Vanderbilt University invites you to hear author, educator, and social activist

Parker J. Palmer
deliver the 2001 Cole Lectures:

*Divided No More:*

*Spiritual Formation in a Secular World*

“Principles of Spiritual Formation”
Thursday, October 4, 7:00 p.m.
Benton Chapel
followed by a reception in Tillett Lounge

“Practices of Spiritual Formation”
Friday, October 5, 10:00 a.m.
Benton Chapel

---from “Poem 351”
by Emily Dickinson
c. 1862, first published 1945

When the Leadership Project conducted a 1998 national survey of 11,000 educators and administrators, Parker J. Palmer was recognized as one of the 30 most influential leaders in higher education, religion, and social change. A senior associate of the American Association of Higher Education and founder of the Fetzer Institute’s teacher formation program, Parker J. Palmer has inspired a generation of teachers and reformers with his evocative visions of community and spiritual wholeness. He is the author of *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*, *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring*, and *To Know as We are Known: A Spirituality of Education*.

Palmer earned his doctorate in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley, and his research has been supported with grants from the Danforth Foundation and the Lilly Endowment.

Philanthropist Edmund W. Cole, president of Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad and treasurer of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust, endowed the annual Cole Lecture Series in 1892 for “the defense and advocacy of the Christian religion.” Cole’s gift provided for the first sustained lectureship in the history of Vanderbilt University.
A Partnership in Ministry
The Divinity School honors the J.R. Hyde Sr. Family Foundation for supporting education at Vanderbilt University for three decades.

Putting Shoes on the Feet of All God’s Children
Doctoral student Herbert Marbury examines the morally reprehensible dimension of our Sunday school heroines and heroes.

The Paradox of the Thistle
From the pulpit in Saint Augustine’s Chapel on the Vanderbilt campus to the streets of Nashville, alumna Becca Stevens delivers a message of hope and reconciliation for women who wish to leave lives of prostitution and drug addiction.

When Silence Is Not Golden
Alumna Emily Hardman discusses the AIDS crisis on the African continent and refutes the conventional wisdom about silence.

Requiem in the First Person
Divinity School student Annette Grace Zimondi of Zimbabwe recounts her sister’s death from AIDS and the dissolution of Africa’s extended families.

Constructing a Critically Cooperative Relationship
Doctoral student Christopher Sanders explores the contradictions underlying faith-based charity.

On the front cover: To illustrate the ministerial partnership between theological education at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and philanthropic foundations, graphic designer Christian Holihan incorporated architectural appointments representing the three monothetic religious traditions and the world economy. The image of the hand is an element borrowed from Jewish iconography that symbolizes the voice of God.

On the back cover: The cut-paper illustration was created by Cathleen Q. Mumford of the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tennessee.
While waiting my turn in a seemingly endless checkout line at the grocery, I decided to amuse myself by perusing the headlines of those sensational supermarket tabloids that shamelessly mock the seven canons of journalism. Pride, combined with a profound fear of being seen in public while holding one of these tracts of yellow journalism, limited my private amusement to viewing only the front-page headlines printed in 72-point bold italic fonts.

Regrettably, we bid farewell to designer Christian Holihan, who is leaving Vanderbilt University. Christian’s design was to interpret and illustrate the theme of partnership between theological education and philanthropic foundations, such as the relationship between the Divinity School and the University’s Fine Arts Gallery, successor, Jenni Bongard, and anticipate a productive relationship with her. During the last few months, Christian has made many beautiful posters and cards that will be used in our annual fund 2002. The article “Witnesses Against Complicity: In Protest of State-Sanctioned Executions,” and the one about the students from Vanderbilt University Divinity School who protested the execution of Robert Glen Coe, I experienced a feeling of sadness mixed with hope. The execution of Robert Glen Coe caused many of us to go into that deep place of personal ethical framework. We are led from the eye of critical judgment are more productive than those that never do. Thank you for a story that documents many issues surrounding an emotional public policy, but more so for the personal framework within which the story is told.

Randy Tite!
Executive Director
Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing (TCASK)

You can help us continue our commitment to tomorrow’s students by supporting
Vanderbilt University Divinity School ANNUAL FUND 2002

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CELEBRATING 120 YEARS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
“No matter what we as professors do in providing lectures and assignments, admitting good people and providing a healthy ethos for their development is a key determinant of our success with graduates.”

What I conclude from all these “sightings” is that we must be doing something right in the classroom if learning leads to service and witness in so many forms. No matter what we as professors do in providing lectures and assignments, admitting good people and providing a healthy ethos for their development is a key determinant of our success with graduates. The religious commitments that were nurtured in students’ lives prior to Vanderbilt have been deepened through study, but they also were deepened by living lives of commitment while they were in school. When our students did not think we were looking, they put their faith into action. And we are grateful for that reflection on the character of Vanderbilt Divinity School.

—Dean James Hudnut-Beumler

Vanderbilt University Divinity School is one of only four university-based interdenominational institutions in the United States and the only one located in the South. The School’s history provides a distinct vantage point for examining theological education since the latter part of the 19th century. Within the 14 chapters of this book, four themes from the School’s history emerge:

• engagement with southern culture, present from the beginnings of the University but taking on special significance in the mid-20th century around the issue of race;
• the transition from an institution of the church (Methodist) to an independent and interdenominational school with a liberal Protestant orientation;
• the development of the modern research university, evident in the establishment of a graduate program in religion in addition to the program for the profession of ministry;
• from the 1950s, a growing concern for diversity and inclusiveness, in keeping with national and international issues and developments both religious and cultural, which has broadened the Divinity School’s sense of ecumenism and deepened the commitment to social justice.

Conflict has played an important part in shaping the history of Vanderbilt Divinity School, from struggles over initial visions to questions of financial support and institutional control, from local debates over academic freedom to national issues of social justice. Especially noteworthy are the transformations the School has experienced since 1960: the “James Lawson affair”—when an African American Divinity School student was expelled for organizing local lunch counter sit-ins—and the implications of his expulsion for the School and the University; the efforts of social change on the School since the late 1960s; and the contributions of women and African Americans, including their appointments to the faculty.
Julian Bond remembers the first time he spoke at Vanderbilt University 33 years ago following the assassination of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. “When I finished speaking, I received a standing ovation. Then William Buckley spoke, contradicted every idea I expressed, and also received a standing ovation. I was told that was because Vanderbilt students were polite.”

When Bond returned to campus in January to deliver the Jean and Alexander Heard Lecture, the 28th Antoinette Brown Lecture in Ministry, on Thursday, March 14, 2002, by Susan Thistlethwaite, president of Chicago Theological Seminary and professor of pastoral theology and culture.

Kwok Pui-lan, the William F. Cole Professor of Christian Theology and Culture at Oberlin College, delivered the 2001 Antoinette Brown Lecture in March. Following her presentation titled “Engendering Christ,” she and student William Young, MDiv’2, discussed colonial conceptions of gender and masculinity. The 28th theologian to deliver the Antoinette Brown Lecture, Pui-lan has been hailed as a pioneer in Asian feminist theology and is the founder and adviser of Pacific Asian and North Asian American Women in Theology and Ministry. Named in honor of Oberlin alumna Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the first woman ordained to the Christian ministry in America, the annual lecture is sponsored by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, a national organization that has been hailed as a pioneer in Asian feminist theology and care at both local and national levels.”

Aline Patte Makes the Grade

When she was hired at the Divinity School in 1977 by Dean Sallia McGauley, Aline Patte performed her duties as faculty secretary by using an IBM-selectric typewriter on a desk in a windowless cubicle. Instead of leaving the Divinity School during her lunch hour, Aline remained in her office and ate her daily quota of carrots while typing examinations, grant proposals, and professors’ book manuscripts. Her skill in the art of details inspired dean Dean Jack Fonstam to promote her two years later to the position of registrar. As Professor Dale Johnson remarked in his tribute to Aline on the occasion of her retirement, “She transformed the role of registrar from clerical worker to provider of pastoral care. Aline made her work her ministry, and despite the number of times she reminded us she had ‘10,000 tasks to do,’ she never failed to ask students how they and their families were doing and how their relationships with their denominations were developing.”

Shared Wisdom

Divinity School students had the opportunity to read from a collection of rare books and documents exhibited during the spring semester at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library. Sponsored by the Remnant Trust Foundation of Hagerstown, Indiana, the “Wisdom of the Ages” collection featured premiere and early editions of such prominent thinkers as Aristotle, Plutarch, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Desideri Erasmus, John Calvin, Martin Luther, John Milton, and Mary Wollstonecraft. The exhibition, sponsored by the Remnant Trust Foundation of Hagerstown, Indiana, draws from the personal collections of prominent authors. The personal mission of Remnant Trust founder Brian Bux is to place, literally, into the public’s hands rare incunabula instead of requiring readers to examine the Great Books through display cases or to conduct research from facsimiles. “The appearance and feel of an ancient book infuses one in a receptive mood of the former generations for whom the texts were written,” explains Trust member Kris Bex.

The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University cosponsored the exhibition.

Andre Barnett, MTS2, of Bowling Green, Kentucky, reads from the first English translation published in 1610 of Augustine’s City of God. On loan from the Remnant Trust’s Wisdom of the Ages Anthology, this volume was among the 40 rare editions available for Divinity School students to research during the spring semester.

After 24 years of recording grades, posting course descriptions and requirements, editing the catalog, serving as advisor to the Office of Women’s Concerns and the Antoinette Brown lectureship committee—while alleviating students’ anxieties and encouraging the School’s future theologians in their quests—Aline has bid farewell to Room 115 to spend time with her husband, Daniel, and their religious studies among their children, and grandchildren. “You have written the book in terms of excellence,” Dean James Hudnut-Beumler told Aline as he presented her with a Vanderbilt rocking chair she received from the VUS administration, faculty, and staff in recognition of her 24 years of service to the School.

Aline Patte, who retired as registrar at the conclusion of the academic year, rocks her granddaughter, Alexandra, in the official Vanderbilt rocking chair she received from the VUS administration, faculty, and staff in recognition of her 24 years of service to the School.
VDS Proposes New Scholarships

To launch an initiative for establishing scholarships for Catholic students at Vanderbilt Divinity School, over 100 members from the Nashville Catholic faith community convened in February at the residence of Patricia Miller Dykes’ husband, the Reverend Edward A. (Monk) Malloy, retired bishop of the Diocese of Nashville, and one of the University Board of Trust. The School’s endowed Thomas R. Hyde Sr. Family Foundation—named for her grandfather who founded the food wholesale company of Malone and Hyde—which provides four honor scholarships annually to Vanderbilt Divinity School students preparing for ministry, has been part of a blended family for 19 years. “We approach each conflict as a creative opportunity for advancing new understandings, our relationships and our lives are enriched.”

Varnell’s commitment to enriching the lives of other people is demonstrated also by her role as secretary and trustee of The J.R. Hyde Sr. Family Foundation—named for her grandmother who founded the food wholesale company of Malone and Hyde—which provides four honor scholarships annually to Vanderbilt Divinity School students preparing for ministry.

“The Divinity School is a pioneer in educating students to serve congregations and in teaching generations of theologians,” contends Varnell. “Students who choose to become ministers do not begin their professional lives by earning large salaries, yet they have to repay their student loans after graduation. We at the J.R. Hyde Sr. Foundation are grateful to know that we are making a difference in the lives of students who are well equipped to serve the church. The School’s commitment to critical thinking and field education, the superior caliber of the students, and the support the institution offers to individuals who are pursuing the ministry as a second vocation are among the reasons why the foundation is pleased to be partners in ministry with the Divinity School and to support programs in which the results are always a notch above the others.”

Whether she is advising nonprofit organizations, leading a religious retreat, training volunteers in conflict resolution skills, conducting a workshop for parents of blended families, or spending time with her husband, Henry, her three children, three blended children, and ten grandchildren, Varnell offers “life-enhancing” opportunities for those fortunate enough to know her. The steadfast support and generosity of the J.R. Hyde Sr. Family Foundation ensure that students from Vanderbilt University Divinity School can prepare to serve humankind and perpetuate her example of ministry through professional service and commitment to enriching the lives of others.”

On behalf of Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Hyde Scholars, Sandra L. Randleman (JD’80, MDiv’99, right) paid tribute to philanthropist Jeanne Varnell, secretary and trustee of the J.R. Hyde Sr. Family Foundation. The citation presented by Randleman stated: “In recognition of Jeanne Varnell’s support of students preparing for ministry occasions, in celebration of her achievements, steadfast support, and leadership in ministry and the church, and in remembrance to perpetuate her example of ministry through professional service and commitment to enriching the lives of others.”

Peyton Hoge, BS’59, hosts members of the Nashville Catholic faith community before announcing a proposal for establishing scholarships for Catholic students at VDS.

When Joanne Thompson Varnell enrolled in Southwestern at Memphis (renamed Rhodes College in 1984) to study the liberal arts, she made a decision that she describes today as “life-enhancing.” The college had to choose whether she would fulfill an undergraduate requirement by studying mathematics, Latin, or Greek for two years. Lacking confidence in her mathematical ability and having less-than-fond memories of conjugating Latin verbs in high school, Varnell decided to explore the language of Plato and Sophocles. Her need to satisfy an academic requirement, however, soon developed into an intellectual passion for Greek, in which subject she would earn her baccalaureate.

“My interest extended beyond learning the mere fundamentals of a classical language,” explains Varnell. “Although I never used the degree in a practical sense, studying Greek proved to be a life-enhancing experience because I developed a keen appreciation for the history of Greek civilization, the writings of the philosophers and dramatists, and especially Greek mythology.”

Varnell modestly says her study of Greek has been useful primarily in allowing her to understand the allusiveness to antiquity she may encounter in her eclectic reading, but a comprehensive examination of her life reveals she has used her degree in a practical sense. She is a lifelong advocate for educating people to serve in nonprofit organizations, a strong proponent for advancing race relations, a teacher of conflict resolution skills, and a philanthropist who has supported theological education at Vanderbilt University Divinity School for three decades. Joanne Varnell’s life illustrates her belief in the value of patience, courage, justice, proper ambition, and magnanimity—five attributes from the Table of Aristotelian Virtues which she would have studied as an undergraduate at Southwestern.

A native Memphian, Varnell is a member of the National Civil Rights Museum, a founding member of the Woman’s Foundation for Greater Memphis, and a trustee of Lambuth University in Jackson, Tennessee, where she was the first woman to serve as chair of the Board of Trust.

As a consultant for Churches in Transitional Communities throughout the southeastern United Methodist Church, chair of the board of the United Methodist Men’s Neighborhood Centers, secretary of the Association for Christian Training Service, and an officer in the Southeastern Jurisdiction of Urban Workers Network, Varnell has demonstrated the skills she acquired while studying for her graduate degree in applied behavioral science from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington. For her master’s thesis, she developed a model to help “blended” families—an expression she prefers instead of the more conventional “stepfamily”—adapt to new domestic relationships.

“There will always be conflict in our families and within groups of people, but ‘conflict’ is not a four-letter word,” says Varnell, who has been part of a blended family for 19 years. “If we approach each conflict as a creative opportunity for advancing new understandings, our relationships and our lives are enriched.”

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Leadership and Philanthropy
BY JEANNIE THOMPSON VARNELL
“Philanthropy and leadership join hands for me in the word chance: a chance to make a significant difference in someone’s life, a chance to enhance the quality of life for a specific population, and a chance to empower persons.”

Y ears ago, a friend introduced me to someone by saying, “Jeannie is a philanthropist!”

My reaction was, “No, I’m not. I don’t have enough money to be a philanthropist.”

Over the years, my understanding has changed. I am a philanthropist—but more importantly, almost anyone can be a philanthropist. Derived from the Greek term philanthropos, which translates as “loving people,” philanthropy is a desire to help humankind, especially by gifts to charitable or humanitarian institutions. It is benevolence, and all we need to practice philanthropy is a genuine love for humankind that we express through acts of kindness and gifts of money. I am thankful for the multimillion-dollar philanthropists—our world needs them—but the world also needs us—people who are willing to give some of their resources for the welfare of all.

I am reminded of the story of an 87-year-old African American woman. She lived in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and quit school when she was 12 to help the family by washing and ironing clothes. She worked as a washerwoman for the next 75 years and retired in 1994 at age 90 because of arthritis.

The three most important aspects of her life were God, work, and family. She lived in a brick and mortar gift, you find a person behind the gift, sharing the vision, and making events happen.

Why is philanthropy important to me? Why do I give? I was trained to give—it is my calling and was modeled for me in a variety of ways by my family. As an adult, I chose to give as an expression of my faith in God and my commitment to others; I give out of gratitude and because I want to make a difference; I give because it brings me joy.

Philanthropy and leadership join hands for me in the word chance: a chance to make a significant difference in someone’s life, a chance to enhance the quality of life for a specific population, and a chance to empower persons. It is vitally important to me that what I give financially reflects how I am investing my time and my life. Also, I believe that it is important to give smartly—that is, I invest my time and my life. Also, I believe that it is important to give smartly—that is, I lead with my heart, but I casually let my head review it.

One of my favorite writers, Henri Nouwen, said that the gift is one in which you receive your gifts from God and then lift them up to God. Jesus, it seems, was a master at giving, for when Jesus took five loaves and two fish, lifted them up, expressed grateful recognition of the gifts, and then shared them. After the multitude was fed, there were twelve baskets of food remaining. Gratitude and plentitude go together.

I hope that you will consider giving to the Diversity Scholarship Fund. When you will discover that your gifts multiply because the School is built on a solid foundation rooted in the Judeo-Christian traditions and committed to excellence while being receptive to diversity and change. The students—most of whom are from minority groups—hold great dreams, and as they graduate and begin making differences in our world, your gifts will continue to multiply. The impact those women and men have in faith communities across the country is beyond a dollar amount. (Jeannie Varnell’s swap is adapted from a speech she delivered to benefactors, alumni, and guests of the Divinity School on Wednesday, April 3, 2001, at the Hermitage Hotel Ballroom in Nashville.)
Putting Shoes on the Feet of All God’s Children:

Dinah, Immanuel Kant, & the Question of Duty

BY HERBERT ROBINSON MARRURY, MA’01

“The Old Testament is devoted to what was right and just from the viewpoint of the ancient Hebrews. All of their enemies were twenty-two carat evil. They, the Hebrews, were never aggressors. The Lord wanted his children to have a country full of big grapes and tall corn. Incidentally, while they were getting it, they might as well get rid of some trashy tribes that he never did think much of anyway.”

—Zora Neale Hurston

Dust Tracks on a Road, 1942

Zora Neale Hurston’s tongue-in-cheek critique of the Old Testament shocked yet captivated my theological imagination when I was an undergraduate student. In her statement, I heard words I had yet to hear from any preacher—that the Bible is full of material we simply don’t like. As a young pastor, however, I soon realized that the black church was ready for neither my theological imagination nor Ms. Hurston’s interpretations. So then my search began with the question, “What do we do with the most difficult stories of the Bible?”

Arguably, these stories occur overwhelmingly in the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible. Replete with vivid images and graphic narratives of sexual violence, most of these stories would offend the most rugged of our moral sensibilities. Even the casual reader is provoked by Old Testament stories of rape, sexual mutilation, and murder as retribution for sexual victimization. The problem is not that the content violates our contemporary aes-
The SPIRE

The Bible itself, the act of rape functions to constitute itself, the act of rape, because the description of Dinah. Clearly, she is objectified in terms of virginity, our answer likely would be that Hamor’s offer is sorely inadequate. In a cultural where shame and honor operate more powerfully than any formal legal system, they live in our Bibles. Instead, they live in our Bibles. Thousands of people believe that if a man and woman intermarry so that the women of the Hivites would be given in marriage to Jacob’s family, and Jacob, in return, would agree to Hamor’s offer on the condition that Hamor’s, his son Shechem, and all of the men of the city undergo circumcision. Daniel’s brothers maintain adamantly that it would be a disgrace for their sister to marry an uncircumcised man. In response to Dinah’s brothers, Hamor and his son agree to be circumcised and convince the men of the city to do likewise.

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The narrative immediately makes easy fodder for the insights of a feminist critic. When we as contemporary readers reflect on the story of Dinah, we are certainly insightful, but instead of giving us a place where we might enter into a dialogue with the story, they highlight the strangeness of Dinah’s and Jacob’s world to our own. As inquiring exegetes, we are still left to ask when and where we enter into the story.

When contemporary readers and biblical scholars encounter the story’s frustrating imperfections, that we employ easy strategies such as ‘displacement,’ which she identifies as a way to dissemble the story by appealing to the claim that God’s plan is realized only fully in the New Testament, not in the texts of the ancient Hebrews. She also addresses strategies that simply ignore texts, “setting them out of the picture,” the story, the place just after Dinah has been raped. So often, the black church participates in a story of sexual victimization when someone who has been violated comes to the church seeking wholeness, seeking affirmation, and, as were Jacob’s sons, seeking retabulation. At this juncture in the story, just after the rape, it is clear that all of the parties—Jacob, his sons, and Hamor—recognize that a crime has been committed. They come together to negotiate restoration. As they do so, they are faced with a central question. The question is Immanuel Kant’s question, “What does duty require of one in any such situation?” Kant, of course, is concerned not with questions of justice and not by inclinations such as kinship ties or personal disposition. In a cultural that has been taken. Yet, when we ask in cases of sexual violence, it is our duty in the church to restore to the victim that which has been taken. Yet, when we ask what duties the church has to offer to those in a poor, but ambitious shepherd. What better way to begin the family and foster a better and fuller family than to marry into royalty?” So Hamor offers to have Dinah marry into royalty, not for the sake of the rights, privileges, and status of royalty. Hamor agrees that Jacob could set the bride-price as high as he would like. In that gesture, Hamor believes he has restored that which has been taken away. For him this is the answer to Kant’s question. With Jacob’s consent, with the help of him to Dinah and to the family and believes this is just recompense. Jacob’s sons, on the other hand, believe that Hamor’s offer is sorely inadequate. How dare Hamor think that he could buy their dignity with his wealth and status? In the face of Hamor’s offer they still demand justice. For them, this justice is punishment and retribution. So they trick Hamor and his clan with the offer of circumcision, kill all of the men, and plunder their possessions. For them, this is the answer to Kant’s question. They see their duty as avenging the crime with death. In a culture where shame and honor operate more powerfully than any formal legal system, they live in our Bibles. Instead, they live in our Bibles.

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When Text and History Intersect

It is important for the black church as informing our visions with the fruits of the social sciences, our visions also must make use of our own stories, that is, our history of struggle for human fulfillment against the alienation of slavery, slave codes, Jim Crow, segregation and even paradoxically, integration. At the intersection of the text with our own history, we find a point of entry. That history ties us to the struggle of all of those who are alienated in our midst. It challenges and informs our conceptions of justice and parity, made explicit in traditional songs such as ‘I got shoes, you got shoes, all of God’s children got shoes.’ Our own stories of dehumanization instruct us that as Hamor and Jacob attempted to restore honor in the historical horizon, we must attend to the question of restoring the personhood or humanity in the contemporary one. For those of us in the black church, that humanity is affirmed, as Karl Barth argued, in Christ Jesus.

It is at the place of struggle around the question of our duty to one another that we find common ground with those in the story. Genesis 34 calls us to come to terms with our own stories. Marcuse argues, in Christ Jesus. Humanity is affirmed, as Karl Barth argued, in Christ Jesus.

The Paradox of the Thistle

A black gauze cloth shrouds the crucifix just as intimately as one powerful agent, the Vanderbilt University Standing at the altar and surveying the rows of empty pews in the sanctuary. Beckists contemplate the sermon she will preach on Good Friday. In her solitude, she pondered whether the language and images she will use to illustrate the central mystery of her faith—the paradox of life from death—will sound hackneyed.

Earlier on this unseasonably warm spring day, she stood at the front of the church attending the requiem of a gentleman whose final request was that his funeral be preached at Saint Augustine’s. The deceased also stipulated that his service be conducted by his spiritual adviser, a cleric who has not always found favor among the local church authorities.

As chaplain of Saint Augustine’s Chapel, Stevens unreservedly has honored the wishes of the deceased and quietly assumed the role of celebrant. Instead of wearing the collar and vestments that immediately call attention to her ministry role, she wore on this occasion, an understated black linen dress. This simple gesture is a testament of Stevens’ character as an unpretentious woman who is not governed by a preoccupation with the external trappings of ecclesiastical authority but by her sensitivity to the sufferings of others.

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One were to paint Stevens’ portrait at this interval of her life, perhaps the artist would represent her as painter Douglas Chander depicted Eleanor Roosevelt in 1945. To capture the depth of Roosevelt’s character, the portrayal could not be limited by a single, sustained pose of his subject; instead, Chander created a multi-image portrait of Roosevelt’s face and hands. A portrait of Stevens would present the same challenge that confronted Chander because her hands are constantly engaged in either the ministry of wife and mother, the ministry of University chaplain, and the ministry of social activist.

For the past six years, her energy as a community activist has been invested in Magdalene, a nonprofit program whose mission is to offer sanctuary and support services to women who have a history of prostitution and chemical dependency. As executive director of Magdalene, Stevens believes that when one woman in a community recovers from the brokenness caused by addiction and sexual exploitation, the entire community

is healed. She lives by the conviction that the extra power of one woman is greater than the forces that motivate women to walk the streets of Dickson’s Road, and for her commitment to helping women transform their lives, the Divinity School alumna was named Nashvillian of the Year by the Nashville Scene.

When she was graduated from the University of the South in 1983, Stevens remembers “feeling in her gut” that she should devote a part of her life to promoting justice in the world; however, she also felt that she lacked the theological foundation to articulate and to defend her beliefs if she were to lobby against injustice. The cornerstone for that foundation was laid when she responded to Vanderbilt Divinity School with the intention of studying theology for one year, but her gut feeling about promoting God’s justice soon won her admission to another idea—presenting herself to the bishop for ordination in the Episcopal Church.

On the Nature of Calling

The fourth daughter of the late Reverend Gladstone Hudson Stevens, Jr., an Episcopal priest, and the late Anna Stevens, executive director of Saint Luke’s Community Center in Nashville, she earned her baccalaureate in mathematics from Bethel College and the University of Swainson, where she worked toward the word for the Lord. She told me after graduation, “If I could make one contribution that would improve the human condition, what is the first step I should take?” and the answer seemed so obvious—feed the children,” says Stevens. “I had seen hunger in Nashville through my mother’s work, and I believed that if the basic need of hunger among children were remedied, then the other issues in the chain of social ills could be addressed more effectively.” As an intern with Bread for the World, Stevens took a vow of poverty and lived in community with other individuals committed to alleviating world hunger. Traveling through the Midwest, she visited different churches and encouraged the congregations to establish hunger programs as one of their outreach ministries. Although she was knowledgeable in the intricate legislative processes involved in social work, Stevens believed her arguments against hunger
I am not concerned about debating the unlawfulness of prostitution or whether the police’s latest strategy to deter solicitation on Dickerson Road involves increasing fines and the length of jail sentences. I am concerned more about trying to heal a brokenness that defies legislation by opening an alternate door for a woman who is convinced that love and grace have no place in her life."

The grade less than an “A” did not blemish Stevens’ academic record or prevent her from pursuing her vocation. She elected to stay for three years at the Divinity School where she distinguished herself as a Hyde Scholar and fulfilled the requirements for the master of divinity degree. By returning to her alma mater where she studied mathematics, she took graduate courses in canon law and liturgy before earning a certificate in Anglican studies. Stevens would later invoke a similar minimally殷 oratory when she was called to receive holy orders in the Episcopal church.

A Vocabulary Made Flesh

The transformative power of grace is a con- 
diction: Stevens can discuss with experien- 
tial wisdom. As executive director of Magdalene, an appointment she assumed, 
grows, Stevens witnesses daily the metamor-
phosis that occurs whenever hope, respect, 
and dignity are introduced into the life of a 
woman who personifies degradation and vul-
garization.

"Prosecution may be the world’s oldest 
profession, but women do not have to choose 
to practice that behavior for their entire lives," 
contends Stevens. "I am not concerned about 
debating the unlawfulness of prostitution or 
whether the police’s latest strategy to deter 
solicitation on Dickerson Road involves 
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tences. I am concerned more about trying to 
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Stevens, who required her loyalty and a portion of her 
income in exchange for his protection, the 
most important person in the prostitute’s life 
is her drug dealer. To satisfy her chemical 
dependency, the resort to robbery and violence.

"None of these women got to the streets by herself," says Stevens. "They are victims of 
domestic violence, sexual abuse, abandonment, addic-
tion, and undiagnosed mental illnesses—factors which make 
prostitution the quintessential women’s issue."

A help break the cyclical pat-
tern of street life, jail sentence, treatment center, and street life, Stevens and volunteers from 
Saint Augustine’s Chapel invited five women in 1997 to partici-
"None of these women got 
to the streets by herself," says Stevens. "They are victims of 
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and undiagnosed mental illnesses—factors which make 
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"I tutored Marcus for that test 
proclaimed, “I tutored Marcus for that test 
and then seek admission to an 
Episcopal seminary. During her 
interview with the commission, Stevens 
was asked to discuss her calling to religious life. She 
candidly told the members, “I’m not sure God is calling me; I 
imagine God is calling me.”

Sitting in her office a decade 
after her ordination, Stevens 
noted wistfully, “I am merely on the tip of the edge of 
understanding the nature of a calling.”

Acquiring a New Vocabulary
Instead of completing applica-
tions to Episcopal seminaries, Stevens decided to reside in 
Nashville, work with her mother 
at Saint Luke’s Community Center, 
and study for a master of divinity degree. 
By returning to 
the Divinity School faculty 
were the encouragement to find my voice and 
to question relentlessly for authenticity,” says Stevens. “I learned from David Buttrick 
that the inherent danger of always preaching 
from the lectern was that I might forget to 
preach the good news of the gospel. And I 
never read scripture the same way after I 
saw Walter Harrelson weep as he recited 
the Song of Deborah from the Book of 
Judges. And fortunately, Jack Fitzmier took 
me down a notch by teaching me not to be so 
impressed with myself.

The lesson in humility that Fitzmier 
imparted to Stevens occurred after the pro-essor of American religious history returned 
an examination on which she earned a “B+”.
She and Hummon had studied together for 
three years at the Divinity School, and when she discovered her future 
husband had received an “A,” Stevens 
quickly went to Fitzmier’s office and 
asked whether she could have the test 
two years later he was in the recording studio, 
excluding from my notes. I made Phi Beta 
Kappa, and I don’t make bad grades. I cannot 
have this on my record because it will mess 
up my plans to become a minister. Why 
don’t you like me?"

Fitzmier responded to Stevens’ question 
by asking her a question, "Becus, when is your 
real education going to commence?"

"I had designed a careful 
plan; I would study one year at 
Vanderbilt and begin to acquire 
the vocabulary of theology, and 
then I would matriculate at a seminary, “she 
said. The change in Fitzmier’s 
tone abruptly changed to laugh-
ter. “As part of our orientation 
tutorial, the student of theology at the Divinity School had 
watched a film on Martin Luther King, and as I was leaving 
the room, I bumped into this
cute guy, and within the first month, we were 
pregnant and discussing marriage.”

This classmate, who impressed Stevens 
with his kindness and compassion and 
invited her to his wedding, was 
songwriter Marcus Hummon. The two 
thousands of years ago, and 
today they are the parents of three sons: Levi, 
9; Carey, 5; and Moses, 1.

In her initial year of theological studies, 
Stevens found herself attracted to the 
study of the nature of a calling. 
Instead of completing applica-
tions to Episcopal seminaries, 
Saul’s model of minister as theologian 
but introduced into the life of a 
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The impetus behind Magdalene was a two-year study conducted by representatives of 
Nashville-Davidson County Metropolitan Government, the criminal courts, law 
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words from a foreign language. We want them to become empowered so they can think beyond the present and eventually return to community as self-respecting, confident, recovering individuals capable of sustaining themselves through employment and trust in human beings.”

Using the model of a sanctuary distinguished Magdalene from all other women’s recovery projects in the country. Although initial funding came from private donations and revenues raised through the administration of the “Juhn School” for men who have been arrested for solicitation, Magdalene has been awarded status as a 501 (c) (3) agency. Vanderbilt Divinity School, the Owen School of Management, and Alternative Spring Break are among the project’s supporting organizations. In an effort to provide a creative, profitable, and sustainable workplace for residents of Magdalene, the board and staff have begun Thistle Farms, a cottage industry of craft and organic garden products that are created in Saint Augustine’s kitchen.

The Reciprocity of Healing

While one resident stands over the stove stirring the essential oils for making lavender salves and salts from the herbs they have grown from seedlings, the women ask God to bless their work and to heal them as they make ointments that can soothe the bodies and spirits of others. As the heat from the stove warms the room, the workers talk about the herbs that need to be transplanted to the garden bed, the pumpkins they will harvest for the autumn, and the summer flowers that will become dried bouquets and sold in the winter.

One can smell the fragrances from such an industry as Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as the women of Magdalene make the salves and salts from the herbs they have grown from seedlings. Beginning their day with meditation and prayer, the women ask God to bless their work and to heal them as they make ointments that can soothe the bodies and spirits of others. As the heat from the stove warms the room, the workers talk about the herbs that need to be transplanted to the garden bed, the pumpkins they will harvest for the autumn, and the summer flowers that will become dried bouquets and sold in the winter.

These women never would have dreamed a year ago that they would be growing herbs, praying in a kitchen, and making candles,” says Stevens as she opens a tin of balm. “But the idea of holding a traditional job can prove overwhelming to a person in recovery, so our vision for Thistle Farms is to provide an environment where the residents can engage in constructive work that will yield a profit dedicated to supporting the three Magdalene houses.”

When asked to explain the significance of the cottage industry’s name, Stevens does not turn to scripture or literary symbolism to defend her answer. “The thistle is the only wildflower that grows on Dickerson Road,” she remarks.

The wildflower familiar to the women of Magdalene is a persistent, drought-resistant, invasive perennial that is difficult to contain—even in the most cultivated gardens—because of the seed’s tendency to become airborne. Like the prickly thistle, prostitution and addiction are forces that can grow anywhere and almost the lives of the vulnerable. But Stevens sees a rather paradoxical and redeeming feature in the thistle. The rich purple hue of the wildflower is the same color that will replace the black gauze on Easter Sunday. And she knows that the attributes of the thistle are comparable to the properties of grass—which is also persistent and invasive.

To learn more about Magdalene, contact the Reverend Stevens by writing to her at Box 630, Sington Rd., Nashville, Tennessee 37223, or by calling 615/322-4783.
morning to go to the fields to work."5 They suffer in silence and in the mines, suffering contradicted. The oppressive apartheid government in South Africa is no longer in power, however, the miners still feel the effects of that system. Although the mining industry has constructed a few family dwellings, hostels remain separate from their wives and children. Familial separations alone among the miners contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the mining communities. Mining is physically and emotionally taxing, for the miners are expected to work eight hours or more under extreme conditions of heat, filthy air, and noisy machinery with few breaks and little access to food and water. The study done by Catherine Campbell, a miner, “We live for dying, no one lives forever. Every day people lose their arms and legs, and we just live in hope.” Another miner says, “The way we are treated here is not nice. No one cares; no one feels, about me, and it is quite impossible for me to know all my needs,” explains another miner. “If I were nearer to my wife, she would take care of me, look after me.”6

Suffering Contradicted

We must ask ourselves: How can we expect miners to produce against a virus they cannot see in an environment where a miner faces death every day of his life? The social isolation of the miners is accompanied by destructive behaviors such as the frequent consumption of alcohol and unprotected sex. The virus is transmitted with great ease, and one miner reveals, “The dangers and risks of the job we are doing are vast. We cannot afford to be motivated by life—all that motivates us is pleasure.”

Determined from his job and caring for his family, two men and left feeling isolated and disconnected, a miner cries the intimacy that one experiences with flesh-to-flesh sexual contact; therefore, miners rarely practice safe sex when they are with commercial sex-workers. Humans need intimacy, and when their opportunities for intimate relationships are limited, they tend to seek intimacy—even by placing themselves at risk—physically and emotionally. “There is no way that my attitudes toward intimacy here, and it is quite impossible for me to know all my needs,” explains another miner. “If I were nearer to my wife, she would take care of me, look after me.”

I knew that Victoria’s friend had many suitors, and her parents allowed those suitors to visit her home. This young girl told her family that she was pregnant, and they were angry when she began to show her pregnancy. The case went before the village elders. It was a man who married the woman’s wife against the girl and, in such cases, the man is always blamed.

Unmarried and pregnant, the girl was doomed to the position of “mistress.” She knew she was pregnant, and as a result, she was no longer acceptable to men and acceptable for men in the rural areas to have a wife and a mistress. Mistresses, unlike second wives, were not supported adequately. Sometimes women in these situations must go to the mining camps as sex-workers. Prostitutes in the mining camps risk their lives to support themselves and their families. Jobs as sex-workers do not require their customers to practice safe sex because it means admitting that they are dirty or impure. And, it is precisely this vulnerability and powerlessness that encourages the spread of AIDS.

Innocence Lost

If it is interesting that in the Book of Job, the story is resolved when the children, whom Job has lost, are replaced by other children? Many of us who read this narrative grow uneasy: How can we replace our children? The answer is that they cannot be replaced; we can only make sure that others are not lost to us.”

AIDS is prevalent in South Africa and the continent, and millions of people are affected by this disease. It is estimated that there are over 5 million people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa, and the country lacks the resources to support its orphans. In the children’s home where I worked, there is one adult per 25 children from the ages of three to seventeen. Food, beds, and clothing are expensive, not to mention the cost for maintaining adequate adult staffing. The children rarely get the one-on-one attention they need, and many will suffer, if ever again, experience family life. They will become the products of poorly financed institutions.

I remember playing with a group of seven-year-old boys at the home. One of the boys jumped onto my lap, and before I knew it, the other little boys also were demanding attention; they were not satisfied with just a few moments with adults because there are so few nurturing adults available for them. Some of these children are themselves HIV-positive, and it saddens and angers me that the children are not like an entire generation of South African professionals, and artists will soon be lost to HIV/AIDS.

For the hero, the story is resolved when the children, whom Job has lost, are replaced by other children many of us who read this narrative grow uneasy: How can we replace our children? The answer is that they cannot be replaced; we can only make sure that others are not lost to us.

I remembered making a visit to a rural Zulu village in the KwaZulu Natal. The villagers were celebrating the consecration of a new Catholic church building where they celebrated the consecration of a new Catholic church building.23 The village women held a beautiful Saturday afternoon, women draped in colorfull beads and African cloth danced to the rhythmic sounds of drums and whistles. Men marched around the church with sticks, chanting in unison—a ritual performed to strengthen the new building. The beauty and joy of that day, however, would be interrupted by a simple meeting—a meeting with a Zulu woman. Like the other women in the village, her spirit was strong, but unlike some, her body looked weak. Her face was slightly gaunt; her body was thin and frail. She smiled and greeted me in Zulu. Later, my friend, Victoria, asked, “Did you see how thin she looked? And, she had thin arms.” I knew she had been raped and had a child by a man she did not love, and her parents allowed those suitors to visit her home. This young girl told her family that she was pregnant, and they were angry when she began to show her pregnancy. The case went before the village elders. It was a man who married the woman’s wife against the girl, and, in such cases, the man is always blamed.

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Unmarried and pregnant, the girl was doomed to the position of “mistress.” She knew she was pregnant, and as a result, she was no longer acceptable to men and acceptable for men in the rural areas to have a wife and a mistress. Mistresses, unlike second wives, were not supported adequately. Sometimes women in these situations must go to the mining camps as sex-workers. Prostitutes in the mining camps risk their lives to support themselves and their families. Jobs as sex-workers do not require their customers to practice safe sex because it means admitting that they are dirty or impure. And, it is precisely this vulnerability and powerlessness that encourages the spread of AIDS.

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Satcher, speak about the issue. Annie Grace and another student, Paul Meier, organized a fundraiser when they discovered that many villagers in Zimbabwe were suffering through the cold nights because they had used their blankets to shroud the dead. I have encouraged VDS students to involve their churches by setting up a partnership between a church in Africa and a church in America. I hope to facilitate this partnership by using Annie Grace’s connections in Zimbabwe as well as the resources of an organization I learned about at the PanAfrica conference called Humana People to People.

After Job is afflicted, his wife angrily declares, “Curse God and die!” (2:9). I cannot blame her for being angry, and I think others would agree with me. Anger can lead to positive transformation. But, in addition to being angry, we also must believe that the ultimate will be healed—newly created through our speaking. Job eventually begins to understand his wife’s suffering and sees the injustice being done to the innocent.

The Hebrew Bible’s narrative of Job, the man who obeyed God and was afflicted with witchcraft or an ancestral curse. There is a traditional belief in Zimbabwe that death merely does not happen; death has to be caused by some phenomenon. Thus, after every death, the relatives of the deceased will consult a witchdoctor or spiritual medium who will tell them the cause of their loved one’s death. At times the family has to perform rituals to appease the ancestors and to protect other family members from death. But after participating in all these rituals for someone who has died of AIDS, the rituals could not be of any consequence because in less than two years the deceased’s wife or husband would become sick and die. Because of the persistent denial that most deaths in my country are related to AIDS, nothing is done to ensure that the children will have accommodations, food, and education when all the parents are gone. Those who know they are infected are not in denial that they are dying of AIDS. Keep the reason for their illness to themselves. Some even decide not to tell their wives, husbands, or relatives for fear of blame and rejection. And when they are sick, they avoid people. Those who try to go and visit them will be told the patient is sleeping, and in most cases, only the pastor will be allowed to see the patient. Patients know that if people see them, their secret will be revealed because of the loss of hair and weight. The patients also know that society will not respect anyone who dies from AIDS, so in an effort to die with a semblance of dignity, they truth remains a secret.

When Morning Stars Sang Together from the Book of Job

—Nadine Gordimer

1991 Nobel laureate in literature

Africa has only 10 percent of the world’s population yet accounts for 70 percent of all global HIV/AIDS cases. Approximately 17 million Africans have died from AIDS since the epidemic began in the late 1970s, and more than 24 million are infected with the virus. By the end of the current decade, the epidemic is expected to leave 40 million children and adolescents orphaned in Africa. In Africa has escaped the virus although some are affected far worse than others. The bulk of new infections continues to be concentrated in east Africa and especially in the southern port of the continent; in fact, the southern region has the majority of the world’s hand-cut countries.

Before I left Zimbabwe in 1999, it was painful to know how many people were dying from AIDS. It was especially hard for me as a pastor when I had to preside at an average of three funerals per week for individuals whose lives had been claimed by the virus. The saddest part, however, was realizing that the deceased’s partner and relatives would associate the death of their loved one with witchcraft or an ancestral curse. There is a traditional belief in Zimbabwe that death merely does not happen; death to become the mother of the children. The youngest of the three surviving daughters, I was appointed to be the mother of my sister’s children. I painfully shared with you how my sister Angie suffered and eventually died. Angie was educated and had a good job. She was seven years older than I, and she started working when I was in primary school. Because my father was a polygamist, he could not afford to pay for my high school education since my older sister was in college. Angie, who was so kind and generous, said she would pay for my education until I finished high school.

She went to church with her children and belonged to the Methodist Women’s Organization. Her husband was very outgoing. He would spend weekends with friends, but he would never take Angie with him. Every time I visited him I asked him where he was going and with whom he was associating, they always had a quarrel. I distinctly remember one time when I was at Angie’s house to spend a weekend with them, but her husband came home at 3:00 A.M., and they started fighting. Because of her small body, Angie was easily overpowered and hurt by him. I asked Angie why she tolerated the abuse, and she replied, “You will understand when you get married—that’s what marriage is all about—and I have to stay in this marriage for the sake of my kids.”

When I became a pastor, Angie shared all her worries and marital problems with me. She had been married for 16 years and had contracted different sexually-transmitted diseases, and I became worried too. My brother-in-law became ill in 1995 and nearly died from shingles, but he recovered and came home after being hospitalized for two months. Six months later Angie had a miscarriage. She became pregnant again and delivered her last-born boy, who is not in good health. Angie got sick in 1996. She complained of stomach pains and had a continuous cough. She went to the hospital, but she did not get better, so she decided to see private doctors. Still, there was no change for the better. After three months Angie started deteriorating; she experienced a drastic loss of weight. She stopped going to work, and that’s when I realized she was extremely sick.

I was over at her house to visit one day, and she told me she suspected she had AIDS. I encouraged her to be tested, but she...
refused. As we were talking, her husband walked into the room. I asked what he thought about Angie’s condition, and before he said a word, Angie said, “He is asking why I am dying, I am told that two of his girlfriends have died from AIDS.”

Angie’s husband became very defensive and told me he didn’t think AIDS was the reason for her illness. He believed his wife had been bewitched, and he wanted to take Angie to the traditional healers. I advised him to take Angie to the hospital, but he said he would only if the traditional healers failed. When my brother-in-law and my father took Angie to the traditional healers, they were told Angie had been bewitched. She was given traditional medication and they were given the assurance that Angie would get better. They came home so excited that Angie was going to be better. But Angie got worse.

It was around midnight one day when Angie’s daughter, who was then 15, called to tell me that Angie had gotten sick. I immedi-
ately rushed to Angie’s house and found her in deep pain. Her husband was not home that night, and as you can imagine, I was very upset. How can a man leave his sick wife alone? Where was he at that odd hour?

I rushed Angie to the hospital, she was admitted, and I stayed with her till the fol-

lowing morning.

The next day, I sent a message to our mother, who lives in the village, to come to the city. Mother was shocked when she saw that Angie was dying. She could not eat and would stay at the hospital waiting for visiting hours to begin. You can imagine how painful it was for me when I would leave Mother sitting alone outside the hospital after visiting hours. Because I was serving as a full-time pastor and also nursing my baby, Lindani could not remain at the hospital. I can still see Mother sitting under a tree at the hospital, refusing food, but holding her Bible. Angie’s husband would come to the hospital once every night but would not allow the children to come with him. As I write, these memories are becoming so fresh, and my friends, I am growing again.

At the hospital, the doctors conducted a number of tests, but nothing was discovered. The final test they could perform was an HIV test; however, a physician must secure the permission of the patient before this test can be done. I asked Angie if she wanted to have the HIV test, and she told me she was not ready. Her husband was avoiding me at all costs, and as you can imagine, I was so angry with him; I am not sure if I have gotten over the anger.

Angie’s doctor called me one night and told me he wanted to talk to me, so I went over to see him. He told me that even though he had not tested Angie for HIV, he was rel-
taining that she was HIV-positive. He told me how to take care of her and suggest-
ed we buy expensive tablets called motracia. We bought the tablets, but I never took mine about my meeting with the doctor. I felt as if no one in the family was prepared for reality, so I kept my thoughts to myself, though at times I would deny this reality since the doctor never tested her. It’s hard, my friends, to accept reality because one is required to accept the inevitability of death. Usually I would really accept that my sister—this beautiful, wonderful woman—was dying?

Angie got a little better, and she was dis-
charged from the hospital. I told her I wanted her to come and live in my house so that Mother and I could help take care of her. She thought this was a good idea since her husband was seldom home. I called her hus-
band and told him I was taking Angie to my house, and he told me that was a good arrangement since he was now working the night shift. Of course I knew he was not telling the truth. I took Angie to our house, where friends and relatives would come to visit her. Members of the church gave us all the spiritual support we needed. After I began attending workshops on AIDS, I could see that Angie was indeed dying from AIDS.

I had time to be with my beloved sister, we talked just as sisters do, we shared jokes, and we laughed when Angie was not in pain. Angie did not want to talk about death, but I decided to open the subject one afternoon. I told her that she was already gone, but from that day on she never again talked about death, and she never said goodbye.

When Angie’s condition worsened, we took her back to the hospital. She began to lose her memory, and she negated all the med-
ication. She lost weight along with her long, beautiful hair. She changed so radically that she was not physically the Angie we all knew.

Her husband would visit her once in a while, but Mother and I continued to be there for her. On the morning she passed away, Mother was with her in the hospital at 4:10 A.M., and I arrived 20 minutes after she died. As I looked at her through tears and in pain, I eventually was comforted by her calm face—finally, she was resting.

We could not locate her husband, so called his parents, who later found their son at his girlfriend’s house. I felt, and still feel, that my sister was to blame. She was not physically the Angie we all knew.

Although the country has the highest per capita GDP, Botswana has the highest estimated adult infection rate—8 percent, 34,000 die each year. 650,000 children have been orphaned, and 15,000 adults and children die each year.

A Continent in Peril

An estimated 8.8 percent of adults in Africa are infected with HIV/AIDS, and in seven countries, at least 1 adult in 5 is living with HIV.

Zambia

Twenty percent of the adult population is infected—1 in 4 adults in the cities; 430,000 children have been orphaned, and 39,000 Zambians died in 1999.

Namibia

With 19.5 percent of the adult population living with HIV, 37 percent of those infected are young; 67,000 children are AIDS orphans, and 14,000 adults and children die each year.

Botswana

Although the country has the highest per capita GDP, Botswana has the highest estimated adult infection rate—8 percent, 30,000 die each year; 60,000 children have lost their mothers or both parents to the disease.

South Africa

This country has the largest number of people living with HIV/AIDS—approximately 26 percent of the adult population, an increase from 23 percent in 1997; 420,000 children have been orphaned, and 230,000 people die each year from the disease.

When will this end?

Annette Grace Zimondi, was called to ordination in the United Methodist Church. While fulfilling the requirements for the master of theological studies degree at the Divinity School, she serves as pastor to the congregation of Saint John’s United Methodist Church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee.
Constructing a Critically Cooperative Relationship:

Religion, State, & Faith-Based Charity

BY CHRISTOPHER KELLY SANDERS, MDIV ’95

The charitable, non-profit organization has become the latest surprising venue for America’s ongoing culture wars. The public debate over the Boy Scouts of America’s exclusion of gay scouts-masters is being waged in hundreds of municipalities, United Way chapters, and religious institutions across the country. Joining this heated issue is the emerging controversy over President Bush’s proposal to provide public funds for so-called “faith-based organizations” that combat social ills.

The president is proposing an $8 billion program that would likely include greater tax benefits for those who make donations to religious charities and procedures that would allow the charitable programs of religious institutions to compete against non-religious charitable institutions for government grants. The creation of a special White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives led by John D. DiIulio, Jr., a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a fellow of the Brookings Institution and the Manhattan Institute, will provide oversight and give the program an “arm’s length” appearance.

Although this proposal raises a number of legal issues, they are beyond the scope of this discussion. Still, certain points are worth noting. The American understanding of the Establishment Clause may be shifting. “Separation of church and state” has long been a popular phrase used to summarize the issue of religion and government becoming too intimate, but it does not actually appear in the Constitution. The fact that the charitable arms of some religious institutions currently receive government grants and the fact that the public seems to support government funding of religious charities may make the point moot.

According to a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, 75 percent of Americans support the idea of religious charities applying for government grants. It is important to note that, as the survey questions become more specific, the level of support drops. Respondents, for example, are less sure about mosques and Buddhist temples receiving public funds than they are about churches and synagogues. Nevertheless, in the age of the sound byte, the overall approval of the basic idea holds well for its initial success in the political arena. In casting the debate as an issue of religious groups being discriminated against when they apply for government grants, Bush has strategically taken much of the power out of the separation of church and state mantra.

Legal issues aside, several theological and critical issues remain for religious institutions, especially for the churches because of their number. What are the objectives of this religion and government partnership? What is charity?, and What is the correct posture of the church toward the state? These are some of the questions that religious institutions must address if they are to engage in the debate on this issue and participate in this program with integrity.

Repressive Benevolence

The overt objective of public funding of faith-based initiatives is to harness the power of organizations that are effectively meeting people’s basic needs. Underlying political motives are surely at work as well. But hints of social control of the poor are also apparent in some discussions of the issue. In the Brookings Institution’s collection of essays, What’s God Got to Do With It?, both John DiIulio and political scientist James Q. Wilson discuss the connections among “criminals, religion, and poverty.”

Underlining political motives are surely at work as well. But hints of social control of the poor are also apparent in some discussions of the issue. In the Brookings Institution’s collection of essays, What’s God Got to Do With It?, both John DiIulio and political scientist James Q. Wilson discuss the connections among “criminals, religion, and poverty.”

After reciting a litany of “delinquency, drug abuse, gang wars, teen pregnancy, and single-parent homes,” Wilson notes that there is abundant evidence that faith-based programs are “changing the lives of identifiable individuals.” According to Wilson, religion is not the whole solution for those in need, but it is the trigger: “Religion does not solve their problems; it heightens them to the point that people feel they ought to do something about them. It creates an opportunity for personal transformation.” In a shocking-ly modern exhibition of Erastianism, Wilson wonders aloud whether it is possible for the government to “take advantage of the transforming power of religion” to combat some of these ills.

The state’s deployment of religion to address poverty for the purpose of social control is nothing new. Ernst Troeltsch points out that in late antiquity the “Church lifted the burden from the State on to her own shoulders” in the realm of charity “to feed and protect the masses of people in the towns.” Peter Brown describes the same phenomenon in more detail in his discussion of the ways in which bishops of the great population centers used charitable outreach and the rhetoric of love of the poor to draw the poor into their constituency. Although such actions flowed from authentically Christian impulses, this strategy also allowed the clergy to transform the balance of power and reconstitute themselves as part of the urban elite. In times of crisis when cities were on the verge of riot, bishops could claim to speak for the city to the emperor, who at least achieved his much-desired order through the workings of the new clerical class.

Nineteenth-century America saw similar developments. Middle and upper class fears of the growth in urban poverty brought calls for the end of publicly-funded charity in favor of religious and private charities. Horrified at the prospect of urban riots, the middle and upper classes amplified their rhetoric of poverty as a moral problem and added the theological flavor of the “dangerous classes.” “Repressive benevolence” is how David Wagner describes this tradition of viewing poverty as a moral problem to be controlled by the improve-ment of the character of poor people. As he puts it, practitioners of Christian philanthropy saw themselves as having a “duty to help change these victims of character flaws.” DiIulio, Wilson, and other contemporary advocates of offering public funds to religious charities and then drawing on their spiritual resources to solve social problems are working, down a well-worn path in the history of the relations between church and state.

The Poor as Spiritually Challenged?

Looking at contemporary proposals for public funding of faith-based organizations, the thought seems to support government funding of religious charities more interesting than it does surprising. The average consumer of mainstream news papers or television news would be rightly shocked to hear a headline such as “Unemployment increase caused by spiritual decline” or “Child poverty on the rise due to unresolved parental issues.” Yet few are surprised that spiritual and secular counseling are increasingly turned to as the solution to these economic problems. The thought seems to be that one can just fix the insides of the poor, then they can find a job and get themselves out of penury, one person at a time.
Charity without Illusions

What is the answer for religious institutions seeking to avoid writing another chapter in the history of repressive benevolence that has characterized American religion’s response to poverty? If religious groups were to look at poverty as an economic problem with spiritual implications rather than looking at poverty as a spiritual problem with economic implications, they might make a beginning. Religion could still provide the impetus for institutions to get involved in outreach, and religion could still provide the motivation for an individual to take steps to attempt to escape poverty. Analyzing poverty as an economic issue prevents one from confusing the poor with personal problems that should be addressed by reorienting their identities.

Another advantage of viewing social problems as social problems instead of spiritual problems is that it provides a common language of debate. It will not produce automatic agreement about solutions; there are, after all, rival schools of economics. But this shift in language of debate. It will not produce automatic agreement about solutions; there are, after all, rival schools of economics. But this shift in language will at least avoid the condescension into the psyches and souls of people already suffering disadvantage. It also makes it easier for different religious groups to work together on the issue because they are not debating the merits of their particular theologies of poverty.

Another option for the churches, if they truly believe poverty should be regarded as a spiritual problem, is to answer more clearly whose spiritual problem it is. Is poverty a spiritual flaw of the church or a social problem that stems from a larger to the rich? The Christian view of poverty as a spiritual peril for the rich seems to be a strong motif of Jesus’ own ministry and is reflected in Gospel stories such as Lazarus and the Rich Young Ruler in Luke 16. This perspective retains the idea that poverty is tied up with character flaws, but it shifts these personal problems to the rich. The disadvantage of this perspective is that it makes poverty a mere background for the drama of salvation for the rich. It also seems to imply that the problem is solved if the rich become poor, when a better solution might be to harness their ability to create wealth for the common good.

A second avenue for the churches seeking to find a spiritual understanding of poverty without patronizing the poor is the tradition of viewing service to the poor as service to Christ himself. The locus classicus of this notion is found in Matthew 25 where Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these…you did it to me.” Identifying the poor so closely with Jesus is the advantage of mitigating the tendency to view poverty as a character flaw because Christians would be unlikely to attribute character flaws to Jesus. The disadvantage of identifying Jesus with the poor is the unfortunate propensity to glorify poverty and make it the means of salvation for the rich and middle class.

Critical Cooperation between Religion and Government

These are issues that plague the philanthropic system in a general sense. What the president’s proposal for public funding of faith-based charitable organizations will specifically add to the mixture remains to be seen. The prospect of combining the spiritually invasive tradition of repressive benevolence with the government’s concern to control criminal deviancy does not sound like a promising solution for poverty. Nevertheless, there is every indication that religious institutions will readily line up for the forthcoming government grants. Finally receiving long-desired public recognition of their good work and a little extra money, religious institutions may rush in before they realize what they have done. How can faith-based organizations maintain their independence and avoid the unholy alliance that produces such queries? The government is in a long-haul national funding program for social programs. And it is also true that anyone who has attempted higher education has benefited dramatically from government grants. Finally receiving long-desired public recognition of their good work and a little extra money, religious institutions may rush in before they realize what they have done. How can faith-based organizations maintain their independence and avoid the unholy alliance that produces such queries? The government is in the process of redefining the role of the government.

If religious institutions are going to cooperate with the government in providing relief, however, there is a risk that their problems of poverty, then they should construct a relationship of critical cooperation with the government. The critical cooperation must occur when a relationship is entered carefully and thoughtfully. Critical cooperation is not control. Critical cooperation does not rule out difference, disagreement, or even competition to a degree, in fact, those attributes are expected as evidence of the critical element in the relationship. The implication for the president’s proposal is important. Churches and other religious bodies should ask themselves whether a dependence upon government support would compromise their ability to advocate long-term solutions to poverty.

Would religious groups be afraid that critical cooperation with the government could lead to fewer grants? Would religious groups become so comfortable with their heroic role of providing solutions to the poor that they would lobby against a systematic, governmental solution to the problem as some did in the 19th century? Would religious charities try to use their influence to build a base of political power as bishops in late antiquity often did? The issue of boundaries is clearly at the heart of these troubling questions for religious groups. Religion could still provide the long-desired public recognition of their good work and a little extra money, religious institutions may rush in before they realize what they have done. How can faith-based organizations maintain their independence and avoid the unholy alliance that produces such queries? The government is in the process of redefining the role of the government.

For the president’s proposal, while a shrewd nod to the power of religion in America, offers many temptations for religious groups. Religion may once again find itself in the role of moral regulator of the poor to serve the government’s need to provide social control. Religion may lose its own purpose in the purposes of the government. An uncritical cooperation in which religion is dependent upon the government for funding of its programs may tempt many religious bodies to muzzle their prophetic call for a long-term, systematic solution to poverty. Criticizing government policy would either seem hypocritical or too risky if one wants to receive grants the following year. Finally, religious groups may find it hard to not capitulate to the growing pressure of the government’s ability to channel the actors of the poor. Candidates for office already spend a great deal of time visiting religious bodies. If religious institutions continue to build up their constituencies it is not hard to imagine their growing ability to sway local elections.

As the president’s proposal gains momentum, faith-based charitable organizations will be beginning to make their decisions about participation in this historic initiative. Even with all the stipulations and red tape, extra funding is hard to turn down. If the program shows early success, then it is likely to shape the church and state landscape for many years. So long as religious groups enter such relationships critically and find ways to maintain their identity and their own prophetic voice, they can participate with integrity. In their zeal to work together, faith-based organizations and the government should not forget that their partnership exists for the eradication of poverty, not the spiritual improvement and social control of the poor.

diversity School alumnus Christopher Sniders, a former Dollar General Scholar, is a doctoral student in historical studies in the Graduate School of Religion at Vanderbilt University. To see http://pewforum.org


Practicing the Rules of Conversation

Paul DeFant, assistant professor of theology, was invited by the 2003 graduating class to deliver a personal reflection during the baccalaureate service on Thursday, May 10, 2001, in Benton Chapel. The following excerpt is from his address.

As graduates of this Divinity School, you have been, willingly or reluctantly, part of a very old and very complicated ongoing conversation that we call “higher education,” or “the academy,” or “the university.” It is the hope of the faculty and administration that you will have practiced the rules of that conversation, pondered, and absorbed those rules that understandings begins with listening as carefully as possible, that proper persuasion is a matter of adding reasons and not just repeating something in a louder and louder voice, that serious conversation uncovered inerradicable differences of commitment and understanding which should be acknowledged and even celebrated, that one can and should question and criticize oneself, even one’s dearest commitments, without questioning the need for commitment itself. The wager or gamble of a school like this one is precisely that a critical initiation into that mysterious and intractable human reality called religious faith properly occurs and flourishes as part of this kind of academic conversation.

We can carry the metaphor of conversation further, for religious faith, too, is a kind of speech or conversation. It is like an immense story about very deep matters which people tell one another, and tell themselves, and tell again and again. What we call tradition happens when one generation tells the story to the next. What we call faith happens when a person understands his or her entire life as part of this story, choosing to live as a character in this story. And what we call the academic study of religion occurs when a person determines to understand what this story is and why people tell it, by using the resources of history, philosophy, or social thought.

A question: the person who studies the story and the person who lives the story—whose whole life is like a telling of the story—can they be one and the same person? Not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role. I know that not everyone can pull that off, perhaps, but the very existence of Vanderbilt Divinity School depends on those of you who do undertake that dangerous role.
Three years ago, when I sat down to write the essays for my application to the Divinity School, I read the commitments stated at the beginning of the VDS catalog. Although the academic rigor that a university divinity school affords was a draw, VDS’s clear and vital commitments to social justice and diversity appealed to me. I often say that I grew up with one foot in the church and one foot out of church because my parents and I experienced difficulty in finding a faith community that shared our most basic values. The ostensibly Christian living that I witnessed while growing up seemed hypocritical at best, and it was difficult to claim either a congregation or my own Christian identity. I had always considered myself a morally upright person, but I thought I was a bad Christian because I did not “believe the right ideas,” and this perception inevitably gave rise to spiritual dissonance.

But during my graduate studies, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and Vanderbilt University Divinity School have offered models of Christianity and Christian living that resonate with my own. Not only is social justice a central commitment, but critical reflection is an integral component of faithful living—not its antithesis. My decision to attend VDS ultimately proved to be a theological homecoming.

Critics of VDS, particularly more conserva- tive ones, are quick to cite the “blas- phemies” that are taught and discussed in our quadrangle. Even our supporters are well aware of the institution’s progressivism. Last fall, for example, a Presbyterian USA minister respectfully joked with my dad that it would be a miracle if I came out of Vanderbilt still a Christian. But for so many of us, VDS offers that window into and that avenue toward the faith for which we struggle.

In a community forum last fall, Professor Fernando Segovia turned around the classic definition of theology as “faith seeking understanding.” He argued that in the academ- ical world of our postmodern context, we experience—is that I have come to discern the blessing of worship and celebration in Benton Chapel.

Dissonance inevitably gave rise to spiritual dissonance.

faith. That has been my experience at VDS. The most inspirational text I have encounter- ed in the three years since I wrote my application essays is Micah 6:8: “This is what God asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.” The beauty of this scripture is that it precisely is not a specific prescription for what constitutes faithful living. Rather, it is a basic call to justice, compassion, and faith; it is a call to each of us to live into one’s own unique fullness-of-being as a child of God created in God’s very image. The blessing of my experience at VDS—specifically the commu- nity of individuals who have shaped that experience—is that I have come to discern and to appreciate what that call means for me.

From the Alumni/ae Association President

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

We have had an exciting year and plan an even better one to come. Our 2000-01 alumni/ae association and council meetings were held during the Cole Lectures featuring Professor Kimberley Ward, professor of New Testament at the University of Chicago Theological Seminary. The three-time medalist in the Divinity School’s history, Hughes currently is a candidate for diaconal ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She was recognized at the Founder’s Medal ceremony in 1996 for her contributions to early feminist thought and commentary.

For first honors in the Divinity School, Krista Hughes, MA’98, MDiv’01, received the Founder’s Medal, an award established in 1857 by Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt as one of his gifts to the University. Dean James Hudnut-Beumler (standing center) presented the medal to Hughes as Chancellor Gordon Gee (right) conferred the honor. Observing the presentation is Martha R. Ingram (sitting) of Nashville, chairman of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust. The 82nd Founder’s Medallist in the Divinity School’s history, Hughes currently is a candidate for diaconal ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The whole arena of genetic research has been one of the most exciting and challenging areas of scientific investigation in recent years. VDS’s new endowed professorship in bioethics and public policy will allow the school to continue to lead the conversation on these issues.

The dates for the next Alumni/ae activities are November 2-4, 2001. Alumni/ae activities include a breakfast with our new dean, James Hudnut-Beumler, and an association meeting on October 5, preceding the second lecture. Dean Hudnut-Beumler will address us on “Ten Ways to Improve the Divinity School.” This will be a great opportu- nity to meet the dean, catch up with old friends, and make new acquaintances. You will receive information regarding time, place, and reservation procedures in the Cole Lectures brochure.

Our alumni/ae council will have a luncheon meeting following the October 5 morning lecture—more details about that event will come to you dedicated souls who serve so faithfully on the council. Again, please mark your calendar and join us.

On Monday evening, October 29, 2001, the Divinity School, in conjunction with the Society for Bioethics and Humanities, will present Laurie Zoloth-Dorfman, associate professor of social ethics and director of the Program in Jewish Studies at San Francisco State University, as the speaker for the Sally Mead Medal lecture—more details about that event will come to you dedicated souls who serve so faithfully on the council. Again, please mark your calendar and join us.

On Tuesday, September 13, 2001, you are invited to the Fall Convocation and Installation of the Divinity School’s 15th Dean, James Hudnut-Beumler, followed by a reception. Please mark your calendar and plans to join us in this celebration.

Our alumni/ae association and council meetings will occur again during the Cole Lectures. Our 2001 lecturer is Parker Palmer, internationally known writer, lecturer, activist, and educator. Palmer has written such acclaimed works as The Company of Strangers, To Know as We Are Known, and Let Your Life Speak, selected as the 2000 Book of the Year by the Association of Theological Bookellers. His timely topic is “Divided No More: Spiritual Formation in a Secular World.” The dates for the Cole Lectures are October 4 and 5, 2001. Alumni/ae activities include a breakfast with our new dean, James Hudnut-Beumler, and an association meeting on October 5, preceding the second lecture. Dean Hudnut-Beumler will address us on “Ten Ways to Improve the Divinity School.” This will be a great opportu- nity to meet the dean, catch up with old friends, and make new acquaintances. You will receive information regarding time, place, and reservation procedures in the Cole Lectures brochure.

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Alumni/e Class Notes

Justin J. Harman, Oberlin BD’42, and his wife, society, moved to Applewood at Amberst, a retirement community in the countryside south of Amberst, Massachusetts.


Howard F. Huffman, BD’49, a retired missionary, seminary professor, and Disciples of Christ pastor, has been awarded the title “minister emeritus” by the congregations of Bethany Christian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He and his wife, Rosemary, also celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on June 10, 2001.

Martha Frances Garner Albers, MA’55, has been named one of five distinguished alumni/e for 2001 at Denison University, the highest award bestowed by Denison’s Student Association. The alumnae, in recognition of outstanding achievements that reflect honor upon the university, Albers was chosen for her work as a community advocate for battered women and for her role in founding Haven House in 1987.

Robert Daniel Fraley, MDiv’56, and his wife, Ruth, recently celebrated 50 years of marriage. Attendance the celebration of their golden wedding anniversary, attended by grandchildren, four great-grandchildren.

James H. Beasley Jr., BA’60, BD’63, DMin’77, retired on July 1, 2000, as senior pastor at the First United Church of Oak Park, Illinois, after a pastorate of 20 years.

Hoyel B. Taylor, PhD’69, professor of religion, emeritus, at Belmont University, has completed work on the sixth edition of Old Testament Story published by Prentice Hall.

Herbert B. Moore, president of the Second Baptist Church of Montgomery, has been featured in an article published in the Journal of Christian Culture and Society. Moore has retired on July 1, 2000, as senior pastor at the Second Baptist Church of Montgomery to assert their rights to vote. “It was rewarding, dangerous, and exciting,” stated Taylor. “I was afraid, but the people we chose, black or white, all came with a lot of courage.”

Robert N. Watkin Jr., PhD’69, has retired officially as a Presbyterian minister, however, he continues serving in interim capacities while teaching religion at the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga where he is an adjunct professor in the philosophy and religion department. During his retirement, Watkin and his wife, Alice Ganit, BA’59, plan to spend time with their three children and two grandchildren.

Jeanne McCarthy Stevenson-Moessner, BD’70, associate professor of church and spiritual formation at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Iowa, was named a Henry Luce III Fellow in Theology for the 2000–2001 academic year. She joined six other scholars—from Princeton Theological Seminary, Yale University Divinity School, Duke University Divinity School, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University; and Howard University School of Theology—chosen by The Henry Luce Foundation and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. In acknowledgment Stevenson-Moessner’s appointment as one of the year’s seven Luce Fellows, University of Dubuque President Jeffrey F. Bullock described her as “a compassionate, articulate, sensitive teacher and excellent scholar.” She is the editor of In Her Own Time: Women and Developmental Issues in Pastoral Care. During her fellowship year, she conducted theological research on the topic “Womb-Love: The Practice and Theology of Adoption in Christianity and Contemporary Culture.” Stevenson-Moessner’s award marks the second consecutive year a member of the University community has been chosen as a Luce Fellow in Theology, Ronnie Miller-McLemore, professor of pastoral theology and spiritual formation at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, was named a Luce Fellow in Theology in 1999-2000 to research the neglected roles of women in religious thought and practice. In Her Own Time features an essay by Miller-McLemore.

Darrrel C. Filler, MDiv’73, has been named the school’s latest president. He is published in 1984 by Abingdon Press, has sold over 16,000 copies.
Orlande as a Christian Church minister, and in 1980, he ordained partnership standing in the UCC.

Jerry Gladson, MA’73, PhD’78, senior minister first at Christ Church (Disciples of Christ) in Marietta, Georgia, announces the publication of his memoir, A Theologian’s Journey from Seventh-Day Adventism to Mainstream Christianity, by Life Assurance Press. Among the significant influences Gladson discusses in his spiritual autobiograph- iography is studying about the Church. He teaches part-time at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur and at the Psychological Studies Institute in Atlanta.

Edward V. Launig Jr., MD’72, PhD’75, has received an appointment as professor of teleological theology at Harvard University Divinity School. He previously held the Robert E. McManus Chair of Christian Thought at Wheaton College where he collocated and directed the program for the Study of the Early Church.

William Edward Reiser, SJ, PhD’77, associate professor of religious studies at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts, announces the publication of his book, In Solidarity with His People: A Theologian Looks at Mark by Liturgical Press. Reiser arranges the argument that the spiritual effectiveness of Mark’s story of the resurrection of Jesus “is in the many who are willing to live, like Jesus, in solidarity with God’s people.”

David Randall Boone, MD’74, MA’81, PhD’97, has received the presidential citation from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine for development of the College of Preachers at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. The College of Preachers sponsored “The City of God: Theological Reflections on America’s Crisis of Leadership” for 2000. The College of Preachers awarded the 2000 College of Preachers Annual Awards during the conference held in Memphis. Alumn/i or may correspond with Boone at boone@utk.ed.

Eric Carl Holmstrom, MD’78, currently serves as chaplain to a long-term care ministry at HCA Manor Care in Devon, Pennsylvania.

Roy Brasfield Herron, MD’80, JD’90, a Tennessee Democratic State Senator from Dresden representing the 24th district and a partner in the legal firm of Neese Herron & Miller-Herron, has coauthored with J.H. “Cotton” Ivy, Tennessee Political Humor: Some of Those Jokes You Voted For Published by the University of Tennessee Press in Knoxville, the book catalogs anecdotes and tall tales about state and local politics, judicial decisions, and Capitol Hill maneuverings. The authors write in the introduction, “...people in politics believe in laughter. The book of Proverbs instructs, ‘Laughter doth good like a medicine.’ As the most famous native of Grinder’s Switch, Tennessee, the Great Ole Opry star Minnie Pearl, used to say, ‘Laughter is God’s hand on the shoulder of a troubled world.”

Charles Brooks Gibson, MD’80, resides in Kannapolis, North Carolina, with his wife, Lindy, and their daughter, Hannah Bitmanne, 2 1/2. He currently serves as a part-time pas- sor at Royal Oakes United Methodist Church and works as a substance abuse counselor at the Charlotte Rescue Mission and as chap- lain for Rebound, the men’s recovery pro- gram. While seeking certification as a clinical addiction specialist and also as a pastoral counselor, Gibson continued, “I believe that saving lives is God’s work.”

Deborah Wilkins, PhD’80, resident in Washington, D.C., currently serves as assistant professor of religious education at George Washington University’s institute in ethics, spirituality, and community. Wilkins teaches mathematics and works as a community educator for the Orange County Rape Crisis Center and where Heathers serves as associate pastor at the United Church of Chapel Hill, United Church of Christ. They write, “We continue to live happily as life partners since our commitment ceremony on August 14, 1999.”

Patricia Wade Eichner Mower, MD’94, was ordained on December 9, 2000, at Grace Episcopal Church in Asheville, North Carolina, by the Right Reverend Robert Hodges Johnson, Bishop of Western North Carolina.

Gary Patrick White, MD’95, associate chaplain at Vanderbilt University, presented a program on diversity issues within the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered com- munities at the annual conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators held in Seattle, Washington.

Nicole Cheryl Kirk, MD’96, was ordained on May 19, Jean Shudick, office manager of the religious life department at Deaconess Hospital in Evanston.

Gregory Lynn Reece, MD’92, adjunct instructor of religion and philosophy at the University of Montevallo, Alabama’s public liberal arts university, received his doctorate in the University of Chicago Divinity School program on diversity issues within the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered com- munities at the annual conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators held in Seattle, Washington.

Karen Leigh Stroup, PhD’96, lecturer in anthropology at Vanderbilt University and a coordinator of Spill the Language of Healing: Living with Breast Cancer without Going to War, was guest editorialist for the April, 2001, issue of the Breast Cancer Educator and was also editorialist, “Time to Debunk the Myths of Homosexuality,” Stroup is a graduate of the Presbyterian Church.

Susan Elizabeth Steinberg, MD’92, is a senior Playstation programmer at Sony Computer Entertainment Inc., at his ministerial position as a professor at the University of Kansas during the 2001- 2002 academic year. An essay by Steinberg was published in the winter 2002 issue of The Spire.

Linda Marie Martin, MD’93, was graduated from Drew University’s Graduate School in May upon the successful defense of her dis- sertation titled Women, Families, and Homosex. An Ethnographic and Historical Study of Lesbian and Gay Families. Dona Ann Dossom, BS’94, MD’98, and Heather Stamey Dillashaw, MD’90, reside in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where Donna teaches mathematics and works as a commu- nity educator for the Orange County Rape Crisis Center and where Heather serves as associate pastor at the United Church of Chapel Hill, United Church of Christ. They write, “We continue to live happily as life partners since our commitment ceremony on August 14, 1999.”

Adrian Adam Durlester, MTS’00, serves on the faculty of Alkivah Jewish Day School in Nashville where he teaches Hebrew and Judaica to students in the first and second grades and music classes to students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade. Durlester was elected recently to membership on the board of directors for the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Educators.

Emily Fletcher Hardman, MTS’01, and Justin Morgan Harvey, MTS’01, were mar- ried on June 2, 2001, at Saint Thomas Episcopal Church in East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Eustis, Florida. Members of the wedding party included Heather Benko, MTS’00; Matthew Drever, MTS’00; and Nicole Cheri Kirk, MTS’00.

Rebecca Marie Heller, MTS’00, currently serves as associate minister of Christ Church (Disciples of Christ) in Chestertown, Maryland.

The Spire Summer 2001
Obituaries


Frederick Otto, Oberlin B', of Springfield, Ohio, at the age of 95 on October 4, 1999.

Richard H. Staple, Oberlin B', of Lincoln, Nebraska, on April 8, 1999.

Mendell E. Rimmel, Oberlin B', of Elyria, Ohio, professor of mathematical sciences, emeritus, at Kent State University and a Methodist minister, on April 7, 2000.

Charlotte F. LaCroix, Oberlin MA'32, of Lakewood Ocean, New Jersey, on September 12, 1999.

Howard H. Patrick, Oberlin BD'36, of Columbus, Ohio, on September 25, 2000.


Albert L. Faurot, Oberlin MA'40, of Vancouver, Washington, formerly of Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Philippines, on January 24, 1998.

Charles Edward Dyer, D'42, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a chorister and lector at Saint Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Pittsfield and professor of education and associate dean of the graduate school, emeritus, at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, at age 86 on November 29, 1999, from the effects of a stroke; survivors include his wife of 60 years, Prudence Osborn Dyer, BA'41, professor of education, emerita, at Drake University.

Marcus M. Gurley, BD'42, of Madison, Tennessee, on September 21, 2000.

Eugene S. Ogrod, BD'42, of Granite Bay, California, on July 8, 1999.

W. Myron Glick, Oberlin BD'46, of Walworth, Wisconsin, on April 20, 1999.

Guy F. Perry, Oberlin BD'46, of Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 1, 2000.


O. Vance Mason, BD'52, of Chickasaw, Alabama, on December 25, 2000.

David Gist Howell, BD'53, of Modesto, California, a retired minister in the Congregational Church, UCC, and former administrator of Edson Convalescent Hospital, at age 72 on January 27, 2001.

Clarence S. Fairbanks, Oberlin B'57, of Greenville, Ohio, on May 19, 2000.

Beverly G. Gulick, Oberlin MRE'62, of Cleveland, Ohio, on July 21, 1999.

Neil Mason White, Oberlin BD'62, interim minister at Edgewood UCC in East Lansing, Michigan, known for his astuteness in translating the biblical message into contemporary life and for his ministry of social concerns while serving churches in Ohio and Michigan, on November 9, 1999, from the effects of a coronary.

Fred Hoskin, Oberlin BD'63, of Troy, Ohio, at age 68, on October 1, 2000, from the effects of leukemia.


Anthony LeRoy Dunnavant, MDiv'79, MA'81, PhD'84, a native of Maryland and Disciples of Christ minister who served as dean and professor of church history at Lexington Theological Seminary in Lexington, Kentucky, on February 8, 2001, from the effects of cancer.
Believer
Tibetan pilgrim with prayer beads
by Stacey Irvin, photographer, BA'98
American (born 1976)
recipient of the 1999 Margaret Stonewall Wooldridge Hamblet Award
for outstanding achievement in studio art at Vanderbilt University
chromogenic print
11" x 14"
courtesy of the artist

And so the spring buds burst, and so I gaze, and so the blossoms fall, and so my days...
Although each of us can be defined by the brief physical time we exist on this earth, we have the ability to make that time extend beyond our brief physical existence. We are part of a collective consciousness, connected to each other by our work, images, thoughts, and writing.

—Maya Ying Lin (born 1959)
American architect and sculptor

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