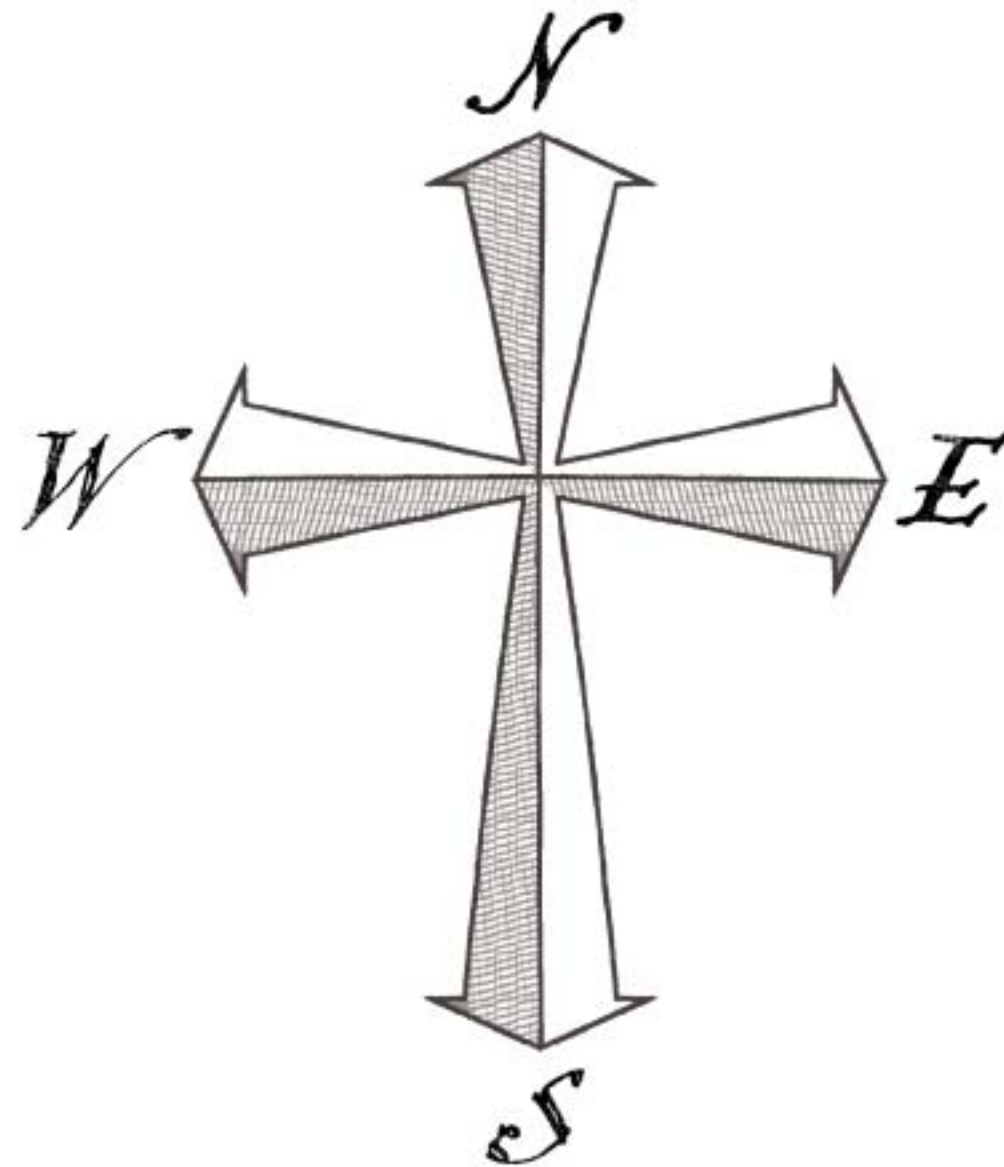


THE GLOBALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY: *Developments and Consequences*



BY FERNANDO F. SEGOVIA
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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.¹ 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:²

- 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:³

- 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.

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

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.⁴

- 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.⁵

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-

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—yielded 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:⁶

- 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 twenty-five 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 the 1920s.

- 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:⁷

- 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

Dances with Academic Wolves

BY HOWARD L. HARROD

I 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 as 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

- 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 mid-century, 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-

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

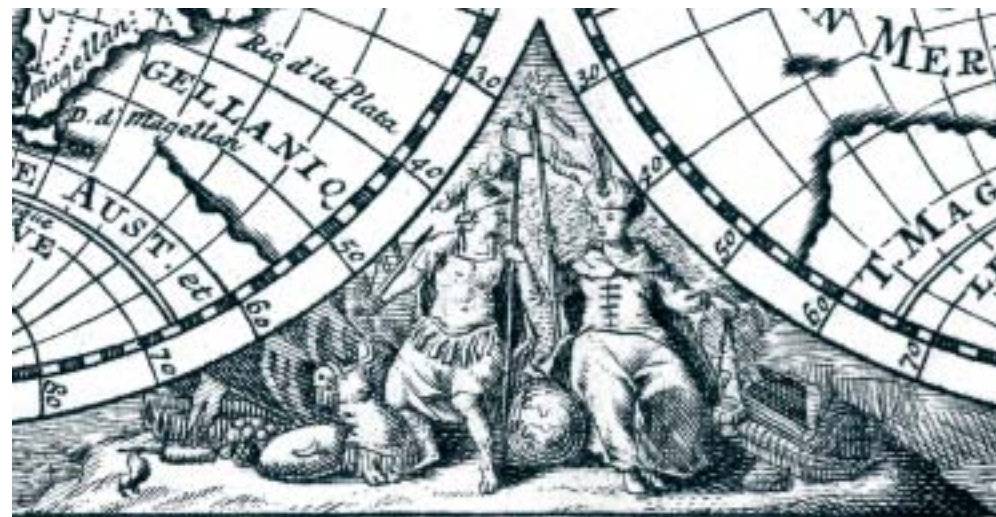
tive, run as follows: Asian Americans, 6.6% and 8.2%; African Americans, 13.1% and 13.6%; U.S. Hispanic Americans, 18.9% and 24.5%. By mid-century, therefore, a quarter of the country’s population will be of Latin American descent.

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 mult centered and diversified tradition and formation.

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

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. 2.
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.



In celebration of his 34 years of academic service 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.



Feather Canoe
1992
by Truman Lowe
Winnebago
wood and feathers
18 x 72 x 12"

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.

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 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 collected through the dreams or visions of a culture hero or other important predecessor. The so-called 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 self-torture. 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 responses of Blackfeet people to the respec-

tive 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,



Indian Horse
1992
by Jaune Quick-to-See
Flathead/Salish
oil, mixed media, collage/canvas
66 x 96"



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

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

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

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 expression that is much used and abused in Big Sky country, I would reply, “You betcha!”

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.

Howard Harrod toasted me at my graduation party last spring. It was 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 what 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.



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 psycho-

logical 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

Kinship 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

gleanings



DAVID CRENSHAW

A Big Sky of the Mind

Howard 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

The Gift of Connections

Howard 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

Phenomenology and the MG

I 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

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

more of you during my term of office. We come from a rich heritage, and if our current students are an indication of the future of VDS, that heritage undoubtedly will continue.

Peace,

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 Tillet 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'02,
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

Drawing 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 revealing 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 Church (Disciples of Christ).

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;

For those of us
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.

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.

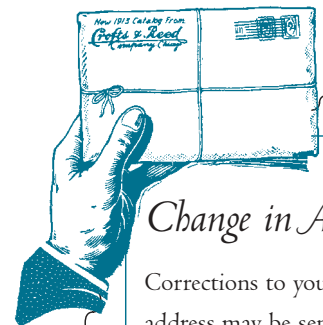
—from *The Black Unicorn:
Poems by Audre Lorde*
W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.,
New York, 1987, pages 31-32



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.

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*“Letters mingle souls,
thus absent friends speak.”*

—JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)



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CELEBRATING 127 YEARS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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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

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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 Stubbs, 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
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)

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

*"I left my
home in Cuba
41 years ago on
July 10, 1961,
so this journey will
prove quite significant for me."*

—Fernando F. Segovia
professor of New Testament and early Christianity
Vanderbilt University Divinity School
reflecting upon returning to his native country

M U L T I P L E

Benefits

25

years ago, J. Holland and Marguerite Folkerth of Birmingham, Alabama, established

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Marcy Hobbs Thomas, MDiv3, is among the 50 student theologians whose graduate education has been supported by the two trusts established 25 years ago by benefactors J. Holland Folkerth, BS'24, and his wife, Marguerite, former organist at Ensley Highlands Presbyterian Church in Birmingham.

"As a recipient of the Folkerth Scholarship at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, I have had the privilege to study with a community of people who are diverse in their backgrounds but committed to the belief that the development of personal faith is critically related to the

contributions we make to our world," says Thomas, who earned her baccalaureate in English from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, before enrolling at VDS to pursue the master of divinity degree. "Mrs. Folkerth is a lively, gracious lady who takes a personal interest in the vocations of the students who become beneficiaries of this scholarship. I always look forward to traveling with the other Folkerth Scholars to her Alabama residence where we lead a worship service and hear her play hymns on the organ."

Thomas currently serves as a chaplain at Southern Hills Medical Center in Nashville. Her son, Joel, 23, is a student in the master of theological studies program at VDS.