



The Tree of Life quilt was conceived and created by Meredith Maxwell Myers, MDiv3, for her course project in Christian Religious Education, Imagination, and Creativity taught by Lloyd R. Lewis, assistant professor of the practice of ministry. A native of Raleigh, North Carolina, and member of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Myers began quilting when she was I6 years old.

"I designed *The Tree of Life* specifically for All Faith Chapel with the hope that generations of students representing a variety of faith traditions will find meaning in the imagery," explains the quilter, who employed such traditional iconographic elements as stars shining from a celestial background of lapis lazuli and the four rivers of Paradise flowing from the earth.

The artist was graduated in 1997 from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro where she earned a baccalaureate in fine arts and religious studies. Before enrolling at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, she worked in Heidelberg, Germany, as a graphic designer for the United States Army's Department of Defense. Myers was commissioned in 2001 as a second lieutenant in the Air Force Reserves and currently has the status of chaplain candidate. For her clinical pastoral education requirement at VDS, she served during the summer of 2002 as a chaplain intern at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Upon earning her master of divinity degree, Myers hopes to be called to ordination in the American Baptist Church. She currently resides in Clarksville, Tennessee.

The Tree of Life 2001 by Meredith Maxwell Myers (born 1974) cotton and gold metallic thread 42" x 32" All Faith Chapel Vanderbilt University Divinity School

# The TREE of LIFE Quilt

"Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on God's law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in season, and their leaves do not wither."

—THE PSALMS, 1:1-3

"Those who believe and act righteously will be admitted into gardens through which streams flow, wherein they will abide by the command of their Lord. Their greeting therein for each other will be, 'Peace be on you.' Dost thou not see how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word? It is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches reach into heaven."

—The Qur'an, 14:24-25

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit, producing fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

—The Revelation to John, 22:1-2

# THESIDIZE

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Professor of American Religious History

A Tribute to Liston Mills

Colleagues, alumni/ae, and benefactors from the University community celebrate the memory of a beloved teacher.

Department of Religion, and the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology are encouraged to submit news of their personal and professional accomplishments. Readers may correspond by

**Just Crumbs** 

On the farmland where his ancestors labored VDS student and farmer Freddie Haddox



F E A T U R E S

raises crops for the tables of the hungry.



Pursuing a Crown of Perfection

Alumna Shelli Renee Yoder presents a femicritique on the inherent violence of beauty pageants.

For artist and educator Rashida Marjana

Browne, drawing is an act of worship.

Lloyd R. Lewis, Assistant Dean for Student Life

Victor Judge, BS'77, MS'79, Editor & Registrar

Dean & The Anne Potter Wilson Distinguished

Jenni Bongard, Designer

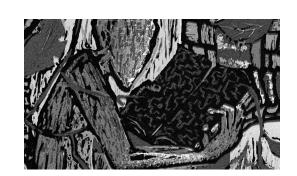
Christopher K. Sanders, MDiv'95, Director of Alumni/ae and Development

Dr. Kent Kyger, MD'58, and Patricia Miller Kyger, BS'59, Chairpersons of Schola Prophetarum

Anthony J. Spence, E'75, Executive Director of Alumni Communications & Publications

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## The Globalization of Christianity

VDS Professor Fernando Segovia examines the dramatic proportions in the deployment and constitution of Christianity and raises questions for theologians of the 21st century.



Dances with Academic Wolves

Professor Emeritus Howard Harrod discusses the intricate choreography within interdisciplinary



**Negative Space** 

26

Fall 2002

# Readers' Forum

#### From the Editor

In his commencement address to the members of the class of 2002, Vanderbilt University Chancellor Gordon Gee charged the graduates to embrace the Jewish conception of *tikkun olam*, "to repair the world," as they departed West End Avenue and began to practice their lives.

"Tikkun olam means to heal, to repair, to restore what has been shattered, to mend what has been torn, to work always toward perfecting a world that is imperfect," explained the Chancellor, but he also encouraged the graduates not to confuse *repair* as being synonymous with *patching*. "Tikkun means working toward what becomes almost an alteration of substance. This is a new world of change that we are all entering, a world of change to sculpt back out of a heap of ashes."

The people from the Divinity School of whom you will read in this issue of *The Spire* are instruments of tikkun—students, alumni/ae, and faculty whose ministries are dedicated to sculpting a better world.

- \*VDS student Freddie Haddox has designated a portion of his family's farmland for cultivating vegetables and fruit for the hungry in Nashville. While shopping for produce at a local farmers' market, Freddie realized that the ingredients which comprise the native diets of immigrant workers were unaffordable under their current wages. Refusing to accept the convenient adage that "The poor will always be among us," he has established the Just Crumbs initiative for raising crops that will be harvested for those in need. Freddie's selfless work as a farmer and as a volunteer reading tutor in the Metropolitan-Davidson public school system proves that one person can, indeed, help to mend the lives of others.
- \*Writing from the perspective of one with experiential wisdom, alumna Shelli Yoder examines the beauty pageant industry's role not only in the objectification of the female gender but of *all* creation. In her autobiographical essay, she offers a feminist

critique of the violent message pageants convey and explains how a theological education has contributed to her revised understanding of perfection.

\*We also pay tribute in this issue to Professors Howard Harrod and Liston Mills, two influential professors whose lives have motivated Divinity School students to adopt the praxis of tikkun olam. When our alumnus, the Reverend Dr. Riggins R. Earl Jr., professor of ethics and theology at the Interdenominational Theology Center in Atlanta, Georgia, learned of Professor Harrod's retirement from teaching at VDS, he composed a letter, modestly signed "a former student." In the letter he describes his first encounter with the teacher he would later acknowledge as one whose life reflected a radical appreciation for the human worth of marginalized people and from whom he would learn the art of listening:

"It was the decade of the mid-1960s at Vanderbilt Divinity School, a time of national political and social upheaval, and I was one of a handful of the black students at VDS," wrote Professor Earl. "Howard Harrod, a cool, laid-back, young, softspoken professor, proved to be no stranger to the marginalized or to their questions. In the Divinity School's pipe smoking culture of that day, seminars took place in smoke-filled rooms. Howard often sat at the seminar table, patiently listening from a non-threatening posture; he listened with the posed grace of a shaman for our budding intellectual voices to take critical shape. Repeatedly he would respond from the veil of his pipe smoke with the question, 'What do you mean?' Interlacedly, he was known to punctuate his critical remarks with the query, 'Don't you see?' I often saw profound insights and heard deep voices within during the creative pauses that Howard's pedagogical method generated in the seminar context. He knew how to use the art of listening ritualistically to help us release our own immature voices into the discourse."

But in the last paragraph of the letter, the author's tribute to Professor Harrod is distilled into a simple, declarative sentence in

the historical-present tense—a statement that conveys the influence of those educators who help change our relationships to the world. "Great teachers never retire to the degree that they live on in their students," wrote Professor Earl, and when we consider the influences of the late Liston Mills, to whom we dedicate this issue of *The Spire*, we can revise this statement by writing, "Great teachers never retire, or die, to the degree that they live on in their students."

I met Professor Mills 24 years ago when I asked him to lecture on the subject of religion in the South for a high school seminar I was teaching in modern southern literature. He invited the class to meet with him in Tillett Lounge on a Thursday afternoon in January. As we were sitting around the conference table and listening to him speak in his distinct eastern North Carolina drawl, one of the students interrupted and inquired in a tone suggestive of intellectual snobbery, "Professor Mills, don't you think religion is just a crutch for unenlightened southerners?"

His response to the unsolicited question— I later would learn from a Roman Catholic priest and one of Professor Mills' graduate students—was indicative of the pastoral way he responded to any student who sat before him. He was not offended by the interruption nor by the reference to unenlightened southerners. With his signature smile, he answered calmly, confidently, but not patronizingly, "A person, regardless of one's region, who makes religion a mere crutch will remain unenlightened." And then Professor Mills, by employing the Socratic method, engaged the student in a series of questions that guided everyone at the table from a generalization on southerners and their religious sensibility to universal observations about fallible humans and mystery. For a novice high school teacher, that winter afternoon in Tillett Lounge provided a memorable lesson in theology as well as in Socratic pedagogy and in patience. —VI



# Correspondence from the VDS Founder's Medalist of '48

Congratulations on the 2002 winter issue of *The Spire*. The layout, design, articles, and photographs combine to make the issue tastefully done. The content of the articles is substantial, stimulating, and worthy of the level of a graduate school of religion. I am speaking out of decades of reading the publications of Vanderbilt Divinity School.

I entered Vanderbilt Divinity School in the fall term, 1944. It was located in the old Wesley Hall where the parking garage is now. In succession I earned the B.D., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. I was on campus during the Lawson Affair, and Langdon Gilkey was my major professor. I was never so proud to be a Vanderbilt graduate.

I am favorably impressed with the current dean, Dr. James Hudnut-Beumler. My sense is that the Divinity School is entering a new period of quality education and takes seriously its responsibility to the Judeo-Christian theological tradition.

*Hubert William Morrow*, BD'48, MA'59, PhD'65 Russellville, Arkansas Professor of Theology and Academic Dean,

Memphis Theological Seminary

#### **Revisiting the Lawson Affair**

I read the captivating article on the Lawson Affair in the winter 2002 issue of *The Spire* and would like to read more. (Jim is a good friend out here in California.) Lou Silberman's part of the article is inspiring and moving, except that I guess I object to thinking of Vanderbilt as a "finishing school" when I was a student there. But never mind that; the Lawson affair was a major turning point for the Divinity School and for the University.

James A. Sanders, BA'48, Phi Beta Kappa; BD'51 Claremont, California

#### Recognition for an English Major

Thank you for sending the winter 2002 issue of *The Spire* which features the essay, "A Sanctuary Without Definitions: Alumnae Create a Place for the Spirit—Inside and Outside the Classroom" by Leigh Pittenger, who received her degree in English from Middle Tennessee State University. Leigh's success and dedication are tremendous virtues.

The Alumni Relations Office is always proud of the accomplishments of our alumni, and we appreciate hearing about their continued success.

Debbie Coppinger
Director of Alumni Relations
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

#### **Reflection on The Tentmaker**

"The Tentmaker: A Portrait of the Minister as Theologian" (Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 2002) is a good story, uncommonly well told. Kudos!

Pat Burton
Nashville, Tennessee

## CALENDAR OF VDS COMMUNITY EVENTS

Vanderbilt Divinity School Community Breakfast

"Depraved, Innocent, or Knowing? Evolutions in our Construction of Children"

Bonnie Miller-McLemore
Professor of Pastoral Theology and Counseling

Thursday, January 30, 2003 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

To make reservations for the Vanderbilt Divinity School community breakfasts at the University Club, please call 615/343-3994 or register on-line at divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/div/events/register.

# Relevant Religion Lecture Series at the Scarritt Bennett Center

"The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Church"

J. Patout Burns
The Edward A. Malloy Professor
of Catholic Studies

Monday evenings, January 27-February 3, 10, 17, 2003

"What do the Dead Sea Scrolls have to do with the Bible?"

Alice Hunt Associate Dean and Lecturer in Hebrew Bible

> Monday evenings, March 10, 17, 24, 31, 2003

Call 615/340-7543 to register or write to spiritus@scarrittbennett.org.

# Prophetic Diversity

A Vision for Heirs Through Hope



BY CHRISTOPHER K. SANDERS, MDIV'95 Director of Alumni/ae and Development

"Prophetic Diversity" might be just the phrase that evokes the meaning of Vanderbilt University Divinity School's commitments. It is unfortunate that the word "diversity" often carries associations of sensitivity training seminars that are part of the human resource strategy of many workplaces. To some critics, diversity is also a euphemism for quotas. Once again, the most

obvious connotation for diversity relates to employment. Prophetic diversity avoids these dead ends by locating diversity within a vision of life instead of locating diversity within a program or a particular sphere of life.

rophetic Diversity names the insight that the human family's amazing variety and all the complicated networks of life in creation are a foundational gift of God worthy of honor and destined for renewal. In that sense, this vision is truly prophetic because the prophet sees the reality that is, despite appearances and shadows, and sees the new reality that will be. Such a vision makes those persons who see it "heirs through hope," in the words of The Book of Common Prayer.

The vision is compelling, but the way to its realization will continue to be painful. If diversity in the workplace has been slow in coming, how much more difficult it will be to achieve prophetic diversity as a way of life! It is sobering to remember that any vision of diversity worth pursuing must also include an analysis of power that offers an understanding of the forces that hinder progress.

Vanderbilt University Divinity School has long been a place where faculty and students have gathered to do the work of prophets. Two recent books provide a helpful understanding of the School's engagement with prophetic visions and power. The first is A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflections on America from the Margins, edited by Professor Fernando Segovia and alumnus Eleazar Fernandez and embellished with an essay by Associate Professor Victor Anderson. The second is Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change, edited by Professor Dale Johnson and written by several professors emeriti, current faculty members, and alumni/ae. Evident in the pages of both volumes is a commitment to prophetic diversity accompanied by an analysis of social power.

The history of the Divinity School makes

one aware that the past continues to shape the School's identity but that the past alone cannot account for the vitality that perennially drives a progressive direction apparent in A Dream Unfinished.

The source of movement is clearly the annual coming together of over 300 students, members of the faculty, and staff who dedicate themselves to a dialogue about faith and certain progressive core commitments related to race, gender, sexual orientation, poverty,

Interesting to me is what the Divinity School's official statements do not include. One finds no position on the Holy Trinity, the person and work of Christ, the procession of the Holy Spirit, the nature and number of the sacraments, the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, the types of grace, the apostolic succession of bishops, and the authority of

Coming from a communion that reveres the credal doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation and that relies on the sacraments as vehicles of divine grace, I began my theological studies perplexed that Vanderbilt devotes so much energy to controversial social teachings. My confusion provided a way for me to learn two important lessons. First, not taking positions on the traditional loci of theology makes it possible for Vanderbilt to assemble a wide variety of scholars, ministers, and activists in order to explore the intelligibility of the entire doctrinal system, often through dialogue and sometimes through argument. Had the Divinity School taken an official position on the Trinity, I would have had an excuse either not to think through the reasoning behind my more traditional views or to dismiss other views

without a second thought. Both options amount to intellectual sloth, and I am thankful that my professors and fellow students spared me easy answers. The second lesson is the importance of the Divinity School's witness on social issues.

While my theological education at Vanderbilt renewed my faith in the classic doctrines of the Church, my studies also have forced me to confront the inescapable reality that religion has been one of the important forces in channeling oppressive power. Inherent in that realization is the hope that religion can also become one of the most potent forces in dismantling injustice in society. A universitybased divinity school is the ideal setting for exploring the connections between religion and social issues. A university's academic mission requires opening a dialogue for the mutual understanding among persons with different views. Sometimes a university's

mission also requires a leadership role of moral witness that involves taking a clear position and making efforts to persuade others to see that new vision. The Divinity School's ecumenical spirit embodies the first part of a university's mission. The statement of commitments is evidence of the second part.

Prophetic Diversity is not just an ideal for divinity school faculties and theological students. If diversity becomes a practice akin to an eleventh commandment, then it is no better than a sensitivity program at work. It must encompass all of life. Nevertheless, religious leadership plays an important role in propagating the vision. For 127 years, Vanderbilt Divinity School has been preparing progressive religious leaders of congregations, service agencies, and the academy. Your support makes it possible for the Schola Prophetarum, the School of Prophets, to minister, serve, and teach in pursuit of the renewal of cre-

## On the Cover

Prophetic Diversity by Kazya Arai Akimoto Japanese painter (born 1965) water color, graphite pencil, and water-resolve color pencil on paper The original drawing hangs in the Office of Alumni/ae and Development at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

In the drawing Prophetic Diversity, artist Kazya Arai Akimoto has interpreted Vanderbilt University Divinity School's commitments to theological education delineated on pages 9-11 of the current Bulletin. Flanked by a richly embroidered Bedouin veil, male and female ginkgo leaves, fish, and a sea shell, an arm draped by a tallith supports a fusion of interlocked hands to suggest the importance of religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue in the School's curriculum. On the viewer's left, a sailing vessel reveals the influence of 19th-century German romantic landscape painter Časpar David Friedrich upon Akimoto and represents the power of education to transport one beyond the realm of the familiar. Embedded in the bloodred roses on the viewer's right is the pink triangle worn by the homosexual prisoners in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Akimoto also employs this image as an allusion to Matthew Shepard—the 21-year-old gay student at the University of Wyoming in School's commitment to confronting the Douglas Knight.

heterosexism that prevails throughout organized religion and society.

Educated in Tokyo by Dominican nuns and priests, Akimoto studied archaeology and cultural anthropology at Kazya Arai Akimoto Keio University in



Japan before traveling to Bremen and Munich to study ethnology and folk art. He received formal instruction at the Académie de Port-Royal and the Académie de la Grande Chaumiére in Paris and at the Academia di Belli Arti in Perugia. His paintings have been exhibited in the museums of Munich, Paris, Tokyo, Milan, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Barcelona, New York, and his visual thesis on the threats to the environment was installed on the front lawn of the White

The editors of Arte Al Dia describe Akimoto as one who "visualizes the fluctuation of the inner and outer worlds through biomorphic pencil drawings which allow him to express the beauty of monochrome and line" and who "translates subjects from the abstract world into concrete, organic pictures."

Akimoto was graduated in 2001 from Radford University in Virginia where he studied philosophy and religion under Vanderbilt University alumni/ae Susan Kwilecki, MA'77, and Russell Inman Gregory, PhD'83. As a current student in the Graduate School's Department of Reli-Laramie, who was beaten and lashed to a gion, he is writing his master's thesis on the fence on October 16, 1998, and died five ecology of the Book of Jonah under the days later-to illustrate the Divinity direction of Professors Jack Sasson and

ation in all its marvelous variety.

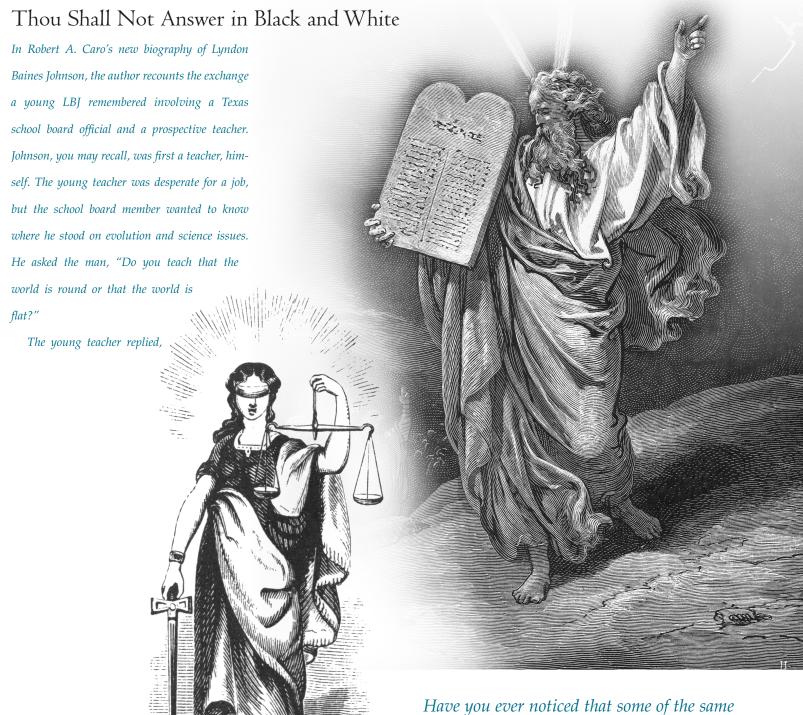
Dean James Hudnut-Beumler and the faculty of Vanderbilt University Divinity School welcome the following new members to our donor society, Schola Prophetarum:

David Adams and Carole Adams David Glasgow and Van Pond Jr. Frank Gulley Jr. and Anne Gulley William Hook and Theresa Hook

Victor Judge and Rick King Fr. Patrick Kibby, the Cathedral of the Incarnation Christopher K. Sanders Jane Tugurian

To learn more about joining Schola Prophetarum, please contact Christopher K. Sanders in the Development Office at 615/322-4205 or at christopher.sanders@vanderbilt.edu.

# From the Dean



Have you ever noticed that some of the same people who want to see the Ten Commandments posted in the courthouse are the first to seek vengeance through the death penalty?

"I can teach it round or flat."

y question for you who are graduates of Vanderbilt University Divinity School is this: Do you teach it, preach it, administer it, and care for it round or flat?

I hope your answer is "No."

At Vanderbilt Divinity School we taught you to search for truth and to seek to do justice. However much you want to please the people whom you serve in the ministries and careers that have grown from the education you received here, you will serve them better if you tell them what you believe to be the truth without trying to tailor your remarks to what the audience wishes to hear. Although we worked at teaching you how to learn and to think theologically, it's up to you to supply the necessary element of character so that you lead with integrity, but now I want to warn you and to charge you.

First, the warning—just like those blue book exams you took during your studies at Vanderbilt, most of the important questions you will face as a Divinity School graduate will not be answerable with a simple "Yes" or "No."

I recently have had this driven home to me again in the midst of our public debate over whether the Ten Commandments should be posted in public buildings all over the state and whether Tennessee county commissions should resolve to live by biblical principles. For those of you who reside outside of Tennessee, you may be interested to know that approximately 90 percent of our county governments have answered the Ten Commandments posting question in the affirmative.

Not surprisingly, people in the media want to know what religious leaders, including the dean of the Divinity School, think about this issue. Are you for 'em or against 'em? If you are for them, you are religious; if you are against posting them in public buildings, then you want to destroy America and deny the biblical and moral foundations on

which the country was established. People want a "Yes" or "No."

But here is the answer they do not want to hear:

It is because I take religion very seriously, indeed, that I do not want it appropriated by a bunch of self-interested politicians who are afraid of the hard-right Christians who vote on the Ten Commandments question and other issues like a litmus test. Ît is because I am a religious leader who came from a school like Vanderbilt Divinity School that I am suspicious of the motives of those who want to press the issue. I hate what it does to stir people up about whether this community is faith-friendly when living by the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus seems to be so little a priority in the advocates' lives. "Love your enemies" is forgotten in this climate. Have you ever noticed that some of the same people who want to see the Ten Commandments posted in the courthouse are the first to seek vengeance through the death penalty? Finally, it is because I love a country where I am free to believe as I choose and to practice as I am led that I am determined not to force my faith on anyone else lest someday one's faith be forced on me.

As dean, I am asked questions posed in black and white although they really are questions in the gray zone—questions you also encounter in your vocations. You've been to divinity school, so you're considered an expert, but try answering these questions:

- Is Islam a religion of peace? Is Christianity?
- Must clergy who cross sexual boundaries in their work always be removed from pastoral office?
- Does God sanction human cloning?

The world—even the ecclesiastical world which should know better—wants a "Yes" or "No" answer to such questions. When you give an "It depends" response, you will be called weak, lacking in conviction, short of



Dean James Hudnut-Beumler

nerve, and unfaithful.

I charge you to seek the truth, however complicated that truth may seem. And then I charge you further to address with integrity whatever questions, issues, and situations you face. At Vanderbilt Divinity School, we call ourselves a school of the prophets. I hope you have learned how prophets work; they see circumstances that others cannot or will not see, and then they tell what they see. By such prophetic visions, new realities emerge.

The Scriptures remind us that while foxes have their dens and birds of the air their nests, those who see as God may find themselves alienated and without a place to lay their heads. I cannot promise you riches, happiness, or the acclaim of the world, but I can point you to a broken and weary world, to a beautiful creation, and to the children of God, and I can remind you that with your traditions and with what you learned at Vanderbilt Divinity School you have the capacity to make a difference. Whatever you encounter, go in good faith, discern wisely, and act as though faith and discernment will make a difference.

# Around the ound the ADRANGLE

"There is a season for everything,

a time for every occupation under heaven..."

-Ecclesiastes 3:1







# A Time For Dancing

Vanderbilt University Divinity School students celebrated an evening of dinner, dancing, and diversity during the 2002 spring gala. Officers of the student government association selected the question, "Can't we all just dance together?" as the theme for the annual gathering of students and faculty. Guests were encouraged to wear attire representative of their cultural backgrounds.



Upper left: Pennsylvania met Kazakhstan when Scott Fritz, MDiv'02; Danna Ermekovna Balafanova, MA'02: Kurt Scheib, MTS'02, MA'02: and Saida Batyrkhanovna Agambayeva, MA'02, attended Gala 2002. The two students from the former constituent republic of the U.S.S.R. attended the University as Bolashak Scholars (the equivalent of Presidential Scholars) and earned graduate degrees in economics.

Above: Carpenter Scholar Melissa Peterson, MTS2, and Hyde Scholar Tricia Gardner, MDiv2, were among the students who enjoyed

Far left: With cap, toothpick, big hair, and a lemon meringue pie, Lee Mitchell, MDiv'02, and Katy Scrogin, MTS2, momentarily transformed the VDS refectory into a truck stop during the 2002 spring gala.

Left: Annette Grace Zimondi, known to her peers as "Annie Grace," donned attire from her native Zimbabwe for the spring gala. The Divinity School alumna from the class of 2002 currently is enrolled in the University's Graduate Department of Religion.

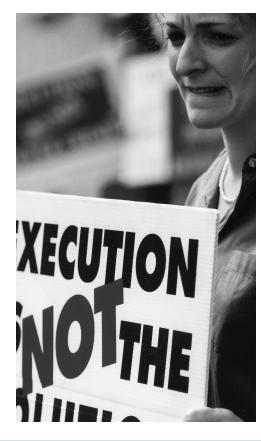
GALA 2002 PHOTOGRAPHS BY PEYTON HOGE

# A Time for Protesting

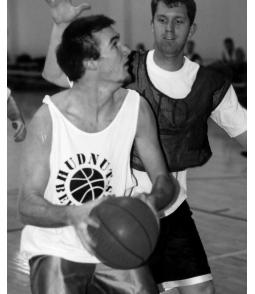
Right: Keri Ann Ehninger, MDiv3, looks pensively at motorists on 21st Avenue, South, where she and other Divinity School students joined members of the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing (TCASK) to protest the execution of inmate Abu-Ali Abdur Rahman. Formerly known as James Lee Jones, Abdur Rahman was sentenced to death in 1987 for slaying Patrick Daniels, a Nashville marijuana dealer. The United States Supreme Court issued a stay of execution on Monday, April 8, 2002, exactly 36 hours before his scheduled execution. Linda G. Manning, director of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center at Vanderbilt University, serves as spiritual advisor to Abdur Rahman.

Far Right: Sixteen-year-old Steven Clontz, a junior at Buckhorn High School in New Market, Alabama, and his 12-year-old brother, Phillip, (partially hidden by his sign) served as witnesses against the death penalty with their mother, Sherill Clontz, MDiv3, associate pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church in Huntsville.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PEYTON HOGE









## A Time for Recreation

Far Left: John Alford, MTS2, posts up a defender during a recent intramural basketball team.

Left: Scott Fritz, MDiv'02, the self-proclaimed athletic director for Vanderbilt University Divinity School, drives in for a lay-up during a game against players from the Law School. The Divinity School's intramural team named themselves "The Hudnut-Beumlers" after the VDS dean.







# A Time for Critical Inquiry

Above Left: To inaugurate a cross-cultural dialogue on global health care issues, Ugandan AIDS activist Noelina Namukisa traveled to Nashville for 10 days in April to discuss how grassroots intervention has helped to reduce the rate of HIV infection in her country from 30 percent to 8 percent. The founder of Meeting Point Kampala a non-governmental organization in the Namuwongo district of Kampala City, Uganda,— Namukisa is recognized as a leading authority on the anthropological implications of disease and specifically of HIV/AIDS. To counter the effects of illiteracy, the volunteers, social workers, and health care providers at Meeting Point teach about HIV in the contexts of music, dance, and drama. "We can demonstrate through drama how young girls who want to get rich at an early age acquire HIV; we can show what happens when women go to witchdoctors instead of testing centers, and we can teach what happens when those who are HIV+ are persuaded by Christian fundamentalists to stop taking medication and only pray."

Above Center: The Reverend Dr. Mona West signs a copy of the book she edited with Robert E. Goss, Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible, for Diana Pepper, MTS1, in Cokesbury Bookstore at VDS. Pastor of spiritual life at the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, the world's largest church for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered congregants, West presented "Outsiders, Aliens, and Boundary Crossers: A Queer Reading of the Hebrew Exodus" during a lecture and discussion sponsored by the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality, GABLE, and the Vanderbilt Office of GLBT Student Life. The occasion marked the second time West had visited the Divinity School; in 1995 she attended the inauguration of the Carpenter Program. West, who earned her doctorate in Hebrew Bible from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has taught at Austin College and at Anderson College where she was a professor of current VDS student, Tricia Gardner, MDiv2.



Above Right: Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and historian David Halberstam delivered "The Media and Professional Expert" during March in Flynn Auditorium at the Law School. In his lecture, sponsored by the Cal Turner Program in Moral Leadership for the Professions, Halberstam stressed that the desire for making a profit in the media industry has resulted in "trivial journalism," citing as an example Disney's decision to discontinue the broadcasting of Nightline after two more years.

Author of The Children, which documents the lives of eight civil rights activists he met in 1960 as a reporter for The Nashville Tennessean, Halberstam also emphasized that "diversity is a form of political protection against the tyranny of a zealous majority." While illustrating his argument, he alluded to one of the pivotal events in the history of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, the Lawson Affair, when a local newspaper publisher launched "a personal jihad based on outdated feudalism against the University."

*Left: The influences of scientific advancements* in genetics upon the moral and ethical landscape were examined by theologian Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite in the 29th annual Antoinette Brown Lecture at the Divinity School. In her presentation titled "Adam, Eve, and the Genome: Feminist Theology Looks at the Human Genome Project," Thistlethwaite explored the relationship between feminist theology and genetic determinism and argued for the protection of vulnerable populations from abuses that could result from the capacity to code each person's genetic material. The president of Chicago Theological Seminary and professor of theology and culture, Thistlethwaite based her lecture upon a course she taught with Lainie Ross, associate professor of pediatrics and medical ethics at the University of Chicago and with Vanderbilt University alumna, Laurel Schneider, PhD'97, associate professor of theology, ethics, and culture at Chicago Theological Seminary.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CRENSHAW

# A Time for Appointments and Retirement



Nicholas S. Zeppos, J.D., Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and

James Hudnut-Beumler, Ph.D., Dean of the Divinity School, announce the appointment of Dale S. Johnson, Doctor of Theology, as the Drucilla Moore Buffington Professor of Church History at Vanderbilt University



Upper Left: After ten years as administrative assistant in the deans' offices, Alice Kinnard retired from the Divinity School in June and moved to McMinnville, Tennessee, for her retirement years. Students and alumni/ae will remember her as the publisher of the School's weekly newsletter, The Communicator.

Upper Right: The 2002-2003 academic year marks not only the tenth anniversary of Kaye Murphey's role as assistant to the dean at the Divinity School but also her recent appointment as budget and financial aid officer for VDS. She will be responsible for managing the School's financial transactions and for applying to students' accounts the scholarships awarded by the financial aid committee.

Lower Left: Pat Daniel has assumed the responsibilities of activities coordinator for the Divinity School's Office of Alumni/ae and Development. She previously served as an office manager for Vanderbilt University's Medical Center.

Lower Right: Sherry Willis, who served for six years as activities coordinator at the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities and for eight years as administrative assistant in the Law School's legal clinic, has been appointed administrative assistant to Dean James Hudnut-Beumler and Associate Dean Alice Hunt.

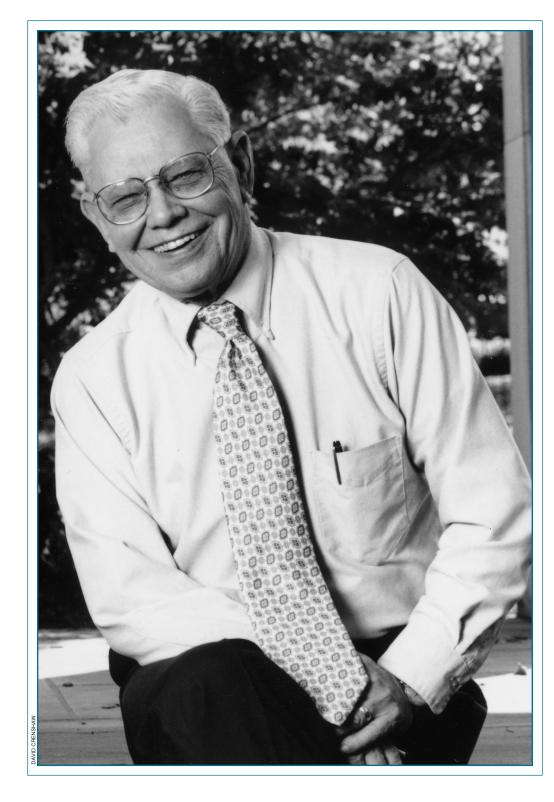
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CRENSHAW











The editorial staff dedicates this issue of

The Spire

TO THE MEMORY OF

Liston Oury Mills

OBERLIN ALUMNI PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND COUNSELING, EMERITUS

(August 7, 1928 — April 30, 2002)

## Bridge Over the Ravine: The Legacy of Liston Mills

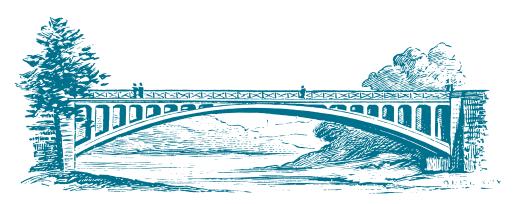
BY H. JACKSON FORSTMAN, The Charles G. Finney Professor of Theology and Dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, emeritus

In my unbiased judgment, Liston Mills, our Divinity School colleague, friend, and counselor, bridged the gaping ravine between human psychology as counseling and Christian faith better and more substantively than anyone else in his generation. Those of you who have not lived and worked within the historically received and contentious division in schools that want to prepare women and men for Christian ministry may not have grasped the weight of this statement.

hat Liston's generation and mine inherited in theological education was a curricular split. The one side was called "academic theology," the other "practical theology." Both terms are prejudicial. If one part of the faculty understands itself to be engaged in "academic theology," the implication is that the other part is non-academic. On the other side, if the other part understands itself to be engaged in "practical theology," the implication is that the one part is impractical. It is a massive misfortune for the churches that these biases infiltrate the consciousness of students and affect to no good the internal dynamics of faculties.

Liston, in his thinking, in his teaching, and in his presence in the Vanderbilt Divinity School faculty, obliterated that distinction. He mastered both the psychological theories and the practices of counseling, but he sought always to show how his substantive struggle to understand Christian faith and its implications for human persons, the church, and the world grounded and gave a critical perspective on those theories and practices.

Consequently, Liston was not a minor player in the astonishingly collegial effort of our faculty to devise a curriculum and a way



of life in our teaching and research that showed promise and, at Vanderbilt, no little fulfillment of overcoming the malaise of theological education that I have described. For some years that achievement of the Vanderbilt Divinity School faculty was, so to speak, the talk of the town in theological schools in the United States and Canada.

Again, from my unbiased perspective, the Ph.D. program in Religion and Personality, of which Liston was the architect, is utterly distinctive. This program embodied Liston's comprehensive view. His heritage with its integrative commitments is today alive in graduates of his Ph.D. program in theological schools and other institutions throughout the country.

Liston was a colleague in the Vanderbilt Divinity School for 36 years. What can I say but that all of us thought of him as our good fortune, our esteemed colleague, and our friend. But he was also an esteemed colleague in the University as a whole. Over the years he established more substantive contacts with other colleagues in the University, I think, than virtually any other professor in our School. Liston's public accomplishments and his University citizenship brought him several of the most distinguished named awards that are given to Vanderbilt professors. His election as chair of the Faculty Senate of the University is testimony to his valued colleagueship by professors throughout the

Beyond that, Liston established close contacts with the finest persons working in human care, especially in Nashville, but also across the country, and one of his crowning achievements was his instrumental role in the founding of the Pastoral Care Centers of Middle Tennessee. Liston's circle of colleagues was astonishingly broad.

I believe it is correct also to say that in a deep and intimate sense "colleague" is an appropriate term for Liston's relationship with the church school class he directed for so many years at the Immanuel Baptist Church. Members of that group have the stamp of Liston on their souls, and they are grateful.

I am bold to speak for all of Liston's colleagues. As best we can, we have grieved, and we continue to grieve with his wife, Jennie, and their daughter, Sarah. At the same time, with deepest gratitude we celebrate his life. Our lives have been enriched by Liston's work with us, by his remarkable humanity, by his enduring friendship, by the astonishing way he struggled with the power of death and for so long looked death in the eye, and more ... much more.

(Dean Forstman delivered this eulogy on the occasion of Professor Mills' funeral conducted on Saturday, May 4, 2002, at Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.)

## A Neighborly Wink

#### BY HELENE HARMON

I stood peering out the kitchen window that faced the river-stone driveway of the house next to ours. Our new neighbors, an attractive young couple, were surveying their home. Rumors describing new owners always precede their arrival; the neighborhood buzz reported he was a Baptist minister connected with Vanderbilt Divinity School and that she was a librarian at Hillsboro High School. My initial opinionated reaction was, "How lucky can we be?"



ur house contained seven children. five of whom were teenagers. Life never was sedate with souped-up cars rolling in and out of the driveway night and day, loud rock music blasting in every room, basketball games at all hours, or the younger children taking shortcuts by dashing across the neighbors' yards. Goody-goody religious neighbors, no doubt, would confuse and frustrate the lives in my household.

How mistook I was in my perception.

Forty years have passed since Liston, Jennie, and Sarah joined our gang. Together, we have survived births, graduations, weddings, visits from relatives, arrivals of new puppies and kittens, moving to new homes, and yes, deaths. Liston's passing spread a pall over my family because we assumed he was invincible. His sense of humor, laughter, and quips always turned a daily crisis into "no big deal." His ability to listen with inter-

est, even to young children, had the effect of compelling a person to rise to the occasion, meet a challenge, and gain an unimaginable level of confidence. My son-in-law once observed, "Having a conversation with Liston becomes an opportunity to learn about yourself." Yes, one could always learn from

I cannot remember hearing Liston speak uncharitably about anyone. Whenever a conversation showed any sign of becoming mean-spirited in tone, Liston would exchange a witty remark, and with his infectious laughter, he discouraged anyone from making comments one might

Although he and I never had intense theological discussions, Liston provided pastoral care during a critical moment in my life. As I entered the vestibule for the funeral procession of my husband, I hesitated, uncertain of my ability to remain a composed widow. And then I saw Liston, sitting on the back pew. With the wink of an eye and the wave of his hand, Liston's gestures delivered a message, loud and clear: "Be dignified; set an example for the mourners, or this situation will deteriorate into Pandemonium." That was the message I needed.

I imagine Liston grinning as he makes his way through the pearly gates. My husband, with Marlboro cigarette in one hand and Liston's pipe in the other, beckons him from

"Where have you been?" he'll ask Liston as they sit down together.

Then the old friends will resume their favorite pastime-talking and solving the world's problems—as they did after cutting the grass on Saturday mornings.

Helene Harmon of Nashville, Tennessee, is a member of Retirement Learning at Vanderbilt University, a continuing education program sponsored by the Office of Community, Neighborhood, and Government Relations in the University's Division of Public Affairs. Her tribute to Professor Mills is based upon an assignment she composed for the seminar in autobiography offered during the fall semester of the 2000-2001 academic year.

## A Double Share of Spirit

BY STATE SENATOR ROY BRASFIELD HERRON, MDIV'80, JD'80

My first year of theological studies was in Scotland; then I entered the joint divinity-law program at Vanderbilt University. During my first year of law school, my father developed congestive heart failure; consequently, I was unsure whether I would continue attending the University. But a kind family in Belle Meade offered this struggling student a room in the home of their recently widowed father, an 84-year-old attorney. This was quite a change from a roach-infested fire hazard off Music Row to "The Boulevard," but I managed

n the first Sunday after moving into my new living quarters, I walked with my live-in landlord a few hundred feet up Belle Meade Boulevard to Immanuel Baptist Church. There to my surprise I found a Sunday School class taught by none other than the Reverend Dr. Liston Mills.

And teach the class Liston did.

He drew us into the discussion by guestioning us, provoking us, and inviting us to consider the Scriptures and their implications for our lives. Here was Liston at his pastoral and professorial best. I became an admirer of Liston Mills as a Sunday School teacher before I took my first class with him at the Divinity School.

A perception held by some of the Divinity School students in the late seventies was that some faculty members seemed more focused on the doctoral students than those of us pursuing the master of divinity degree. Liston, however, seemed focused upon whoever was in his presence. He defied the stereotype of the cold, detached, distant academician. Liston was warm, serene but passionate, approachable, and compassionate. He made all of us feel important.

As the Southern Baptist on the Divinity School faculty, Liston may have been the most greatly out-numbered of any of the many minority groups that make the Divinity School special. But if the adage, "One person with courage makes a majority," is true, then Liston had us all out-numbered. He never feared, or at least never showed his fears, when it came time for him to tell the truth as he interpreted the truth.

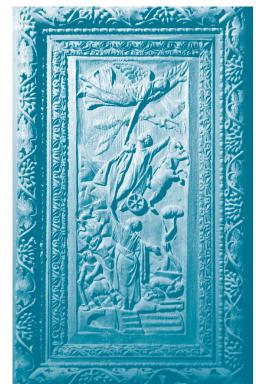
In his pastoral care and counseling classes, Liston taught us how to listen. More than that, he taught what to listen for and how to respond to what we heard. Liston Mills did not merely teach pastoral care. In class and out, he exemplified, demonstrated, and lived what he taught.

Liston Mills was a man of God. I hesitate to use the phrase "man of God" because some readers may think the language sexist and outdated. I thankfully recognize that there are many "women of God," but I use the expression because the more inclusive "child of God" does not seem quite right since Liston was a mature Christian and an example to those of us who were young in our faith. Liston was a man of God with the strength of character and wisdom that come with the maturity few achieve. If "man of God" seems antiquated, perhaps one reason is because today so few deserve that description. Liston Mills not only qualified for the description. He defined and personified the term for many of us looking for role models, teachers, pastors, and witnesses to the faith.

One Sunday during my first year at Vanderbilt, I missed Liston's Sunday School class. Earlier that morning a caller from home told me the congestive heart failure had finally claimed my father. Two days later, a pastor no taller than Liston but who also was compassionate and knew Scripture, reminded us of the story from the second chapter of Second Kings. He re-told the story of the prophets Elijah and Elisha.

The older Elijah knew that he was at the end of his time on earth and repeatedly tried to get Elisha to leave him. But each time, Elisha replied, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." Finally, after they had crossed the Iordan River and just before Elijah was taken up into heaven, he said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." To which Elisha replied, "I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

As we remember Liston, that should be



Elijah carried to heaven relief detail from the wooden doors Santa Sabina, Rome

our prayer. We should pray, as Elisha did, for a double portion of Liston's spirit. For what a spirit it was! And it is up to those of us touched by Liston's work and life to carry them forward.

The ministry and teaching of Liston Mills, his life and his love, will continue as long as we minister and teach—as long as we live and love—and as long as other children of God with whom we minister conduct their ministry and carry on that love in turn.

May that be forever.

Amen.

A Democrat representing the 24th congressional district, Senator Herron of Dresden, Tennessee, was one of the first two alumni/ae to earn a dual degree in divinity and law at Vanderbilt University. He is a partner in the legal firm of Neese, Herron & Miller-Herron and is the author of Things Held Dear: Soul Stories for My Sons, published in by Westminster John Knox Press. and Tennessee Political Humor, coauthored with L.H. "Cotton" Ivy and published by the University of Tennessee Press. During the fall semester 2002, the senator is co-teaching a course at Vanderbilt Law School with Professor Don Hall in legislative drafting.



# Pastoral Laughter

BY MARY KATHERINE (KAKI) FRISKICS-WARREN, MDIV'92

Laughing at a student is poor form for a professor of pastoral care.

But Liston Mills laughed for me. He started with a smile, modulated to his Grinch-like grin, and had to sit down because his raucous

guffaw was creating a disturbance in the hospital hallway.

Thad decided to complete a unit of clinical pastoral education during the summer after my second year in the master of divinity program. The Veterans Administration Hospital was the convenient local site, and Liston was the small-group facilitator. Plaguing my semester were case themes that revolved around my not being taken seriously: patients flirted with me; nurses seemed too busy to think about spiritual issues; my case studies never seemed theologically profound. Liston was uninspired by my struggle; he merely assured me that my gifts were sufficient to my calling.

During this period of my academic career, I was determined to reinvent the 22year-old longhaired Texan girl with the twang in her voice; on the day of laughter, however, I would be transformed. I pulled my hair back into a tight bun, retrieved from the back of my closet a brown suit with a straight skirt, and forced my feet into pumps-with heels. I looked seriously ministerial. As fate would have it, I clip-clopped down the hall of the VA Hospital at the exact moment Liston was stepping out of the chaplain's office. He took one look at me and lost his composure. His amusement, at my expense, was hardly fleeting; no sooner than he would collect himself, he burst into laughter again. Finally, when he could look at me without cracking up, he suggested we

unpack the "case."

Twenty years later, this theme continues to replay itself, in various forms, as Liston knew it would. Making a difference in the world requires us to use our gifts as given and in the time when they are unveiled. Being who we are is the best we can offer. Liston's laughter was saying, "Avoid taking yourself too seriously—keep your sense of humor—this is the only way you can remain in ministry for the long haul."

I was not a student member of Liston's inner circle; I was not someone he was

grooming for a career in pastoral theology, yet Liston was attuned to my needs. When I was overmatched by my work on death row, Liston asked the questions that helped me determine what was happening and sidestep the pitfalls of one who was starting out in ministry. When I decided to marry Bill Friskics, Liston listened to me and offered insight. "You know," he said, "you marry a family, not an individual." He was right, and I've been blessed. When I decided to expand my congregational calling to include ministries of social justice, this traditional Southern Baptist man confirmed my call and commissioned me for ministry I could conduct while wearing my hair down.

Over time I learned to read Liston's face. That smile was his way of saying, "You've got it; now go do something with it." That grin meant he found pleasure in watching you resolve issues, that he knew you'd "get there." That laugh meant, "Give it a break; you're making this much harder than it has to be."

Smiles, grins, and laughter—these were the teaching tools—and yes, the pastoral care I needed during my time at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Liston alone gave me a belly laugh. He showed me his teeth, and I learned to smile.

Reverend Warren is the executive director for Renewal House Residential Resources, a recovery community in Nashville for mothers recovering from addiction and for their children. She earned her baccalaureate from Texas Christian University before matriculating at Vanderbilt Divinity School where she serves as an adjunct lecturer in church and ministries.

## Compassionate Realism

BY S. BRUCE VAUGHN, PHD'91

I write this tribute with a sense of impropriety, for the Liston Mills I knew was rarely comfortable receiving praise, much less the verbal demonstrations of affection to which I am prone. (However, I also know he would appreciate my satisfaction at having the last word.) This discomfort seems congruent with Liston's hard-nosed realism, an attribute that permeated his work as a pastoral theologian, teacher, and mentor. Unlike many who consider themselves realists, Liston did not use realism in the service of cynicism, apathy, or callousness. Rather, he administered his pragmatism with care and concern. He often came across in class, as well as in private conversation, as a confrontational curmudgeon with a pastor's heart. This disposition is reflected in two of my favorite classroom recollections.

n one occasion students were debating the importance of motivation in human behavior, and the students who believed that a questionable motive could obviate a kind act were gaining the upper hand. Liston listened thoughtfully for some time and then interrupted: "Now, you all will come to understand that there is precious little good in this world and that you must sing the doxology whenever it appears, regardless of the motive."

In another session the class was discussing whether and how persons change. Liston bluntly remarked, "Human beings are fundamentally recalcitrant. They don't change until they're miserable."

I also recall being the personal recipient of Liston's compassionate realism. During my first semester of graduate work I was becoming disenchanted and confused and was considering leaving the program. I sought Liston's counsel one afternoon in his office. He listened attentively and patiently while I recounted a number of frustrating experiences and wondered aloud whether or not I belonged in the religion and personality doctoral program. He carefully responded to each of my concerns, for the most part reassuringly. Then he looked me straight in the eyes, drew a puff on his pipe, squinted as he gazed at me through the blue smoke, and concluded: "Mr. Vaughn, you are a gifted young man. If you weren't, you wouldn't be here. But you have to understand that one condition we expect of persons in this program is that they grow up. We don't hold students' hands as they do in some of the other programs around the country. Now, what you must do is decide what you want in life, and whether what we are doing here serves that agenda."

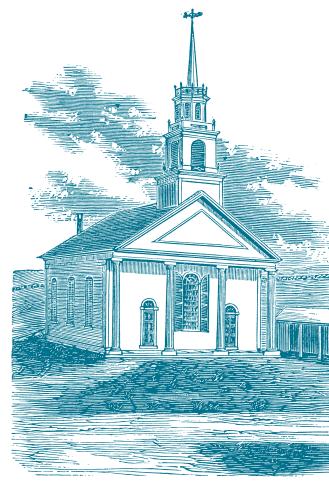
You might think as you read these words that I must have felt insulted, demeaned, or shamed. I had none of those feelings, for the respect and regard with which Liston held me had been obvious during the entire meeting and was evident in his demeanor, even as he stated those challenging words. So, instead of leaving his office dismayed, I departed with a clearer sense of purpose and a determination to give my best effort to completing my studies at Vanderbilt.

That conversation remains to this day one of the finest lessons in pastoral care I have ever received. Today I attempt to embody this same sense of compassionate realism in my own work as a pastoral counselor, as well as on those occasions when I am called upon to supervise or teach.

When I attended Liston's 65th birthday celebration, I told him of my appreciation for him and remarked that as long as I lived I knew he

would be part of me. This was one of those verbal displays of affection that Liston must have found a bit too sentimental for his taste, for he demurred rather embarrassingly. But I meant what I said. I still do. I am proud to say he was my teacher.

Vaughn earned the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, the alma mater of Professor Mills. Upon fulfilling the requirements for his doctorate in Vanderbilt University's Graduate Department of Religion, Vaughn began his practice as a counselor and currently serves on the staff at The Turning Leaf Pastoral Counseling Services in Brentwood, Tennessee.





ESSAY BY WILL CONNELLY, MTS2

photographs by Adam Collin Sayler, MDiv'02

It's ten minutes after ten on a fall Friday morning in the Vanderbilt Divinity School Common Room. After a week of attending lectures, participating in discussion groups, and conducting research, Divinity School students convene with the faculty and administration at this time each week to announce upcoming community events, to converse with colleagues, and most importantly, it seems, to partake of bagels, doughnuts, coffee, and tea.

The goal of this gathering is to foster and develop a sense of community among students and faculty within the Divinity School by bringing them together at a common time. Once bodies are fed, minds are primed to plan and discuss activities that should become physical manifestations of the ideas presented in the classroom. Through these activities, students and faculty have opportunities to answer the question, "So what?," a question that prompts and reminds us that theories—no matter how complex, impressive, and intriguing—are as useless as lead life preservers if left in the mind and not applied in the real world.

It's fifteen minutes after ten, and the Common Room is now bustling with people. On one of the larger tables, containers of cream cheese and boxes of doughnuts surround a mountain of bagels. I pour a cup of coffee, grab a bagel, and locate an empty chair. Instead of chatting, I focus on my food. By following such a strategy, I feel justified in not engaging in conversation. Other people appear to have adopted the same practice. Then it hits me. This is all about my food! Do I really care about the "community?" Do I want to ponder the questions "So what?" or "How do I apply my studies?" The question is, rather, "Is this the fat-free cream cheese or regular?"

"See how small they are," he observes. "They're like crumbs, but that's all it takes to feed a lot of people."

It's twenty-five minutes after ten and time for announcements. A student reports on plans for a spring gala. Others voice prayer concerns; student leaders announce meeting times and venues for their respective organizations; and others inform the assembly when and where they are preaching and ministering this Sunday.

I am honestly not interested. I have been sleeping, eating, attending classes, studying, and writing, for the past two months and have nothing to show for it save a few less than stellar marks on my academic record. I want to do something, and I need to do something before I become apathetic and gain ten pounds. Many of my colleagues

explain that classroom theory meets action when they provide pastoral care for members in their churches or faith-based organizations. I continue to wonder about what it means "to minister" and when, or if, I will find a ministry.

My bagel and coffee compete with these rather rudimentary questions until a tall man, holding two jars of seeds, stands in front of the group. Someone obviously didn't tell him that food was provided at this function. He proceeds to tell everyone in the

room that he lives on a farm, and he wants to start a hunger-relief program called "Just Crumbs" that makes

high-quality organic foods available to those who struggle with hunger. He adds that it only takes tiny seeds, small amounts of land, and a few volunteers to produce large quantities of food. He finishes his brief announcement by saying that farming is spiritual labor and those interested should meet with him when the announcements conclude. I set my food on the table. That's it! It is all about food!

It's forty minutes past ten, and my life is about to change. When announcements end, I walk over to the tall man and introduce myself. I discover the man's name is Freddie Haddox. He immediately embraces me with a handshake and a smile and proceeds to pour about ten seeds into my hand.

"See how small they are," he observes.

"They're like crumbs, but that's all it takes to feed a lot of people."

I rotate the seeds in my hand. They are light, fragile, but immeasurably powerful. Finally, I have something real, something physical to work with that actually has the potential to give and sustain life.

Freddie puts the seeds back into the jar and tells me that planting begins in the spring after the first frost. I am now a novice farmer; perhaps farming will become my ministry and the hungry will be those to whom I can minister.

The setting for the Just Crumbs hunger-relief initiative is Freddie's farm in Franklin, Tennessee, land tilled in the 19th century by his ancestors who were slaves of a landowner named Winstead. When Winstead died, he bequeathed in a handwritten will the entire farm to his slaves instead of his own family. This inheritance gives Freddie inspiration daily, as he claims, "Even then, during slavery, there were good people with good hearts." The slave owner's gesture also motivates Freddie to retain the natural beauty of the land despite weekly offers from land developers who claim that Freddie is "hindering progress."

In response to this allegation, Freddie wants to show people his idea of progress. Progress is designating a portion of his farm for an organic method of cultivation called "nature farming" as a model for feeding people who struggle with hunger. Ideally, Freddie and those involved want to streamline this method of farming so that other people, people who have smaller plots of land, can replicate it easily and become ministers. The process of nature farming allows this replication to occur in backyards and other smaller plots of land across the globe. By focusing on the nutrition of the soil instead of external fertilizers, pesticides, and other unnatural growth stimulators, nature farming allows farmers to narrow space between plants. The result is the maximization of growth and yield in a minimal area of land; consequently, a rather small area of land (25 x 25 square feet) can produce large amounts of produce.

Nature farming is the method of agriculture advocated by Mokichi Okada (1882-1955), an accomplished Japanese entrepreneur, painter, calligrapher, and poet, who became spiritual leader of the followers of Johrei (pronounced "joe-ray"). Okada taught that by practicing Johrei, the word he used to

describe God's healing light, one can cleanse the body of impurities and purify the soul to achieve a state of health that allows one to live fully in accord with God's will.

As a deterrent to adding impurities to food, Okada encouraged people to grow vegetables using only the natural components of soil and water and to refrain from adding chemicals, manure, or compost. Vegetables and grains produced in nature farming fields are denser, have longer roots, and are

Right: As soon as this young kid is weaned, the milk from Haddox's goats will be used for making cheese. The dairy product will be donated as part of the Just Crumbs hunger-relief project organized by Haddox.





Above: Divinity School students Will Connelly and Freddie Haddox survey the land that will be transformed into plots for nature farming, an agricultural method that uses only natural components of soil and water and avoids the use of chemicals. The farmland in Franklin, Tennessee, was inherited by Haddox's ancestors during Reconstruction.



stronger against blight and high winds. To comply with the strict practices of nature farming, Freddie irrigates the plot of land with mineral water he draws from a well. He transplants wild blackberry shrubs from the hillsides in the virginal soil. Milk from his goats will be made into cheese.

The harvest from the Just Crumbs initiative will be distributed through the Society of Saint Andrew, an ecumenical Christian ministry established in 1979 by United Methodist pastors. Dedicated to the principles of good stewardship, the Society of Saint Andrew collects produce that would otherwise go to waste and delivers the food to the hungry.

The first frost has passed and progress is evident. Generous volunteers have planted seeds, built fences, constructed a new entrance to the farm, and even bottle-fed baby goats. Others who have not visited the farm have also contributed to the effort. Fang Guo, MTS2, donated money to buy three cherry trees; a jar of pennies collected by MarLu Scott, MDiv3, provided the funds for purchasing a plum tree; and P.K. Bramlett, an attorney in Nashville, is doing pro bono legal work for the organization. Every single contribution and effort is a solid step in the direction of progress.

If you are interested in becoming part of the Just Crumbs initiative, please e-mail Will Connelly at *william.h.connelly@vanderbilt.edu*, or call Freddie Haddox at 615/485-3665.

The essayist, Connelly, was graduated in 2001 from the University of Rochester where he studied religion and classics. Photographer and Divinity School alumnus Sayler is studying for the doctorate of philosophy in the sociology of religion at Marquette University.



Above: Haddox prepares the soil for transplanting wild blackberry shrubs. The fruit will become part of the Just Crumbs harvest distributed to the hunoru.



Above: Connelly weeds a tract of Haddox's farm before planting fruit trees purchased with donations from Divinity School students Fang Guo and Marl.u Scott.

# How the Poor Evangelize Us

### Reflections on an Urban Immersion

BY KURT GILBERT SCHREIBER, MTS2

Immersion trips are designed as intense opportunities to gain firsthand knowledge of different societies and cultures. The Church in the City Immersion, a course offered at Vanderbilt University Divinity School during Maymester 2002, was an experiment to explore expressions of church in an urban setting, but in contrast to typical immersions in foreign locations, the urban setting was Nashville.



he first task was to open our eyes to the city. We began with a "sensory journaling" exercise in which the 13 students were divided into four groups that were sent out to explore different quadrants of the city. We were to note the conditions in detail. The premise was that most people, in moving from point A to point B, truly fail to notice the conditions and the people between these points. Our job was to see and to hear.

Three of us drove over to south Nashville and then began walking down the streets while observing sites that I had overlooked during the six years I have lived in the city. We ate at a burrito stand and found ourselves sharing a table with a man who sleeps on the steps of a church. He manifested grace, faith in God, and appreciation for others in his community. I began to realize that in my determination to get from point A to point B, I had overlooked many of those who do not fit neatly into the domains of my professional life and charitable giving. I remembered Jesus' description of those who heard his parables: "For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn ..." (MT 13:14, 15)

As the two weeks of the immersion course progressed, it became clear that this was indeed an opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of different societies and cultures. Our schedule was full—meetings with government officials, ministers, church members, social workers, teachers, and a statistician—lunches with the homeless; a meeting with former prostitutes in a sanctuary program; and a conversation with refugees. From all these experiences, the highlight, for me, was

"I began to realize that in my determination to get from point A to point B, I had overlooked many of those who do not fit neatly into the domains of my professional life and charitable giving."

discovering how intervention programs in Nashville treat participants truly as "the image and likeness of God."

In an educational program, Project Reflect, teachers emphasize the inner purity of children who are from economically deprived backgrounds and who are failing academically. Instructors are taught to focus only on the positive and the good; they are to ignore what is "incorrect" and reteach, thereby giving the children skills to become architects of their lives so they can carry out God's creation in them.

Former prostitutes in Magdalene, a recovery program are also treated with respect. They are given the responsibility of living without supervision in group homes. They are able to talk frankly about their past addictions and behaviors because they understand that they are now free to progress. In the program's five years, only one woman has returned to a life of crime. It appears to me that these ministries "mark the perfect, and behold the upright;" and the end does, indeed, appear to be "peace." (PS 37:37)

A refugee father, his 16-year-old daughter, and his niece had moved beyond the trauma of their past. In 1988, he had preserved his family in the face of warfare by uprooting them, carrying his three children, and helping his pregnant wife over snow-covered mountains in northern Iraq. After three years in a refugee camp, they arrived in Nashville with their only possessions—their clothing—in

two plastic sacks. They were greeted and assisted by a local congregation. Since then the father has worked steadily, and the children have progressed in school; today, they would return to their former home "only to visit."

As I reflect on these experiences, the words of one of the former prostitutes come to mind. She said that reformation came when she finally realized that there were many wanting to help, with hands extended to her, but that she needed to reach out and grasp one of those hands if she were to change her life. Like one of Jesus' parables, this image has implications I did not expect. The immersion certainly showed me new ways in which to reach out to offer aid to others in need. But just as important, it opened my eyes to ways in which the poor and marginalized are reaching out to me. They are reaching out, not only for aid and justice, but also as sources of lessons that I need—lessons in humanity, faith, and fellowship—if only I will look, reach out, and grasp their hands. As the director of a program for the homeless told us, "We must also focus on receiving from the poor, because the poor evangelize us."

The essayist was graduated from Cornell University where he earned a baccalaureate in economics; he earned the doctorate of jurisprudence from the University of Michigan Law School and holds a certificate in international law from the City of London College. He is an active member of the Christian Scientist faith community.



# Pursuing a Crown of Perfection

A Journey from Atlantic City to Vanderbilt University Divinity School

BY SHELLI RENEE YODER, MDIV'02, CERTIFICATE FROM THE CARPENTER PROGRAM IN RELIGION, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY, AND DOLLAR GENERAL SCHOLAR

# Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

-MATTHEW 5:48 NRSV

A decade has passed since Shelli Renee Yoder sang "This is the Moment" from Jekyll and Hyde during the talent competition in the 1993 Miss America Pageant. This year marks the ten-year reunion of her pageant experience, but Yoder elected not to attend the celebrations commemorating her journey from Shipshewana, Indiana, to Atlantic City, New Jersey. Instead of reuniting with the nine final finalists on the runway, she decided to remain in Nashville and compose an essay on the violence of pageantry.

Before enrolling at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Yoder was educated at Purdue University where she earned a baccalaureate in interpersonal and public communication and at Indiana University where she was graduated with a master's degree in counseling and human services. She attends Brookmeade Congregational Church and is currently preparing for ordination in the United Church of Christ.

always am uncertain how to respond when someone who discovers I competed in pageants offers, "Really? You don't seem the type." Usually I enjoy engaging the other person, and together we discover our own stereotypes and ambiguous pasts. But there are those days when I am in no mood to discuss the subject, and I retort, "Well, I guess I am the type."

Unless I am willing to ridicule my own experience, I usually refrain from disclosing my pageant past. I keep the lessons learned from those experiences locked away in the dark along with my Miss Indiana crown. Occasionally, and with people I trust, I bring out the crown, brush off the dust and hold the crown and the experience up to the light for closer examinations. Talking openly about the good, the bad, and the in-between, is like reuniting with an old friend. My pageant past is multilayered and peculiar—complete with big hair and oddly enough, a significant amount of gratitude.

I stumbled into pageantry at the close of my senior year of high school when I participated in a small Youth for Christ choir called Skywatch. We were asked to sing during the Miss Northeast Pageant, a preliminary pageant to the Miss Indiana title. As contestants changed from swimsuits into evening gowns, we sang songs about Jesus and the glory of God and how we all need the Lord and the grandeur of heaven's streets of gold. Such peculiarity did not register with me immediately.

Following the pageant, one of the judges approached me and suggested I enter a local pageant. She offered the name and telephone number of the person to contact. I called the director of the pageant, and two weeks later I participated in and won the Miss Limberlost title which qualified me to compete in the Miss Indiana pageant. Over the next seven years, I competed for the crown of Miss Indiana three times. The first trip resulted in my finishing 26th in the top 26 places. During the second time around, I finished in second place. Finally in 1992, I won the crown of Miss Indiana and competed in the Miss America pageant.

#### Long, Long; Short, Short

The days leading up to my departure to Atlantic City are among my most cherished memories. In my home town of Shipshewana, Indiana, the 500 citizens, predominately Amish and Mennonite, exercised no restraint in celebrating my being crowned Miss Indiana. Welcome home parades, community gatherings, exquisitely handcrafted gifts, horse and buggy rides, endless telephone phone calls, mountains of homemade breads, cookies, pies, and homemade Amish peanut butter were aplenty. An outpouring of love and support encircled my family; our home resounded from the constant activity. Neighborhood children, family, friends, and curious strangers were welcomed guests. I met for the first time my second, third, and

fourth cousins—once removed. Suddenly life became a celebration, day after day after day. The crown became more than a stack of sterling silver embedded with rows of sparkling rhinestone. We shared laughs together as men and women, young and old, Amish and English, tried on that stack of sparkling silver and paraded around like royalty and imitating the stylized Miss America wave—long, long; short, short. The experience was so novel and out-of-the-ordinary, but those days were sacred. Together with my community, a positive experience of Miss America was shared.

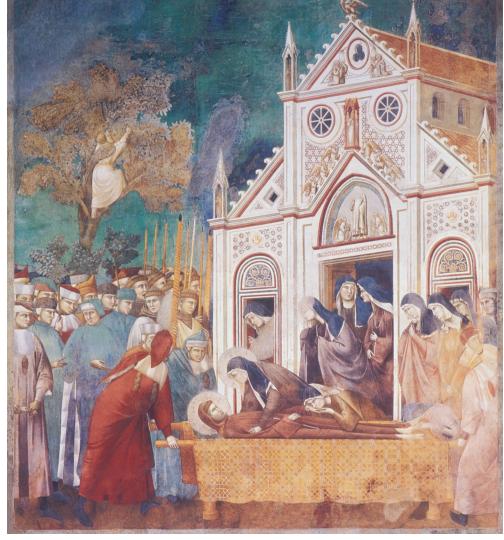
#### Impressionistic Violence

But what cannot be ignored or denied is the objectification imbedded in the phenomenon of Miss America, a reflection of the broader culture. This certainly is not news for veteran feminists. But for a novice, who also happens to be a past Miss Indiana, the misogyny is more difficult to name, more painful and shameful. I am not merely reflecting critically on an abstract phenomenon; I am scrutinizing personal experience and acknowledging how unpleasant life becomes when we look inward.

Reflecting on my experiences of pageants is like trying to look at an impressionist painting with my nose against the wall. Gaining distance from the wall, from the painting, from pageants, I begin making out images of an unusual violence against women. Maybe the violence is not physical, but the message sent to women of all ages, especially the young, leaves an unusual kind of scar. As we compete against each other to become the ideal woman, as we struggle to alter our own body shape to achieve a culturally defined image of beauty, as we volunteer within our community not necessarily for our community's sake but to win favor from our peers, a violation of the soul occurs.

Perhaps these scars are not visible to the eye; nevertheless they are etched into the surface of the heart. This objectification of women scars not only women but all creation. It is a violation which keeps us disconnected from each other and imprisoned in harsh and critical self-judgment.

The inherent danger in this violation is that it is couched in terms of women's liberation. Great lengths to change the image of Miss America from a beauty pageant to a scholarship program have taken place over the past decade. Miss America is now mar-



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keted as the world's leading provider of scholarships for women, but Miss America's relationship with education creates mixed messages of women's liberation and sexual objectification. As long as women are able to name and claim the conditions, the misogyny is no longer labeled as objectification but earns the dangerous label of women's liberation via empowerment. But I ask: Whose definition of the ideal woman are we embracing?

Just as our bodies are manipulated in pageantry, so is the message regarding violence against women; this violation against women is subtle but contributes to our society's objectified gaze upon women. Height, weight, hair color, skin tone, intelligence, talent, sense of style, posture, composure, wit, and personality—women are walking checklists based on a male model of perfection. From my experience, the 21st-century Miss America ideal is a "liberated" woman complete with an education and a career; she is smart, talented, heterosexual, and remains on display for the male gaze.

#### The Prescription According to Matthew

If being a novice feminist who also is a past beauty queen is not enough to raise eyebrows, being a Mennonite and a beauty queen certainly will. Either of the seeming contradictions can provoke eyebrow raising on its own, but combine the two paradoxes and entire faces begin to contort. Discovering my feminist voice would come years later, but I was a Mennonite when I entered pageantry, and at this interval of my life, the pageant ideal and my religious sensibility seemed compatible: abide by a list of rules and morals; dress according to strict guidelines; and by adhering to these codes, salvation or in this case success—was sure to follow. There was no gray ambiguity. For me, religion and pageants seemed more similar than different. Legalism stood firm. Religion and Miss America seemed to embody the pursuit of perfection. To become Miss America was to become America's ideal, God's ideal, or so I thought. The possibility of achieving perfection arrested me and seemed to clarify the

Poor Clares Mourning the Death of Saint Francis ca. 1296 by the Master of the Obsequies fresco San Francesco, the Upper Church

Gospel of Matthew's prescription, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The Miss America image of perfection challenged the guessing game in life. I was addicted to the control I thought I had in pageants. Competing, achieving, and winning gave me a sense of self-worth, a self-worth defined externally and not internally; "knowing thyself" was not a priority. I used the Miss America program to define who and what I was and would become. Instead of learning the skill of critical thinking, I only had to imagine: WWMAD? What would Miss America do?

This mythical, superheroic figure put God first, followed the Ten Commandments, committed no acts of misconduct, smiled and looked attracted, and performed good deeds for her neighbor. Follow such a list and behold—a excursion down the runway of gold was certain. Such a pursuit of perfection served strictly as an external check and balance system. Never mind about listening within for the voice of God. God was the checklist of America's ideal. Become Miss America, and God's favor would be bestowed upon me.

#### Virtue, Check

When my dream of becoming Miss America ended, I was left with a big, gaping hole of emptiness. The checklist of perfection, that so narrowly defined how I should and should not be, failed to produce a sense of fulfillment or spiritual transformation. What was God if not perfection or power? Even more perverse, what was God if not male or American? The emptiness left me searching. I would like to say I was searching for a way to confront and begin living into the emptiness I felt inside; however, I searched for a replacement checklist, a new inventory of "dos and don'ts" to define who and what I should be

I still longed to be the ideal, virtuous woman. I got married. Check. I got religious. Check. I started graduate school. Check. I decorated my house for every national and religious holiday. Check. I bought shoes to match every individual outfit. Check. After all, a virtuous woman has all her boxes checked off, for only then is she "far more precious than jewels" (Proverbs 31:10). Check. For the ideal woman, perfection is not just the destination; it is her way of travel.

While fulfilling the criteria of the check-

list, I was "getting religious" and at the same time working toward my first master's degree in the field of counseling. During my studies, I discovered a book by Murray Bodo titled *Clare: A Light in the Garden*. Neither biographical nor a spiritual meditation on the life of Saint Clare of Assisi, the story tells of Clare's relationship with Francis of Assisi.

Reading the book proved to be a transformative experience. I was not comforted by the story; I was angered. I became furious. I questioned. In the middle of my anger and questions, my idolatrous belief system and fettered spirit were exposed. Just as Clare's life was defined and understood through her relationship with a man, I realized this pattern was how I valued and understood my own life—through a male definition of perfection. In the middle of my questions and through my relationship with another woman's story, 700 years removed, I experienced the holy. In a rush of emotion from anger to feelings of solidarity with a woman such as Clare, I questioned "destination perfection."

Clare's commitment to peace, her ability to recognize the Beloved in all creation, her understanding of the connectedness in the world, her contemplative heart, her courage to walk away from wealth and 12th-century expectations of the virtuous woman, inspired me to begin delving beneath the surface of my own reality. What or who would I find beneath the mask of Shelli Yoder, second runner up to Miss America? Where would my questions lead?

The path of seeking is more circular than linear. I began noticing the endless shades of green found in creation, the unique shape of each individual eye, mouth, and nose, the different ways children laugh and the many ways we experience silence, my bare feet touching the earth, and the overwhelming presence of homelessness in a country of affluence and resources. I noticed how little I knew about the beautiful gift of my sexuality—how fear and ignorance kept me from exploration instead of inviting me to a greater awareness—how the Divine Spirit dwelt within one. I began paying attention.

Ten years have passed since I was Miss Indiana and second runner-up to Miss America. During the decade my thoughts have fluctuated from "What was I thinking?" to offering up a whispered "Thank you." I am grateful for the unique perspective this experience provided, and I am thankful for the kind and generous people my chosen

path encountered. Most deeply, I am indebted to my experiences at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

People whom I met during my reign as Miss Indiana continue to correspond with me. Their words are encouraging. There are many others from whom I have never heard. I am sure meeting a beauty queen in a St. John's knit ensemble, wearing a glitzy crown, talking about accepting and believing in your self regardless of the circumstances, was bound to foster questions as well as create distance. The decked-out beauty queen talking about self acceptance is a rather hypocritical image, an image of my past I live with daily.

I have been told I am only responsible for actions I deliberately perform, that it is the intent of the heart that really matters, and because I did not intend to do harm, I am not responsible.

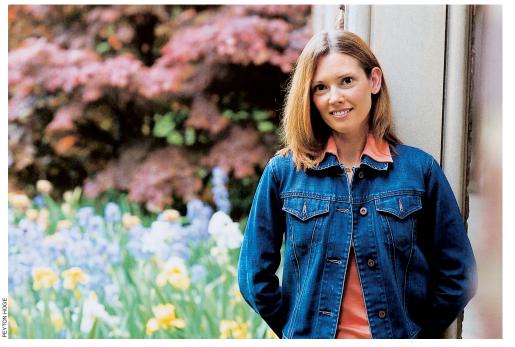
I disagree.

If I embrace the theological tenet of the connectedness of all life, and I do, I am responsible, or rather accountable to my neighbor and not just the ones defined as human. We are connected and accountable to the hermit crab, the missel thrush, the wood sorrel, the air we breathe, the ocelot, the prairie, and the weeping willow. We stand accountable to the twelve year old girl dying to be thin, the man on death row awaiting

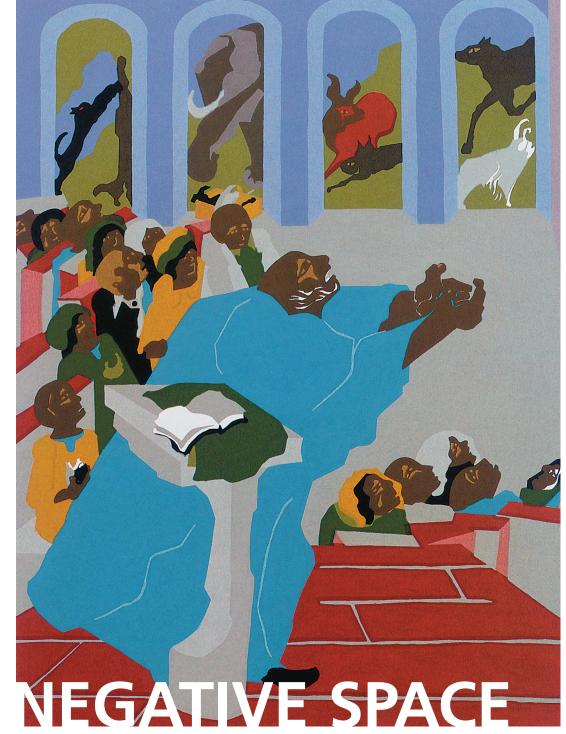
execution, and the Afghan refugee without a home. My choices have consequences. Such privilege demands critical reflection, just responses, and an unfettered spirit embodying the Love of God.

With a list of "dos and don'ts," we can convince ourselves we are granted a special dispensation from life's asymmetry. Perhaps that's the lure of such a phenomenon as Miss America. The pageant sweeps the messiness of life under the train of an ermine-trimmed robe and projects a contrived image of perfection. It helps tie up the loose ends. But what is reality if not loose ends? Life is scarred and flawless, broken yet whole. Perhaps in opening ourselves up to the questions, embracing unconditional compassion, and standing accountable to our neighbor, we are as close as we possibly can be to what it means to be perfect.

The cut-paper stained glass window was created by Cathleen Q. Mumford who serves on the faculty of the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tennessee. The artist was graduated from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan.



Shelli Renee Yoder, MDiv'02



BY VICTOR JUDGE

## Artist Rashida Marjani Browne dwells in the House of Possibility.

I dwell in Possibility—

A fairer House than Prose—

More numerous of Windows—

Superior—for Doors—

Of Chambers as the Cedars—

Impregnable of Eye-

And for an Everlasting Roof

The Gambrels of the Sky—

*Of Visitors—the fairest—* 

For Occupation—This—

The spreading wide my narrow Hands

To gather Paradise—

"Poem 657"

c. 1862

by Emily Dickinson

(1830-1886)

mong the fairest visitors to her figurative residence are Imagination, Metaphor, Question, and Revision. Whether a conversation with her addresses techniques of linoleum block printmaking or Paul Tillich's conception of the ground of being, the leitmotif of the discourse is "possibility," a word which has a sacramental connotation in Browne's lexicon.

"When one elects to enter the creative life or the spiritual life, one must be willing to take risks; one has to develop a respectful relationship with the unknown, with the possibilities that emerge continuously from a world of constant inconstancy," contends Browne, whose stylized prints have been commissioned for *The Spire*. "To engage in the creative life, as in the spiritual life, one must always ask, 'How much control am I willing to yield?' When I'm applying colors and assembling the blocks for a print, or when I'm contemplating the mystery of God, I am always discovering the unexpected, and each discovery reinforces my conviction that possibility is the essence of creativity and theology."

As one listens to Browne discuss the paramount role imagination plays in one's artistic and spiritual formation, the auditor observes how she inclines her head to the left and how carefully she enunciates each syllable in a reverential tone as if she were participating in an act of prayer; one notices how deliberately she pauses after each clause, as if she wishes to remove any doubt a transcriber may have regarding the placement of commas or periods. The easeful cadence of her delivery echoes a triadic, scriptural syntax—a rhythmical pattern one might

"And God created all the beasts of the earth."

Number 6 from Eight Studies for the Book of Genesis
1990
by Jacob Lawrence

African American artist of the Harlem Renaissance (1917-2000)

screenprint on Whatman Print Matt paper from hand color-separated photo stencils 63.5 x 48.6 cm.

screens destroyed from Jacob Lawrence: Thirty Years of Prints (1963-1993) A Catalogue Raisonné Francine Seders Gallery, Ltd., Seattle University of Washington Press

Among the artists Browne acknowledges as being influential upon her creative development is printmaker Jacob Lawrence whose signature style is described by art historian Patricia Hills as "a reductive, figurative modernism uniquely wedded to socially concerned subject matter and characterized by tight interlocking patterns of simplified shapes."

"...when I'm contemplating the mystery of God, I am always discovering the unexpected, and each discovery reinforces my conviction that possibility is the essence of creativity and theology."

not expect in the voice of a 27-year-old—but appropriate for one whose name translated from Swahili means "the righteous woman of coral."

At one interval in the conversation, she abandons her still posture and slowly raises her hands, like a figure orant, as she professes, "I am a finite being; I have limitations; consequently, my creative expression is limited. I cannot be more grand than the Mystery, but I have the freedom to alter or to revise my expression of the Mystery—to investigate another possibility."

Browne's understanding of the inherent power of revision, in both artistic and theological contexts, reminds one of the introductory paragraph of *Pentimento*, the memoir of the 20th-century American playwright Lillian Hellman:

"Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called pentimento, because the painter 'repented,' changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again."

Reared in the Pentecostal tradition of faith but educated for 17 years in Roman Catholic schools, the young artist views her life as a succession of pentimentos which have afforded her opportunities for questioning and revising her "ways of seeing."

#### **Drawing Against Convention**

The oldest of five siblings, Browne was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and began her education at the School of Saint John Nepomucene where she remembers "struggling with the dexterity required for using scissors" during art class.

"When I was in kindergarten, I was perceived by the nuns as not being able to cut well with scissors, so I had to take a pair of safety scissors and sheets of construction paper home and practice at night by cutting out paper hearts," recounts Browne. Often

accompanying the scissors and paper were notes from the nuns to Browne's mother, Valerie, regarding her daughter's deportment. The school children ate their lunches in silence, as the nuns would take their meals in the refectory, and for each time a student cleaned one's plate while maintaining silence, a smiley-face badge was conferred upon the dutiful pupil.

"I never ate all my lunch, and I always was talking during the meal, so I never acquired a collection of smiley-face stickers," says Browne as she laughs for the first time during the interview. "I also never understood why we sang the Beatles' song "Yellow Submarine" each day during music class, and whenever I hear those lyrics, I don't see images of the Fab Four from Liverpool or of the animated film; instead, I have this vision of an elderly nun playing the piano as we stood and sang about living beneath the waves aboard a yellow submarine."

Browne was more content to sit at her desk and create graphics with her Etch A Sketch until she was seen shaking the red plastic-framed Plexiglas screen—the necessary procedure for rebooting the drawing instrument. "Sister Mary Ralph confiscated my Etch A Sketch and told me she would return it to me at the end of the school year, and in my first-grade naiveté, I believed her. But on the last day of school, I went home empty-handed thinking to myself, "That nun stole my Etch A Sketch.'"

Perhaps Browne's breaking silence during lunchtime and her boredom with music class were early manifestations of an artistic temperament resistant to repetition and imitation and a disdain for provincial, pedestrian images such as construction-paper hearts and yellow smiley faces. Her mother was not unnerved by the notes describing her daughter's disruptive conduct but interpreted the schoolgirl's behavior as a reaction to the introduction of an infant sister into the family. The artist's mother would pay closer attention, however, to a comment on her daughter's report card from Saint Stephen Martyr Grammar School.

When a lay-teacher in the art department



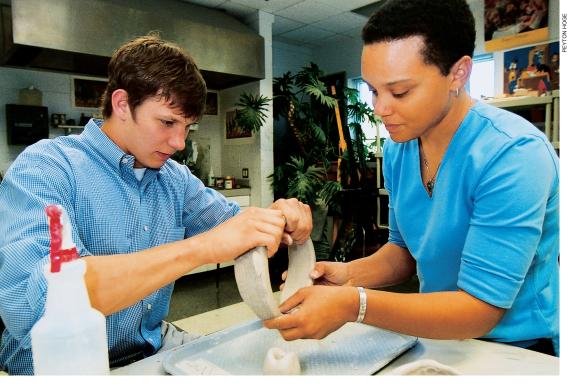
Above: Upon earning her degree from the Divinity School, Rashida Marjani Browne accepted a faculty appointment in the art department at Montgomery Bell Academy, a college preparatory school for young men in Nashville.

saw a picture that her student had created based upon an imaginary scene from a Milwaukee fair, she was impressed with the innate sense of composition and advanced perspective demonstrated by the drawing. "I had drawn the figures at the fair in profile; their lips and noses were protruding, and the teacher remarked that most children would draw frontal figures with circular heads and represent their facial features with single lines," remembers Browne, "The teacher wrote to my mother that my drawings were stylistically mature because I was able to draw lines more loosely instead of trying to make the pencil follow the contours of an object; she believed I had a raw sense of how to respond to a subject and that I drew against the preconceived, conventional representations."

Convinced that Browne's creative development would be enhanced by the art curriculum in a city feeder-school where she could prepare for admission to the high school for the arts, the teacher recommended that Browne transfer from Saint Stephen Martyr and matriculate in the public school. But her mother was unreceptive to the proposal.

"My mother had a profound conviction that public education was synonymous with poor education," contends Browne. "She had attended Catholic schools and believed that her five children would have more academic and cultural opportunities by attending parochial schools."

Because Browne and her siblings were not Catholic, they were not entitled to receive the discount in tuition offered to parish members, and the cost of private education required sacrifices of her mother, a homemaker, and her stepfather, a public works employee for the Village of Whitefish Bay. While attending



Above: During a studio art course, Browne helps MBA senior Jack Bryant, son of Divinity School student Rick Bryant, MDiv2, with an assignment in clay.

Saint Joan Antida High School for Girls, Browne participated in forensic competitions and was always excited when tournaments were conducted at the high school for the arts where she could view the displays of student artwork. "I often wonder if I might be more advanced as an artist if I had attended a school with an art curriculum instead of elective classes," ponders Brown, "but I also understand my mother's motive; she wanted to provide for her children a gift she believed to be of uncompromising importance in her role as a parent—a private education."

#### **Confusing the Homonyms**

The discipline of parochial education was reinforced by the strictness of the African American Pentecostal faith tradition in which Browne's spiritual formation began. At the Church of God in Christ, women were not allowed to wear makeup, slacks, or open-toe shoes, nor were they allowed to cut their hair.

"I was the quintessential tomboy who lived in jeans and shorts," says Browne, "and I never understood why I had to wear long sleeves when we went to church, even during summer." But from this conservative tradition, which she describes today as "legalistic," emerged Browne's earliest conception of God.

"From my perspective as a child, the music was the redeeming feature of going to church, and I particularly remember singing the chorus of a hymn with the clause, 'Our God reigns.' One Sunday I illustrated the hymn by drawing with my crayons a large umbrella and raindrops, and I wrote "Our God rains" in the sky. The refrain inspired me to imagine God as water falling from the heavens, and my mother had the drawing transferred to a decal and applied to her coffee mug before she told me I had confused 'rains' with 'reigns.'"

When her parents grew uncomfortable with the unrelenting legalism that characterized the denomination's polity, the family began attending services at the more charismatic, interracial Assembly of God but quickly discovered a similar emphasis upon the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic. "There were only three questions that were seemingly valued by that congregation: Who held the record for attending the most services? Who prayed out loud the most? and Who could demonstrate the most spirituality? This environment was not as oppressive as the one in the first church we attended," says Browne, "but I now realize, after studying theology at the Divinity School, how both congregations of my childhood were more concerned with what could be measured by the eyes."

#### **Moving South**

In 1993, Browne bid farewell to the cold winters of Milwaukee and was greeted by the humidity of New Orleans where she enrolled in Xavier University of Louisiana, the only historically Black, Catholic college in the Western hemisphere.

"When I arrived in the South, I had to become accustomed to people saying 'Hello' at the bus stop; in Milwaukee, everyone tends to stare ahead as they walk down the streets, but in New Orleans people greet one another as if they are acquaintances."

The first expression of discrimination Browne experienced in the South was not related to race but to her identity as a university student. As a participant in the Jesuit university's outreach program, she tutored children and adolescents at the community center in Gert-Town, a neighborhood across the canal. Because the students under her tutelage had experienced failure in their classes, they adopted an anti-intellectual

posture as a defense against their fear of not succeeding academically.

"Unfortunate circumstances in their lives had conditioned them to disappointment," explains Browne, "and they would tease me by saying, 'You think you are so smart because you are in college,' or when I initially tried to help them, they resisted and replied, 'We don't need you.' But I believe their resentment was a façade for their feelings of unworthiness. A session with a tutor from Xavier was among the few constructive experiences in their lives, so I approached my volunteer work with the same degree of seriousness with which I approach teaching."

While fulfilling the requirements for the baccalaureate in fine arts, Browne encountered three individuals at Xavier—an artist from Harlem, a Jesuit priest, and a professor of biblical studies—who changed her relationship to creativity and to religion. From the painter Jacob Lawrence, she learned there was no legitimate excuse one could employ to justify not creating. When Lawrence lectured at Xavier, he described his adolescence during the Great Depression and how brown paper bags served as improvised canvases for painting with tempera, the only medium he could afford. Upon hearing Lawrence speak so reverently about his urge to create, Browne remembers admitting to herself, "I will never have a reason for believing I cannot create—even if I have to search for scrap metal on the roadside—I can find a surface on which to express my ideas." Viewing the African-American genre scenes comprising Browne's portfolio, one immediately recognizes the influence of Lawrence's distinctive angular, cubist-expressionist style upon her work; she shares with the Harlem Renaissance artist a keen sense for vibrant colors and a commitment to meticulous

When her academic advisor informed Browne that she had to declare a minor for her program of studies, she decided to adhere to the conventional wisdom of her peers and take courses in business. "Other art students told me I needed to enroll in finance and management classes so I would not have to hire an agent to promote my work, but I soon grew weary of numbers." She considered taking a minor in education, but found the methods courses dull. Computer science did not complement her aesthetic sensibility, but the inspiration she was deriving from her theology classes resulted

in these courses becoming more than mere requirements at a Catholic institution; consequently, she declared theology her minor.

Studying with Father Phillip Linden Jr., S.J. allowed Browne to realize that asking questions could not destroy one's faith. The religion classes of her secondary school years and the Sunday school lessons in the Pentecostal church had not fostered a healthy respect for interrogation, but the priest incarnated the gospels by encouraging her to examine contemporary society and to criticize the conditions that contradict the teachings from Scripture. "Father Linden was the first authentic critic of religion I met because he lived within questions and never dismissed concrete evidence," says Browne, "And despite his being criticized by the hierarchy, he has never stopped believing in the possibilities and the constructive changes the Catholic church can bring into reality."

Linden's insistence upon questioning was reinforced by the pedagogy of Monya Aletha

During her courses with Sallie McFague, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of Theology, emerita, Browne discovered how the vocabulary of art was compatible with the lexicon of theology.

"I remember becoming anxious in Constructive Christian theology class when Professor McFague required us to write our creed in which we were to develop and defend a systematic conception of God," says Browne, who continues struggling with that assignment five years later as she searches for a faith tradition to claim. "I do not perceive God as being a controlling force in the sky; through my imperfect reasoning, I perceive God to be a Mystery who continues to be revealed—a Mystery whom I cannot experience completely in time and who exists within negative space."

To illustrate her argument, Browne reaches for a pencil and drawing paper and hurriedly sketches the outline of a heart, similar to those patterns she cut from construction

"I perceive God to be a Mystery who continues to be revealed—a Mystery whom I cannot experience completely in time and who exists within negative space."

Stubbs, MTS'95, who taught biblical studies at Xavier before returning to Vanderbilt University where she is pursuing the doctorate of philosophy in New Testament. "I was fascinated by Monya's literary approach in teaching Scripture; she treated the Bible as a tactile text with which a reader should become engaged, in the way an artist would touch the canvas. Before studying with Monya, I had not been exposed to the importance of reading the Bible in context; my previous engagement with the text had been for the purpose of memorizing Bible verses to recite in Sunday school."

#### The Heart of Negative Space

The experience of having a professor who was educated at Vanderbilt Divinity School also motivated Browne to apply to the University and begin formal studies in theology.

paper in her earlier endeavor to become dexterous with scissors. As she encloses the heart within a rectangle, she explains, "The empty space surrounding the image is known in art theory as negative space; if there were no space, one could not discern the image three-dimensionally—one could not see the concrete—and this space ultimately extends beyond the rectangular frame. I interpret the negative space to be like God, who cannot be contained or measured. As a mortal, as an artist, I represent finite, positive space that creates forms from the negative space," she continues, "and within the negative space reside infinite possibilities."

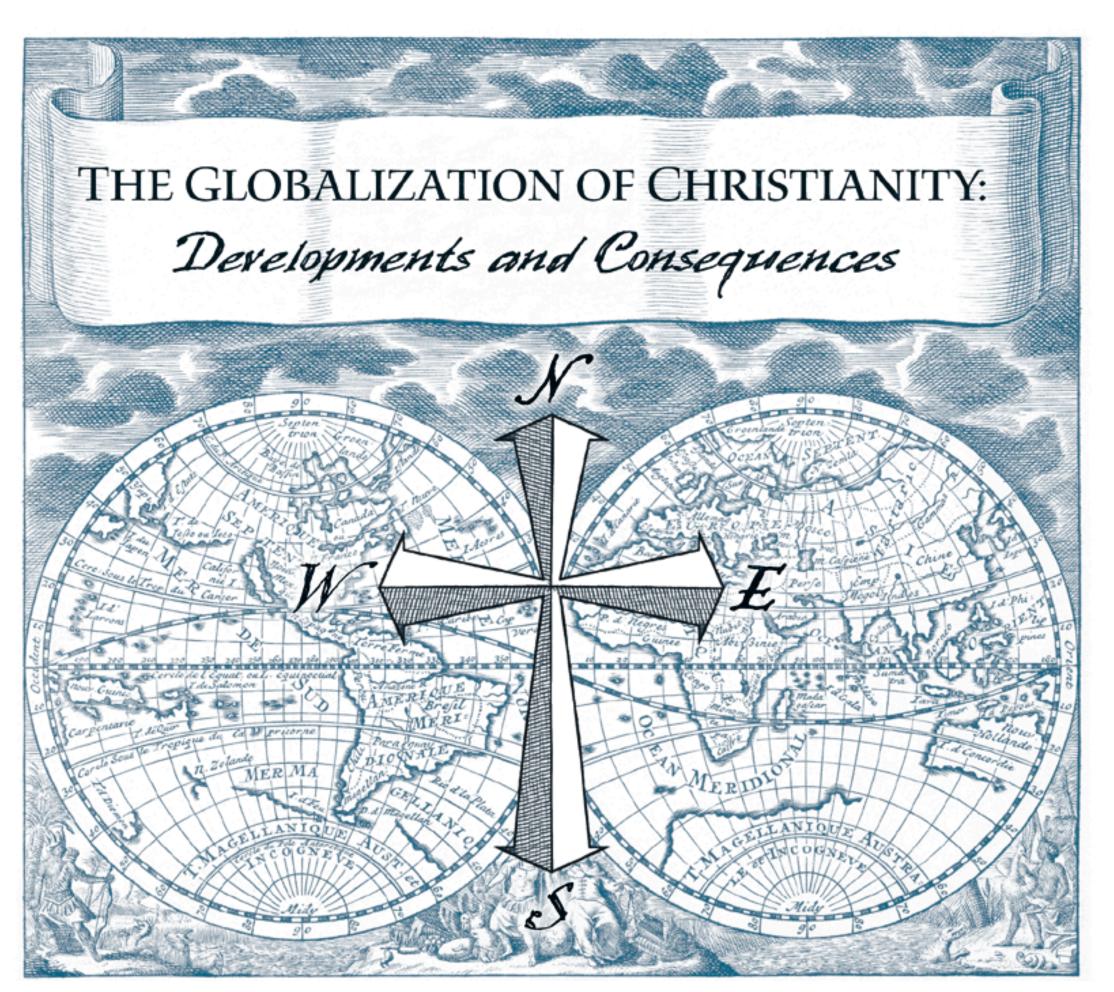
As her forefinger traces the outline of the heart, Browne cogently remarks, "Negative space, like God, exists independently of the image."

Drawing correlations between a theory of

art and Tillich's conception of the gestalt of grace proved to be one of the most significant academic exercises during the two years Browne studied at the Divinity School. A week after submitting her creed, she was crossing the street at the traffic light at 21st Avenue, South and Wesley Place, where she heard someone from behind call her name. The voice belonged to Professor McFague, who told Browne that she found the thesis of her argument to be quite credible. "The confidence I gained that day while walking across the street remains more important than the grade I earned in the Constructive Christian theology course; I admire Professor McFague's style of writing because she communicates remarkably profound ideas in accessible language, and her prose has such a literary, figurative quality. Having her as a teacher and as a reader has helped me not only in writing but in teaching art because I learned in her courses how to moderate a classroom dialogue; I introduce the students to a technique; I start the demonstration, but I never finish the demonstration by myself; I invite them to apply layers of color or to mold the clay."

Should one of the young gentlemen in Browne's classes at Montgomery Bell Academy confess, "I can't draw; I'm not talented." Browne tells him of the day she arrived at Vanderbilt to begin graduate studies and how she did not feel her contributions to a group discussion would be worthy of theological discourse. To dispel the myth that creativity and talent are synonymous, she asks the student, "How did you learn to write a coherent paragraph?" and after the student recites the litany of stages diagramming sentences, developing a topic sentence, employing declarative, compound, and complex syntactical patterns, writing a preliminary draft, and revising to ensure that each word supports the topic sentence— Browne encouragingly advises, "The same lines you draw for diagramming a sentence can be transformed into the lines of a landscape or of a human figure's profile."

Perhaps the teacher's response to the doubtful student is an invitation to imagine the possibilities that will unfold when one enters negative space.



#### BY FERNANDO F. SEGOVIA

Professor of New Testament and early Christianity, Vanderbilt University Divinity School

The 20th century witnessed a shift of truly dramatic proportions in the deployment and constitution of Christianity. This shift is often characterized as "the globalization of Christianity" and its end result as "Global Christianity." Its ramifications for Christianity in general have already proved profound and extensive. They shall prove far-reaching as well for the study of Christianity in particular, what is commonly known as "theological education" and what I prefer to call "Christian studies"—in effect, the sort of studies in which most of us at the Divinity School are engaged. This shift toward a Global Christianity is a shift that affects all Christians and of which all Christians should be aware.

#### Approaching the Shift

For an explanation of the shift, I find the thesis of Andrew Walls, professor, emeritus, of the study of Christianity in the non-Western world at the University of Edinburgh, regarding the historical development of Christianity quite helpful. Walls speaks of three major shifts in Christianity's center of gravity, all of which have entailed not only major geographical and demographic changes but also substantial cultural and religious changes, as Christianity mutates, in recurring cycles of recession and expansion, from an already existing theater of operations to an altogether new one. In each mutation, Walls points out, Christianity undergoes a sharp decline in its established theater of operations and a swift expansion in its new theater of operations. It is the third such shift that constitutes the globalization of Christianity. To understand it better, however, a brief picture of the first two shifts is helpful.

In the first mutation, Christianity turns from a demographically Jewish phenomenon, centered in Jewish Palestine and culturally defined by Judaism, to a demographically and culturally Hellenistic-Roman phenomenon, dispersed across the Mediterranean and the Roman Empire. This first shift is firmly in place by the fourth century and is paved for by a mission to the "Gentiles" that goes back to the first century. In the second mutation Christianity turns from the urban centers of the Mediterranean to a new setting among the Celtic and Germanic peoples between the Atlantic and the Carpathians and thus among cultivators and semi-settled raiders, where it acquires its territorial sense of "Christendom." This second shift is tied to

the collapse of the Roman Empire in both its eastern and western provinces—in the East, in the face of Islam; in the West, at the hands of the "barbarians"—and is also anticipated by the mission outside the imperial frontiers.

In the third mutation, identified with the last 500 years of Western expansionism and paved for by accompanying missionary movements throughout, Christianity turns from territorial Christendom to global Christianity, that is to say, away from its Western base, where it undergoes decline in the face of the forces of modernity, toward the non-Western world, where it witnesses incredible growth. The result is what Walls calls the non-Western formation of Christianity. Although 500 years in the making, as Walls points out, it is really in the course of the last century that this mutation becomes evident.

At the heart of this transformation, still very much ongoing, lies the phenomenon of globalization: the drastic change in the demographics of Christian communities across the entire ecclesiastical spectrum brought about by deliberate, intensive, and highly successful worldwide expansion. If the century began in the throes of a crusade to make "the Christian century" a reality by spreading the Christian religion to all corners of the world, it ends with such a reality very much in place, from Africa to Asia and the Pacific to Latin America and the Caribbean. The numerical figures in question—heightened as they are by the highly distinctive demographic development of the last century, with population explosion in the non-Western world and population stabilization (even decline) in the West—are simply astounding.

The following statistics, fragile as they may be, drive the point home in no uncertain fashion:<sup>2</sup>

- While in 1900 approximately 82% of the world's Christians lived in the West (70.6% in Europe and 11.4% in Northern America), in 2000 that figure was estimated to be 39.6% (28.4% in Europe and 11.2% in Northern America).
- While in 1900 Christians in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean represented approximately 17.9% of world Christianity, in 2000 that figure was placed at 60.3%.
- In the course of the past 100 years, the following changes in percentage with respect to the number of Christians worldwide proceed as follows: in Africa, from 1.7% to 17.7%; in Asia and the Pacific, from 4.0% to 17.4%; in Latin America and the Caribbean, from 11.5% to 25.2%.

Such figures could be endlessly multiplied, but the point is clear: what Walls has characterized as the non-Western formation of the Christian religion is already very much upon us and still very much on the rise.

#### **Explaining the Shift**

In tying this third mutation of Christianity to the last 500 years of Western expansionism and its accompanying missionary movements, Walls is actually invoking the Western imperial-colonial formation. It is imperative, therefore, to look more closely at this geopolitical phenomenon: its overall scope, the role of Christianity within it, and its effects on the world and Christianity alike.

In terms of scope, the imperial-colonial tradition of the West may be approached in terms of three different phases and periods:

- Early imperialism, with reference to the initial, mercantile phase of European imperialism—from the 16th century through most of the 19th century, from the monarchical states of Portugal and Spain to the early modern states of England, France, and the Netherlands, among others.
- High imperialism, involving monopoly capitalism with its integration of industrial and finance capital in the major capitalist nation-states—from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, with England as prime example.

• Late imperialism, with reference to both the end of formal colonialism (post-imperialism and post-colonialism) and the continued impact and power of imperial culture (neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism) in the world—from mid-century to the present, with the United States as its prime example.

With regard to the role of Christianity, it should be recalled that this tradition of Western empire-building was accompanied throughout by a very prominent socioreligious dimension as well. Following Andrew Walls, two major stages can be readily outlined in this regard:

- A first stage, lasting from the 16th through the 18th centuries, was primarily Catholic in orientation and involved the massive evangelization of the Americas.
- A second stage, encompassing the 19th through the mid-20th centuries, was primarily Protestant in nature and concerned the massive evangelization of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and remaining areas of the Americas.

no exception in this regard. The process of colonization that paralleled the development of Western imperialism involved a massive dispersion of Europeans throughout the entire world. Untold millions proceeded to settle everywhere and, in so doing, established countless new Europes outside of Europe. The statistics, though varying, are clear on this score:

- It is estimated that, between 1820 and 1930, fifty million Europeans migrated to the temperate zones of the world.
- It is argued that the great European migration during the course of the 19th century involved the movement of 70 million people in all, of whom 35 million found their way into the United States.<sup>5</sup>

The resultant web of diasporas and settlements had enormous consequences for non-Western peoples across the entire spectrum—from the social to the cultural, from the economic to the political, from the religious to the educational—of their respective societies.

For Christianity, the result was globaliza-

Just as Christianity deeply affected the religions that it came across during the process of colonization, so has Christianity itself been profoundly touched by its own experience outside the West.

Thus, the first missionary wave parallels the first, mercantile phase of Western imperialism, while the second missionary wave coincides with the second, capitalist phase of Western imperialism, which reaches its climax at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Over the last five centuries, therefore, the different phases of European expansionism brought with them, wherever they turned, their respective religious beliefs and practices, whether Catholic or Protestant.

In terms of effects on both the world and Christianity, the following should be noted:

For the world, the result was enormous Western migration. At the core of imperial-colonial formations lie, indeed from the very beginning and at every step of the way, the reality and experience of un-settlement, travel, re-settlement, the reality of diaspora—the geographical translation of peoples, coerced or voluntary, from homelands to other lands. The Western imperial-colonial formation is

tion. This result had a twofold impact: on the one hand, that of Christianity on the non-Western religions encountered in the colonial world; on the other hand, that of the colonial world on Christianity as the religion of the West. Just as Christianity deeply affected the religions that it came across during the process of colonization, so has Christianity itself been profoundly touched by its own experience outside the West. In the end, this process of globalization—driven throughout by the desire to transform "the other" and thus undertaken with a spirit of mission and conversion, of exclusivism and superiority vielded self-transformation at the hands of such others as well.

#### Complicating the Shift

There is a further and most important dimension to this shift to Global Christianity. It is not just a question of the West moving out to the non-Western world; it is also a matter of the non-Western world coming

into the West. Again, it is imperative to look more closely at this phenomenon: its origins, its scope, its effects on the world and Christianity.

With respect to origins, the phenomenon of diaspora unleashed by the Western imperial-colonial formation turned out to be, in the long run, quite complicated. Indeed, in addition to the great European migration, one must speak of two other major phases in geographical translation:

- The process of Western expansionism engendered, in turn, a massive dispersion of non-Western peoples from their historical homelands. Once again, untold millions were settled, mostly by way of slavery and indenture, in other areas of the colonial world as sources of cheap labor for the system of production of early capitalism. The resultant web of diasporas and settlements had enormous consequences as well across the globe, not only in the historical homelands left behind but also in the new lands in question, where highly mixed societies and peoples eventually came to be, especially in the "New World."
- In more recent times, this process of colonization has further engendered a new and massive dispersion of non-Western peoples from their own homelands, whether historical or imposed. Yet again, untold millions have begun to settle, by way of legal and illegal migration, in the West, given the economic forces at work in the system of production of late capitalism. There should be little doubt that the ramifications of such a web of diasporas and settlements will prove, in time, just as enormous for the West, across the entire spectrum of its respective societies.

In terms of scope, the process of geographical translation at the heart of the Western imperial-colonial phenomenon may be seen as having ultimately come full circle: what began in the late 15th century with dispersion from Europe outward, leading to a massive European diaspora of global proportions, has yielded in the late 20th century to dispersion from outside the West into the West, leading to a massive non-Western diaspora of global proportions within the West itself. Consequently, just as the West succeeded in establishing itself quite prominently in the non-West over the greater part of the last five hundred years, so has the non-West begun to establish itself quite firmly in the West in the course of the last few decades.

The United States, for example, is presently undergoing as profound an ethnic transformation as that which took place from 1880 through 1920. Just as that earlier wave of immigration—composed of southern and eastern Europeans and involving Catholic Christians, Jews, and Orthodox Christians—changed the face and tenor of the country forever, so will the present wave—composed of immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean—change forever as well the visage and discourse of the country. The statistics are, once again, most telling:

- In the 1980 Census, the non-Hispanic white population of the country numbered approximately 80%—one in five was of non-European descent; in the 1990 Census, this population stood at 75%—one in four was of non-European descent; in the 2000 Census, this population amounted to 68.8%—in less than five years, before 2005, one in three would be of non-European descent. Two points are in order here: The first is a simple pause for reflection—from one in five to one in three in less than twentyfive years, a truly incredible development. The second is a word of explanation: such growth is a direct consequence of the 1965 Naturalization and Immigration Act of Lyndon Baines Johnson and its radical revision of the restrictive immigration laws of
- Between 1980 and 2000, the major minority groups experienced the following increase in population: Asian Americans, from 1.5% to 3.6%; African Americans, from 11.5% to 12.6%; U.S. Hispanic Americans, from 6.4% to 12.5%. Again, two points are in order here: first, the Latino community has, in point of fact, already become the largest minority group in the country. Second, the white-black dichotomy of the country, so prevalent in and so determinative for its culture, must now give way to a much more convoluted view of ethnic and racial relations at work in the country.

With respect to effects on the world and Christianity alike, the following should be noted:

For the West, the consequences of this process of geographical translation are clear: a radical shift in global patterns of migration.

Since mid-century, and above all in the last two to three decades, the earlier flow of population from Europe to the rest of the world, including North America, has experienced a sharp reverse, with large-scale immigration now flowing from the whole of the non-Western world into the West—Europe, to be sure, but above all anglophone North America (Canada and the United States). And with that immigration has come non-Western Christianity.

For Christianity, the consequences have proved fundamental as well. The non-Western formation of Christianity is now to be found not only outside the West but also, and increasingly so, within the West itself. While non-Western immigration into Europe is largely non-Christian in character, such immigration into the United States does have a strong Christian component, as it is becoming quite evident in Christian churches around the country, across the entire ecclesiastical spectrum. Given the demographic projections, moreover, it is clear that Christianity in the United States, at the very core of the contemporary West, will become increasingly "global," less Western and more non-Western in origins and composition.

#### Appropriating the Shift

To begin with, I should like to take a look ahead. I observed earlier that the ongoing shift in Christianity, from Western Christendom to Global Christianity, was a phenomenon that affected all Christians and of which all Christians should be aware. The preceding overview of this latest mutation of Christianity renders such a declaration patently clear. Again, the statistics prove definitive in this regard.

First, regarding Global Christianity:<sup>7</sup>

- The projected figures for 2025 are as follows: 30.8% of the world's Christians will live in the West (21.4% in Europe and 9.4% in northern America)—down from 39.6%, while 69.1% will live in the non-Western world—up from 60.3%.
- In the course of the next 25 years, the following changes in percentage are anticipated with respect to the number of non-Western Christians: in Africa, from 17.7% to 24.1%; in Asia and the Pacific, from 17.4% to 19.5%; in Latin America and the Caribbean, from 25.2% to 25.5%.

Second, regarding the United States:8

- The projections, dating from 1995 and thus prior to the unexpected surprises of the 2000 Census, call for the white, non-Hispanic segment of the population to decrease to 60.5% in 2030 and 52.8% in 2050. By midcentury, therefore, half of the country's population will be of non-European descent.
- The projections for 2030 and 2050 regarding minorities, again dating from before the 2000 Census and hence much too conserva-

What such changes mean for Christian studies or theological education in general and for our own Divinity School in particular, it is fair to say, we have barely begun to address. Yet, we must do so, for we are already quite out of touch and quite out of date. To be sure, we are not alone in this regard. By and large, the nature of the mutation at work has not yet begun to be apprehended, much less felt, in the West or in our own United States. And it is too bad, really, for, in the end, I believe that all of us would

...the past dominance of the West in the formulation and direction of Christianity will gradually but inexorably yield to a much more multicentered and diversified tradition and formation.

tive, run as follows: Asian Americans, 6.6% and 8.2%; African Americans, 13.1% and 13.6%; U.S. Hispanic Americans, 18.9% and 24.5%. By mid-century, therefore, a quarter of the country's population will be of Latin American descent.

One cannot even begin to imagine the situation and the figures in question when a future faculty member of the Divinity School writes, just after the turn of the 21st century, on the development and consequences of global Christianity.

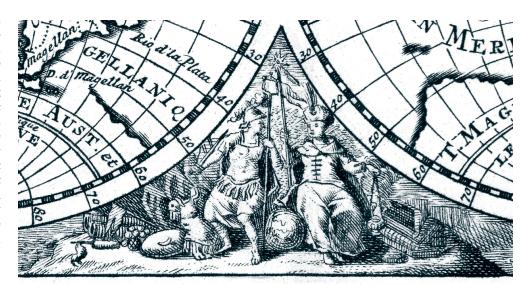
To conclude, I should like to cast a look around. To say that this shift will bring fundamental changes on the character and shape of Christianity seems utterly redundant, yet absolutely imperative. Such changes will inevitably and radically affect its practices and beliefs at all levels—from the manifold venues of everyday life among believers, to the defining and ruling centers of institutional life, to the learned and knowledge-producing circles of academic life. Indeed, their impact has only begun. What its ultimate effects will be, for global Christianity both outside the West and in the West, will not be fully grasped until a century or two from now. It seems safe to say, however, that the past dominance of the West in the formulation and direction of Christianity will gradually but inexorably yield to a much more multicentered and diversified tradition and formation.

be far richer as a result, given not only the incredible diversity of Christianity in the world but also its manifold relationships to other religions, societies, and cultures around the globe. As a present faculty member of the Divinity School, writing for an audience just after the turn of the 20th century, and as a product of this most recent migration from the non-Western world into the West, I would argue that the globalization of Christianity must turn from material reality to conscious reality and begin to inform all that we do and say as members of Christianity as well as all that we read, write, and teach as students of Christianity. I cannot help but think that that future faculty members, a

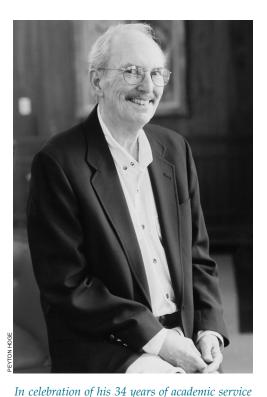
hundred years from now, will be most pleased.

#### Notes

- 1. A. Walls, "Christianity in the Non-Western World: A Study in the Serial Nature of Christian Expansion," Studies in World Christianity 1 (1995): 1-10.
- 2. These statistics are taken from the most recent update of D. B. Barrett, G. T. Kurian, and T. M. Johnson, eds., World Christian Encyclopedia, Vol. 1: The World by Countries: Religionists, Churches, Ministries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) in D. B. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2000," International Review of Missionary Research 24:1 (January, 2000): 24-25.
- 3. For such a historical periodization of the different types of imperialism at work in the West in this period of five centuries, common enough in the literature, see, e.g., David Sprinker, "Introduction," in *Late Imperial Culture*, ed. R. de la Campa, E. Ann Kaplan, and M. Sprinker (London: Verso, 1996), 1-10.
- 4. A. Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- 5. D. Kennedy, "Can We Still Afford To Be A Nation of Immigrants?," *The Atlantic Monthly* 278:5 (November, 1996): 52-68.
- 6. On population growth by race and ethnicity from 1980 to 2000, see "Beyond the Census: Hispanics and an American Agenda" (Washington: National Council of La Raza, 2001). On the 2000 Census statistics, see E. M. Grieco and R. C. Cassidy, "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin," U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Brief (March 2001), C2KBR/01-1.
- 7. See n.
- 8. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P25-1130, "Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995-2050." Four alternative projections series are listed: Lowest; Middle; Highest. The figures used are from the Middle Series.



# Dances with Academic Wolves



to Vanderbilt University, Howard L. Harrod (above), the Oberlin Alumni Professor of Social Ethics and Sociology of Religion and professor of religious studies, was invited by the Graduate Department of Religion to present a paper at the final colloquium of the 2001-2002 academic year. The editorial staff of The Spire is pleased to publish Harrod's paper and to announce that Dean James Hudnut-Beumler has established the annual Harrod Lecture in recognition of the scholar's contributions to the disciplines of ethics and the sociology and anthropology of religion. We also wish to announce to our readers that the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust awarded the title "professor, emeritus" to Harrod during the 2002 commencement exercises.

BY HOWARD L. HARROD

grew up in a small town in Oklahoma that was ten miles from Wewoka, the capital of the Seminole Nation. The land upon which my town, Holdenville, was built was originally Creek land. Not far away were populations of Choctaws and Chickasaws. Indians and whites swam together, dated, and intermarried in this little town. But African Americans were rigidly segregated. These cultural facts made an impression on me that has remained throughout my life. Indians were often socially close to whites, especially when they had similar social locations. Yet some Indians and all blacks were economically oppressed and racially marked for prejudice and discrimination. These experiences would become important motivating forces later in my life. As a student at the University of Oklahoma, I was a music major-trumpet player until my head was literally turned toward philosophy. After my undergraduate studies I went to Duke Divinity School where I studied ethics and received a bachelor of divinity degree in 1960. That is what one sees on the surface.

Underneath the narrative there were tumultuous struggles for meaning occurring. These struggles first took the form of a love affair with philosophy and the "great questions." Then the decision to enter Duke was motivated by a conviction that life would only make sense if I found a way to serve the needs of others. At the appropriate point, there was a campus minister—later to become a bishop in the Methodist Church—who suggested that I was, in the parlance of the day, "called to preach."

And preach I did—at Sterling, Oklahoma, while I was an undergraduate and at Cos Cob, Connecticut, while I was in the S.T.M. program at Yale Divinity School. And while in graduate school, I served churches during the summers in Townsend, Montana (the Townsend, Toston, and Radersburg circuit), Big Sandy, Montana (the Big Sandy-Box Elder circuit), and in Butte, Montana. There was a nursing home in Box Elder that I used to visit. Some of the "codgers" there told me about the significance of a large tree standing on the plains about a half-mile in the distance. That tree, they said, was where sheep men were hanged during a range war with cattlemen. Despite such stories—probably because of them—I proceeded to be ordained

in the Montana Conference of the Methodist Church.

But while at Yale, the course of my life changed. I had gone to Yale to do a one-year S.T.M. program after which I was headed for Big Sky country. I wrote my S.T.M. thesis on the sociology of knowledge and studied, in particular, the work of Karl Mannheim. While at Duke my mind was jerked out of culture Christianity by the notion of transcendence in Karl Barth. With similar force, Barth was replaced by the idea that all of human experience was socially constructed and located; the form and content of knowledge were existentially grounded; even the "structures of the mind" were culturally produced and maintained. This was in 1960, and during that time "the earth moved under my feet!"

These ideas affected me deeply, and I was literally hungry for more. When the opportunity to pursue doctoral work at Yale came along, there was no question at to what to do. I decided to stay and study with teachers who had been so influential on me up to this point: H. Richard Niebuhr and James Gustafson. I enrolled in the program called "Christian ethics." There were three paths to the Ph.D. in this program: Christian ethics, social ethics, and sociology of religion. I was already immersed in the sociology of knowledge, so the sociology of religion seemed to me to be the next step.

Entering the program in the sociology of religion deepened the interdisciplinary path I was already traveling. After all, studies in divinity schools like Duke and Vanderbilt were already interdisciplinary since the fields of study were, of necessity, so constituted. How could one study the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament without archaeology or theories of interpretation, for example? And how could one study theology without philosophy? The Ph.D. program required that I take courses in the department of sociology in the Graduate School, and the faculties in religion and in sociology administered my qualifying examinations.

The final product of this work, the Ph.D., was in religion, a fact that would become increasingly important in the future.

Underneath this narrative, struggles of meaning continued. How could I proceed with a dissertation that would take up the



problems that lured and consumed me? I was fascinated by problems of race, cultural difference, and class (gender and sexual orientation were not yet on my horizon). I was captured by Durkheim's notion that deeply shared symbolic structures and powerful ritual processes constituted and maintained social cohesion and identity. I was equally drawn to Max Weber's strong thesis that religion could produce real, though perhaps unintended, consequences for social change. Charismatic leaders could contribute to the formation of revolutionary social movements; conversely, such leaders could also contribute to movements that were quite conservative and maintained high social boundaries. I was also deeply steeped in the traditions of social justice proceeding from the Social Gospel and especially from studies of Reinhold Niebuhr. I was involved in the

Civil Rights Movement. How to get these

Feather Canoe 1992 by Truman Lowe Winnebago wood and feathers

themes together in a dissertation—that became the question.

While in graduate school I maintained my membership in the Montana Conference, and I took summer appointments (Townsend, Big Sandy, and Butte). So the love affair with vast landscapes, mountains, and Big Sky country continued. After several failed attempts to formulate a dissertation topic, a theme slowly rose to the surface. This topic captured and seemed to hold together several of my intellectual interests that were rooted in deeper affections and passions. I was interested in the relation between religion and social change; the function of the churches as social institutions; the way religion helped shape deep cultural values; questions of race and culture; and an old set of questions about Native American cultures. So I proposed to do a dissertation on the impact of Protestant and Catholic missions among the Blackfeet Indians.

This dissertation made more and more sense to me and seemed to address some of the deep struggles I alluded to earlier. I did not know very much about the Blackfeet at that time. But I had been on their reservation in northwestern Montana, and I had gotten to know James Bell, the Methodist missionary. I read John Ewers classic study, The Blackfeet: Raiders of the Northwestern Plains, and I began to uncover a rich bibliography in Yale's Sterling Library. These explorations raised pressing questions of perspective and method. What angle of interpretation was I going to take, and how was this study to proceed?

The perspective informing the dissertation was a general functionalist approach, viewing the churches as social institutions. And the method, as Gustafson had taught his graduate students, was dictated by the problem at hand. So what "tools" would be required to do this dissertation? Certainly fieldwork would be necessary. In addition, relevant sources were produced by a variety of disciplines, such as cultural anthropology, social psychology, history (and later, ethnohistory), sociology, folklore, and archaeology. And the producers of this literature were a motley crew: traditional scholars, trappers, traders, missionaries, adventurers, and artists, to name a few. In addition to books, a great deal of material was housed in various archives and in oral traditions. Finally, there was the Blackfoot language itself.

Gustafson taught his graduate students that the appropriation of the findings of other disciplines should be guided by two principles: first, one should be very clear about how these disciplines related to the problem on which one was working; second, one had to be reasonably sure that one knew, at least minimally, the history and major approaches of these disciplines. Otherwise, scholars in particular fields might reject your work if they sensed that you did not understand the discipline and its problems. No one wants to be in this embarrassing position!

After having studied fieldwork methods and done preliminary work on the Blackfeet, I set off for the Blackfeet Reservation in the summer of 1963 in my black VW bug. My aim was to understand past and present missionary activity on this reservation and to compare these findings with missionary work among the Blackfeet on the three reserves in Alberta, Canada. While I was able to accomplish the fieldwork part of this goal, the dissertation included data only on the Blackfeet in the United States. Including Canada in the study became increasingly unmanageable. Before going further, something more needs to be said about the people I was studying.

The Blackfeet people possess a rich and complex cultural history. They have been on the Northern Plains for a very long time, and they claimed a huge territory that included much of southern Alberta and about one third of the present state of Montana. The Blackfoot language belongs to the great Algonquian family, and at the time of historic contact these people formed a confederacy that included at least three culturally interrelated groups: the Piegans, the Bloods, and the Siksikas. Some have argued that the Small Robes formed a fourth division. This group became extinct in the 19th century as a consequence of great pandemics that swept the Northern Plains. The present population on the reservation in the United States is about 15,000, and a total of about 20,000 are enrolled tribal members.

The Blackfeet received horses from the south in the last decades of the 18th century and became the horse-mounted mobile people encountered by whites at the beginning of the century. There are oral traditions that tell of the time before horses when the Blackfeet hunted buffalo on foot and used dogs as beasts of burden. There are also oral traditions, supplemented by archaeological evidence, which indicates that the Blackfeet once made pottery. During this earlier time they may have

lived in the eastern woodlands of Canada before they began a slow migration toward the Northern Plains to the west.

Roman Catholics encountered the Blackfeet during the 1840s and began a long process of establishing permanent missionary activity. Protestants, in the form of the Methodist Church, had a brief encounter during the late 1870s, but regularized activity was not established until the 1890s. Both of these religious bodies participated in and implemented the assimilationist policies formulated by the federal government during the late 19th century. The General Allotment Act of 1887 was designed to break up tribal lands, to suppress native religious practices, and to move Indians toward the goal of civilization, citizenship, and assimilation into American society. On the Blackfeet Reservation, the Roman Catholics established a boarding school called Holy Family that sought to implement the policies of civilization and christianization.

groups, backed by the power of the federal government, made a frontal attack on this important social structure. Traditional Blackfoot religious experience and knowledge were constituted by dreams and visions; ritual processes focused on acquiring power for healing, success in hunting and warfare, and for renewal of the animals and the world. Important tribal rituals centered on releasing the power of bundles, which were collections of sacred objects given to the people through the dreams or visions of a culture hero or other important predecessor. The socalled Sun Dance was a complex tribal ceremony that was held each year during the late summer. Even though it was primarily a ritual of world renewal, it involved what whites considered "pagan practices" such as selftorture. The Sun Dance was banned on the Northern Plains by the federal government—despite constitutional protections guaranteeing religious freedom!

After additional fieldwork and archival

research, Mission Among the Blackfeet was

published in 1971. This book told the story of

the development and implementation of

missionary policies, their interrelationship

with the federal policies, and the relative

# Social justice ought to define the mission of the churches from now on whether or not they gained a single member in the process.

Though the Methodist Church did not have a boarding school, it supported government policies and sought to make its contribution toward the "great goal."

Some of the intended and unintended negative consequences of missionary activity among the Blackfeet, as well as other groups across North America, were varying degrees of culture loss, religious and social confusion, cultural shame, and economic marginalization. A number of Blackfeet did accept the "white man's medicine," joining the Roman Catholic Church in greater numbers than the Methodist Church. Even though some Blackfeet responded to the missionary approach, they often did so out of a context of pain and confusion. The consequences of their response often produced an internal conflict within the individual and sometimes a conflict within the extended family if some members of that group chose not to respond to Christianity.

The traditional Blackfoot family was often polygynous, and missionaries from both

> Indian Horse by Jaune Quick-to-See oil, mixed media, collage/canvas

responses of Blackfeet people to the respective missionary movements. The end of the book was a call for the churches to redefine their "mission" from conversion to ministries of social justice. Traditional religious practices and beliefs were being renewed, and some Blackfeet had returned to what they considered the "old ways." I argued that the churches needed to respect this movement and to back off from mission defined as conversion. The Blackfeet as a group were in desperate straits, with as many as 80 percent of the people unemployed during some periods of the year. The cash income per family was well below the poverty line; drop out rates for Blackfoot students were high, and the social ills of alcoholism as well as child and spousal abuse were all too evident. Social justice ought to define the mission of the churches from now on whether or not they gained a single member in the process. Or so I argued!

As a consequence of writing this book, I came to see that one of its great deficits was a relative lack of a Blackfoot "voice." The missionary voice was clear but the Blackfoot response was too muted. Furthermore, my understanding of Blackfoot culture and religion was insufficient, and my interest in this area began to grow. It was at this point that I turned from a focus on Christian missions to Native American religions. Along with this shift came a comparative interest in other groups on the Northern Plains such as the





Crows, Cheyennes, Arapahos, Mandans, Hidatsas, Pawnees, and others. After a sojourn in the country of phenomenological sociology (*The Human Center*, 1981) and further reflection on theories of ritual and symbol, these interests came to fruition in the publication of *Renewing the World* in 1987 and *Becoming and Remaining a People* in 1995. *Renewing the World* approached another interest that had been developing, namely, the relation of Native American religious themes to environmental understandings. This task was taken up in *The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship.* 

At one level, The Animals Came Dancing continued the same sort of work that I had done in the previous two books. This work involved the retrieval and reconstruction of shared cultural symbols and ritual processes that constituted the religious experience and particular identity of specific groups on the Northern Plains. This task was complicated by the fact that the historical material that one depended upon was often flawed by cultural and academic prejudices of various sorts. One of the first problems, then, was critical deconstruction of anthropological observations; the goal of this process was to identify as clearly as possible the biases and prejudices that were imbedded in the text. Once this was done—and it was never done perfectly—one might begin to ask whether it was possible to identify a sufficient number of traditions that would allow reconstruction to proceed. This was usually not a problem given the massive amount of material that exists in moldy volumes in the library.

The Animals Came Dancing used such material to focus questions on how Native American cultures related to what we would call the natural world and to the non-human beings that surrounded them.

These questions had grown increasingly important, primarily because of what I had learned from and shared with Annemarie, my companion of 31 years. She has a specific love for and response to the natural world that compliments and expands my more philosophical interests in environmental matters. Her interest in and scholarship on specific questions concerning, for example, native and exotic plants, her fascination with specific ecological relationships, and her penchant for environmental activism have always brought me back to a more concrete reality!

What I discovered in this book was that Native American cultures encountered what we would call the natural world through a symbolic structure that constituted experience in terms of what one of my friends has called Person, Power, and Gift. We confront "nature;" they encountered powerful persons. We extract "resources;" they received gifts of food, land, and other goods from these powerful persons. From an ecological perspective, we are fundamentally dependent on nonhuman others and natural processes: they understood relations with transcendent nonhuman others in terms of kinship. We assess our "resources," seek to "manage" and manipulate them at the deepest genetic levels; they ritually renewed the world. Ours is a scientific ecology; theirs was a sacred ecology. While these contrasts are too quick, perhaps you see the point. Can we learn from these cultures? Might we achieve a deeper relationship with the living beings that occupy this planet with us? Might these relations be expressed in meaningful ritual processes? I held out hope that this might be possible, but the way is still unclear to me. That problem, as they say, is the starting point of another book.

I would like to conclude by commenting

about what all of this has to do with the title, "Dances With Academic Wolves." First, you will notice that university presses published the books that I have mentioned: the University of Oklahoma and the University of Arizona. They were and are reviewed by scholars in anthropology, Native American studies, history, folklore, and a variety of other disciplines. Very seldom has a scholar in religious studies or in a divinity school reviewed one of these books. As far as I am aware, none of them has been reviewed in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion. What this means is that one runs a gauntlet of reviewers who are primarily outside the field of religion. Some of these reviewers think that I have no business walking on the turf of anthropology or whatever discipline they represent. Second, there are tensions between Indian and non-Indian scholars. While these tensions are receding, there was a time when the legitimacy of books written by non-Indians was under serious question. Even though I may have a genetic connection to the Creeks, I have never used this possibility strategically since I was adopted and the connection was too difficult to prove with absolute certainty. Third, within the university there is a normative rhetoric that claims to value interdisciplinary work. The reality, however, is often the domination of a guild mentality: Rather than openness, one encounters high disciplinary boundaries. In addition one may encounter bemusement on the part of those who find out that one with a degree in religion is working across such important boundaries. And in some cases, doing interdisciplinary work may place one in a permanent liminal space! Fourth, interdisciplinary work is often difficult to get published, sometimes gets snapped at by various academic "wolves," and is slower to come out as compared with work in a single discipline. But had I to do it over again, would I take the same path? In an

# Dancing on the Banks of the Belly River

BY MICHAEL JAY STOLTZFUS, PHD'98, AND SALLY SMITH HOLT, PHD'01

As a tribute to Professor Howard Harrod, alumni/ae Michael Stoltzfus and Sally Holt composed an essay in the first person singular perspective. "For those who know Howard, a joint essay written in the first person 'I' will not be confusing because Howard's presence functions to integrate rather than isolate," explain the authors. Stoltzfus serves as assistant professor of philosophy and religious studies at Valdosta State University in Georgia, and Holt is an assistant professor of religion at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

expression that is much used and abused in Big Sky country, I would reply, "You betcha!" Toward Harrod toasted me at my graduation party last spring. It was I the day after the graduation ceremony, and a few friends and family members had gathered to celebrate the event. It was a memorable conclusion to my experience as a doctoral student in the Graduate Department of Religion. I view it as an incredibly meaningful event because it felt so good to be beginning anew and because Howard toasted me in that moment. His presence helped make everything seem right and complete because his recognition and trust had been with me throughout the journey. I changed a great deal during the process, and Howard contributed significantly to both my academic and personal growth. Theological, ethical, and philosophical education, for Howard, involves not a verbalization but a transformation of experience.

I guess it was really a series of moments in graduate school that changed me and allowed me to see the world in new ways. If you know what I am talking about, you know how exciting it can be to grasp an idea tentatively and then more fully. Grasping a new precept can mean that you never see occurrences the same again. I remember such a semester with Howard. I refer to him as Howard now, but at that time, I was much more comfortable calling him Dr. Harrod. We were engaged in an independent study on Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Clifford Geertz. By the end of the semester, I saw events differently. I had studied the writings of these figures previously, but Howard helped make the ideas congeal. Religion was transformed, and culture became a lens through which I could view human life in

the sacred. This was a pivotal moment for me academically. In *An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard describes such events as moments of awakening. We become aware of an idea, feeling, disposition or symbolic awareness that has eluded use earlier. Howard helped me awaken to the elusive mystery and purposeful summons of cultural and interpersonal expressions so that I could participate more fully in the beauties and vulnerabilities of my own life and experience. This was not an easy process for me. I struggled.

I did not come to Vanderbilt as a finely composed student with well-laid plans. I did not have clear ideas about what courses to take or possible dissertation topics. I came to Vanderbilt, for lack of a better term, "green." I was fresh from seminary, twenty-four years old, and ready for someone to tell me what to do and how to do it. Howard did not cooperate with my plans to follow instructions. Instead, Howard gently but steadfastly required me to take responsibility for my own education, indeed, my own life.

Howard did not try to make students into his own intellectual disciples. Instead, he provided a pedagogical environment that nurtured and empowered students to grow into academic maturity. When you make something you put it together; you carve an image out of wood or stone, working from the outside to the inside. However, when you encourage something to grow, it works in an entirely different way. It expands from within and gradually complicates itself, expanding outward, like a bud blossoming or a seed turning into a plant. Howard embodied the pedagogical art of "letting things happen," which is not mere passivity but, on the contrary, a creative technique

familiar to the activity of many musicians and artists whereby skill and insight are found to be the fruits of a certain dynamic relaxation. This is very different from the typical precise definitions and pretentious attitudes that are so familiar in academic circles.

As a teacher, Howard pushed me to understand that everybody operates on certain taken-for-granted assumptions and that these unexamined systems of belief and practice are extremely influential in our lives. One way of discovering what our basic assumptions are is by contrasting the way you look at something to the way it is looked at in another culture or religious tradition. Through this process of comparative analysis and critical reflection. I not only became more aware of my own biases but also came to realize that a lot of the things I thought I wanted are not really want I want at all. Howard empowered me to view myself as a partner in human inquiry instead of an empty vessel to be filled by social conventions or precise academic instructions.

He also helped me to see that too strict a focus on methodology and social roles functions to depersonalize culture and people. The proper relation among persons is love—or at least respect and humility. The characteristically human is not accessible to technical devices. Indeed, few things stand in the way of a genuine awareness of other people's religious life more firmly than the imposing of one's own taken-for-granted categories upon the data of one's research. Studying with Howard opened my eyes to the multiple horizons of religious life and meaning. He taught me how to be more available to the sacred in all of its manifestations.

By introducing me to the momentous appeal of transcendence, Howard contributed to my academic and personal transformation. The worlds of culture, religion, and people always transcend our definitions and categories. The something that transcends our knowledge is the world itself. Howard helped me learn to live with transcendence without a desire or a need to control the elusive.

Learning to live with transcendence, on one level, involves learning how to live with the unique human beings that inhabit the world. Howard enabled me to become aware of the mundane and obvious. Namely, it is our relationship with other human beings that makes our own selfhood possible. We are not born by ourselves, nor do we learn to talk or to think by ourselves; we need others



to help us. Howard's fundamental answer to the question, "Who am I?" is that I am the counterpart of my relationship with other people and with the broader phenomenal world as a whole. We live, act, value, learn, and love in this world together or not at all. Howard empowered me to see that human agency is fundamentally participatory in that the fulfillment of the needs of others becomes an implicit part of the individual's own fulfillment. The academic term for this is intersubjectivity, but that word is meaningless without the personal sense of responsibility and awareness that accompanies it.

Howard refused to allow his students to confuse terms with personal agency, creeds with the religious life, norms with the moral life, symbols with physical reality, or money with wealth of the human spirit. He was clear that definitions, creeds, norms, and principles are not very meaningful unless you embody them in your everyday life. The religious and moral life requires manifestation and not simply verbalization.

I was introduced to the mythology of the natural world in Howard's course on environmental ethics. Howard taught us how in the particular cultural milieu of the Christian West, "to know" often means "to control;" that is, to see how events may be fitted to consistent orders of words and types so that we may predict and govern their course. But this mania for control leads ultimately to a barren confusion because we ourselves are by no means separated from the environment we are trying to control. Just as human beings are dependent on other people, so are we dependent on the clouds, the rain, the trees, and the sun for our very existence and survival. There is a profound mystery to the earth, sky, and wind, and human beings are never going to be in absolute control of what occurs. Howard encouraged me to celebrate our interconnectedness with the natural world and to question our false sense of isolation from all that surrounds us.

The environmental ethics course was also my introduction to Howard's work with Native American religious traditions. His research in this area has spanned over 30 years, and his knowledge of symbols, myths, rituals, and indigenous cultures has enriched the educational experiences of Vanderbilt students for decades. Howard himself was transformed by his passion for Native American religions. He fervently wished for all of us to be transformed by our own passions in a similar way. This transformational passion is clear in a paper Howard presented at the Graduate Department of Religion on the topic of the Blackfoot Okan. He describes his own movement from mere "observer" of the Northern Plains Sun Dance to participant in the dance itself. He says of the experience:

"I had been seized by the symbols, transported by them, absorbed into their meaning. I will seek this experience again, not as an observer but as a dancer. And if I am able to participate in the Okan again, I hope and, more strongly, I desire to move again into those levels of experience that came upon me in the enclosure along the banks of the Belly River."

Howard helped me and many other students move from observer to dancer. I participate more fully now, in all that I do, from the effort of teaching to the breaking of bread.

Howard's seminar on Moral Agency

A Shaman's Helping Spirits 1971 by Jessie Oonark Inuit stone cut and stencil 94 x 64 cm.

influenced me greatly. A problem with some contemporary ethical analysis is the popular idea that true moral agency, and therefore moral responsibility, resides in social systems and social institutions. As a result of this problematic association, individuals readily blame government, corporations, and the so-called "system" for all the ills of our society, while individuals routinely claim that in their roles as employees of these corporations and citizens of these governments they are not to be blamed. For Howard, individual moral development, as it is enhanced or hindered by ongoing participation in human relationships and in educational

and religious institutions, is the key to a more compassionate society. I now realize that moral agency and responsibility resides in unique individuals as they jointly form a social collectivity and instigate both personal and cultural transformation.

To be honest, I was probably not the best student in any of my Vanderbilt courses because in some ways I was timid and hesitant, but I learned. And, most importantly, Howard believed in me. He did not tell me outright, but I knew it. It made a significant difference in my graduate school career, and I held on to that knowledge. Even though I knew he believed in my capabilities, Dr. Harrod's interest in me was not anything remarkable. He was positive toward all the students, but not overly positive. He expected students to work hard and to earn his respect.

I had first met Howard on a visit to Vanderbilt the spring prior to my enrollment. I don't think our first meeting was extraordinary. I know I was not overly impressive. I mentioned a book he had written that I had looked up on the dusty shelves of my seminary's computer-free, outdated library. I was totally unaware of his current research interests. I found that first conversation to be a bit difficult, but he was kind to me. That's the core of it. He is a human being with reservoirs of kindness. A few examples from my GDR

years will help illustrate this point.

I mentioned that I was a timid and hesitant student when I first embarked on my graduate school education at Vanderbilt. Howard's actions made a difference for me. He never hesitated to challenge me, but he did so in a way that encouraged my growth. I clearly remember him calling me at home to offer me my first teaching assistantship. I had not applied for one, but he asked me to be a T.A. for one of his seminars on Native American religious traditions. I jumped at the chance. During our last meeting, after that semester of working together, I asked him why he had offered me the job. We had gone to the dining room in our building and we were eating lunch. He told me he'd thought I needed it. It was that simple for him, and he was so right.

Howard was one of the people who encouraged me to pursue my interest in the sociology of religion which became my minor field and greatly influenced my dissertation work. After sending him the first draft of my dissertation, I recall receiving the carefully read copy from him in the mail. He had read it while in Montana for the summer, and he had given me part of his research and writing time by responding so thoughtfully and thoroughly to my own work.

My memories of Howard seem endless. I remember the parties we had in graduate school. Howard hosted the first one I attended. He was there for so many of our gatherings because they were important to him. He told me that socializing was another aspect of the educational process. It was how we were to learn about the examination process and the proposal process. We were to learn from each other. Howard helped me through some very difficult times. I remember his comforting presence when I was struggling with issues of family illness and death. One summer, when he was leaving for Montana, he gave me the keys to his office. I was working on the index for his most recent publication, The Animals Came Dancing, and he told me to use his office any time. He knew I needed a space for my dissertation work. He gave me the space I needed. If you've ever written a dissertation, you probably know that point when you just don't know if you can ever finish. It becomes an emotional and psychological battle. I remember the day I knew I would finish. I was in Howard's office discussing my dissertation. I was no longer at Vanderbilt and had just finished my first year of teaching. I'd traveled back to Nashville during the spring to meet with committee members and do some research. Howard said to me, "You'll finish." That was all it took to get me past the point of wondering. His belief in me allowed me to believe in myself.

Dr. Harrod's contributions in the areas of research and teaching are unquestionable. His knowledge alone, though, is not the reason I consider him my mentor and my friend. It is the whole person that garners my admiration. There are many parts of him of which I know little—the husband, the father, the grandfather. But, I do know this: Howard Harrod was willing to help all of his students. I know this because these students have been my

friends and confidants. His availability and presence have meant so much to all of us. A bit of encouragement here and there has made a difference for us. We are an important part of his legacy. I know he has helped make each of us better scholars, and my graduate school friends are just a few of the many students he has influenced. I know that he has made me a better person. Not just because of the ideas about religion and ethics he has imparted to me but also because of the way he has treated me. I told him once that I hoped, some day, to be the kind of professor that he is. I still hope that at some point in my life, I will achieve that goal. So I'd like to offer a toast to Dr. Howard Harrod. Thank you! For all your years of teaching, for all your research and writing, and for all of your kindness to your students, I offer you my deepest gratitude and respect.

# The Anthropologists Came Dancing

Inship and reciprocity are at the center of human relations to nature in the native cosmologies that Howard Harrod's work illuminates. In the Northwest Plains, culture heroes become kin to animals, and through this union they gain the power to cross between the worlds of people and animals. They learn to speak the language of the other, gaining a kind of double consciousness through which they view reality from the perspectives of both.

The other day, Howard commented that if he had it to do over again, he might become an anthropologist after all. Like the tales told by Trickster-Coyote, it was a disingenuous comment, a tease of perspective. The truth is that Howard became an anthropologist long ago, crossed over to become kin to my Ethnographer tribe. Like all boundary-crossing culture heroes, he learned to speak the language of the others, live as they live, strange rites of fieldwork and all. He returned to his tribe, the people of Ethics and Religion, with a gift of seeing from multiple perspectives, translating between many disciplines, and between ideas from the past and for the future.

Anthropologists claim Howard as kin, but like all boundary-crossing culture heroes and shamans, his work moves far beyond the bounds of a single tribe. From his perspective as an ethicist, Howard uses ethnographic material to illuminate the insights and relevance of native religions as philosophical and moral systems. At the center is a vision of relations based in principles of respect, reciprocity, and renewal between peoples, and between humans and the more-than-human world.

—Beth Ann Conklin, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Religious Studies Vanderbilt University

# A Big Sky of the Mind

oward is a rare Mensch, the kind of person you hope to have as a colleague and you're lucky to have as a friend. I discovered this virtually the moment I first arrived at Vanderbilt in 1973, 29 years ago and fresh out of graduate school. Howard was 10 years older than I, and he moved immediately to make me feel welcome. He was chair of the Graduate Department of Religion when I joined the faculty—ironically the same position I now hold as he retires from the faculty. While we became close friends from the start. Howard also became my unacknowledged mentor during those stressful years as a new teacher and provided subtle suggestions and savvy guidance through the maze of faculty politics.

His intellectual interests, rooted in the sociology of religion, embrace both ethics and Native American studies—if you will, a

Big Sky of the mind. Howard is guided by the values of respect, engagement, and honesty. In his first book, Mission Among the Blackfeet, he exposed the devastating effects that Protestant and Catholic missionaries had on the Blackfeet people, and he called for the church to abandon its proselytizing and cultural conquest and turn instead toward a ministry of social justice for these Native Americans. When his Methodist church failed to respond, Howard summarily defrocked himself. Vanderbilt University Divinity School Dean, emeritus, Joe Hough, writes appropriately, "My favorite description of Howard Harrod is composed of three words: Integrity, Integrity, Integrity."

Howard is not a disciple-maker, but he has always respected students as intellectual equals. I understand that he can sit in silence during a seminar longer than any other

teacher could manage while a student thinks out a response to a question.

Characteristic of Howard is his sociology-speak—his penchant for sprinkling his normal conversations with phrases and constructions most of us would have to work out in writing, such as "maintaining high symbolic boundaries," "routinized charisma," "the structures of everyday life," "the institutionalized distribution of knowledge," "predecessors and successors," or recently: "The problem is the nomadism of our faculty with respect to collective behavior." I'm not certain how we'll manage to get through another faculty meeting without his interpretations of our actions.

—Douglas A. Knight, Professor of Hebrew Bible & Chair of the Graduate Department of Religion Vanderbilt University

# Phenomenology and the MG

had the privilege of working with Howard Harrod from 1970 to 1981 when we were colleagues on the ethics faculty at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. This was an especially important period in my life, for I was shifting the focus of my studies from systematic and philosophical theology to theological and philosophical ethics. Howard made valuable contributions to my intellectual development, especially by introducing me to phenomenological studies that can illumine relationships between ethical and human science perspectives on human action. He also deepened my understanding of Native American traditions and the urgency of honoring the integrity of Native American communities in U.S. federal and state policies.

One special delight: he passed on to me his bright red MG convertible, which especially suited my mood and spirit at the time. I regret that our busy lives have kept us from on-going contact over the past two decades. Howard has retained an important place in my thoughts and memories, and he will continue to do so.

—Thomas W. Ogletree, Professor of Theological Ethics Yale Divinity School

### The Gift of Connections

oward was never one to attend professional meetings for the joy of being there. A group of Howard's graduate students who missed seeing him organized an effort to reunite us at a meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics. That event may be the only occasion for which we all gathered. We paid tribute to Howard and remembered him for his seminars on ethics and social thought and for his many kindnesses to his graduate students. That tribute remains one of my most memorable occasions in the Society of Christian Ethics.

Howard's care for us and his ability to help us make connections between social thought and the moral life will remain a part of our teaching and scholarship as long as we remain teachers and scholars. We continue to be grateful.

—Harlan R. Beckley, Founder's Medalist, MDiv'72, PhD'78, The Fletcher Otey Thomas Professor of Religion & Director of the Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capability Washington & Lee University

# gleanings

## From the Alumni/ae Association President

Greetings to all VDS, GDR, and Oberlin alumni/ae,

For the past two years, I have been privileged to serve as president of your Alumni/ae Association. During that time we have welcomed a new dean, James Hudnut-Beumler, and a new director of alumni/ae and development, Christopher Sanders; we have honored Harold Harrod, the Oberlin Alumni Professor of Social Ethics and Sociology of Religion, upon the occasion of his retirement and congratulate him upon joining the emeriti faculty, and we have mourned the passing of Liston Mills, the Oberlin Alumni Professor of Pastoral Theology and Counseling, emeritus.

As alumni/ae, we have seen the Divinity School reach out to the university and larger community in the wake of September 11. Some of you have been involved in our continuing education series that focused on Islam and created opportunities for interreligious dialogue. Others have heard familiar and new voices at the community breakfast presentations. Last fall we welcomed Parker Palmer as the Cole Lecturer and initiated an alumni/ae gathering in connection with that weekend's association and counsel meetings.

Edited by Dale Johnson, a history of the Divinity School—our history—was published in December 2001 by the University's press under the title *Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change.* Alumni/ae Jimmy Byrd, James Duke, Anthony Dunnavant, Kim Maphis Early, Richard Goode, and Frank Gulley Jr., contributed chapters to this important work. If you have not purchased a copy, discounted copies are available for alumni/ae through the Development Office at 615/322-4205.

The first Alumni/ae Global Perspectives trip has been scheduled for June 3-12, 2003, with the help of our Office of Alumni/ae and Development, the Center for Global Education, and Fernando Segovia, professor of New Testament and early Christianity. A native of Cuba, Fernando provides us a unique opportunity to learn about the cultural, religious, economic, and environmental landscapes of this interesting country. The summer 2003 trip will mark the first time he has returned to Cuba since his departure in 1961.

Global Perspectives has become an integral part of the curriculum at the Divinity School and has allowed our students to engage in experiential learning in crucial parts of the "two-thirds world" that includes South Africa, Nicaragua, and Thailand. "Transformative" is the adjective students use most often when reflecting on these experiences, and I encourage you to consider this opportunity for "transformative" educational travel to our Latin American neighbor.

As I prepare to turn the reins of leadership over to my colleague and your vice-president, James Cole, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Alumni/ae Association and to become acquainted with

come from a rich heritage, and if our current students are an indication of the future of VDS, that heritage undoubtedly will continue. Peace,

more of you during my term of office. We

Trudy H. Stringer, MDiv'88 President, VDS, GDR, and Oberlin Alumni/ae Association trudy.h.stringer@vanderbit.edu 615/343-3926

Seventy-one graduates from the Divinity School and the Graduate School's Department of Religion were welcomed into the Vanderbilt University alumni/ae community on Friday, May 10, 2002. Chancellor Gordon Gee conferred the master of divinity degree upon 26 students and the master of theological studies degree upon 18 graduates during commencement exercises on Alumni Lawn. Eight students received the master of arts degree in religion while 19 members of the Class of 2002 were awarded the doctorate of philosophy in religion.

#### Kudos for the 2001-2002 Academic Year

Founder's Medal for first honors in the Divinity School, William A. Newcomb Prize for receiving honors on one's senior project, and Wilbur Tillett Prize in ethics

Jill Elizabeth Sawoski Shashaty, MDiv'02, Southampton, Pennsylvania

Academic Achievement Award and Umphrey Lee Dean's Award for best exemplifying the School's vision Amy Marian Ard, MTS'02, Atlanta, Georgia

Florence Conwell Prize for outstanding preaching

Marilyn Eileen Thornton, MDiv'02,

Washington, D.C.

St. James Academy Award for outstanding sermon Janet Todd Salyer, MDiv'02, Nashville, Tennessee W. Kendrick Grobel Award for outstanding achievement in biblical studies Jay Ross Hartley, MDiv'02, Nashville, Tennessee

J.D. Owen Prize for most successful work in the New Testament Donna Ann Parramore, BA'83, MDiv'02 Nashville, Tennessee

Nella May Overby Memorial Award for field education Erika Olive Callaway, MDiv'02, Moore, Oklahoma Shelli Renee Yoder, MDiv'02, Shipshewana, Indiana

Elliott F. Shepard Prize in church history *Kaye Pickens Nickell, MDiv'02, Franklin, Tennessee* 

Christian Board of Publication Awards to Disciple students

Sharman Kay Hartson, MDiv'02, Springfield, Tennessee Arnold Gene Hayes, MTS'02, Nashville, Tennessee Eric Christopher Smith, Walnut Grove, North Carolina

Student Government Association Community Service Awards Annette Grace Zimondi, MTS'02, Harare, Zimbabwe Robert Taylor Phillips, MDiv'2, Nashville, Tennessee

Bettye Ford Award for service to the faculty and students of the Graduate School's Department of Religion

Douglas A. Knight, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Chair of the Graduate Department of Religion

# Heeding the Call

BY JILL ELIZABETH SAWOSKI SHASHATY, MDIV'02

rawing upon a text by the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr., Professor Susan Bond, in her baccalaureate address, charged our graduating class to "STAY AWAKE for the revolution!" This message, I feel, is particularly appropriate for describing both the development of my education in theology and ethics and the tasks that my education demands of me in the future. My years at Vanderbilt Divinity School have, indeed, been a series of awakenings, a time in which my impulses have been transformed into convictions, my inklings into ideas, and my suspicions into awareness.

These moments of awakening have been as varied as they have been plentiful, for instance: analyzing economics and globalization through the lens of Christian theology with Professor Douglas Meeks; recognizing the depth and moral significance of our relationship in the natural world in Professor Sallie McFague's course in ecological theology; realizing both my own identity as a feminist and the vital importance of women's voices in theological and ethical conversations through Professor Mary Fulkerson's course in feminist theology; learning to critique and transform unjust social arrangements and ideologies in Professor Howard Harrod's ethics courses. While studying in the master of divinity program, my coursework assumed flesh in my field education experiences. Walking through a death row cellblock in Nashville and visiting a village of cardboard and tin shelters in a South African township incarnated my theological education in an irreplaceably transformative way.

Over three years, these distinct events have slowly integrated themselves within me. They have become a cohesive set of theological and philosophical understandings of culture and history, a powerful tool for analysis, and most importantly, the impetus for a grounded and well-informed conviction to work for greater justice and peace in our world. Professor Bond's charge to "STAY AWAKE"



Left: Carpenter Scholar Jill Elizabeth Sawoski Shashaty, MDiv'02, received the Founder's Medal for first honors in the Divinity School from Dean James Hudnut-Beumler during Commencement 2002. A native of Southampton, Pennsylvania, Sawoski is the 83rd Founder's Medalist in the history of the School; the first medal was awarded in 1917 to Tzz Chao of Soochow, China. Shashaty was graduated Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude, in 1997 from Georgetown University where she earned a baccalaureate in English and mathematics. As a student in the master of divinity program at VDS, she concentrated upon the study of systematic theology and ethics and wrote The Ecological Dimensions of Sacramental Life for her senior project.

"The theological and moral language that pervades our current national discourse surrounding terrorism, homeland security, justice, and economics exemplifies and underscores the vital importance for theologically educated persons not to shrink from the call to be prophets, even conscientious agitators."

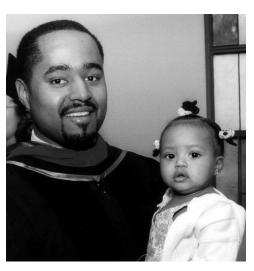
—Jill Elizabeth Sawoski Shashaty 2002 VDS Founder's Medalist

articulates and amplifies hints of this same message woven into the fabric of nearly every class of my program of studies. The theological and moral language that pervades our current national discourse surrounding terrorism, homeland security, justice, and economics exemplifies and underscores the vital importance for theologically educated persons not to shrink from the call to be

prophets, even conscientious agitators. I am certain that Vanderbilt Divinity School has prepared me well for this charge, and I hope that I can meet the challenge of service to our human community and to the endangered natural world by infusing wakefulness with action and compassion.

### Commencement 2002

COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CRENSHAW



James Gabriel Banks Jr., BS'95, JD,'99, MDiv'02, of Delaware, Ohio, holds his one-year-old daughter, Nicole Simone, following the act of worship and celebration in Benton Chapel. He currently is serving as a judicial federal clerk under the Honorable William J. Haynes Jr., JD'73, in the U.S. Department of Justice.



Katrina Marie Laude, MDiv'02, of Indiana, Pennsylvania, modified rather slightly the Divinity School's traditional black, gold, and scarlet academic regalia to include an insignia indicating the year she became an alumna. While she prepares for ordination, Laude currently serves as a youth group director at Calvary United Methodist Church in Nashville.



Judy Davis, mother of Gerry Wayne Davis Jr., MDiv'02, happily examines her son's diploma. The alumnus serves as associate pastor for the congregation at First United Methodist Church in Pulaski, Tennessee, where his responsibilities include overseeing the youth minister's work and the church's educational ministries.



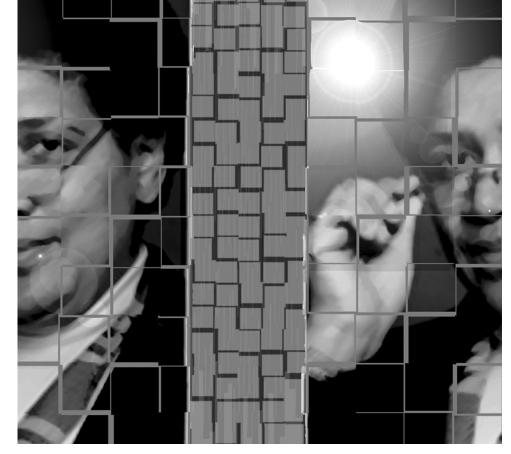
Donna Ann Parramore, BA'83, MDiv'02, associate pastor at City Road Chapel United Methodist Church in Madison, Tennessee, joined friends and family members during the graduates' reception in the refectory. From left are James Todd McLean, BE'85, and Warren, William, and Anne Parramore.



As banner bearer for the Divinity School, Amy Marian Ard, MTS'02, of Atlanta, Georgia, lead the procession of degree candidates to Alumni Lawn for the commencement exercises. Ard returned in August to her undergraduate alma mater, Denison University, in Granville, Ohio, where she is serving as campus chaplain for an ecumenical student religious group and as a consultant for a grant proposal to be submitted to the Lilly Foundation.



Having earned degrees in music from Howard University and Johns Hopkins before matriculating at Vanderbilt, violinist Marilyn Eileen Thornton added master of divinity to her credentials on May 10, 2002.



# An Open Letter to Audre Lorde

BY ANGELA DENISE DAVIS, MDIV'00

For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us.

—Audre Lorde (1934-1992)

Dear Audre,

I've been thinking of you. Perhaps it is because you belong to the ideas that keep me awake when I would be asleep. You are like a sliver of light that I see coming through my blinds at night, a reminder that there are happenings on the outside while I slumber. Your words make me want to sleep less.

I need total darkness to sleep, which is why I put brown, butcher paper over my windows. The thin blinds do a poor job of keeping out the nightlight beside my front door. It's the same butcher paper I used to imprint my naked body with red tempera paint, but after a few months I turned the image into a man's face. He had two big eyes, a big nose and a bushy mustache. My body parts translated exactly into the contours of his face. The nude was part of a triptych that had side panels with quotations from your books. But I'm not writing you this letter to tell you why I was afraid to keep the painting on display in my home. (I did have a problem, though, with the thought of the plumber or my landlord gazing upon a reflection of my naked body.)

I'm writing to tell you that I finally listened to the voice on the inside of me. You would have been proud. I now understand what you meant by saying that "[my] silence will not protect [me]." You were right. This voice inside of me has repeated those words often. Today I listen.

The voice has always been there, but I haven't always trusted it. It often gets lost between the notes of tradition, place, culture, and expectation. So when it has said, "Stand," I have found my seat to be a better

place, or when it has shouted, "Stay," I have fled. How could I trust something that came with no guarantees? It was, seemingly, only accompanied by risk and adventure. I think it must have been sister to the voice that Robert Frost heard while in the woods contemplating which road to take. Who would have known what roads I would have taken had I listened to the voice years ago.

It not just a voice, though, it's a movement, the same voice/movement in the words of God saying, "Let there be..." and there was. This voice/movement was what I encountered as I sat on the front row in the church during my grandmother's funeral. This is the encounter that made me realize the truth of your words, those words I had often heard uttered time and again by the voice inside me.

The church was called "St. Mary's" for reasons I can't understand. Why Mary's name would have to be attached to such a sexist place I do not know. Holy Mother of God! It was my grandmother's church, but for many years she had been too ill to worship there. The most recent time she had been in the church was for my grandfather's funeral a couple of years before her death.

At my grandmother's funeral, the pastor opened the service for remarks. I left my seat to say a few words only to be headed off by another woman who made it down the aisle before me. I sat on the front row, the mourner's bench, waiting for her to finish. That's when I heard the voice.

"From where are you going to speak, the lectern or the pulpit?" I was fully prepared to go to the lectern before I heard the voice. If I had not been detained on that row, if I had not heard the voice, I would have performed the "proper" action and stood at the lectern. It was the voice. The voice made me do it. Before I had a chance to answer the question posed, I found my body raising its weight

and approaching the steps to the pulpit. Not fully aware of what any of this meant, I made my way to the top of the steps and met the charge of my grandmother's pastor.

"I don't allow women preachers in my church!"

The pastor stood between the pulpit and me as if he were guarding an untouchable relic. His words, clear and sharp, stunned me. I didn't know what to say.

"But you can go over there and speak," he said pointing to the lectern across the way.

The preacher wasn't unlike the men I had encountered on a regular basis during my course of work at a religious institution. The only difference about him was that he knew, albeit through an assumption, that I was a "woman preacher." I had kept that a secret from the others. It made my work easier. "What they don't know won't hurt them," I told myself. Why encounter conflict by reveling that you are both clergy and from another denomination? My silence was to protect me.

Truth be told, it wasn't just the men I didn't allow to know this part of me. It was women, too, women like the one who told me that she considered me to be a "sister" of hers, even though she didn't really like having women friends. She suggested that women should just stay in their places and be "pregnant" and "cute."

Clearly, I was "out of my place" as I stood beside the pulpit. Refusing to move until I moved away, the pastor watched as I slowly descended the stairs. Moving with more grace than I ever had in my life, I spoke as I walked.

"No,
I will not
stand
over there.
I
will stand
here."

Here, was beside my grandmother's casket. I started to cry, and I could feel my top lip quivering. My nerves were not under my control anymore, but to the degree that my lips trembled my body stood erect. Pain had been dumped upon my grief. I looked out into the audience. There was a hushed quiet of anticipation. I saw shock on the faces of my family. The voice inside me simply said, "Your silence will not protect you." So I spoke.

"This is my grandmother," I said pointing to the casket. "And I will stand here." I then turned towards the pastor. "I know you don't allow women preachers in your church."

"That's right," I could hear the preacher reply.

"But this is my grandmother, and she was proud of me."

I was beginning to harness the energy that had been spent in my tears. I went on to speak about a reflection I had earlier that morning after reading Ecclesiastes 3. Then I returned to my seat and closed my eyes. I tried desperately to settle my soul.

Audre, I closed my eyes for the remainder of the service because I didn't want to forget the incident. I wanted to remember how it felt to be accosted by someone who tried to threaten what I had taken for granted— my status as a clergywoman. This was not the first encounter when I had seen sexism in the

church, but it was "my" encounter. It was my story.

I had been in a church where the pastor told women ministers that they were not to sit on the front row with the male ministers. I had witnessed men leaving a worship service when the topic of equality for women ministers came up in a sermon. I even had heard about men refusing to attend conferences because women were pictured on the cover of the conference material. Sexism in the church was not new to me, but it had never touched me in such a personal manner.

But, Audre, this really isn't just about my voice/movement. It's about my father's as well. It was his pastor who confronted me in the pulpit. My father, a faithful member of that church, was silent during the ride home. This did not surprise me, for my father is often silent. I didn't know whether he was offended by my actions, though. I wondered if he were angry or disappointed.

My mother, who attends a different church, was anything but silent.

"But baby, didn't you know that he would be like that. This is the same man who refuses to serve communion to persons who aren't Baptists."

I listened to my mother and began to cry all over again.

"But Mama, he had no right."

"I know he had no right. He was wrong,

but what did you expect?" she asked.

That is the question. I didn't have any expectations because none of this was planned. It was that voice/movement that had lead me, lead all of us into new territory.

Later that afternoon in the kitchen, my father told me that he would have a word with his pastor. I was shocked. My father hadn't been angry with me after all. I imagine that some voice inside him spoke up that day, too. He had never seen someone be turned away from a pulpit, and it marked him.

Audre, my father hasn't read any of your work, but he knows that his silence will not protect him. He spoke with his pastor and told him that I was his daughter. Of course, the pastor said that I was wrong and out of place, but that really didn't matter. What mattered was that my father and I learned to listen to the voices inside, and we moved when the spirit said, "Move."

That's all I wanted to say.

It's nighttime again, Audre, but I can't sleep. You keep me awake once again. I hear the voice inside of me, and I wonder what road it will present for me this night.

Goodnight, Audre.

The epistler, who serves as admissions and recruitment director at Vanderbilt Divinity School, is an ordained minister in the Christian

# A Litany for Survival

For those of us who live at the shoreline standing upon the constant edges of decision crucial and alone for those of us who cannot indulge the passing dreams of choice who love in doorways coming and going in the hours between dawns looking inward and outward at once before and after seeking a now that can breed futures like bread in our children's mouths so their dreams will not reflect the death of ours;

who were imprinted with fear like a faint line in the center of our foreheads learning to be afraid with our mother's milk for by this weapon this illusion of some safety to be found the heavy-footed hoped to silence us For all of us this instant and this triumph We were never meant to survive.

For those of us

And when the sun rises we are afraid it might not remain when the sun sets we are afraid it might not rise in the morning when our stomach are full we are afraid of indigestion when our stomachs are empty we are afraid

we may never eat again when we are loved we are afraid love will vanish when we are alone we are afraid love will never return and when we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard nor welcomed

but when we are silent we are still afraid.

So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive.

—from *The Black Unicorn:*Poems by Audre Lorde
W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.,
New York, 1987, pages 31-32



Church (Disciples of Christ).

Jim Davis Rosenthal, associate director of student academic services at the University of Colorado in Boulder, created the diptych titled "Audre" for Standards: the International Journal of Multicultural Studies, Volume V, Number 1, Fall 1995. The fee for this reprinting of Rosenthal's depiction of the African American poet Lorde has been donated by the artist to research on breast cancer, the condition with which the poet struggled for 14 years and which claimed her life in 1992.

## Alumni/ae Class Notes

Russell Lindsay, BD'59, who served as pastor for the Minnesota Conference of the United Methodist Church from 1959 to 1982, has returned to Tennessee where he and his wife, Earline, have settled on the family acreage near Hendersonville. Lindsay retired from the pastorate in 1996 but continues his ministry by helping to revitalize small congregations. He writes that he is spending his retirement years playing the guitar, growing a garden, and raising beef cattle on his "hobby" farm.

Dale Everette Bilbrey, MDiv'69, MLS'78, was ordained in July 2001 for the mid-south conference of the United Church of Christ. After 20 years of service as a theological librarian at Scarritt College, the Upper Room, and Memphis Theological Seminary, he fulfilled the history, polity, and theology course requirements at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut and completed his clinical pastoral education at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Memphis. Bilbrey currently serves as chaplain at Memphis Regional Medical trauma center.



Riggins R. Earl Jr., MDiv'69, PhD'78, professor of ethics and theology at the Interdenominational Theology Center in Atlanta, Georgia, is the author of Dark Salutations: Ritual, God, and Greetings in the African American Community published by Trinity Press International in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. A volume in the African American Religious Thought and Life Series, the book is dedicated to Charles H. Long, "the provocateur of the first significant group of black scholars who were studying for the doctorate of philosophy in religion during the 1970s," and to Howard Harrod, the Oberlin Alumni Professor of Social Ethics and Sociology of Religion and professor of religious studies, emeritus, at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Graduate School of Religion. According to Earl, "Harrod brought to the teaching moment a pastoral disposition that gave comfort to the most insecure student." The Vanderbilt alumnus also is the author of Dark Symbols, Obscure Signs: God, Self, and Community in the Slave Mind.

Robert Wayne Willis, BD'69, director of pastoral care for Norton Healthcare in Louisville, Kentucky, is the author of P.S. God, Can you Fly? Heart-Felt and Hope-Filled Prayers of Children published in January 2002 by Westminster John Knox Press. In his book of reflections based upon 30 prayers composed and left by children in the hospital chapel. Willis explains, "The prayers of children are remarkably uninhibited. Unbound by conventional notions of how prayers should be structured and worded, these children freely pray what they mean—the kind of prayer not to be heard in a formal Sunday morning church service. Children composed the prayers not in a classroom, not to satisfy a Sunday school teacher, but in the fiery furnace of a tertiary care hospital where the stakes—the life and health of a loved one—could not be higher." He and his wife, Dorothy Jones Willis, BA'68, reside in Louisville.

Ariel Medina Zambrano, MDiv'69, writes that he is regaining his energy after a serious bout with cirrhosis of the liver and that he has returned to his study of Jesus' parables for his third book in biblical studies to be published by Upper Room Books. He and his wife, Mary, who is originally from Gallatin,

Tennessee, reside in Claremont, California, and recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

Richard H. Schmidt, MDiv'70, is the author of Glorious Companions: Five Centuries of Anglican Spirituality published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan. By examining the most influential Anglican figures from the 16th century to the present, the book chronicles their lives and work while capturing the deep personal faith they communicated to the world. Twentynine spiritual biographies of bishops, scholars, wives, poets, novelists, and teachers who have influenced the Anglican communion and the church are presented by Schmidt who retired in 2000 after serving three decades as an Episcopal parish priest in West Virginia, Missouri, and Alabama. He and his wife, Pamela Hegerberg Schmidt, reside in Chesterfield, Missouri.

James M. Lawson, D'71, who was named Vanderbilt University Divinity School's first Distinguished Alumnus in 1996, is among the civil rights leaders profiled in the film "We Were Warriors" from the Public Broadcasting Station documentary *A Force More Powerful*. This chronicle of the campaign of civil disobedience that helped catapult the African-American struggle to the forefront of national attention received the second annual Jan Karski Film Competition award in recognition of outstanding television programs produced on the theme of moral courage.

James E. McReynolds, MDiv'71, DD'72, pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Nebraska City and Chapel in the Elms in Elmwood, Nebraska, will celebrate 50 years in ministry in 2003. An elder in the United Methodist Church, he also serves as a mental health therapist for Lutheran Family Services in Omaha and as campus minister at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

Robert G. Bottoms, DMin'72, president of DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, has begun a four-year term as the Divinity School's liaison to the Vanderbilt University Alumni Board. He succeeds Fr. William E. McConville, O.F.M., PhD'83, who currently serves as associate pastor for the Catholic Community of Saint Francis of Assisi in

Raleigh, North Carolina.

William Winston Barnard Jr., BA'74, MDiv'78, of Sylvania, Ohio, has completed his assignment as interim associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Findlay and has accepted the appointment of chaplain at Swan Creek Retirement Village in Toledo. As an affiliate of the Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services, Swan Creek provides assisted living, home care nursing, and hospice care. Barnard will be responsible for leading worship, counseling, developing residents' ministries, and working with church relations. "I have enjoyed two great years with the good folks at FPC, and learning to speak Presbyterian wasn't really that hard," he writes. "I am confident I will be busy, challenged, productive, and nurtured at Swan Creek."

Dent Catron Davis, MDiv'74, has been appointed director of continuing education of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, where he will be responsible for designing educational programs for ministers, educators, and congregational leaders. "The call of Dent Davis as director of continuing education signals Columbia's intention to take the program to an even higher level of service to the church," says D. Cameron Murchison, dean of faculty and executive vice president. For the past six years, Davis served as associate pastor at Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary where he earned the doctorate of ministry and is completing his doctorate in education at the University of Tennessee.

Mervyn Alonzo Warren, DMin'75, professor of preaching at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, is the author of King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Ir., a homiletical biography published by InterVarsity Press of Downers Grove, Illinois. Originally written as a dissertation for the doctorate of philosophy at Michigan State University, the manuscript, which documents the author's private interview with King, became part of the archives at the King Center for Nonviolent Change in Atlanta. Warren revised the dissertation for publication to illustrate how King's sermons remain topical and timely. "Here was a man who spoke and served from principles ham-

mered out primarily from family, the Bible, and theological underpinnings. All of his responses to my questions bore indelible marks of a conscious fulfillment of the understanding of God's law of love incumbent on his life-love of God and love of his fellow human beings," explains Warren. "Dr. King took the gospel from behind stained glass windows and placed it on courthouse steps."

Gay House Welch, MA'76, PhD'80, University chaplain and assistant professor of religious studies, is the recipient of the Mary Jane Werthan Award for 2002. Named in

honor of the first woman to serve on the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust, the award is presented annually by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center to an individual who has contributed significantly to the advancement of women at the University. The award celebrates three attributes of Mary Jane Werthan, BA'29, MA'35, (1907-2000): vision, persistence, and extraordinary skill in interpersonal and institutional relations. Welch, who has devoted two decades of her vocation to supporting the community of women at the University, currently serves on the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities.

Rosemary Brown, MDiv'77, pastor of Nashville's Monroe Street and Jordonia United Methodist Churches, delivered three sermons during the spring for *The Protestant Hour*, a national radio program that has been broadcast for 57 years. Cooperatively produced by the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Episcopal Media Center, *The Protestant Hour* is the recipient of the George Foster Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting.

"Letters mingle souls,

thus absent friends speak."

—John Donne (1572-1631)

By sending us news about your professional and personal accomplishments, you won't be absent from all the friends you made at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

Please keep us and your classmates informed of your vocation as well as your avocations by sending a class note to divinityspire@vanderbilt.edu or to The Spire, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Office 115, 411 21st Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37240-1121.

We're anxious to hear from all VDS, GDR, and Oberlin Alumni/ae!

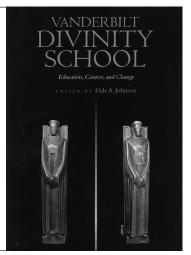
Brown's work with the United Methodist Women's School of Mission has proven instrumental in raising funds for a school in the Congo. She also was guest speaker for the 2002 Church Women's World Day of Prayer Celebration in Huntsville, Alabama.

Eric Carl Holmstrom, MDiv'78, serves as staff chaplain at Abington Memorial Hospital, a 508-bed facility in Abington, Pennsylvania. He also assists his pastor as a member of the pastoral staff at Saints Memorial Baptist Church (American Baptist) in Bryn Mawr. As an adjunct faculty member of Eastern University's School of Professional Studies in Saint Davids, Holstrom teaches introductory biblical courses, and as a chaplain in the army reserves, he was called to New York City after September 11, 2001, to provide pastoral care for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel. "Self care for me involves yeararound walking on the beaches of Cape Henlopen on the Delaware shore," writes Holstrom, "and I hope to visit the Divinity School soon."

Mitchell Pacwa, S.J., MA'82, PhD'84, has accepted a position at the Eternal Word Television Network located in Irondale, Alabama.

# VANDERBILT DIVINITY SCHOOL

Copies of Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change are available through the Office of Alumni/ae and Development. To order your copy, contact Pat Daniel, activities coordinator for the Divinity School, by calling 615/322-4205 or by writing her at pat.daniel@vanderbilt.edu.



CELEBRATING 127 YEARS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Jesuit priest previously taught at the Institute for Religious and Pastoral Studies at the University of Dallas. While studying Hebrew Bible in the Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt, Pacwa was introduced to broadcasting when he founded the "Catholic View on Scripture" radio program in response to the anti-Catholic sentiment he perceived was being expressed on a Nashville station. ETWN, launched in 1981, broadcasts 24 hours a day to 66 million homes in 38 countries through television, radio, and the Internet.

Mary Beth Blinn, MDiv'83, was appointed superintendent of the Danville District at the 2002 session the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Her husband, Robert C. Blinn, MDiv'83, who was elected conference secretary, also was appointed to serve as pastor of Smith Memorial UMC in Collinsville, Virginia. The Blinns' appointments were made by Bishop Joe. E. Pennel Ir., BD'64, DMin'77. Their son, Christopher, who was graduated from Earlham College in 2000, is on the staff of The Open Door, a ministry for the homeless in Atlanta. Their daughter, Anna, valedictorian of the class of 2002 at Sherando High School in Fredrick County, Virginia, attends Bryn Mawr College. The Blinns reside in Martinsville, Virginia.

Lorna J. Daigle, MA'84, has completed the master of education degree from Regis University in Las Vegas, Nevada, and has accepted an appointment at Bishop Gorman High School where she will teach Hebrew Bible and New Testament. She also will serve as a campus minister at the school.

John William Harkins III, MDiv'86, PhD'01, serves as an assistant professor of pastoral theology and counseling at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, and has an appointment as an adjunct faculty member at Emory University and an appointment as a staff therapist for the Cathedral Counseling Center at the Cathedral of Saint Philip. Harkins was ordained in 2001 in the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. He and his wife of 20 years, Victoria Smith Harkins, MSN'84, are the parents of two sons, Justin, 19, a freshman at Emory University, and Andrew, 16, a sophomore at the Westminster School. The alumnus writes that he recently completed his 26th consecutive Peachtree Road Race.

Gideon Adebisi Olaleye, MDiv'89, DMin'91, pastor of Beautiful Gate Church, and his congregants have broken ground for

the construction of a new 300-seat house of worship and day care center in south Nashville. Olaleye and four families founded Beautiful Gate Church in 1987 because they wanted a place of worship that welcomed diversity and represented a multicultural atmosphere; today the membership includes 100 attending families. The new building opened in October 2002.

C. L. Stallworth, MDiv'92, was installed as pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, on January 13, 2002.

Jane Harper Chelf, MDiv'93, a registered nurse and health educator at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, is enrolled as a doctoral student in human resource development at the University of Minnesota. The focus of her program is organizational development, and she hopes to explore the issues of spirituality and the working life.

Jeffrey Darren Marlett, MTS'93, assistant professor of religious studies at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, is the author of Saving the Heartland: Catholic Missionaries in Rural America published by Northern Illinois University Press in DeKalb. The book illustrates how the priests of the "motor missions" in the Catholic Rural Life Movement of the mid-twentieth century worked to safeguard the future of both farming and faith and how Catholic agrarians joined with religious and secular groups to improve American farming practices during the dust bowl agricultural crisis in the American Midwest.

Ken Stone, PhD'95, associate professor of Hebrew Bible and director of the doctoral program at Chicago Theological Seminary, was among the recipients at the 14th annual Lambda Literary Awards presented on May 2, 2002, in New York's Tribeca area. Writers in 20 juried categories were honored by the Lambda Literary Foundation, the only national organization dedicated to the recognition and promotion of gay and lesbian literature. Stone received the award in the reli-

gion and spirituality category for his work as editor of *Queer Commentary and the Hebrew Bible* published by The Pilgrim Press.

Mark Edward Williams, MDiv'96, who was ordained in 1998 as a minister in the United Methodist Church, learned on May 30, 2002, that the committee on investigation of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church dismissed the complaint filed by Bishop Elias Galvan for "practices declared by the United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings." The complaint alleged that a statement Williams read into the record of the conference record on June 15, 2001, constituted a statement of homosexual practice incompatible with the United Methodist Book of Discipline's standards for clergy; however, the committee concluded there was not reasonable cause to recommend the matter for a church trial.

Melita Baucom Padilla, MDiv'97, an elder in the United Methodist Church, has been appointed senior pastor for the Norwood charge in North Carolina. For the past five years, she has served as pastor at Pegram United Methodist Church in Pegram, Tennessee.

Barbara Holmes, PhD'98, associate professor of ethics and African American studies at Memphis Theological Seminary, and the Honorable Susan Holmes Winfield, have coauthored "King and the Constitution: Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," a chapter in *The Legacy of Martin Luther* King Ir.,: The Boundaries of Law, Politics, and Religion. Published by the University of Notre Dame Press in South Bend, Indiana, the volume reveals how King moved beyond southern particularism to create a more democratic America and a more inclusive world. Lewis V. Baldwin, professor of religious studies at Vanderbilt, composed four chapters for the book and served as editor.

Service of Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church on March 3, 2002. Participating in Tate's ordination at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, were the Reverend Carole Knight, MDiv'95, of Christiana Presbyterian Church; Janet Todd Salyer, MDiv'02, elder, Westminster Presbyterian; Aline Patte, elder, Westminster Presbyterian and former registrar at Vanderbilt Divinity School; Daniel Patte, of the Reformed Church of France and professor of New Testament and early Christianity and religious studies at Vanderbilt; Dale Johnson, elder of Trinity Presbyterian Church and professor of church

history at the Divinity School; and Viki Matson,

assistant professor of the practice of ministry

and director of field education for the Divinity

School. Tate will serve the congregation at

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, a new

church development under the auspices of

Carol Ann Tate, MDiv'00, was called to the

the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

Janetta Sue Cravens, MDiv'01, a former Dollar General Scholar, was graduated in May from the University of Geneva and the Bossey Ecumenical Institute where she earned a master of arts degree in ecumenical studies. She and Brandon Gilvin, MDiv'02, are currently serving a two-year residency program in creative ministry under the auspices of the Lilly Foundation for the Central Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky.

Diana Gallaher, MTS'01, a community outreach specialist for the anti-hunger nonprofit organization MANNA, reviewed Dorothee Soelle's book, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Fortress Press, 2001) for the MethodX Web site. In her review, which may be read at <a href="https://www.methodx.net/hyperactive/reviews.asp">www.methodx.net/hyperactive/reviews.asp</a>, Gallaher alludes to the initiative by Erie Chapman III, MTS'02, president and CEO of Nashville's Baptist Hospital, to create a "healing environment" instead of a clinical



Above: After Dennis Wade Griffith II, MDiv'02, received his diploma, the new Divinity School alumnus was presented his great-grandfather's pocket watch by his father, Dennis, his uncle, Warren, and his 2½-year-old nephew, Sanders White. Griffith is serving as associate pastor at Latham United Methodist Church in Huntsville, Alabama.

#### **Obituaries**

setting for curing ailments.

Albert A. Kosower, Oberlin, B, a retired United Church of Christ minister of Phoenix, Arizona, on August 22, 2001.

Watson Dale Cook, E'29, D'27, of Loretto, Tennessee, at the age of 97 on November 8, 2001

Albert W. Buck, Oberlin, BD'33, of Elmhurst, Illinois, on April 19, 2000.

Samuel Amos Brackeen II, Oberlin, BD'43, of North Wales, Pennsylvania, founding pastor of Philippian Baptist Church; in an obituary compiled for The Philadelphia Inquirer, staff writer Yvonne Latty reported, "During the Civil Rights movement, the Reverend Brackeen was sitting defiantly at a lunch counter in Ohio that didn't serve blacks when a shotgun was pointed at his head. The white man brandishing the gun demanded that he move. Brackeen didn't budge, and the gunman backed down. And Brackeen kept fighting. He fought for underpaid sharecroppers, for black schoolteachers to get equal pay. He sued a skating club that didn't admit blacks. But his greatest victory may have been when he built the membership of Philippian Baptist Church from a congregation of 99 to a membership of 3,000. With the support of his congregation, he built the Philippian Baptist Church Edifice of Idumuja-Unor, Nigeria, and the Marcia E. Brackeen School in Milot. Haiti." Brackeen died at the age of 83 on June 5, 2002, of complications from diabetes.

Frank H. Argelander, Oberlin, B'47, a retired United Methodist minister of Wonewoc, Wisconsin, on April 3, 2001.

Robert C. Johnson, PhD'57, of North Branford, Connecticut, former dean of Yale Divinity School from 1963 to 1969; he began his vocation as an ordained Presbyterian minister for congregations in Shrewsbury, New Jersey, and Greeneville, Tennessee, before accepting a professorship at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; after resigning the deanship at Yale, Johnson served as professor of theology until his retirement from the university in 1993; he died at the age of 82 on March 14, 2002.

Charlotte Hotopp Zackary, Oberlin BD'57, of Crawfordsville, Indiana, former pastor of the First United Presbyterian Church US in Madison, Illinois, on January 5, 2002.

Bart White Stokes, BA'65, MDiv'83, of Nashville, Tennessee, a first lieutenant in the United States Armed Forces in Vietnam, began his work career in the Office of Alumni and Development at Vanderbilt University. He later forfeited a career in business to home school his son, Robert William Charles, and his daughter, Sara Ann Ellen. As one who enjoyed the company of people, Stokes often remarked, "The world is my church; a stranger is a friend I'm yet to meet." He died at the age of 60 on July 21, 2002.

David Allen Greenfield, MDiv'71, DMin'94, former director of Arlington Psychological Services in Erin, Tennessee, on December 25, 2001; survivors include his wife, Martha Wessell Greenfield, BA'68.

**Leonard Doyle Nash, MDiv'78,** former pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Marianna, Arkansas, on March 15, 2002.

**Doris Davidson Snapp, MDiv'90,** of Bristol, Tennessee, on January 9, 2002.

Paula Marie Edwards Sitton, D'93, a first grade teacher in the Alvord School District of Riverside, California, on June 12, 2002, at UCLA Medical Center from the effects of a ventricular tumor; she is survived by her husband, Michael Scott Sitton, MTS'92, and their four-year-old daughter, Beth.

#### In Memoriam

Members of the administration, faculty, staff, and student body of Vanderbilt University Divinity School and the Graduate Department of Religion extend their condolences to the family of

> Jacinta Hanserd (1979 – 2002)

who died on February 17 at the age of 22 years. As a member of the Refectory and Vanderbilt Faculty Reading Room staff, Jacinta will be remembered, in the words of eulogist and doctoral student Monya Aletha Stubbbs, MTS'95, for "her ministry of presence" and her enthusiasm for the writings of Maya Angelou.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance fall away.
We are not so much maddened

We are not so much maddened as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of dark, cold caves.

And when great souls die, after a period peace blooms, slowly and always irregularly. Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration. Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us. They existed. They existed. We can be. Be and be better. For they existed.

---Maya Angelou

(stanzas IV and V from "Ailey, Baldwin, Floyd, Killens, and Mayfield," in *I Shall Not Be Moved*, Random House, Incorporated, New York, 1990, pages 47-48)

52 THE SPIRE

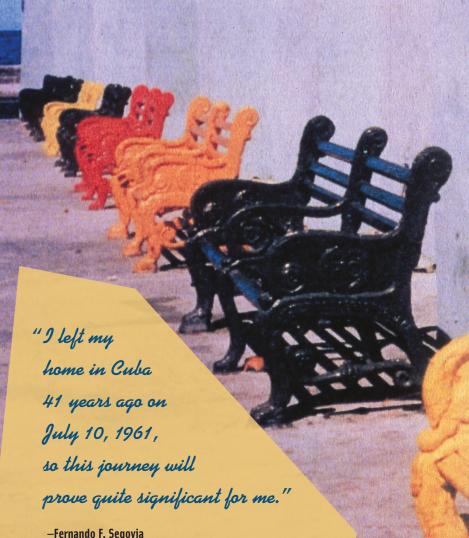
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Photograph by John Kings for his essay "In Havana," published in *Six Days in Havana*, by James A. Michener and Johns Kings, 1989, page 96, the University of Texas Press, Austin

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lands Presbyterian Church in Birmingham.

"As a recipient of the Folkerth Scholarship at Vander- on the organ." bilt University Divinity School, I have had the privilege to study with a community of people who are diverse in Hills Medical Center in Nashville. Her son, Joel, 23, is their backgrounds but committed to the belief that the a student in the master of theological studies program development of personal faith is critically related to the at VDS.

Marcy Hobbs Thomas, MDiv3, contributions we make to our world," says Thomas, who is among the 50 student theolo- earned her baccalaureate in English from Mercer Unigians whose graduate education versity in Macon, Georgia, before enrolling at VDS to has been supported by the two pursue the master of divinity degree. "Mrs. Folkerth is trusts established 25 years ago by a lively, gracious lady who takes a personal interest in benefactors J. Holland Folkerth, the vocations of the students who become beneficiaries BS'24, and his wife, Marguerite, of this scholarship. I always look forward to traveling former organist at Ensley High- with the other Folkerth Scholars to her Alabama residence where we lead a worship service and hear her play hymns

Thomas currently serves as a chaplain at Southern