associate director of field education and lecturer in church and ministries; Bonnie Miller-McLemore, professor of pastoral theology and counseling; Fernando Segovia, professor of New Testament and early Christianity; Elena Olazagasti-Segovia, senior lecturer in Spanish; and students Renata Alexandre, Amy Ard, Cherie Booker, Claudia Carls, Brandon Gilvin, Wade Griffith, Lee Mitchell, Karlene Roberts, Adam Sayler, Kurt Scheib, Kurt Schreiber, and Michael Waller. (To fulfill their requirements in field education, Roberts and Waller remained in Nicaragua for the fall semester to work with different religious and social agencies.)

It's one occasion to revisit your own memories. It's a luxury to have a quiet moment when you can pause and reflect on your life—the places you've been, the people you've known, and the accomplishments you've made. Whether those memories are sad or sublime, there is something comforting about being able to have the time to examine the events of your own life. There's a power in it, an ability to shape and manipulate how you want to remember that is key to the creation of history, the shaping of our identities, even the preservation of our sanity.

But there are some memories that revisit you in ways you can't control. They are evoked when the shape of the landscape suddenly turns familiar, when your eye passes over a memorable quotation or photograph, or when a phrase or name catches your attention because you know you've heard it somewhere. They are overpowering, captivating, and while they have the potential to keep you smiling for days, they can also leave you in tears.

As a writer, I feel caught somehow between these types of memories. After all, it is my job to take good notes and shape memory into memoir, but often times, it is the memory that breathes life into the writer, not the writer that breathes life into the memory.

For me, all it took was four minutes worth of memory as I listened to a National Public Radio report that took me back to the time I stood on the side of a dusty road in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, surveying an impromptu village of ratty blanket-beds and makeshift tents, as a small child played with the pen I used to take notes while her mother asked me for money.

We were an unlikely group to meet on the side of the road. I was with a delegation of Vanderbilt Divinity School students enrolled in a travel seminar dealing with issues of religion, economics, and politics in Latin America. We were on our way from the capital city, Managua, to the northwestern region of Matagalpa to learn about a coffee crisis that was strangling the economy there. On the other hand, the group of approximately two hundred people we were with—one of three such groups alongside the same road—were campesinos, “peasant farmers,” who had been kicked off the land they worked by farm owners who could no longer afford to pay them. The campesinos were heading from Matagalpa to Managua—

walking on the road that had taken us three hours to drive. They hoped to march right to the steps of the presidential palace and demand food, medical aid, and work.

It had been a dry rainy season, we were told. And while I knew from growing up on a farm that there are growing seasons during which rain is expected but never comes, something struck me about it being a dry rainy season—as if rain could somehow be dry. A dry rainy season sounded tragic and absurd, poignant and poetic. But such could be expected in a Nation of Poets, as

“...on the side of the road, among the rot and ache of desperate poverty, people could evoke the beautiful and the magical with their words. But they could also demand justice.”

Nicaragua is called, where the scenery is as lush as language itself. Even here, on the side of the road, among the rot and ache of desperate poverty, people could evoke the beautiful and the magical with their words. But they could also demand justice.

“We are Nicaragua, and we are waiting for the people and government to wake up!” Silvia Gonzalez, one of the organizers of the campesinos, told us as she pounded her fist into her palm.

“So far, we have ten children and six adults who have died! We may have to carry the dead to Managua to demand our rights!”

“The life of one Nicaraguan might save the lives of others,” another voice spoke up, “The government must listen to us!”

A Divine Aberration?

It is hard to pinpoint the exact cause of the economic problems of Nicaragua. And getting a single answer is even more difficult. Is poverty an unavoidable economic condition that is part of a gradual global economic growth that will eventually raise everyone's standard of living? Or is poverty the result of a corrupt government that makes politicians exorbitantly wealthy while ignoring the needs of the people? Are the roots of poverty in the imperialist and neo-imperialist policies of the United States? Or did they begin with the Socialist Sandanista Revolution of 1979 and the long civil war that followed? Does God ordain poverty, or is it an aberration in the sight of a God who stands for jus-

tice? Clearly, the politics of wealth and poverty are inseparable from the theological, ideological, and historical concerns that weave their way through life in Nicaragua.

But in the case of the campesinos we met on the side of the road, everyone from economic experts to many of the campesinos themselves were clear on one of the central factors in the current economic situation of Nicaragua: the globalization of the coffee market.

While the drought in Matagalpa has severely decreased Nicaraguan production

of coffee, the price of coffee has dropped, nonetheless, from \$140 a bushel two years ago to the current price of \$50 a barrel because the global market has been flooded. Countries such as Vietnam, a relatively new player in the production of coffee, are under pressure from the World Bank to make payments on their national debts and are increasing production. Although the supply in Nicaragua may be well below the international demand for coffee, global supply far exceeds global demand and has caused prices to fall. In fact, prices have fallen so low that in Nicaragua the price of coffee does not even cover the cost of production—forcing farmers to lay off the campesinos.

But by no means do the global dimensions of the issue diminish the level to which the local and national government found themselves enmeshed in the issue. With no government subsidies or social safety nets to help the campesinos meet their basic needs, these layoffs were devastating to thousands of workers and their dependents. But the layoffs were not sudden. Rather, the crisis that arose from the layoffs had been a year in the making.

According to Manuel, a campesino who also served as an organizer and spokesperson for the mass on the side of the road, last August hadn't been much better. There had been a “silent period” in which the land had not produced as much coffee as was hoped for by the workers. However, everyone had a bit of work, and though wages were sub-



standard, even by Nicaraguan standards, workers still received some pay. But soon the money ran out, and farm owners, who promised wages for the campesinos once they received the government loans they had been promised, forced them off the land they worked. They were left with no choice but to march and beg for food.

"The government has robbed us and continues to rob us. They steal our lives," Manuel told us. "You must go back to the United States and take these impressions with you so that the U.S. knows that the corrupt government in Nicaragua assassinates its own people!"

The antigovernment sentiment felt by Manuel is not without warrant. Corruption, power brokering, and the often illegal—if not immoral—influence of the United States government and military mark the history of Nicaragua. For a poor campesino who had been promised so much by corrupt politicians on the campaign trail, the lack of response from the government was one more crime against the people to go along with the thousands of others committed over the last century.

Policing the Flagrantly Impotent

The political and economic interests of the United States have long been a major factor in the frustrated quest for Nicaraguan autonomy. In 1904, Theodore Roosevelt established what would come to be known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, a stern warning that any "chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of society, may in America...force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power."

Clearly, the United States had positioned itself to intervene at will in the affairs of Central American nations whose political goals stood in the way of U.S. policy, even if those

goals were simply concerned with national autonomy. In 1909, when Jose Santos Zelaya, a liberal dictator, executed two Americans, the U.S. helped foster an anti-Zelaya revolt which ousted the unpopular leader but led to economic chaos that was only stabilized when the U.S. offered security to European creditors who were poised to demand payment on their investments. Of course, this left Nicaragua dependent not only on European credit, but also on political and economic conditions determined by the United States. The U.S. Marines occupied the small nation, creating resentment among those who believed that Nicaragua should enjoy national self-determination.

"The government has robbed us and continues to rob us. They steal our lives."

Among those who opposed the U.S. occupation was Augusto Cesar Sandino, who led a band of guerillas against the Marines and their Nicaraguan supporters. Even after the occupation ended with the election of Juan Bautista Sacasa, a proponent of Nicaraguan autonomy, Sandino continued his fight, seeing the American-trained Nicaraguan National Guard as a threat to true self-determination. However, with Sacasa in office, Sandino agreed to work in tandem with the government to produce a peace plan. However, while leaving the presidential palace after peace negotiations, Sandino was captured and executed by National Guard officers.

Sandino's misgivings about the National Guard proved prophetic. The year 1937 saw the rise to power of Anastasio Somoza Garcia, general of the National Guard. Somoza established a family dynasty that ruled Nicaragua with an iron fist until 1979. Dissent was not tolerated; opposition parties

were crushed by political influence and violence; and corruption ran rampant. For example, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, the last leader of the regime, was accused of diverting into his personal account funds meant for the recovery of Managua after the earthquake of 1972.

All the while, the United States supported the Somoza regime, seeing them as a stabilizing—though autocratic—force against the threat of Soviet-style communism. The socialist turn of the Cuban Revolution and the Bay of Pigs standoff were recent memories, and as long as the Somoza regime remained in power, there would be one less communist "threat" with which the United States would share a hemisphere.

A Grand Social Experiment

But in 1979, the Sandanista Liberation Front, named for the martyred Sandino, defeated the National Guard and seized power in Nicaragua. The Sandanistas fed from a broad band of support, including those committed to Marxist revolutionary causes, Catholic clergy and laypeople committed to social justice and opposed to the corruption and classism that kept so many Nicaraguans in poverty, and intellectuals and artists who sought greater personal and national sovereignty than offered under the Somoza regime.

The initial goals of the Sandanista government included a foreign policy that insisted upon pursuing its own aims without deferring to the United States and the creation of a "mixed economy," which included socialist and capitalist elements, in order to foster greater socioeconomic justice and the redistribution of wealth. Like their Cuban predecessors, the Sandanistas proved to be extremely efficient in reducing illiteracy rates, providing preventative medicine, and bolstering vocational and academic education. They received financial support from several European governments and even

"Here the only political party is hunger!"

received cautious support from the Carter administration, which sent \$8 million in emergency relief to Managua and secured congressional aid to the tune of \$75 million. Moreover, a feeling of hope began to pervade Nicaraguan society once again. A grand social experiment, meant to make life better for all people, was in the works, and the future looked bright.

The shape of the future changed radically in 1980 when Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States. The Reagan administration was vehemently anticommunist and filled with seasoned cold warriors. Despite the fact that Latin American socialist movements were of a different ilk than those behind the Iron Curtain, the Sandanistas were nonetheless seen as a threat, and U.S. foreign policy was soon focused on their overthrow.

Through illegal arms sales to Iran, the United States funded a counterrevolutionary army known as the Contras, which waged war on the Sandanista government. Nicaragua was thrown into disarray. Even though the Contras were never able to take control of key areas, their military offensive led to more than 50,000 deaths, ruined countless Sandanista public works including clinics and schools, and caused the Nicaraguan military budget to make up half of the total national budget, all of which contributed to a downward spiral in production and an inflation rate of 33,000 percent.

The end of the war between the Sandanistas came in 1990 when economic despair and other social issues, such as mandatory military conscription, soured the reputation of the Sandanistas in the eye of the Nicaraguan public, and Sandanista leader Daniel Ortega lost the presidency to Violeta de Chamorro, a conservative whose administration turned back many social gains in the name of religion and tradition. The ambitious, idealistic social experiment had come to an end, and Nicaragua, war-

tom and weary, was no better off than in 1979.

In fact, there are many who believe that the country is worse off now than it was in 1979. The current president, Arnoldo Aleman, has been accused of bilking the Nicaraguan people of huge sums of money in order to amass a personal fortune. After losing two elections, the Sandanistas had reformulated much of their platform to appeal to a broader base of voters and had traded in their revolutionary rhetoric for neoliberalism, a quasi-economic ideology that emphasizes open borders between national markets, government deregulation, and de-emphasizes spending on social services and the role of labor in economic decision-making.

Many critics automatically tie neoliberalism and globalization together since World Bank and IMF policies, as well as Free Trade policies such as NAFTA, have a strong neoliberal ideological grounding. The de-emphasis on the government's responsibility to provide social services and the reliance upon market forces to raise eventually a nation's standard of living is a far cry from the Sandanista's federally funded literacy campaigns and land redistribution policies of the 1980s. To many voters and observers, the new-look Sandanistas and their familiar candidate, Ortega, appeared almost indistinguishable from the Liberal Party and its candidate, Vice President Enrique Bolanos (himself a defector from the Conservative Party), and to many people loyal to the ideals of the revolution, the Sandanistas were traitors.

A Revolutionary Psalmist

One such person was Ernesto Cardenal, the poet, priest, and self-proclaimed revolutionary who had served as Minister of Culture in the Sandanistan government. Cardenal, famous for a book of Psalms that reinterpreted the biblical poems in the context of the Central American revolution, was a student



of literature at Columbia University and also became a Trappist under the tutelage of Thomas Merton. We met with Cardenal at his studio, Cas de los Tres Mundos, a few days before our trip to Matagalpa, and got his perspective on the political situation in Nicaragua.

Cardenal separated from the Sandanistas when he felt that they had abandoned the initial aims of the movement. Not one for politics in general, Cardenal had only joined the Sandanistas because he was so enamored by the hope of the revolution.

"I'm not a politician; I am a revolutionary," Cardenal told us over coffee. "I was in the government only because it was revolutionary. By revolution, I mean that it was for change—the type of change that Christ came to make. The Sandanistas are no longer for change. They are no longer revolutionary."

For Cardenal, postrevolutionary Nicaragua, weighed down by years of war and economic instability, was not in need of neoliberal economic policies, which to him looked like more of the same exploitative ploys used by U.S. and European investors over the last century. Nicaragua was in need of a complete overhaul.

"You have to begin again!" Cardenal said emphatically. "If you read the prophets in the Bible, they're always starting anew."

And for Cardenal, beginning again means one act: "I do what I have always done. I write!"

For Cardenal, art is a revolutionary action that must challenge the mechanisms of oppression and the status quo. A sculptor as well as a poet, he designed a massive rendering of Sandino's silhouette which stands upon a huge hill overlooking Managua. It casts a vast shadow over the landscape dotted with new shopping malls and American fast food restaurants, serving as a reminder of a revolution long past and of hope nearly extinguished. And while revolutionary hope may cast a shadow across the landscape, it serves less as an inspirational icon than as a reminder of the complexities that follow idealism and the muddied uncertainty that follows zealous optimism. And in the face of such uncertainty, how can anyone begin again?

"There are new elections coming," campesinos organizer Silvia Gonzalez told us. "We hope that the candidates can fulfill all the promises they are making."

Indeed, both Bolanos and Ortega had

made promises of relief and had exchanged pointed fingers in each other's direction for the coffee crisis. For Ortega and the Sandanistas, the problem was the corruption of the Aleman-Bolanos administration while the Liberal Party portrayed Ortega as the political force responsible for a 20-year economic spiral downward and who would push even more Nicaraguans into the plight of the campesinos. But soon enough, tales of sex scandals and accusations of terrorism against Ortega filled the newspapers and television reports, and the devastation of the coffee crisis soon sunk into the background, becoming merely a footnote in the nation's political rhetoric and leaving the campesinos alone in their daily fight for survival.

"The politicians have been deceiving us," Juan, yet another spokesperson for the group, told us. "They have the resources, and the poor just die. They play at politics, but we have little concern for that. Here the only political party is hunger!"

Feeling claustrophobic in the heat as the crowd pushed in around us and watching children scribble in the dust that coated our tour bus, I couldn't help but think about Cardenal's words. Here were people who had been abandoned by their government, who felt lost in a strange new globalized world much different from the world promised by a long, dead revolution. Here were children wearing secondhand Nike tee shirts, old men with gnarled hands and toothless smiles, teenage girls days away from delivering babies—all of them hungry, angry, and tired of promises that never seem to come true. Here were people who had no other choice but to start over, and to start marching.

It would be a long march, a painful march, and one that would not guarantee success. Would the government listen? Even if a sympathetic ear greeted the marchers at the presidential palace, would there be any aid available? Would their voices be heard by anyone outside of Central America? Would I remember their faces in a week, a month, a year? Would we leave and forget that their struggle is not just a workers' struggle, but also a struggle for every theologian, minister, teacher, and writer? Would we leave and just do nothing?

They begged us not to forget them but to tell the world their story, to keep them in our memories and to march alongside them in solidarity for the sake of their rights and

even their lives. But we were not there as organizers. We were not there to give them rides, and sadly, regrettably, we could not stay with them forever, and we could not join with them in their march.

But just because I could not march does not mean that I did not join them. I chose to do what I always do.

I write.

Epilogue

In the presidential election held in Nicaragua on November 4, 2001, Enrique Bolanos defeated Daniel Ortega. Ortega's concession came after less than 20 percent of the votes had been counted and followed a week of heavy-handed policy making in the United States, including a bipartisan congressional measure to reevaluate U.S. policy in Nicaragua in the event of a Sandanista victory, and public denunciations of Ortega by American politicians, including Governor Jeb Bush of Florida, who called Ortega "an enemy of everything the United States represents."

One of Bolanos' preelection public appearances was as a guest of the U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua who wore a Liberal Party cap as the two distributed emergency food-aid throughout the country. Ortega called the Bolanos campaign "dirty" and speculated that U.S. interference contributed to his loss.

Sources Consulted: The Guardian, BBC News Service, The New York Times, and Modern Latin America by Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith.

A native of Mount Sterling, Kentucky, the essayist Brandon Gilvin was graduated in 1998 from Hiram College in Ohio where he earned a baccalaureate in religious studies and creative writing. He is a staff correspondent for The Tennessean daily newspaper.

Adam Collin Sayler began taking pictures when he was eight years old and developed his craft as a student at the Southeastern School of Photography at Daytona Beach Community College. A native of DeLand, Florida, Sayler was graduated in 1997 from Stetson University where he studied religion and was an award-winning student photographer.



For Ernesto Cardenal

*on the Eve of the Feast of the Assumption
August 14, 2001
The Hotel El Convento
Leon, Nicaragua*

*Tomorrow morning,
I will have breakfast
With Sandino and Mother Theresa,
Elvis and Arafat.
They will be my company.
They will not say much, but of course,
Watercolored icons rarely say
Much of anything at all.*

*You know so very well, Ernesto,
That it is we who say very much about
those very icons
It is we who say prayers for
Marilyn, light candles for Elvis Aaron.
It is we who curse, bless*

*Poets who are revolutionaries
Who are priests.*

*So to you, Ernesto, I give my
meager attempt to write
a poem in a country full of poets—
poets who are revolutionaries
who are priests who in the end
are icons cast thicker than brass
and I write this poem, knowing full well
that if I am to err, it is better to err
on the side of the Iconoclast
But if you should find that I have
For once erred in the opposite direction:
That I have remembered more mythos
than logos,
Know that I did not wish to write a psalm for
Some distant, wordless God,
But a prayer for a poet who is everything else,
Yet not a thing more.*

—Brandon Gilvin



Los Campesinos



The Human Abstract

Pity would be no more,
If we did not make somebody Poor:
And Mercy no more could be,
If all were as happy as we;

And mutual fear brings peace;
Till the selfish loves increase.
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
And waters the ground with tears:
Then Humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the Catterpillar and Fly,
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat;
And the Raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

The Gods of the earth and sea,
Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree
But their search was all in vain:
There grows one in the Human Brain

—from *Songs of Experience*
by William Blake (1757–1827)
English poet, mystic, engraver, painter,
printer, and social critic





Abolishing the New Plantation

BY LEE MITCHELL, MDIV3

Dear God,

Living outside your hand has sure enough made me feel less than a man. Sitting alone on my bunk, I believe this is the furthest that I've ever sunk. Once again, I'm asking for your forgiveness. An apology is necessary in this case because when no one else was there to care for me, your grace guided me to New Avenues.

—from "A Letter of Atonement"
by Glenn, an inmate at the
Correctional Work Center
Nashville, Tennessee

A dark cloud of smoke blows in a southerly direction and brings an odor that disturbs even the most beautiful spring day in Nashville. While walking in the recreational yard at the Correctional Work Center, a jail managed by the Davidson County Sheriff's Office, where I am a chaplain intern, I begin conversing with Joe, an inmate in the New Avenues drug and alcohol treatment program at CWC. We discuss addiction, our families, and his plans to live in a halfway house when he is released from jail. Gathered near the fence at the north end of the yard, a group of inmates looks toward the new Metropolitan Animal Control facility where animal carcasses are being incinerated.

Joe and I eventually part ways, and I stop to talk with Paul Mulloy, director of treatment services for the Correctional Work Center. We both comment on the stench and how the inmates at CWC will spend their one hour outside each day breathing in the smell of

the treatment program staff at the Correctional Work Center are working to abolish by promoting a more progressive attitude toward crime and incarceration.

Indiscriminate Enslavement

The similarities between the 19th-century slave plantation and today's correctional facilities are uncanny and disturbing. While the white proprietor managed the 19th-century slave plantation, today's politicians (or stockholders in privatized correctional facilities) manage the jails and prisons. On the slave plantation, the steward managed the overseers who worked directly with the slaves; on the New Plantation, the prison and jail administrators, usually Caucasians, manage the guards and officers who oversee the inmates. As in the overseer-slave relationship, there is a very thin economic line between the guards and inmates. While the slave was seduced with alcohol, coffee, and other "Sunday Tricks," today's inmate has easy access to illicit drugs and also is numbed by television—the first privilege reinstated following a riot. And like the 19th-century freed slave, today's ex-inmate often has very few real job skills or opportunities that could allow one to become integrated into the mainstream of society.

I have been at the Correctional Work Center long enough to observe the New Plantation firsthand. Research suggests that seven out of ten inmates who comprise this underclass at the New Plantation had prior sentences to either probation or incarceration. In the last 14 months, I have seen numerous repeat offenders, but my work at the Correctional Work Center has exposed me to another hard truth: today's inmate is likely to be a member of a racial or ethnic minority (63 percent of all jail inmates in the U.S.) and from an urban-poor community. There is a connection between poverty, violence, and incarceration that should not be underestimated. Incarceration creates a vicious cycle of poverty and violence that is nearly impossible to break; incarceration diminishes a person's future earning power and often leads one back to crime and eventually to jail or prison—and the cycle continues.

As the French sociologist and philosopher Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) argues, violence, especially suicide and homicide, increases in societies where there is a gap between people's dreams and their lived reality. Durkheim's premise is certainly relevant for



Following the morning roll call, the men incarcerated at CWC spend an hour outside in the recreational yard where they can exercise, play basketball, or converse with members of the staff.

burning animal flesh—a condition that most citizens of Nashville will never know, much less experience.

"Don't get me wrong," Mulloy remarks. "Most of these guys deserve to be here, but they shouldn't have to pay twice while staying on the New Plantation."

Mulloy often ponders the phrase "New Plantation," an allusion to a policy he and



Divinity School alumna Susan Gray serves as chaplain at CWC where she and Paul Mulloy, director of treatment services at CWC, employ creative strategies for delivering spiritual messages to the inmates participating in the New Avenues recovery program. VDS student Lee Mitchell, who completed his chaplain internship under the direction of Gray and Mulloy, introduced the inmates to the contemplative practice of centering prayer.

those who reside on the New Plantation.

There is a more obvious connection between alcohol and drug use and today's offender. The most recent research from the Bureau of Statistics reports that four out of ten violent crimes involve alcohol consumption by the offender, and three out of four cases involve spousal abuse. Thirty-six percent of all offenders was drinking at the time of the offense. Two-thirds of all jail inmates was involved with drugs prior to incarceration. Sixteen percent of convicted jail inmates committed their offenses to get money for drugs.

These problems are undeniably complex; the urban communities which are home to many of today's offenders not only have been plagued with minimal infrastructure, housing discrimination, poverty, and violence, but also they have faced a restructuring of the economy. For example, deindustrialization in the 1970s caused many of the poor, often minorities, to lose their manufacturing jobs while the middle class fled to the suburbs. Those left behind in urban poor neighborhoods turned to the drug trade as a major source of employment. The introduction of crack cocaine into ghettos during the 1980s also has had significant consequences; crack is available in smaller quantities, and its effect is short lived; consequently, the number of transactions on the street increases, and opportunities for violence increase. For those living in this underclass, alcohol and drugs offer an easy escape from this seemingly hopeless situation characterized by a pattern of poverty, violence, crime, and incarceration.

Today, unlike the 19th-century slave plantation, alcohol and drug addiction does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, social status, gender, or earning power.

Slaves were given alcohol on weekends and holidays as inducements to discourage their fleeing the plantation; today, drugs and alcohol enslave addicts in an endless cycle of spiritual and material poverty.

Reinterpreting Step 11

The New Avenues drug and alcohol treatment program at the Correctional Work Center is working to eliminate at least one contributing factor to this complex social problem by treating addiction. The D-1 pod at CWC is home to New Avenues where 50 men live together in community for 45 days of drug and alcohol treatment. Unlike the other pods, D-1 is colorful; there is a wall painted in bright colors—turquoise, pink, red, purple and blue—with various slogans from the Twelve-Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous: “Restored to Sanity,” “One Day at a Time,” and “Free at Last.” On another wall there is a chart entitled the “Continuum of Criminality,” which points out the stages of criminal thinking, and a banner outlining the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Crayon drawings by the inmates—depictions of their understanding of the Higher Power—are mounted on the Breeko blocks.

D-1 does not feel like a jail. There is a more positive attitude and less violence among the inmates as a result of the highly structured environment of the treatment program. Inmates are busy for 14 to 16 hours each day with various programs—lectures,

group therapy, job readiness, G.E.D. classes, AA and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings. Within this setting, the men often feel freer to let down their defenses in order to work on some of the painful issues, such as sexual abuse, which contribute to their addiction and incarceration.

While the New Avenues program is highly structured, there is also tremendous freedom within the chaplain's office for developing creative strategies for delivering a spiritual message to the men. Consequently, the inmates in D-1 have become more receptive to creative activities—from making piñatas, crayon art, and improvisation—to writing in their journals, listening to music, or watching a film.

Susan Alice Gray, BS'77, MDiv'80, chaplain at CWC and treatment coordinator for New Avenues, has worked in the field of drug and alcohol treatment for ten years.

“New Avenues is like a M*A*S*H* unit. We're on the front line, and many of these people are going to die if they don't have some intervention for their addictions,” contends Gray.

*“New Avenues is like a M*A*S*H* unit. We're on the front line, and many of these people are going to die if they don't have some intervention for their addictions.”*

She believes that unless the men in New Avenues experience spirituality on a deep level, they will continue to practice their addiction. “We have an intensive spiritual component in the program; in fact, it is the heart of the program. Unless spirituality is addressed in a significant way, everything else will be lost,” says Gray. “Lee has introduced centering prayer as a way of practicing the 11th step of Alcoholics Anonymous, ‘Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry out God's will.’ This strategy has proven to be far more useful to our clients than traditional religious experiences.”

Centering the Arch

My project during the summer of 2001 was to introduce the spiritual component of centering prayer, a form of Christian contemplative prayer, into the New Avenues treatment pro-

gram. Father Thomas Keating, a Cistercian monk from Snowmass, Colorado, strongly advocates this spiritual exercise.

Many of the inmates come from church traditions where they were taught that prayer means “talking to God.” As I explain to the men, the goal in centering prayer is simply to sit quietly for 20 minutes; it's more of an exercise in listening.

During a group's orientation to treatment, I tell them, “Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and place your hands in your lap. Next, select a sacred word such as ‘peace, joy, love, Jesus, Allah, or any other word that you would consider sacred or holy. Take a few deep breaths and close your eyes. Whenever you have a thought—whether it's ‘Gee...I wonder if I'll get a time cut with this program’, a vision of the Virgin Mary, or a pain in the knee—just say your sacred word to yourself. The word is simply a reminder; it reminds us of our intention to be with our Higher Power for the 20 minutes that we are sitting.”

As Keating suggests, this 20-minute session is simply “hanging out with the Trinity.” I explain to the men that this “hanging out with your Higher Power” means there is a seed of the Creator within us; instead of looking for peace and serenity outside of ourselves through alcohol, drugs, sex, or food, centering prayer allows us to look inside ourselves for that peace we've been searching for all along.

For Gray, centering prayer is actually a way to unload some of our deepest issues from childhood. She compares the process to constructing one of the wonders of the engineering world, the Gateway Arch in Saint Louis.

“The arch's strength and support reside underground, but if the structure had been out of line one-thousandth of an inch in the foundation, the curves would not join at the uppermost interval,” says Gray.

This engineering figuration has become a metaphor in Gray's chaplaincy. “Life's experiences do not always come together because our foundation is off-center. Most of us are a bit off deep inside, and centering prayer gives God permission and the opportunity to realign those uneven parts inside of us. The result is that life comes together in ways we have not known previously; the brokenness that we could not fix becomes healed. The more we are in line with God on a deep personal level, the more the parts fall into place

“I have been told that jail can be a sacred place. Sometimes when I am standing in the D-1 pod, meeting with the men in New Avenues, I feel as if I am standing on holy ground, a place where emotions are raw and where healing and spiritual transformation occur.”

instead of becoming fractured. We could talk about spirituality all day, but doing the prayer is different; you can't just talk about it; you have to practice letting go.”

Jane Montgomery, a primary alcohol and drug counselor at CWC for New Avenues, concurs with Gray. “When clients in New Avenues choose to practice centering prayer, they seem less self-centered and become calmer, and most importantly, they move away from negativity and paranoia. This method of prayer functions as their tool for accessing a healthy pride.”

On Holy Ground

I have been told that jail can be a sacred place. Sometimes when I am standing in the D-1 pod, meeting with the men in New Avenues, I feel as if I am standing on holy ground, a place where emotions are raw and where healing and spiritual transformation occur. It is a sacred space where those who are carrying heavy burdens from a chaotic and often traumatic past can lay them down—through tears, laughter, silence, questions, or confrontation. The inmates who enter New Avenues have hit bottom and have no one left to be but themselves. Ironically, many people, including Susan and I, find a certain amount of freedom at the jail—a freedom to be our authentic selves, the person God created us to be. As Susan often tells the men in New Avenues, “When we find our True Self, we will begin to do extraordinary tasks with very little effort.” D-1 Pod has become a place where the inmates and the staff alike can quit struggling so hard to behave independently and just surrender to God.

I have had the honor to witness men who have been dismissed as hopeless drunks or thugs begin a process of spiritual transformation. I think of Joe, a white man in his forties who is a low-bottom alcoholic. If he had not been sentenced to jail, he would have died from liver failure. Joe was graduated from the New Avenues program and is now working for the police department. He cleans stalls for the mounted unit while he completes his

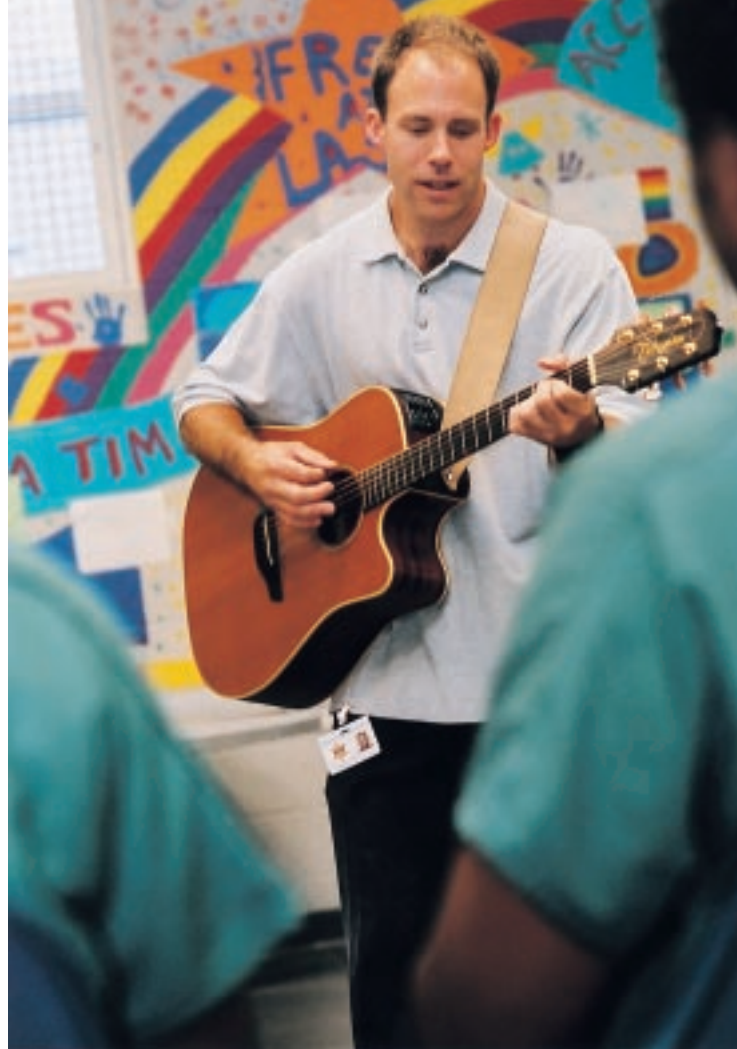
jail sentence.

Whenever I encounter Joe at the jail, I see a new spirit in his attitude, an attitude that has become an inspiration to other men in the New Avenues program. I think of Bobby, an African-American man in his forties who was 40 pounds underweight when he came to jail and was literally dying on the streets from a crack cocaine habit. He has spent most of his adult life incarcerated. When I see Bobby today, I see a spark of hope in his eyes, which are often filled with tears, a sign that he is slowly being healed.

When I first began my internship in the summer of 2000, I was sure that I would be learning general chaplaincy duties such as notifying an inmate of a death in his family, conducting Bible study classes, or passing on



In the D-1 Pod, 50 men live in community for 45 days while participating in the New Avenues drug and alcohol treatment program. For one of their creative projects, the inmates transformed the walls into colorful murals designed with images and themes from their spiritual journeys.



An accomplished guitarist and vocalist, Mitchell incorporates music into his ministry at CWC. The inmates often join in singing the chorus, especially during Mitchell's rendition of Don Schlitz's song "The Gambler."

my knowledge and experiences to the inmates. During my internship at CWC, I have had the opportunity to preach, give lectures on spirituality, teach meditation and centering prayer, and facilitate spiritual activities and exercises. At some point, however, I learned that this internship was not really about preaching and praying.

As Susan sometimes reminds me, the work we do at the jail is often not about what we bring to the inmates, rather it has more to do with what the inmates bring to us. In other words,

this internship has allowed me to examine my own inner life and spiritual journey. As the Gospels teach us, Jesus came to proclaim release to the captives. For me this teaching has little to do with time cuts, probation, or parole. Rather, through my own experiences of spending time with the incarcerated, I have gained freedom. This has been my first step toward true compassion.

A native of Fort Worth, Texas, essayist Lee Mitchell earned his baccalaureate in communications from Florida State University in Tallahassee. In 1991 he traveled to Nashville and maintained three part-time jobs while pursuing a career as a guitarist and songwriter. Mitchell remembers laughing when the results of a battery of career placement tests suggested he study for the priesthood; however, he decided to matriculate at the Divinity School where he is a Hyde Scholar and a candidate for the master of divinity degree in May 2002. Mitchell currently serves as coordinator of

the McGill Project, a program designed to stimulate and foster discussion and exploration of philosophical issues among Vanderbilt University's faculty and student residents of McGill Hall.

The architectural figurations of a plantation and an arch from Mitchell's essay inspired artist Cathleen Q. Mumford to create the title illustration in the medium of cut-paper. Mumford was graduated from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan and serves as a faculty member of the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tennessee.

The photographs accompanying the essay were taken by Peyton Hoge of Franklin, Tennessee.



Divinity School student and chaplain intern Lee Mitchell greets an inmate at the Correctional Work Center. Regulations prescribed by the Davidson County Sheriff's Office stipulate that inmates may not be photographed frontally.

Unmasking Self-Made Worlds

"Contemplative prayer is the world in which God can do anything. To move into that realm is the greatest adventure. It is to be open to the Infinite and hence to infinite possibilities. Our private, self-made worlds come to an end; a new world appears within and around us, and the impossible becomes an everyday experience. Yet the world that prayer reveals is barely noticeable in the ordinary course of events."

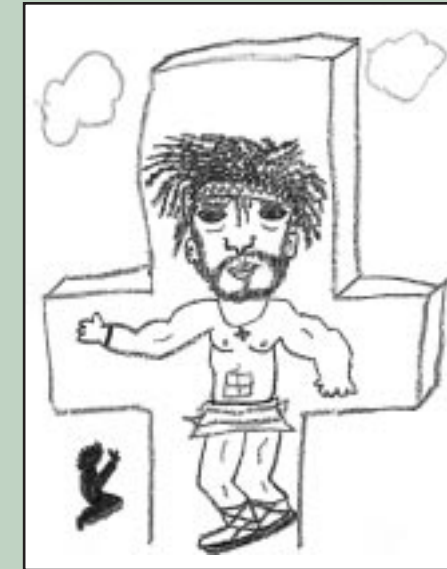
"Centering prayer is a method of refining one's intuitive faculties so that one can enter more easily into contemplative prayer. It is not the only path to contemplation, but it is a good one...Centering prayer as a discipline is designed to withdraw our attention from the ordinary flow of our thoughts. We tend to identify ourselves with that flow. But there is a deeper part of ourselves. This prayer opens our awareness to the spiritual level of our being."

—from *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*
by Thomas Keating

"I believe the God of my understanding is right there with me."

"Every time I said my special word a tear came to my eye. It was like my father was protecting me from all harm. My chest and body would shake, and I can feel a lot of power moving through my body. I was really feeling in touch with my God."

—from the journals of two inmates participating in the New Avenues Program at the Correctional Work Center



In this crayon drawing by an inmate identified as John, the artist presents his interpretation of a Higher Power. A striking feature of the drawing is the disproportion between the size of the supplicant, represented in the lower left corner, and the dimensions of the Higher Power, who is depicted with traditional and contemporary iconographic properties.

"The mask at home, the mask at work, the mask in the car on the interstate. The mask I wear changes like the sky. The silent mirror never lies when we look into our own eyes."

"Christ sees a different side of us and wants us to believe in ourselves. Unmask, and be the persons we are supposed to be."

—from "Reflections on Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem 'We Wear the Mask'" in *32 and a Wake-Up*, an anthology of poetry from the creative writing classes at the Correctional Work Center, Volume 1, June-July 2001, edited by Yahne A. Jackson



Woman in Tents, 1913
by Max Weber
(1881-1961)
American (Russian-born)
oil on canvas
30 x 36 inches

The Tentmaker

A Portrait of the Minister as Theologian

BY VICTOR JUDGE

“And when Paul found they were tentmakers of the same trade as himself, he lodged with them, and they worked together.”

—the Acts of the Apostles 18:3

The gnawing originated in the emergency room.

She and the physician tried to resuscitate the 15-year-old boy lying on the gurney, but the energy in their hands could not contradict the paramedics’ words, “dead on arrival.” The absence of blood and lacerations on his body summoned the cliché, “He looks as if he is sleeping,” but such speculation was silenced by the irrefutable diagnosis of broken neck, severed spinal cord, and massive brain hemorrhage. He had jumped from a moving wagon during a hayride with the church youth group, and the witnesses reported that he had landed on his head.

Thwarted in their efforts to revive the teenager, the doctor and the emergency room nurse, Kaye Nickell, entered the waiting room to inform the parents that their son had died from the effects of the fall. As the horrific news was conveyed to the boy’s relatives and peers, the youth minister assumed it was incumbent upon him to render an interpretation of the tragedy. Detaching himself from the circle of mourners, he approached the parents and

uttered a statement that elevated the most hackneyed expression to a level of originality. He confidently told the mother and father, “It is God’s will that this boy died.”

Although Nickell was not introduced formally to the minister, she acknowledges him as the impetus behind her decision to enter the Divinity School whenever she remembers how his shallow, conventional rhetoric inspired a paralytic anger and sadness within her. “When I overheard the youth minister tell the parents that God had willed the boy’s death, I became mad from my toenails to the roots of my hair, but simultaneously, I was saddened by the parents’ acceptance of such an illogical reason,” explains Nickell, who exercised restraint and did not challenge the minister’s pronouncement. “I had no right to speak because I was not a member of that community, but that remark began to gnaw on me and ultimately set me on the path to disciplined theological studies.”

As Nickell recounts this experience from her vocation as a nurse, she leans forward, folds her hands, and casts her eyes downward to the scuffed tiled floor. By her posture, one infers that the gnawing never ceased.

Bedside Lessons in Chaos and Grace

After she was graduated in 1980 from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Nickell worked for 20 years as an emergency room nurse at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and Saint Thomas Hospital in Nashville. Her experiential wisdom of the vulnerability of human nature allows her to speak about suffering with the authority of a Greek tragedian. “As you blow your breath into a person’s lungs until the respirator can be connected, or when you put your hands into a person’s chest cavity and squeeze the heart until the surgeon arrives, you realize how fragile human nature is,” she says. “In the emergency room, you meet the unexpected chaos within the world; you encounter individuals who have made willful, horrible choices for themselves; you witness the suffering inflicted upon innocent people because of another person’s selfish actions; you are introduced to the properties of evil, face-to-face, but you also meet grace and a life force that is incredibly strong.”

While wearing nurse’s scrubs, Nickell gained early experience in the pastoral duties that a divinity school education even-

tually would prepare her to assume. “Each critical moment in the emergency room involves touching someone whose mortal nature is threatened, so you pray silently that God will help you to be the best nurse you can be for each patient because in the next waking moment, you may find yourself commending the patient’s soul into the hands of God,” she says. But Nickell also perceived her role as nurse to include serving as a presence for a patient’s family, a presence in the context of the Greek noun, *theraps*, an attendant.

“Medical care also involves attending to the fears and questions of others who are affected by a patient’s suffering, and when you can’t provide conclusive answers, you strive to be a calm presence in a room that is cold and sterile where people believe they are enveloped in hopelessness, and you pray that you can mediate the grace of God. There are times, however, when the simple gesture of touch communicates as effectively as words.”

With the exception of working 18 months as a pharmaceutical sales representative, Nickell elected to remain in the ER for two decades instead of pursuing appointments in other areas of the hospital. In a profession that has been characterized by inadequate staffing and employee burnout, Nickell attributes her longevity in ER nursing to a single reason—the continuous opportunity to learn.

“Each shift entails a crisis that provides an opportunity to learn anew—not only to learn about an individual’s finite, physical nature but also about the human spirit. I like the fast-paced rhythm of the ER and the chance to see immediately the results of your work, unlike the praxis of theology where results are not always apparent,” she admits. “But working in the ER is also like studying theology; neither is predictable, boring, or unchallenging.”

An Insatiable Hunger

In the fall of 1998, Nickell declared herself a “seeker” and decided to begin a serious inquiry regarding the questions that had developed from the bedside lessons in chaos and grace. Five years before she walked through the John Frederick Oberlin Divinity Quadrangle, she had been the primary provider for her husband, Mark, a financial

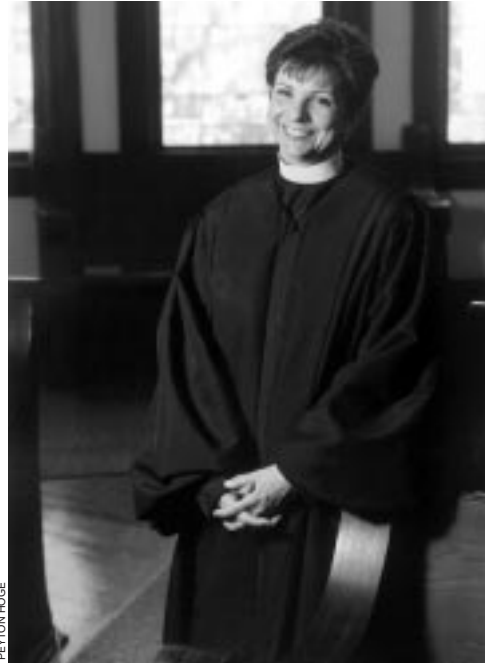
planner and assets manager, and their children, Susanna, 12, and Thomas, 9.

“Mark resigned from the Big 8 accounting firms to establish his own company, and we agreed that when he felt secure in private practice, I would consider whether or not I would apply to a master’s program in nursing. I was turning 40; I had been promoted to a management level position in the ER, but I did not enjoy the administrative responsibilities as much as I did bedside care.”

Nickell, however, was deriving significant enjoyment from her work in religious education at First Presbyterian Church (USA) in Franklin, Tennessee. An ordained elder, Nickell taught an adult Sunday school class and offered courses on Wednesday evenings. “I had always been interested in reading church history and studying the Scriptures, and I privately thought of myself as a tentmaker—someone who serves a congregation but whose primary income depends upon another career.”

Committed to her lay ministry as a tentmaker but unnerved by the resounding question, “What do I want to do in life?”, Nickell believed she needed more theological education. She previously had studied at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville for a year and later took advantage of her University employee tuition discount by enrolling as a special student in the Divinity School and taking classes in New Testament with Mary Ann Tolbert (currently professor of biblical studies at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley) and Hebrew Bible with James Crenshaw, PhD’64, (currently the Robert L. Flowers Professor of Old Testament at Duke University Divinity School). But when her husband said, “It’s your turn in the partnership to pursue your interests,” Nickell was reminded of a quotation by theologian Frederick Buechner: “Calling is where your deep hunger meets the world’s deep needs.” Her hunger summoned her away from the ER and led her to the Divinity School.

Nickell arrived at VDS with the conviction that a relationship with God is foundational for life’s decisions and with an appreciation of the Bible as a narrative about people struggling to maintain that relationship. These two tenets of her religious sensibility may be traced to her Baptist upbringing in the small West Tennessee town of Fowlkes, near Dyersburg. “As I reminisce about the



To fulfill her requirements in field education, Kaye Nickell, RN, MDiv3, serves as minister to the 13 congregants who attend Central Presbyterian Church (USA) in Culleoka, Tennessee.

church of my youth, I realize what an ecumenical, inclusive foundation was laid by my parents and the ministers," says Nickell. "And from that foundation emerged a respect for questioning and trying to discern the part we play in the narrative of salvation."

Studying in a denominational seminary introduced Nickell to a movement toward interpreting Scripture that was not consonant with the inclusive foundation of her early spiritual formation; consequently, she found herself searching for a new theological and liturgical home where women could participate in roles beyond pastor's wife, Sunday school teacher, missionary, or member of the ladies' auxiliary. Nickell discovered that home in the Presbyterian Church (USA) where she could embrace the tradition's approach to biblical authority and interpretation, liturgical heritage, and polity as a connectional church. "After witnessing the turbulence in the Baptist polity in the eighties, I was attracted to a denominational organization whereby no one church is by itself; we are connected together; we make decisions together; and we look together for the will of God. There is an inherent system of checks

and balances so that no one person can create an empire, and the church and the minister are held accountable to each other and for each other by a body that has authority over them."

The sense of place Nickell acquired by her membership in the Presbyterian Church has been reinforced by the scholarly, ecumenical conversations in the classrooms at the Divinity School. "Having been at a denominational institution, I value the freedom the Vanderbilt professors have to teach from their commitments and their research interests, and I value equally the plurality of perspectives expressed during a course discussion or conversation," she says. And as she prepares for graduation in May, Nickell feels less intimidated when participating in a theological conversation than she felt four years ago. "My nursing education did not include coursework in critical thinking and argumentation; no one cared if I understood why cardiopulmonary resuscitation worked; the only concern was that I could perform the procedure correctly."

For someone who had documented patients' conditions by charting in sentence fragments, Nickell was daunted by an assignment of composing and defending a four-page paper. "I had to develop a different set of study skills and a different mindset; the words 'argument and critique' are not heard in the ER, so I also had to acquire a new vocabulary."

The Floodgate Opens

To help her family adapt to her new role as graduate student, Nickell elected to enroll at VDS on a part-time basis. "I returned to the classroom at the time my son was entering the first grade, and like a first-grader, I had to be initiated into the role. I began by taking only two courses because I knew if I were to become fluent in the language of theology, I would have to immerse myself in the classes, and I could accomplish that immersion by taking only two classes. I read every assignment—diligently—and I read the marginal comments on my papers graded by Professors Paul DeHart and Dale Johnson with the same seriousness as I studied a textbook because their critiques always revealed a method or strategy I had not considered for approaching a question."

During her rite of passage, Nickell devel-

oped an amiable relationship not only with the recurring adverb 'why' but also with the computer, whose relevance to the life of a student theologian had not registered with her until she had to mail assignments electronically as Word files. The confidence she gained from her academic success was slightly eclipsed, however, by her uncertainty about the particular ministry she should pursue. "Whenever I was asked if I were seeking ordination, I was reluctant to say I felt a calling to pastoral ministry because that direction seemed so different from my only vocational reference as a nurse. I imagined myself as a chaplain for a hospital or a hospice; I thought about integrating pastoral care with public health because I couldn't conceive of dismissing the past 20 years of hard work."

But in an unexpected moment, Nickell received the encouragement she needed for envisioning herself standing in the pulpit. As one of the Divinity School's Presbyterian students, she was invited to participate in a mock pastoral interview at Southminster Presbyterian Church. The church's staff felt slightly inexperienced in interviewing candidates because their pastor had served a long, successful tenure and there had not been a reason to recruit candidates until his retirement. By rehearsing with students, the staff hoped to develop criteria for interviewing prospective candidates.

Sitting before the panel, Nickell was asked questions ranging from visiting the sick to praying for a pet's welfare: If a neighborhood resident who did not belong to a faith community were hospitalized, would she go visit the individual in the hospital? Would she use formal prayers during the liturgy or ask the congregants seated in the sanctuary to offer their concerns and petitions? Would she be comfortable visiting members of the church who had been admitted to a nursing home? How would she respond to a child who asked her to pray for his sick dog?

As Nickell was leaving the interview, a member of the panel remarked, "From your answers, you sound as if you are not afraid to touch people."

Hearing that comment was comparable to opening the floodgate. "I wept privately when the interviewer made that statement because she unknowingly articulated the connection between pastoral ministry and

nursing. My vocation had involved touching people; I had been the conduit through whom they received air, and my experience in the mock interview affirmed what I had always believed—that a minister is a conduit for the breath of the Spirit and has the serious responsibility of helping a congregation remain a vital community."

Pitching Her Tent

To prepare for her role in worship leadership, Nickell requested that she be assigned by the Office of Field Education and the Executive Presbytery to a church that was not multi-staffed and where she would gain experience in delivering sermons. In February 2000, the student in ministry ascended the pulpit of Central Presbyterian Church (USA) in Culleoka, Tennessee, and preached to the 13 members who comprise the congregation.

"When they nod their heads and smile, I know they're engaged in the sermon, and by the inquisitive expressions on their faces I know I've confused them or prompted them to consider another meaning of the Scriptures, yet as I look at them from the pulpit, I am reminded of a communion of saints who come together to make a confession—not out of a sense of obligation—but with joy because they believe their confession matters."

"I went from teaching a Sunday school class with 65 adults to leading worship for a group representing only one-fifth of that number, but I needed to learn the demands of worship leadership without being dependent upon a staff; I wanted to immerse myself in the role, to have opportunities to enact the sacraments, and to learn 'how' to preach."

For the past two years, Nickell has preached to the grandsons and granddaughters of the worshipers who helped establish Central Presbyterian in 1911. Light filters through the dome's oculus and the stained glass windows and falls upon the dark wooden pews that could accommodate 150 people. There are less than 20 names on the current role, yet the church is financially independent. Located outside Columbia, Culleoka was once celebrated for its cantaloupe harvest, but when the railroad ceased serving the agricultural town, the

farmers had to seek other livelihoods. The retired postmistress is among those who gather to worship, and there's Mr. Harris who still runs several heads of cattle and grows alfalfa for hay. The young people don't always return to Culleoka after they depart for college, so Nickell was particularly excited when she recently received a young family of three into the faith community.

The church's frontier revivalist tradition is apparent by the front-center location of the pulpit, an indication of the importance the congregation assigns to preaching. On the table in front of the pulpit is a large Bible flanked by two candles and a cross. There is no baptismal font; an engraved silver bowl is used for that sacrament. Although there's a piano and an organ, the accompanist prefers to play the organ because of her arthritis.

"They always sit in the same place, and

my delivery was more intimate, so I stopped depending on a manuscript and began preaching with only an outline."

Nickell also acknowledges four other people who have circumscribed her identity as a minister-theologian. "My 'father in ministry' is the Reverend Tom Walker of Franklin's First Presbyterian Church (USA) who is the model of minister as theologian. I admire his willingness to wrestle with questions and his honesty when he says from the pulpit, 'I don't know,' and I respect his integrity in resisting the popular idea that worship should be entertainment."

But Mark, Susanna, and Thomas help her remember that one cannot love the church at the expense of one's family. "What seems like not much time to me is an eternity to my children, and without their understanding and adaptability, I could not be a tentmaker.

Sometimes the check for a school fundraiser is delivered late; sometimes when I'm researching my next sermon, I have to stop and make sure everyone has a weekly supply of clean underwear, but when I make a mistake, they, too, forgive me, and we continue—in the balance."

As Nickell, 44, awaits the day she will be called to ordination, she thinks of how her views of God have changed since childhood. She remembers the Baptist Church in

Fowlkes where as a five-year-old girl she sat and stared at an idyllic mural of the Jordan River painted on the wall behind the baptismal. "I imagined that if I could enter that scene and look into those stylized clouds, I could see God, but I also had a rather sacrilegious thought," she laughs. "I also imagined how soaked the choir would be if the glass panel of the baptismal broke."

Figuratively, the nurse, elder, wife, mother, Divinity School student, and minister-theologian has entered that mural, and she has witnessed occasions more sacrilegious than a child's innocent comments about a soaked choir—occasions such as the pronouncement from a youth minister who claims omniscience for knowing the will of God. The bucolic imagery of 1950s baptismal art has been replaced with gnawing gray questions from the human condition, but for Kaye Nickell, the tent is a comfortable dwelling.

Fractions, Fortran, and Hebrew: The Hunt Equation

In her first life, she was a high school mathematics teacher.

Standing at chalkboards in Africa to Alabama, Alice Wells Hunt, MTS'96, MA'00, expounded upon algorithms and the quadratic formula before she entered her second life as a computer programmer. Having earned a baccalaureate in mathematics and secondary education from the University of Montevallo in 1978, she began her teaching vocation in the Georgia public schools system but traveled to the port city of Mombasa on the southeastern coast of Kenya where she taught before settling in her father's native region of northern Alabama.

While grading papers in the faculty lounge in Guntersville High School, Hunt overheard a colleague remark, "My husband works for Boeing, and the company is recruiting mathematicians to train as computer programmers." The fellow teacher's casual statement proved to be a rather fortunate catalyst in the Hunt equation.

Although she had never sat before a com-

puter terminal, Hunt interviewed with the world's leading aerospace company and found herself moving to Huntsville to learn the languages Fortran, C, and Ada. For someone whose understanding of computers involved only knowing they were electronic devices that required stacks of keypunch cards, Hunt mastered the technical languages with such remarkable proficiency that she was contracted by the National Aeronautics & Space Administration to develop software for monitoring the exception parameters of a space telescope.

"My decision to leave the classroom was pragmatic," says Hunt. "I couldn't support myself on a teacher's salary." But the transition from a high school classroom in Marshall County, Alabama, to the mainframes at Boeing and NASA provided a benefit more profitable than financial security; the teacher turned programmer suddenly had what she describes as "the luxury of time" to pursue questions that had challenged her since adolescence—questions that could not be solved

readily by the application of an algebraic equation or the examination of images recorded by a space telescope. These questions resided in the gray realm of theology, and to seek answers to these conundra, Hunt returned to the classroom to study biblical and modern Hebrew, koiné Greek, and Aramaic—languages quite unlike Fortran, C, and Ada whose syntaxes have become archaic by technology's standards. The setting where Hunt would enter the phase that may be considered her third and present life would be the quadrangle of Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

"During the years I was working in technology, I also began reading church history in an effort to find answers to questions about my faith tradition, and I became charmed by the possibility of learning more as well as by the sobering realization of how little I knew," explains Hunt, who spent her formative years in Taiwan as the daughter of missionaries. "Growing up in the church, I had certain questions that were answered

readily, but there were questions that did not yield immediate answers such as 'How did we become the church we are today?' and 'Why are some believers more monolithic in their interpretation of Scripture?' I wanted to be able to articulate and to investigate these questions, and a divinity school seemed to be the environment where that inquiry could occur."

Hunt admits her critical views of her childhood denomination, Southern Baptist, would not have been welcomed in a seminary. Reared in the tradition she acknowledges as "old Southern Baptist," she regret-

Vanderbilt University, and the Divinity School's location within a research university and the opportunities for interdisciplinary study influenced her decision.

"I enrolled in the Divinity School because I wanted to gain confidence in my ability to articulate theological questions, and my education at Vanderbilt enabled me to formulate more complicated questions. Not only did I receive a validation for the questions I needed to ask, I also gained self-respect, both intellectually and spiritually," says Hunt. "From my initiation in the first foundational course on the literature, religion and faith of

"When you work side by side with people and experience them as human beings, you learn that 'the other' is not a category. Otherness is created by people and imposed upon individuals or groups, but once you study and work with people, any notion of otherness fades. The diversity at the Divinity School is an intentional diversity; consequently, the School faces a constant challenge of creating and advancing a sense of community, but intentional diversity always challenges the category of otherness."

fully contends that during the past two decades the infrastructure of the faith community of her parents' generation has been co-opted by outsiders to the disservice of two founding Baptist principles—the priesthood of all believers and the autonomy of a local congregation.

"I probably would have studied for ordination in the old Southern Baptist tradition if that opportunity had been available," reminisces Hunt. "Unfortunately, ordination was not an option, and those few women who now pursue ordination in congregations that offer that trajectory often suffer the consequences of not receiving appointments to local churches unless the churches stand outside the denomination."

As she explored the trajectories she could follow, Hunt was concerned with a single common denominator—the institutions to which she would seek admission had to be located within a two-hour radius of her home in Huntsville. She considered Samford University, the University of the South, and

ancient Israel to writing my creed in constructive Christian theology, I discovered the gift of contexts, and for someone coming from a background where Bible teachers were white and male, entering VDS was a stunning experience."

But another significant contribution the Divinity School made to Hunt's graduate education was the opportunity to interact with representatives from faith traditions with which she was unfamiliar. "When you work side by side with people and experience them as human beings, you learn that 'the other' is not a category. Otherness is created by people and imposed upon individuals or groups, but once you study and work with people, any notion of otherness fades. The diversity at the Divinity School is an intentional diversity; consequently, the School faces a constant challenge of creating and advancing a sense of community, but intentional diversity always challenges the category of otherness."

Hunt was graduated from the Divinity



Alice Wells Hunt, MTS'96, MA'00, associate dean for academic affairs and lecturer in Hebrew Bible

School in 1996 and was awarded the J.D. Owen Prize for her scholarly accomplishments in Hebrew Bible, but earning the master's of theological studies degree did not satiate the questions that motivated her to pursue graduate education. She continued her studies by enrolling in the University's Graduate Department of Religion and working toward the doctorate of philosophy in Hebrew Bible under the direction of Professors Douglas A. Knight and Renita Weems.

Chalkboards, computers, and students' papers—attributes from her former careers—figure quite prominently in her current roles at the Divinity School as lecturer in Hebrew Bible and associate dean for academic affairs, an appointment she accepted in July before she and her sons, 13-year-old Carl and 10-year-old Eric Hudiburg, moved to Nashville. From the computer in Office 116, she conducts her administrative work or prepares a lecture for Divinity 2756, the course she is teaching this semester on the Dead Sea Scrolls. From her computer at home, however, she edits the final draft of her doctoral dissertation on the Zadokite priesthood of ancient Israel or occasionally writes software programs for friends. Apart from her responsibilities as mother and educator, she enjoys reading biographies, novels, and essays on critical theory.

"To join the administration and faculty of the Divinity School is a privilege," says Hunt. "We have an interesting and provocative student body, and we need to continue to attract excellent students; we have an extraordinary faculty committed to teaching and research; and the Divinity School has countless opportunities for involvement in the faith communities throughout Nashville." —VJ

From Southern Finishing School to University

Revisiting the Lawson Affair

In December 2001, the Divinity School and Vanderbilt University Press celebrated the publication of *Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change*, edited by Dale A. Johnson, professor of church history. With permission from Michael Ames, director of the University Press, we are pleased to print the following excerpt from the sixth chapter titled “The Lawson Affair, 1960: A Conversation.”

On October 2–3, 1998, a conversation was held at Vanderbilt Divinity School among persons who participated in what has come to be called “the Lawson affair” in February–June 1960. This conversation took place in Tillett Lounge around an imposing wooden table, one of the pieces of furniture retained in the move from Wesley Hall to the new Divinity quadrangle in 1960. That table would be mentioned in the course of the conversation as one of the connecting points between an earlier decision in 1952 and the present day.

“The Lawson affair” became one of the defining moments in the Divinity School’s history. For a few days in June it seemed as though it might even bring down the Divinity School itself and have serious repercussions for the University as a whole. It was touched off in late February by the activities of James M. Lawson, an African American divinity student, in his leadership of the sit-in movement in Nashville, and news of the controversy quickly spread around the country.

The series of events that followed contained a number of complicating dimensions: a fledgling civil rights movement attempting a new protest strategy, a history of racial segregation in the South, differing regional and local perspectives on national priorities, a developing plan by Chancellor Harvie Branscomb to integrate the University, as well as a variety of governance issues within the University. It was not only a critical moment for the University and the Divinity School, but for Nashville and the larger culture as well. How can we best tell such a

story within the context of the history of the Divinity School? The only published account of these events is in Paul K. Conkin’s history of Vanderbilt University, *Gone with the Ivy* (1985). One Divinity faculty member, Arthur L. Foster, dictated an extended account that was later transcribed. He placed a copy of this document in the University Archives, and Conkin used it in his construction of that particular chapter. Beyond that, however, no other Divinity faculty wrote accounts of their experiences, despite occasional suggestions that some should write what they remembered so that future generations would have material to attempt to understand what had happened.

Obviously, this topic warrants a chapter in a volume on the school’s history. However complicated the events, we decided not to write a narrative parallel to Conkin’s chapter, but rather try to add material to the historical resources and to provide personal reflections by holding a conversation among several participants. We decided that it should be a representative group of individuals, but not so large as to prevent a genuine conversation. By the late 1990s, however, a number of the key participants had died, including James Sellers and Herman Norton of the Divinity faculty; Chancellor Branscomb died in July 1998, at the age of 103. The group as eventually constituted included two people who had been Divinity students at the time: James M. Lawson, the central figure in the story, and Gene L. Davenport, president of the Divinity School’s student government in 1959–60; two Divinity faculty members: Lou H. Silberman, who was Hillel Professor of Jewish Literature and Thought, and Langdon Gilkey, professor of theology; and two faculty members from the College of Arts and Science: Charles Roos, then associate professor of physics, and John Compton, then associate professor of philosophy. The volume’s editor served as arranger, host, and moderator of the conversation. Lou Silberman began the conversation by recounting an important prologue to the 1960 events.

LOU SILBERMAN: I think that the prologue to what happened in the spring of 1960 is necessary, so I want to go back and talk about what happened in 1952 at a meeting of

the faculty of the School of Religion. The only other person who was present at that meeting and who may still be alive is Everett Tilson, and I haven’t seen or spoken to him in a great many years. As I look down, I think that this table, if it could speak, could tell us what was going on because this was the table of the faculty room in the late lamented Wesley Hall. [The Divinity School moved from Wesley Hall to its new facilities in the spring of 1960. —Ed.]

I came to Vanderbilt in the fall of 1952, as did John Compton. The first faculty meeting I attended was in October, in the back room, down the back corridor of Wesley Hall. Chancellor Harvie Branscomb presided at that meeting. I had no idea, of course, of what portentous matters were going to happen at that moment. The Chancellor presided, the usual sort of things took place, and then something happened that everyone else seemed to be anticipating. The previous spring, members of the faculty of the School of Religion had sent a memorandum or a petition to the Board of Trust, saying that the faculty could no longer in good conscience allow the school to be segregated.

I can remember the tension in that room; many of the faculty members were southerners. I remember particularly a professor of church history, Joseph Batten. Joe was a Virginian, and I saw that man almost in tears muttering, “Thank God, thank God, thank God.” I am a far westerner, and I have never been involved in that kind of tension before, but that is what happened in October 1952.

CHARLES ROOS: I came to Vanderbilt because it was the first school in the South to integrate. I am a fifth-generation southerner, from Texas, and I was at Cal Tech. I had meetings with the Cal Tech provost, Bob Backer, who told me that we needed to build up physics in the South. “You can come back if it doesn’t work,” he said. So I came to Vanderbilt holding a faculty appointment at Cal Tech for the first four years I was here. I stopped on the way and talked with Holmes Richter, dean of the faculty at Rice University. I asked him, “What do you think of Vanderbilt? I don’t know much about it.” He said, “You’ve got a good chancellor, a courageous man who is pushing, very forward thinking;



left: In 1991, Divinity School alumnus James M. Lawson, D’71, spoke at the University to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Nashville sit-in movement. An architect of the nonviolent methods that characterized the city’s movement, Lawson is the subject of “The Lawson Affair, 1960: A Conversation,” the sixth chapter in *Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change*.

“When I came to Vanderbilt, I had no notions about limitations upon my being who I am or who I was then.”

—James M. Lawson

he is going to build a good university.”

When Jim Lawson’s problem arose in the spring of 1960, I held the largest scientific grant in the college and the first one in physics. It was a grant of \$85,000, which was ten times my salary; it does not sound so big today, but that was big money at the time, my position was very strong.

JAMES LAWSON: In the spring of 1957, I decided I would leave the Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin and move South so as to get involved specifically in the southern struggle. I had met Martin King on the sixth of February at Oberlin, where he spoke, and told him of a long interest in living in the South in order to see what could be done about segregation from the nonviolent perspective. We hit it off immediately and he said, “Don’t wait, come now—we need you now; we do not have anyone with your specific background in nonviolence.” So I said that I would come as soon as I could; I prepared then to drop out of school and move South, intending to go to Atlanta and perhaps then to enroll at ITC [Interdenominational Theological Center]. In the meantime, however, somewhere in the fall of 1957, I informed A. J. Muste, a mentor and a friend who was executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation [FOR] in New York, that I was going to move South, that I wanted to

put to work some of my thoughts and ambitions of the past. He said fine, but then he said, “Don’t make any plans until I’ve talked to you again.” That was the way we left it; sometime that fall he called back and said, “What about your becoming the southern secretary of FOR?” I said, “That’s wonderful, I’ll be glad to do that.” So we then prepared for me to come. Part of that preparation was having Glenn Smiley, the field director of FOR, get in touch with me and then our talking about how we would make this transition. It was he who suggested that Nashville was a better site than Atlanta and who also suggested that Vanderbilt would be the place to enroll when I was ready. That is how I left it, and I came to Nashville in January, if I recall, of 1958.

...I found the Divinity School to be a very fine place; I knew the reputations of any number of the faculty people. I knew a number of them from Methodist student affairs and conferences and camps across the years in the Midwest and in the South. I had friends in the Board of Evangelism and in the Board of Education, both headquartered in Nashville, because I had served with them in different settings in the Methodist Church. So I felt myself very much at home in Nashville. I had been here on a number of occasions for meetings prior to 1958. When I came to Vanderbilt, I had no notions about

limitations upon my being who I am or who I was then. That meant that Gene Davenport became a friend, as well as Dick Allison and other guys. We ate together whenever we decided to eat at Vanderbilt University. I loved sports then and wanted to play football and basketball with the Divinity School teams, and I did (I learned later on, of course, that this had some eyebrows lifted). I moved about as a theological student and activist without fear or trepidation of being here, but enjoying the experience and enjoying the study and enjoying also my work in the field.

...While I was at the Divinity School, I was doing workshops on nonviolence in various places around the South. I did tours into Virginia, into Alabama, into Arkansas, into North Carolina. I did workshops with the then-developing Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Martin Luther King in South Carolina and other places, including Mississippi. Kelly Miller Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, had by this time invited me to join the executive committee of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council as a person in nonviolence and strategy. We had workshops in 1958 in Nashville sponsored by Kelly Miller Smith’s church. In a couple of workshops in 1959 we took the first step of the nonviolent approach—that is, to settle on an issue, to examine the situation, and to decide where we wanted to focus. We did that in two or three workshops at Bethel AME [African Methodist Episcopal] Church, over on South Street. Out of that we determined that we would desegregate downtown Nashville—that would be our project and effort.

...Then on February 1, 1960, the Greensboro, North Carolina students started their sit-ins, and we immediately called meetings among ourselves. To the first meeting some seventy-five students came, and we talked about what we would do and when, and we planned it for, as I remember, February 13; that was the first Saturday that we sat in. Some 250 people sat in, and we had it in five



GERALD HOLLY

Harold Stirling Vanderbilt, great-grandson of the University's founder, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, was chair of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust during the Lawson Affair. In this photograph taken on November 5, 1965, Vanderbilt is shown at the unveiling of his statue on the library lawn. The significance of the statue is discussed by John J. Compton, professor of philosophy, emeritus, in Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change.

or six places. It went very well; the police were orderly, the managers kept people from congregating without shopping, and the police did the same thing. We had observers in the streets. Will Campbell [local representative of the National Council of Churches—Ed.] had put together a number of white observers to be present every time we sat in, in case we needed witnesses—so we had that organized. Others of us walked from place to place and kept our eyes on things and also observed. We had uncovered by this time a number of friends in the merchant community downtown. We discovered that Harvey's Department Store was owned by a group in Chicago and that this was their second or third store. They were interested in making the changes that could be made, but they did not think they could do it by themselves.

DAVENPORT: I want to pick up on something that Jim Lawson said when he was talking about Will Campbell organizing observers. A half-dozen or so of us on the Student Cabinet did go downtown fairly often as observers. At one point one of us, Wilson Yates, suddenly was in the middle of the demonstration. The demonstrators were walking in a circle, carrying placards, and one of them had left the circle. I do not recall exactly how it happened—whether the demonstrator was arrested, just left the circle, or what, but Wilson wound up carrying the abandoned placard. One of the young toughs on the outside of the circle stepped up, hit Wilson on the back of the head, and knocked him to the ground.

The police then arrested Wilson. George Barrett, Wilson's lawyer, asked two or three of us to appear as character witnesses for Wilson at his trial. So one of the roles that some of the students who were not involved in the demonstrations themselves did play was that of observer.

[The largest sit-in to that point occurred on Saturday, February 27, 1960, when eighty-one students were arrested. Their trials began on the following Monday. That day, the Nashville Tennessean identified Lawson as a Vanderbilt student and the leading organizer of the demonstrations. On Tuesday, March 1, the Nashville Banner in a lead editorial described Lawson as "continuing to advise the element behind him to violate the law. That is the incitation to anarchy."]

On Wednesday, March 2, the Executive Committee of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust was scheduled to meet to consider launching a large capital fund drive. The Divinity School dean, J. Robert Nelson, was summoned to this meeting to participate in the discussion of Lawson's activities downtown, and he presented a statement from Lawson regarding his views on the law and one's right to oppose existing law. At this meeting the Executive Committee determined that Lawson would be given until 9 A.M. the next day to decide whether to withdraw from the University

or be expelled.

The Divinity faculty held a meeting with Chancellor Branscomb on Wednesday afternoon, where it heard the decision of the Executive Committee meeting. Most of the faculty reacted with anger and dismay. The next morning the Chancellor held a closed meeting with Divinity students and faculty, at which he announced that Lawson was no longer a student at the University.—Ed.]

[The University Commencement took place on Sunday, May 29. On the following day the Chancellor met with the Divinity School's admissions committee and reported that he had denied the proposal to re-admit Lawson. Anticipating this decision, the faculty members' letters of resignation, effective at the end of the following academic year, had been prepared. Dean Nelson indicated to several faculty members that he would resign as well. This information was conveyed to Chancellor Branscomb at his home on the evening of May 30, and on the following day the story was carried by the Nashville newspapers and the wire services.—Ed.]

GILKEY:...This was when the newspapers and a good many people were saying that we in the Divinity School were rabble-rousers, that we were interested in becoming famous. This is of course the way people who do not like what you are doing are inclined to interpret a thing like that, and we were booed by the faculty. We were hissed when we came in and when we left. We were the representatives of the Divinity School, and the university faculty as a whole was not in favor of our actions.

When we decided to resign, the admission having been refused, I got on the phone with David Rogers in the Medical School and said to him, "We have decided this, and this includes most of the faculty." I said to David, "You have been urging us to resign all the while; we have decided to resign—what are you guys going to do?" I don't think I was rude enough to say "put your money where your mouth is," but that was the general point. Bless his heart, he said, "We will, and we will let you know tomorrow what we do."

SILBERMAN: The minute the medical faculty told Branscomb what they had in mind, it was all going the other way. Harold Vanderbilt had been enormously embarrassed; he did not have a lot to do with the place, but it was nonetheless his place. His grandfather had built it.

GILKEY: I would like to say that we heard that Harold Vanderbilt really did have some role here. There was a story that he was sitting in the Harvard Club in New York, and somebody came up to him and said, "I understand that university with your name is being turned into a southern finishing school." Vanderbilt put down his newspaper and said, "What do you mean?" Then the other man told him our story. I think Vanderbilt was embarrassed and a bit outraged that his name and the name of his family were getting into this kind of trouble, and he was there at meetings showing his support for Harvie. That was something I think that impressed Harvie. Apparently it did not impress the Executive Committee of the Board of Trust. I think we should record that Harold really did help at that point and was very courteous and charming to us.

"If you belong to a university, you belong to one of the great creations of Western civilization...this was going to be a university and not a southern finishing school."

—Lou H. Silberman

SILBERMAN: At the end Harold Vanderbilt took me aside and said, "We've got to get this matter settled."

GILKEY: With this Medical School threat, negotiations started. Apparently there came an agreement between Branscomb and ourselves with regard to Lawson's re-admission, and Branscomb said he would get this through the Board. I know we had a big celebration. Bob Baldwin, Joe Wright, and I had a celebration that night; but at the end of the celebration we heard the news that Branscomb had been turned down by the Board. At that point, let me say, the University faculty dramatically shifted sides. They were outraged that the Board had turned down the chief administrator of the University, and they suddenly found us to be something they could tolerate and support. I think that was great and marvelous, but I don't think it should be read back into history.

The physiologist in the Medical School, Rollo Park, from Baltimore, was a wonderful man and one of those who would have resigned. We were sure we could talk the

Board of Trust into a different position, so he and I went to three members of the Board of Trust at their homes in Belle Meade. I will never forget that morning. They all regarded me as a communist, needless to say, since this was my reputation in town. But they were very polite, asked us in for a drink and to sit on the front porch—it was hot and we would have a little bourbon. Park did all the talking. He said, "We hope you realize that with this, Vanderbilt ceases to be a major university in America. You will not be able to get an appointment from anybody from MIT or Cal Tech or the University of Chicago or any other place. No one will consider coming here, and you will become a southern finishing school." He said this to all three of them. And all three of them replied, "Well, sir, we'll take the southern finishing school." Park and I went away very, very discouraged.

ROOS:...It was a long, sleepless night. I kept reviewing the arguments that Branscomb and I had exchanged in correspondence. When morning came [Wednesday, June 8], I sud-

denly realized that I knew what made Branscomb tick. I had had thirty-three years' experience. He was just like my father. He was a man quite sure of himself, very intelligent, he knew what he was doing. When my father died, he was the economic advisor to half of the productive capacity of the United States. He was a man who was right 95 percent of the time, and he was pure hell when he was wrong. I realized that Jim Lawson, whether he was a good man or bad man, did not really have anything to do with it. Branscomb was concerned about showing that he was in charge, just as Langdon said. I had been wasting my time arguing Jim Lawson's case; this was really about administrative power.

I looked at the morning paper, and there was the key right on the second page: two contrasting photos, one of Branscomb with the faculty and the other of Jim Lawson in Boston. So I told Anne I was going to write a conciliatory note for Chancellor Branscomb to send to the Divinity faculty.

I went over to the university early and typed a conciliatory note; it did not really say much, but basically said let's talk some more. Then I called up Branscomb. It is sort of surprising when you think about it in retrospect; there I was, a thirty-three-year-old



NEIL BRADY

gleanings

From the Alumni/ae Association President

associate professor, and I talked to the Chancellor immediately. He said I could come over right away; Harold Vanderbilt had to catch a ten o'clock plane, and I could have fifteen minutes. I was over there about nine o'clock. I pulled out the *Tennessean* and said, "Gentlemen, the issue is, who is running this University? We need to bring control back to Nashville; look at this page—there's not a smiling face here in Nashville." The photo had Chancellor Branscomb and Mr. Vanderbilt looking glum at the faculty meeting. On the same page the *Tennessean* had a provocative photo showing Jim Lawson with a tremendous smile with two Boston University students. It was not the kind of picture you wanted published at a time of social tension—the *Tennessean* was very ambiguous. I said, "Look at this smile, look who's in charge of this situation; we have got to bring control back to Nashville." That was a new thought. They asked what we should do. I said that we have to buy time, you are about to have an explosion: "I do not know what to do; we have to get some time first, and then we can figure something out." Then I pulled out the note. I said, "Send this to the Divinity faculty and keep talking until this can be resolved." I told them about the twenty people at my house last night. "I am going to leave, not in anger but in despair because I know you cannot build a university with this. Your goals are no longer possible. I came to help you build a university, but I cannot do it with this problem. It is going to be with a great deal of despair and regret, but that is what I am going to have to do."

I knew Branscomb did not want to react to a threat; it was the last thing you wanted to give him. I said, "Why don't you invite Lawson to come over to discuss the situation; that will give you a couple of days while he gets down here." Branscomb said, "Oh, he would just take advantage of us and get a free plane trip." Branscomb then left the room to check on Harold Vanderbilt's timetable. I turned to Vanderbilt and said, "If

we can get out of this mess for a couple of plane tickets, it will be the best money this university has ever spent." Then he took charge of that meeting, and the settlement proposal was negotiated by Vanderbilt, not by Branscomb. It's an important difference. Vanderbilt considered the Board of Trust members James Stahlman and John Sloan as much a part of the University's problem as Jim Lawson. To him it was a ridiculous situation. He did not appreciate that the administration had not been able to solve it; he did not appreciate the Divinity faculty. To him, he was in charge of a university with problems about to explode. The people from *Life* were there, and he didn't like it. . . . Vanderbilt was a real master. It was very interesting to watch Harold Vanderbilt in action. Branscomb and I would square off on an issue, and Vanderbilt would blast me with various barbs—I was intransigent, or I was stubborn, I had to think about the good of the university. Then he would propose a settlement that was 95 percent my way and insist that I compromise. It was clearly for Harvie's benefit. He never criticized Harvie, he always criticized me, and then we would go on to another thing.

Frankly, Harold Vanderbilt had a certain amount of contempt for his Nashville Board of Trust members. They were not his peers. He was not going to be that influenced by what Jimmy Stahlman thought. Stahlman was publishing a nothing newspaper in Vanderbilt's view. He was always gentlemanly, but he made his feelings pretty clear to me. Branscomb was scared of Stahlman, there is no question of that. In defense of Branscomb, it is not a question of his administrative ability; he just did not feel he had the power to buck Stahlman. He was trapped; he had seen the collapse of all that he had worked to achieve; he did not see any way out until Harold Vanderbilt began to use his power and show that there was another side to this issue.

At that meeting at the Chancellor's house on Thursday morning [June 9], it was John Stambaugh who was very unsupportive of

any solution. He was vice-chancellor for Business Affairs, and he made some comments about what faculty had to do and not do. Then Lou made a speech that was one of the greatest discussions of the rights and obligations of faculty that I have ever heard. I was not familiar with the eloquence of this man, and I am sorry it was not recorded, but I would like Lou to tell us what he said. It was a wonderful speech, and when he finished there was not another word from Stambaugh the whole day.

SILBERMAN: I talked about what a university is. I guess I still have a very old-fashioned idea of what that is. I went to UCLA and to Berkeley, graduating from Berkeley in 1934. Berkeley taught me what a university is all about. It was full of people with worldwide reputations who were perfectly willing to teach students. I guess I got imprinted there. If you belong to a university, you belong to one of the great creations of Western civilization—at least I thought so. That is what I told John Stambaugh.

I think that the whole thing at Vanderbilt came together at that moment, as the term has been used before: were we going to be a university, which was what Harvie Branscomb wanted, or would we remain, as it were, a southern finishing school? As I said before, the real die was cast around this table in October, when a bunch of ordinary and simple (I don't say that in a bad sense) people made up their mind to challenge the ethos of Vanderbilt University. When that decision was made as we sat around this table, the die was cast—this was going to be a university and not a southern finishing school. These people didn't know, I didn't know, that they were revolutionaries.

To read more about the Lawson Affair and the history of the School, you may order a copy of Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change by contacting the Office of Alumni and Development at 615/322-4205 or spire@vanderbilt.edu.

Greetings from the Vanderbilt University Divinity School/GDR/Oberlin Alumni/ae Association!

The events of September 11 have changed and challenged us all in a myriad of ways. We would like for you to know how your Divinity School responded in the immediacy of the events. Some of the texts of the responses are printed elsewhere in this issue of *The Spire*. Most importantly, our school was made a sanctuary for all needing respite, especially foreign students who might be feeling particularly vulnerable. Our dean participated in campus gatherings designed both to comfort and to increase our sense of shared community.

By the time you receive this issue of *The Spire*, you also will have received information regarding the VDS Community/Continuing Education Series designed in conjunction with the Scarritt-Bennett Center. The March and April series deal with various aspects of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, justice, and peacemaking. Speakers will include James Hudnut-Beumler, dean and the Anne Potter Wilson Distinguished Professor of American Religious History; Douglas Meeks, the Cal Turner Chancellor's Professor of Wesleyan Studies; Jack Sasson, the Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies and Hebrew Bible; Lenn Goodman, professor of philosophy and religious studies; and various representatives of the Nashville Islamic community. Also, please watch for the October and November four-week series. During October, Professor Sasson will present "Hebrew Narratives: Histories and Stories." In November, Victor Judge, editor of *The Spire*, will lead a series entitled, "Creativity and Christian Art." Continuing education units (CEU) will be available.

In case you did not get to attend the Cole Lectures in October 2001, let me say that Parker Palmer was exceptional. In conjunction with the lectures, we hosted an alumni/ae association breakfast and meeting. The dean met with us for a lively exchange regarding the future direction for our school. Following the Friday lecture, your alumni/ae council convened for our yearly meeting, and we announced plans for the first VDS alumni/ae educational travel seminar. We have an opportunity to travel with Fernando Segovia, professor of New Testament and early Christianity, to his native Cuba. This trip, arranged with the Center for Global Education and scheduled for June 28 to July 9, 2002, will include opportunities to learn about the religious, cultural, social, and political landscapes of Cuba.

Speaking of global education, we know some of you are aware of an exciting initiative at the Divinity School, the Global Perspectives Program, designed to integrate into our curriculum experiential learning opportunities involving the "two-thirds world" and questions surrounding faithful responses to the phenomenon of globalization. The alumni/ae trip described above offers graduates an opportunity to engage in this study and learning.

Also, the community breakfasts are back! For those of you in driving distance, this is a great opportunity to see former professors, meet the new faculty, see "old" friends, make new acquaintances, and share in the scholarly life of our school. We hope to see you there!

Finally, we want to hear from you. If you have questions and suggestions for your VDS Alumni/ae Association, please contact either of us at the numbers/addresses listed below.

Peace,

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left: Retreatants walk the classical seven-circuit labyrinth at Cross Winds ecumenical and inter-faith contemplative center.

A Sanctuary Without Definitions

Alumnae Create a Place for the Spirit— Inside and Outside the Classroom

BY LEIGH PITTENGER, MDIV2

“The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

—John 3:8

On October 7, 2001, three days after Cole lecturer Parker Palmer had spoken at Vanderbilt Divinity School on the topic of spiritual formation, a group of alumni/ae and students interested in the spiritual life gathered at Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center for an informal afternoon retreat. On this beautiful blue-sky day in rural Tennessee, the wind blew gently whispering through the pine trees and rippling the surface of the lake. We participated in several different kinds of prayer, such as walking the labyrinth, sitting in silence, and lifting our arms in “body prayer,” a meditative form of movement.

Vanderbilt Divinity School alumnae Donna Scott, EdS’75, MDiv’85; Ann Van Dervoort, MDiv’83; and Jennifer Crane, MDiv’89, DMin’97, greeted guests while Billy Fondren, MTS’01, entertained children and families with his creative improvisational techniques. For a few hours in the midst of a hectic week, we were able to enjoy simply being in the presence of the Spirit.

Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center, situated on 25 acres of scenic farmland in College Grove, Tennessee, is a place that welcomes anyone interested in spiritual nourishment. With its lush landscape and outdoor stone labyrinth, it is a unique retreat center in the Middle Tennessee area. Before I came to Vanderbilt Divinity School and enrolled in Donna’s course in ministry and

spirituality, I did not know that there were places nearby and inexpensive where one could go, just to stop a while and pay attention to the movement of the Spirit. Donna, who currently serves as director of spiritual formation at Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church in Franklin, Tennessee, has served on the board of Cross Winds since its inception and currently bases her work in spiritual direction at the center. She has been teaching the course in ministry and spirituality at Vanderbilt since 1996 and always takes the class members on retreat at Cross Winds.

Last year, our ministry and spirituality class met at Cross Winds on a cool autumnal Saturday. In this relaxed, intimate setting we shared our spiritual autobiographies,

watched a movie about Saint Francis, and enjoyed the luxury of silent time. Some of us walked the labyrinth while others settled into a private, cozy corner to write in our journals or sip hot tea.

When asked to name the words that we associated with the experience, we responded, “hospitality, solitude, quiet, and peace.” When I later asked Donna why the retreat is such an integral component of her course, she remarked, “I want to expose students to a sense of sacred space, of time apart, and particularly to an environment that encourages them to be on a spiritual journey.” She says that students have always responded positively to the retreat experience.

Donna’s course, with its emphasis on

spirituality and experiential learning, reflects a new development in the curriculum and atmosphere at Vanderbilt. When she was a graduate student in the 1970s, no such course was offered. Knowing that she wanted to integrate her interests in religion, spirituality, and psychology, Donna left the University to study for a year at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, Switzerland, and became a Jungian-oriented counselor. After returning to Vanderbilt in 1981, she continued to feel dissatisfied by Vanderbilt’s neglect of the spiritual dimension in theological education. “My interest was in spiritual formation—for our society and for our theological institutions—but at that time there was no interest in spiritual formation,” she says.

In 1996, Associate Dean Jack Fitzmier asked her to teach a course in ministry and spirituality because more students were requesting that spiritual formation be incorporated into the curriculum. Having completed her doctorate in ministry and spirituality from Wesley Seminary, Donna was excited to have a chance to teach at the Divinity School.

“I wept when Jack asked me to offer the course; I love to teach, and this invitation provided an opportunity to teach a subject for which students were hungry and which I

felt was missing in their education.”

In her class, Donna emphasizes that theology and spirituality were essentially connected in the early Christian tradition. Evagrius, the fourth-century monk, said, “If you are a theologian, you truly pray. If you truly pray, you are a theologian.” Donna endeavors to recover this integrated vision in the present.

She is committed to the belief that spirituality has a place not only in the classroom but also in society. “Retreat centers provide the conditions necessary for spiritual growth; they fulfill a need in our society by reminding us to slow down, to become more aware, to be open to the breaking in of God’s transcendent presence.”

Retreat centers offer their sacred space to

a variety of people—clergy, lay people, members of other religious traditions, or those who claim no particular faith. The centers receive people as they are, without imposing any religious doctrine or definition of spirituality upon them.

Donna is not the only Divinity School graduate committed to supporting sacred spaces for fostering spiritual growth. Jennifer Crane and Ann Van Dervoort, through their friendship with Donna, were invited to serve on the board of Cross Winds. Jennifer, who works as a pastoral counselor and as an associate in ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Lewisburg, Tennessee, has led retreats at various local centers, including a “Retreat for Weary Pastors” at Scarritt-Bennett. She laughingly describes herself as “non-contemplative by nature” although she values her experience with retreat centers and appreciates the sense of sanctuary such places offer. “Sanctuary is very important to me because that is where I renew myself; it is the reason I get up every morning and begin my work—knowing that I can return to my sanctuary.”

The associate rector at Saint Paul’s Church in Franklin, Ann also stresses the importance of “a place apart” for those in ministry. For high-profile leaders in the church, taking time for occasional retreats can help prevent burnout. “I don’t think that ministers, including myself, take retreats often enough,” she admits. “You really have to be intentional about designating the time, and those who don’t take retreats don’t know what they’re missing.”

In the spring of 1999, Ann invited a friend to lead a centering prayer retreat at Cross Winds. Lee Mitchell, MDiv3, attended the retreat and left changed by his experience. He had been practicing Buddhist meditation but had never heard of centering prayer. Since the retreat, he has practiced centering prayer regularly and led a prayer group last year at Vanderbilt’s All Faith Chapel. As part of his field education practicum, he introduced centering prayer to the prison inmates whom he counseled. When asked if he thinks that spirituality is necessary to theological education, Lee says, “It’s the most necessary component; unless spirituality walks alongside our theological growth, there would be no theological growth. I can’t emphasize that enough.”

My Vanderbilt education has brought me to places that I never would have expected.

Ever since Donna first exposed me to the world of retreat centers, I have recognized the importance of honoring sacred space in my own life. I have attended a journaling retreat at Cross Winds, a Thomas Merton retreat at Saint Mary’s Episcopal Retreat Center in Sewanee, Tennessee, and a “Quiet Day” at Penuel Ridge, an ecumenical retreat center established by Joyce and Don Beisswenger, professor, emeritus, of church and community. As I’ve tried to carry the perspectives gained at these retreats into my daily life, I have learned slowly the value of seeking the Spirit in a variety of ways by drawing from the practices rooted in ancient monastic disciplines.

Leaving Cross Winds at the end of that afternoon on October 7, I carried with me a sense of reawakening. Lee said that walking the labyrinth had enabled him to “let some things go,” and he drove home singing his favorite John Prine song, “It’s a Big Old Goofy World.” We returned to our chaotic lives, trying to hold on to that sense of inner stillness for as long as possible. It’s refreshing just to know that such a sanctuary is out

there and that the wind continues to blow. We can always return.

For more information about Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center, contact:

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The essayist was graduated in 1993 from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro where she received a baccalaureate in English. Upon earning her master’s degree from the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Pittenger taught English composition, creative writing, and spiritual autobiography at Lithuania Christian College in Klaipeda for two years before matriculating at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. She is a member of the class of 2003 and serves as the program development consultant for Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center.



Reverend Ann Van Dervoort, Reverend Donna Scott, Will Judd, MTS2, Lee Mitchell, MDiv3, Billy Fondren, Reverend Jennifer Crane, and Leigh Pittenger, MDiv2, gather at the lake at Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center in College Grove, Tennessee.

Robes in the Closet

BY SUSAN ELIZABETH STEINBERG, MDiv'92

uring September 2000, I took my clerical robes from my church office and hung them in my bedroom closet. After serving for seven years as the associate pastor of a lively Presbyterian USA congregation, I packed up my books, files, and robes and stored them. I've scarcely used any of them since that day.

It was difficult, indeed wrenching, to say goodbye to the people of the church and to my ministry with them. I left the church on good terms, and there were plenty of tears to go around on my last Sunday. The final farewell was full of both sweetness and sorrow.

Ending that call—my first as an ordained minister—was not easy, but I made the decision in order to spend time with my two young children. I had to trade in blouses for tee shirts, stockings for crew socks, and robes for blue jeans so I could live in my kids' world for a while. I was afraid if I didn't make this decision, Henry and Anna would grow up thinking of the church as a place that takes away mommies. We already were heading in that direction with Henry, who at age three said to me between our two Sunday worship services, "Mommy, you can't go to another service!" And when I worked on Saturdays, he would scold me and insist, "But people don't go to their offices on Saturdays!"

What could I say? "Most people don't, but ministers do work on Saturdays, Sundays, and most days. That's what the church requires of us, son."

Is this what I wanted Henry to learn?

I wrestled with these questions for more than a year. I loved the church I served and felt absolutely called to be there. I was proud of being one of the pastors of that congregation and afraid to let go of all that my position carried. The congregation and staff supported me throughout my pregnancies; they loved my children and were sensitive to my new parental responsibilities, yet I was unable to figure out how to be both a pastor and a mother of young children. I cut back and rearranged my schedule as much as I could, but I could not find a way to make full-time ministry compatible with family life.

Finally, the conflicting loyalties became unbearable. I was tense much of the time because I never seemed to be in the right place. If I were at home, I felt I should be at the church; if I were at the church, I felt I should be at home. After living with these tensions for some time, it became clear to me at last that calling incorporates the public and the private, the professional and the personal. Just as God called me to the ministry, God also called me to be a mother. I am called, I realized, to know my children and to give them both my love and my time.

Making such a radical shift from full-time ministry to full-time mothering has been a serious challenge. As confident as I had become in the pulpit, I was anything but sure of myself with a 22-month-old girl and a three-year-old boy. I have been humbled to the core since hanging my robes in the closet. There is nothing glorious in toilet training, searching for hidden pacifiers, and sponging spilled milk, but what it takes to do all of this—day in and day out—has left me in total awe of childcare workers, single parents, and anyone who has more than two children.

"After living with these tensions for some time, it became clear to me at last that calling incorporates the public and the private, the professional and the personal."



Alumna Susan Steinberg with her children, Henry and Anna Farmer

Staying at home with the kids has given me a whole new perspective on my life. I was worried when I left the pulpit that I would lose my theological lens on the world and my theological vocabulary—and to a certain extent that may be true. The questions from my son, however, have provided significant opportunities for religious reflection: "Why do some people not have houses? Why are there prisons? What does 'dead' mean? Why did Jesus die?"

His questions come fast and furious, and I struggle to find answers that my son can understand. He makes me think theologically all the time.

I must admit that occasionally I open the closet and stare longingly at my robes. They haunt me. They are reminders of a season that is now past, and I miss wearing them. I miss the church and my calling to serve her. I weep at the beginning of the first hymn on Easter Sunday, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." I want to be up there where the ministers stand; I want to be the one announcing the Resurrection to the faithful.

But as much as I grieve my role and my robes, I need to hear the good news from where I am sitting, with my son next to me in the pew. I need to be right beside him instead of rows and rows in front of him. If, in spite of my tears, I sense I am in the right place on Easter Sunday, I know I am without a doubt on Easter Monday when Henry bounds out of his bath—naked and jubilant—and excitedly says to me, "Excuse me, Mommy; peace be with you!"

Perhaps with that wish for peace from my firstborn, God was trying to tell me that for now, anyway, my robes are in the right place.

Diane M. Jones, scribe, of Sewanee, Tennessee, created the essay's initial "D" in the decorative style known as the white vine illumination of 15th-century Italy.

Alumni/ae Class Notes

Bruce A. Crill, BD'43, of Bartlett, Tennessee, recently celebrated 60 years of service as a minister in United Methodist Church. He became a member of the Memphis Conference in 1939, the year the Methodist Episcopal Church South united with the Methodist Church North and the Protestant Methodist Church.

Darrel F. Linder, Oberlin BD'51, is the author of *Living Life in the Survivor's Lane*, a collection of homilies based on learning to accept timeless themes. A cancer survivor and facilitator for the American Cancer Society's Man-to-Man Program, Linder serves as a volunteer at Saint Rita's Regional Cancer Center in Lima, Ohio, where he also is a board member of the Saint Rita's Hospital Foundation.

Roger W. Merrell, Oberlin BD'53, pastor, emeritus, of Newburg United Methodist Church in Lavonia, Michigan, and his wife, Josephine, have earned three world weightlifting championships since 1997 when they began practicing the sport in an exercise rehabilitation program for improving their health.

Christian E. Hauer, BD'55, PhD'59, professor of religion, emeritus, at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, and his colleague, Professor William A. Young, announce the publication of the fifth edition of their textbook, *An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey Into Three Worlds*, by Prentice Hall.

Ernest C. Pennington, BA'60, BD'64, retired in February 2001 after 49 years as a pastor in the Church of God. He continues to serve as a supply pastor, as a certified hospital chaplain, and as a member of the State Council of the Church in West Virginia.

Furman Clark Ford, D'64, has retired as a minister of the First Christian Church and resides in Midland, Texas, where he and his wife, Mattie Belle, perform volunteer work and enjoy spending time with their son, Kenneth, their daughter, Debra, and their five grandchildren who range in age from 23 to 3 years. "I'm sure the Divinity School still is a great place to receive an education," writes Ford. "I have many fond memories of

my classmates and the faculty, and I always am glad to recognize familiar names when reading *The Spire*; the last issue reported on Professor Liston Mills who had a great influence on my ministry; I'll always appreciate his friendship."

Glenda Stanton-Webb, BA'70, MDiv'73, DMin'77, teaches English as a second language to adult refugees living in Nashville. She writes, "Since the fall of 1999, I have discovered a very special ministry in relating to refugees from so many different countries, cultures, and religious beliefs."

Terry L. Clark, MDiv'71, has completed seven years as district superintendent of the Central Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church, Spoon River District, and has been appointed to two churches in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference—Signal Hill United Methodist Church and a new church in Belleville, Illinois.

William Lewis Sachs, MDiv'72, director of research for the Episcopal Church Foundation located in New York City, has been named a research fellow at Yale Divinity School. He conducts domestic and international ethnographic research on patterns of local spirituality and mission among Anglicans, and his current project is a book based upon the Zacchaeus Project—a year-long national research project designed to explore what it means to be an Episcopalian in today's society and how Episcopalians renew their sense of identity in communities of faith. The project involved interviewing more than 2,600 Episcopalians in 260 localities. Sachs sends greetings to Professor Dale Johnson and good wishes to Vanderbilt Divinity School.

Edward V. Lauing Jr., MDiv'73, CEO of NUASIS Corporation in San Jose, California, has been appointed to the executive board of the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto and also has been named treasurer of the organization. UMPA is a 30-year-old ecumenical agency that serves the needs of the homeless in the Palo Alto area. Lauing also is a member of the board of directors of Congregation Beth Am, a large Union of American Hebrew Congregation in Los Altos Hills where he serves as chair of the social action committee.

Gay House Welch, MA'76, PhD'80, University chaplain and assistant professor of religious studies, was honored at the 15th annual Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiatives Awards assembly sponsored in October by Vanderbilt University's Opportunity Development Center. A member of the Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities, the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Lecture Series Committee, the Holocaust Lecture Series Committee, the Violence Against Women Task Force, the Service Learning Task Force, and the Women's Faculty Organization, Welch was recognized for advancing the Opportunity Development Center's core values of diversity, equity, accessibility, and tolerance.

Roger W. Jackle, DMin'77, has been elected to the senate of the Academy of Senior Professionals at Eckerd College in Saint Petersburg, Florida. Members of ASPEC are recognized by their peers as leaders in their professional lives and in community service and as individuals who exhibit extensive intellectual interests and wish to engage in creative, social, and cultural growth.

Ernest Newsom, D'78, serves as pastor for refugees from Sudan who worship at the Sudanese American Nuer Presbyterian Church in Gallatin, Tennessee. The 100 congregants comprise the only Sudanese refugee faith community in America that has its own church facility. For the past five years, the members of the Sudanese congregation—many of whom came to America to escape civil war—conducted worship services in other churches before raising funds to acquire land and erect a sanctuary, which they dedicated on November 4, 2001. With 3,000 refugees, Nashville has the largest population of Sudanese living in the United States. After visiting the refugee camps in Ethiopia, Newsom returned to America determined to improve the lives of the Sudanese. "I see myself as a bridge between the Sudanese in Middle Tennessee and the African American people," remarked Newsom during an interview broadcast on National Public Radio's "The Changing Face of America," a program that tells the stories of everyday Americans and the issues they face at a time of rapid and dramatic change in the U.S.

Larry Stephen Clifton, MDiv'81, collaborated with Cinemarr Entertainment to produce a documentary on the ghostly legends of Tennessee for A&E and the History Channel. Author of *The Terrible Fitzball: The Melodramatist of the Macabre*, a biography of the 19th-century British dramatist Edward Fitzball, Clifton also is a partner in the wedding chapel industry in Gatlinburg. He writes that he has fond memories of being in Professor Douglas Knight's first Hebrew Bible course.

Ray Waddle, MA'81, the *Tennessean's* religion editor for 17 years, has resigned from his position with the daily newspaper to pursue book projects and other writing opportunities.

William Avery Mulroy, MDiv'82, has returned to the pastorate after serving as chair of the religion department at Memphis University School where he received the John M. Nail Excellence in Teaching Award during the 2001 commencement exercises. Mulroy taught courses in Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and ethics during his tenure of eight years at the college preparatory school for young men. Bishop William W. Morris, DMin'73, of the Memphis Conference has appointed him associate pastor at Saint Luke's United Methodist Church in Memphis. The grandson and son of United Methodist ministers (James R. Mulroy, BD'54, DMin'77), Mulroy coordinates the mission and outreach ministries at Saint Luke's and has an active role in the church's adult education program.

Charles H. Lee, MDiv'84, has been appointed pastor of Huffman United Methodist Church by the North Alabama Conference of the UMC. In staff writer Greg Garrison's article, "Racial Breakthrough Eyed: First Black to Lead Hoffman Methodists," published in the June 6, 2001, issue of the *Birmingham News*, Lee commented upon his appointment to the Huffman church with a predominately white congregation of 1,600 members. "I'm counting on what the Lord's going to do. I've got to be pastor to the people who are there, then we have to discern what God wants us to do in the community. I adapt my style to what the audience wants. The message has not changed. The spiritual needs are the same. I feel at home in an enthusiastic black worship service or in high liturgy."

Douglas Beam Paysour, MDiv'84, serves as pastor at the Fincastle United Methodist Church in Fincastle, Virginia. He and his wife, Gail, are the parents of three sons—Jacob, Matthew, and Benjamin.

David Schnasa Jacobsen, MDiv'86, MA'93, PhD'97, has been granted tenure at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary of Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario where he is an associate professor of homiletics.

Rebecca (Becca) Mary Stevens, MDiv'90, chaplain at Saint Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University and executive director of Magdalene, was inducted into the YW's Academy for Women of Achievement in October. The five other Nashville women honored for their leadership and influence as role models for young women were Deborah Yvonne Faulkner, EDD'84, deputy chief of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department; Deborah C. German, senior associate dean for medical education, professor of medical administration, and associate professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University; Delorse A. Lewis, executive director of the Tennessee State University Foundation; Margaret Ann Robinson, chair of the Nashville Public Library Board; and Elise L. Steiner, community volunteer. The Academy for Women of Achievement was founded in 1992 by the Young Women's Christian Association of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, known in Nashville as the YW. In the past decade, 53 women have been inducted into the academy for empowering women with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve self-sufficiency and for helping diminish violence and racism.

Tanya Alayne Arbogast, MTS'92, works as a physician assistant for a family practice group in the rural counties located on the southern coast of North Carolina. She writes, "I would love to have visitors. Any ideas where Michael Yesenko is?" Classmates may write her at 2322 Belvedere Drive, Wilmington, North Carolina 28405-2820.

Grant Levi Azdell, MDiv'92, chaplain and director of church relations at Lynchburg College, received the M. Carey Brewer Alumni Award during the college's 2001 homecoming. The award honors alumni for their contributions to their profession, civic

and religious life, and their alma mater. Azdell was graduated from Lynchburg in 1989 and was ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) after completing his master's degree at VDS. He and his wife, Jane, are the parents of a son, Andrew Grant, and a daughter, Caroline Margaret.

Allan Fesmire, MTS'92, has been certified as a chaplain by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains and as a support group leader by the Louisville chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. He serves as chaplain at Good Samaritan Home Pathways in Evansville, Indiana.

Susan Elizabeth Steinberg, MDiv'92, who served for seven years as associate pastor of a Presbyterian church in Charlottesville, Virginia, has accepted a part-time campus ministry position at Duke University and has decided to spend time with her children, Henry, 4, and Anna, 2. She and her husband, Stephen Farmer, reside in Carrboro, North Carolina, and he serves as senior associate director of admission at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. An essay by Steinberg entitled "Robes in the Closet" is published in this issue of *The Spire*.

Bishop Joseph Warren Walker, MDiv'92, minister at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Nashville, and his congregants dedicated a new \$17 million, 5,000-seat sanctuary in October. Mount Zion Baptist Church represents the city's largest congregation with a membership of 7,800.

Dierdre W. Jarrett, MDiv'94, and her husband, Rick, are the parents of a daughter, Grace, born on September 23, 2000. The Jarretts reside in Orlando, Florida.

Amelia Elisabeth Becker, MTS'95, currently serves as school minister at Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania and is seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ. She writes, "As time notches more and more rings in the ole trunk of life, I find my experience at Vanderbilt Divinity School emerging continuously as a shaping force in my work."

VDS, GDR, and Oberlin Alumni/ae:

Number your paper from 1 to 10.

1. Studying for another graduate degree?
2. Defended the dissertation?
3. Gainfully employed or earned a promotion?
4. Appointed to a new congregation?
5. Participated in a conference?
6. Published an article or signed a book contract?
7. Changed careers?
8. Welcomed a new member to the family?
9. Developed a new hobby?
10. Retired?

Why not share your answers with us?

At Vanderbilt University Divinity School, we're always interested in learning about your professional and personal accomplishments. Please keep us and your classmates informed of your vocation as well as your avocations by sending a class note to spire@vanderbilt.edu or to *The Spire*, VU Station B 357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, Tennessee 37235-7703.

We're anxious to hear from you—all 2,436 alumni/ae!

Anne Bartlett Carey, MTS'95, assistant to the executive director of the International Rivers Network, an environmental and human rights organization located in Berkeley, California, is an active member of the Bay Area Organizing Committee, an organization of churches and unions working with political leaders in San Francisco.

Carleton Prescott Bowen, MTS'96, and his wife, Holly, have moved into their first home in Silver Spring, Maryland, where they are the parents of a daughter, Jessica Nicole, who was born on November 12, 2001. Carleton is a global account executive with AT&T where he provides large corporate clients with e-business Web hosting infrastructure. Holly is employed as a marketing analyst for Hughes Network System.

John Mark Browder, MTS'96, assistant chaplain with the 678th personnel services unit in Nashville, completed the master of divinity degree in December 2000 at Lipscomb University. He also was cast as an

inmate in the movie *The Last Castle* which was filmed in Nashville. His wife, Janet Marie Grinnell-Browder, is a member of the faculty of E.B. Wilson High School in Hendersonville.

Angela Gay Kinkead, MDiv'97, was named dean of the chapel at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, West Virginia, on October 1, 2001.

Brant James Pitre, MTS'99, and **Elizabeth Thibodeaux Pitre, MEd'99**, of South Bend, Indiana, announce the birth of their daughter, Morgen Theresa, on June 25, 2001. She weighed eight pounds, 14 ounces and measured 20 1/2 inches in length at birth.

Whitney Albert Bauman, MTS'00, publications assistant at the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, serves as managing editor for *Dialog: A Journal of Theology and Theology and Science*. He also is a member of the steering committee of Theological Roundtable on Ecological Ethics and Spirituality (TREES), an organization dedicated to raising awareness of the economic, social justice, ethical, religious, and philosophical issues surrounding ecological degradation.

Shannon Sellers-Harty, MTS'00, currently works in program development for the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, a non-profit organization that promotes economic development by providing greater access to capital and opportunities for underserved people. NHCLF helps individuals secure affordable permanent housing, childcare services, microloans, and technical assistance. Sellers-Harty and her husband reside in Loudon.

Diana Gallaher, MTS'01, works as a community outreach specialist for MANNA, a grassroots coalition of Nashvillians united by their conviction that more than a box of food is required to end hunger. Among the accomplishments of the 25-year-old nonprofit organization are helping to secure a state mandated school breakfast program, establishing a food stamp outreach program, and promoting public policies to ensure the rights of welfare recipients.

Obituaries

Thomas L. Culbertson, Oberlin, of Toledo, Ohio, on January 23, 2001.

Leonard W. Short, Oberlin, of Dayton, Ohio, on March 17, 1999.

Eugene Murray, BD'31, of Tavares, Florida.

James P. Sanders, MA'41, BD'43, of Sacramento, California, on March 10, 2000.

John L. Knight Jr., MA'43, of Friendship Village in Tempe, Arizona, retired Methodist minister and former president of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Baldwin-Wallace College, on July 21, 2000.

Robert W. Hall, D'45, MA'45, of Staunton, Illinois, on January 17, 2001.

Howard Farmer Huff, BD'49, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, minister, emeritus, of Bethany Christian Church in Tulsa and former professor at Phillips Graduate Seminary in Enid; recipient of the 1949 Founder's Medal for first honors at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Huff also studied Hebrew Bible and Christian ethics with Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and James Muilenburg at Union Theological Seminary in New York City; he and his wife, Rosemary Bowers Huff, served for ten years as missionaries in Japan for the United Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ; he died at the age of 78 on September 16, 2001, following an extended illness.

Sergio J. Reyes, Oberlin, BD'54, of Burlington, Vermont, former chaplain of Mary Johnston Hospital in Manila, district superintendent of the United Methodist Church in Manila, and senior chaplain at Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, on January 28, 2001, following several years of failing health.

Don R. Bundy, BD'57, of Geneva, Illinois, former pastor of Bethany United Methodist Church in Itasca, Illinois, on September 27, 2000.

William G. Harris, BD'59, of Burns, Tennessee, on July 12, 2001.

Frank A. Kostyu, Oberlin, MST'62, of Durham, North Carolina, on March 6, 2001.

Clarise Ann DeQuasie, MLS'66, of Oak Hill, West Virginia, a librarian for 30 years at the Jean

and Alexander Heard Library of Vanderbilt University who also attended the Divinity School where she served as editor of *Prospectus*, worked as a library assistant, and received the J.D. Owen Prize in Hebrew Bible; known for her keen sense of humor, clever writing skills, and inventive Halloween costumes, she was an ardent fan of Luciano Pavarotti and traveled the country to attend his concerts; her friendship with the tenor and his family is documented in the Clarise DeQuasie-Luciano Pavarotti Collection which she bequeathed to the Heard Library's Special Collections; Will D. Campbell, preacher, civil rights activist, and author was a eulogist at her memorial service conducted at McKendree Village Chapel in Hermitage, Tennessee; she died at the age of 63 on June 12, 2001.

William G. Walker, PhD'68, of Owensboro, Kentucky, a Presbyterian minister and servant of humankind for seven decades, established and served as first director of the Kentucky Council of Churches and was instrumental in organizing the Tennessee Council of Churches; Walker provided leadership during the civil rights movement in Middle Tennessee and served as president of the Owensboro Churches for Better Homes, a precursor to the international organization Habitat for Humanity; he died on January 24, 2001.

Fred Albert Craig, MDiv'73, of Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, at the age of 54 on November 18, 2001.

Loviss Rutledge Landers III, D'81, of Birmingham, Alabama, on March 29, 2001.

In Memoriam

Members of the administration, faculty, and staff of the Divinity School and the Graduate Department of Religion extend their sympathy to the families of the three Vanderbilt University alumni whose lives were claimed during the tragedy of Tuesday, September 11, 2001:

Mark David Hindy, BS'95, a member of the Commodores baseball team and employee of Cantor Fitzgerald, the son of Virginia and George Hindy of Brooklyn, New York.

Terrence Edward (Ted) Adderley Jr., BA'01, a securities analyst for Fred Alger Management, Incorporated, the son of Vanderbilt University Board of Trust member Mary Beth Adderley and Terrence Adderley of Bloomfield, Michigan.

Davis Grier "Deeg" Sezna, BA'01, an employee of Sandler-O'Neill & Partners, L.P., the son of Gail and Davis Sezna Sr. of Wilmington, Delaware.

Holy Sonnet X

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou are not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me;
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more
must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones and soul's delivery.
Thou are slave to fate, chance, kings, and
desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die.



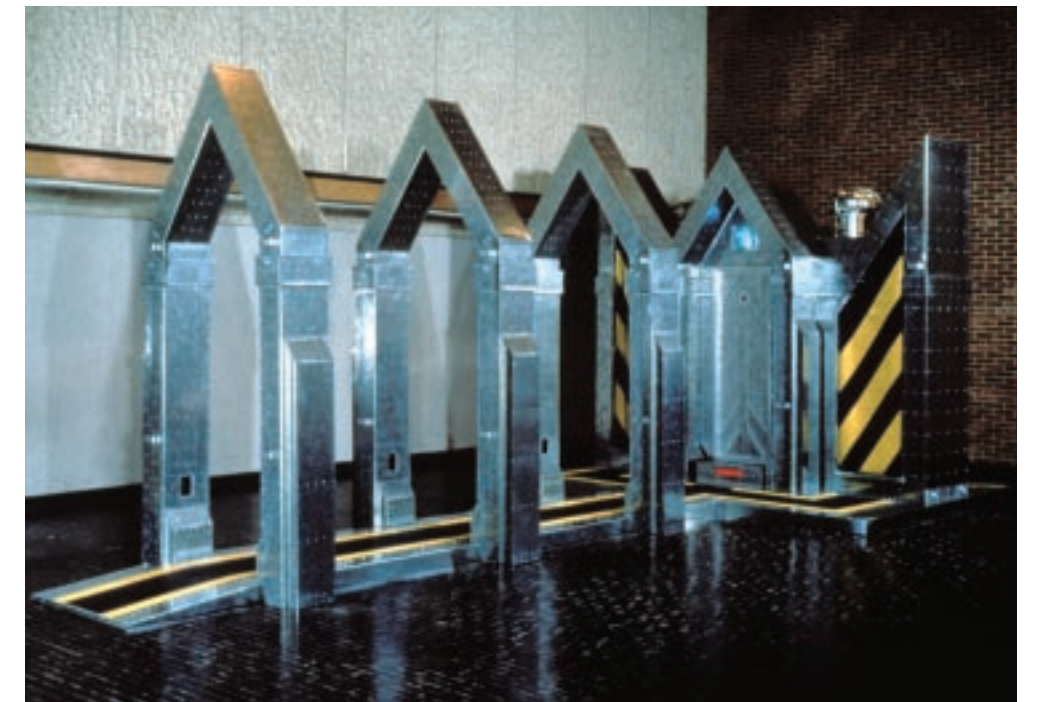
(ca. 1610)
—from *Divine Meditations*
by John Donne
(1572–1631)

“...the act of confessing can in itself increase the vulnerability of persons who expose their secrets, especially in institutionalized practices...when self-revelation flows in one direction only, it increases the authority of the listener while decreasing that of the speaker. In ordinary practices of confiding, the flow of personal information is reciprocal, as the revelations of one person call forth those of another; but in institutionalized practices, there is no such reciprocity.”

—from *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation*
by Sissela Bok, 1983



Confessional, 1994
from the series *Secrecy*
by Michael L. Aurbach, sculptor
American (born 1952)
Professor of Art
Vanderbilt University Department
of Art and Art History
mixed media
10½ x 12 x 36"



The antihumanistic vision of power, a prominent theme in postmodern discourse, inspired sculptor Michael Aurbach to create *Confessional*. Viewers are invited to contemplate the intricate relationship between secrecy and institutional power while walking through a series of insular arches constructed of cold sheet metal and fashioned with motion detectors and alarms. Upon entering the confessional booth, an individual encounters one's own speaking image projected from the screen of a closed-circuit television. According to art historian Glen R. Brown, *Confessional* serves as a reminder of the constant vigil we necessarily maintain over the information that defines us and the vulnerable posture we assume by the indiscreet revelation of secrets. Recent sculpture by Aurbach will be featured in the exhibition, *Diverse Visions 2002: Works by the Studio Faculty of the Department of Art and Art History*, which will be mounted in the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery from March 30 to June 8.

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Inscribe the Future

“For those of you who must speak because you believe God has spoken, we hope Vanderbilt University Divinity School will represent what the lintel in the courtyard proudly claims, a Schola Prophetarum, a school of the prophets. Go, then, and speak a good word to the world.”

—Paul DeHart, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Theology
Vanderbilt University Divinity School
from the baccalaureate address to the Class of 2001

Our graduates have been committed to speaking “a good word to the world” since 1875, the year Methodist Bishop Holland Nimmons McTyeire, the first president of the University’s Board of Trust, proclaimed the Vanderbilt theological community a *Schola Prophetarum*. Bishop McTyeire’s pronouncement, inscribed in the stone lintel above the entrance to Old Wesley Hall, also serves today as the name for the Divinity School’s donor society.

Since VDS is not supported by any particular denomination, individual private giving is critical for helping students defray the costs of graduate education. Funds donated through *Schola Prophetarum* are designated for scholarships.

As a donor to the Divinity School, you can help inscribe the future for the next generation in the school of prophets.

For information regarding membership in *Schola Prophetarum*, please contact:

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