The Antoinette Brown Lecture at Vanderbilt University Divinity School commemorates the life of the first woman in the United States to be ordained to the Christian ministry. Born on May 20, 1825, in Henrietta, New York, Antoinette Louisa Brown began to speak publicly at the services of the local Congregational church when she was nine years old. She was graduated from Oberlin College in 1847 and completed the course requirements in the theological seminary in 1850; however, her degree was not granted. Ordained on September 15, 1853, she was awarded an honorary master of arts degree from Oberlin in 1879 and an honorary doctorate of divinity degree in 1908. A writer and speaker for women’s rights, temperance, and the abolition of slavery, she was among the pioneers of the women’s rights movement who lived long enough after the suffrage amendment to see its fruits ripen.

Antoinette Brown was graduated from Oberlin College in 1847, but her degree was not granted because she was a woman. She became a prominent figures in the women’s suffrage movement and worked to improve conditions for women in many areas. Her life and work are commemorated by the Antoinette Brown Lecture at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

Antoinette Brown was a promoter of women’s rights and was among the pioneers of the movement. She was involved in many areas, including temperance, abolition, and the protection of vulnerable populations from abuses resulting from the capacity of men. Her legacy continues to be remembered through the Antoinette Brown Lecture at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

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Benefactor Sylvia Sanders Kelley, BA’74, established the annual lectureship in 1974 with a gift to the Divinity School. At the invitation of a committee of students, distinguished women theologians address the University community on the critical concerns confronting women in ministry. As the 25th theologian to deliver the Antoinette Brown Lecture, Professor Thistlethwaite will explore the relationship between feminist theology and genetic determinism and argue for the protection of vulnerable populations from abuses resulting from the capacity to code each person’s genetic material.
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Disembarking the HMS Church

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

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

Rick Dietrich, a colleague at Columbia Theological Seminary, relished his work in ministry. He believed that ministry meant cutting jobs and slashing profit estimates. It isn’t like military leadership, or a CEO, or a commanding ship leader, or a CEO, or a CEO. Ministry is not about being the one’s job is commanding authority. Servant leadership, as practiced by the disciples of Jesus, is a not doormant leadership. It is helping people to do what God wants them to do with and through the expenditure of their lives in faith abundance.

The difficulty of being a leader in today’s church is that what people want is a cruise ship leader, or a CEO, or a commanding presence in the pulpit. While personal magnetism and a sense of authority are assets to ministry, they are not the substance of the leadership that today’s church needs. Your job, when they ask for stones instead of bread, is to transform their hearts so that they will want bread, the bread of heaven. This means transforming first and foremost our understanding of ministry.

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

We need a definition of ministry for all time that is non-clerical, dynamic, and theological. Let me suggest one such definition of ministry. It comes from two of the great theologians of the last century, Daniel Day Williams and H. Richard Niebuhr. They defined ministry as the “increase of the love of God and love toward neighbor.” It may sound familiar. It should. It’s taken from Jesus’ summation of the law. In fact, Jesus derived that definition of what it meant to be God’s righteous people from Deuteronomy in which the Ten Commandments themselves, if thought to be too many, could be reduced to two simple principles. We could do worse in our churches, and we have.

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

—Dean James Hudnut-Beumler

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The Call to Serve

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

Photographs by David Croushore, BA '87

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

While fulfilling requirements for the master of divinity degree, these students also are serving on committees at VDS: Brandon Gore, representative to the House Council; Charles Turner, chair of the Vanderbilt chapter of Black Seminarians; Heath Godsey, coordinator for the Office of Women’s Concerns; Judi Emley, chair of the Political Action Network (PAN); Michelle Jackson, cochair of the Black Seminarians; Will Judah, chair of Eco Concerns; Eric Schlegel, coordinator of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns (GARLE), and Erika Callaway, coordinator for the Office of Women’s Concerns.
THE SPIRE

Winter 2002

New Staff Appointments at VDS

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

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

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

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

He succeeds Cathy H. Snyder who has served Vanderbilt University but also her return to the quad where she is manager of the remodeled Refectory and Vanderbilt Faculty Reading Room. To provide a centrally located place for faculty and students to gather and exchange ideas, the Refectory was reconfigured during the summer to feature a dining area and a reading room with wireless access to the Vanderbilt network.

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

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

When prospective students make inquiry about applying to Vanderbilt University Divinity School, one the first individuals with whom they’ll become acquainted is Jamison Fee, MDiv’99, who returned to campus this fall as assistant to the director of admissions. He succeeds Brian Hueser, MTS’90, who has enrolled in the doctoral program at Vanderbilt’s Peabody College.

A native of Nashville, Fee was graduated in 1984 from David Lipscomb University where he studied early American history. He and his wife, Melissa, MSN’99, a lecturer in the School of Nursing and practitioner at the Vanderbilt Page-Campbell Heart Institute, are parents of a five-year-old daughter, Sydney, and a two-year-old son, Wallace.

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

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

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

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

Eminent Algerian-French philosopher and literary critic Jacques Derrida, acknowledged by the New York Times as "perhaps the world's most famous philosopher—if not the only famous philosopher," delivered the Chancellor's Lecture in Vanderbilt Law School's Flynn Auditorium on October 25. The pioneer of the Deconstructivist movement, Derrida presented a paper titled "The Jury," which probed a range of topics relating to memory, fidelity, and religion, framed within an account of the life of his friend Paul de Man, the controversial semiotician. Raising questions about memory as an ethical obligation infinite at every moment and the ultimate compatibility of marriage and Christianity, Derrida continued to explore language and culture in the vein of his watershed works Margins of Philosophy, and also hosts Africa's only national HIV/AIDS radio program.

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The Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality welcomed South African AIDS educator Christo Greyling to the Divinity School in November to discuss the role of the church in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A hematologist who tested HIV positive 3 years while at seminary, Greyling was instrumental in developing "I Have Hope," an AIDS peer group model selected by the South African National Population Unit as the best practice model for peer group-based HIV/AIDS prevention programs. He presents this model throughout the continent and also hosts Africa's only national HIV/AIDS radio program.

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

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

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

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

Zoloth-Dorfman also holds an appointment at San Francisco State University where she serves as director of the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality. During his visit to the University, he also met with professors and graduate students in the philo­sophy department to answer pointed questions about his complex theories.

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

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

"The enemy has destroyed the sanctuary. Your foes have roused within your holy place; they set up there en­emies for your name. At the upper entrance they hacked the wooden trellis with axes. And then with hammers and hammers, they smeared all the carved work. They set your sanctuary on fire, they devastated the dwelling place of your name."

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

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Tribute to a Mentor
Amy-Jill Levine, the Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, received the 2001 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Denver, Colorado. She was introduced at the SBL meeting by Marianne Bickettstaff, JD’01, doctoral student in New Testament and administrative assistant to the Carpenter Program and Kelly Miller Smith Institute. The following excerpt is from Bickettstaff’s introduction:

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

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

Many students are required to submit papers to be read at professional meetings, and she is in the audience during their presentations. She has graded papers with the same high standards she expects of well-established scholars. For example, a grade of A– for her course always requires a paper of publishable quality, and no one is more proud than she when a student’s paper is published.

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

But her mentoring includes more than scholarship. Teresa Hornsby, PhD’03, an assistant professor of philosophy and religion at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, says, “A–J. expends an extraordinary amount of energy toward transforming the young graduate student into the person of a professional. She offers practical advice on interviewing for jobs, purchasing designer clothing on a graduate student budget, and choosing a good martini gin. A–J.’s annual trip with students to a local outlet mall to shop for professional wear is always an anticipated event.”

She was nominated for this award because she serves as an example of how one can maintain a balance among commitments to teaching, scholarship, family, and community service. “Because of the model she has set for us, the young medieval Oxford Oxordian, seriously,” explains Hornsby. “I try to follow her example by replaying to every student’s e-mail or phone call. The church is an ammatical or stylistic error, taking time to listen although my desk is piled high with papers, being hard when necessary—but soft when necessary, and by maintaining a clear and professional boundary between teacher and student. Even now, A–J. remains my mentor; in moments of panic I can send an e-mail and receive an immediate answer on questions ranging from Second Temple Judaism to publishing.”

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

On April 2, 1739, John Wesley took to the open air and preached outdoors to a large crowd in Bristol, England. It was his first experience with “field preaching.” He later remarked about the incident that he had “subdued the pious spirit and liberal social convention and taking the gospel to be the law of the new covenant.”

If one were to be insistent on a particular date and place, then this event can serve to mark the genesis of the Wesleyan Methodist Revival. Wesley had long been involved in the serious pursuit of discipleship that had earned him and his Oxford colleagues the Methodist moniker, but it was not until that pivotal spring day in 1739 that he was won over to a method of evangelizing that allowed his movement to become widespread. It was with an interest in this movement that a contemporary group known as People Called Methodists recently journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean to explore Wesleyan roots and to join in a dialogue with their British Methodist cousins. Led by Professor Doug Meeks, the Cal Turner Chancellor’s Professor of Wesleyan Studies and chair of Early Christian Studies at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, the group included 24 students and alumni from the School. From May 14-25, 2001, these pilgrims covered an amount of territory in southern England that would have made Wesley proud. And while the Vanderbilt travelers did not have to make their way on horseback, they logged plenty of miles. As they crisscrossed the country, Professor Meeks, the Cal Turner Chancellor’s Professor of Wesleyan Studies and chair of Early Christian Studies at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, maintained a balance among commitments to scholarship. Teresa Hornsby, PhD’00, an assistant professor of philosophy and religion at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, says, “A–J. expends an extraordinary amount of energy toward transforming the young graduate student into the person of a professional. She offers practical advice on interviewing for jobs, purchasing designer clothing on a graduate student budget, and choosing a good martini gin. A–J.’s annual trip with students to a local outlet mall to shop for professional wear is always an anticipated event.”

She was nominated for this award because she serves as an example of how one can maintain a balance among commitments to teaching, scholarship, family, and community service. “Because of the model she has set for us, the young medieval Oxford Oxordian, seriously,” explains Hornsby. “I try to follow her example by replaying to every student’s e-mail or phone call. The church is an ammatical or stylistic error, taking time to listen although my desk is piled high with papers, being hard when necessary—but soft when necessary, and by maintaining a clear and professional boundary between teacher and student. Even now, A–J. remains my mentor; in moments of panic I can send an e-mail and receive an immediate answer on questions ranging from Second Temple Judaism to publishing.”

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

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

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

After hoofing through the streets of medieval Oxford on our first full day, we stopped to enter the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, the University Church of Oxford. The Church is impressive for the history it claims, and the more of that history I learn, the more I love it. You only have to close your eyes to imagine the number of eminent politicians, scientists, and theologians who have walked these stone columns throughout the centuries. Sitting in the pews and running my hands over the grey stone columns were powerful moments not only for this student of Methodist history but for anyone with an interest in the history of Christianity.

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

Nida Griffiths, MDiv’03, and Andrew Thompson, MDiv’93, stand before a portrait of John Wesley at the stake. And this was also the church where the Wesleys worshipped and where John, as a fellow of Lincoln College, had the privilege of periodically delivering university sermons.

I tried to picture Cranmer’s 16th-century audience as it was surprised by his eleventh hour recantation of his earlier confession of heresy. I tried to see Wesley, slight in build and stern in demeanor, as he chastised the faculty and students of the university as “tre- fians,” who displayed “pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience and previshness, sloth and indolence, gluttony and sensuality.”

In his final university sermon, “Scriptural Christianity” (1744), Wesley matter-of-factly defended himself as only having communicat- ed the judgment of the gospel in “plainness of speech.” The site where these pivotal moments occurred holds all the intangible gravitas of a place that has seen great figures and great events throughout the centuries. Sitting in the pews and running my hands over the stone columns were powerful moments not only for this student of Methodist history but for anyone with an interest in the history of Christianity.
Do We Need a New Religion?

By James Hudson-Leipoldt, Ph.D.,
Dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School
and The Anne Potter Wilson Distinguished Pro-
fessor of American Religious History

The program for today’s service labels this a “Service of Worship and Celebration.” It is both, for we wor-
sip God in this moment when we have come face to face with our insecurity, and we celebrate the good we know through human communities like this School, families, friends, and congregations. But if I had one more word I could add now to the program’s title, it would be “remembrance,” for in the words of Psalm 131, “Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of God’s faithful ones.” Faithfulness has taken diverse and inspiring forms in the last three days, from incred-
ible acts of putting the lives of others before one’s own, to final cell phone calls made to tell someone in the fleeting moments of life, “I love you.” And so we remember that the greatest gift the creator has provided us as human beings is one another. That gift, how-
ever, was rejected on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. The Holy Scriptures of Judaism, Chris-
tianity, and Islam respectively remind us that God’s love and love of neighbor are sup-
posed to go together. In the days ahead, we must work hard to remember that lesson when our love of neighbor is tried by our natural desire for revenge.

At a time like this, our faith commitments are tested. Religion is about big ques-
tions: Why? Why are things the way they are? How are we to live? And religion is about small ques-
tions, too, about our own lives. Sometimes people want a new religion because they find the available traditions tainted by patriarchy or ethnocentrism. The historic religions come with such baggage, don’t they? Why not jettison the unwieldy and freighted package for just the God we need?

And as we have just seen, there are also those in the religious world who would have you exchange the uncertainties that a thoughtful person entertains for the pre-
dictable certainty of a small deity that behaves as humans might wish. But that God will not satisfy, let alone save. Is that not the prophet Isaiah’s point—

“Why am I here?” and “How are we to live?” If we choose to wade into those deep waters, there is something to be said for leaving some things to our elders.

But will the old religion suffice? No. While I’ve suggested that there is something good about being in a religious tradition that constitutes a multigenerational conversation about what is true, what is good, and what is required of us, I must also suggest that some-

ne new religion of scientific and social “progress.” At the beginning of the 21st century, we face the same kind of question. In what should we believe? Contemporary Amer-

icans express great interest in spirituality but less interest in organized religion. In social conversation, you may have heard someone say, “I’m very interested in spirituality, but I’m not religious, or anything like that.” I know I have. Still others have continued to remain observant, but wonder if everything their religious leaders say should be given equal weight. That’s where the Divinity School comes in: our mission is to help find a way through a culture that alternatively declares itself faith in the Davia-Kidd book-

One of the roles of a divinity school is to help people to appreciate the relevant wis-

dom that is already there. Religious tradi-

tions with deep roots remind us that human beings haven’t changed as much as modern culture wants us to believe. Shakespeare still makes sense after 385 years because foolish rulers, jealous spouses, and noble people who suffer despite their honor still populate our world. In a like way, the Bible still speaks to us because we know deep down that it is still wrong to bear false witness, that family matters even when it is painful, and that adultery still hurts. Like people in the Ancient Near East, we still wonder why evil-
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one else’s religion will not do. The Divinity School must be positive toward traditions by

opposing traditionalism. As Jaroslav Pelikan

has suggested, a tradition is the living faith of the dead, but traditionism is the dead faith of the living. Fundamentalists of the various faiths represent a refusal to be faith-

ful in the here and now and twist the here and now changes to suit their archaic world-

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

In our time, we need to learn from the mistakes of the past and develop a certain humility about the religion we hold. Never believe people who know too much about God. After Jerry Falwell made his famous mid-’80s pronouncement that AIDS was God’s retribution upon gay men for their lifestyle, William Shake-

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

At the Divinity School we like to say that we believe in constructive theology. We believe in constructing our theologies with all the tools and materials available—recognizing the value of past contributions, together with those of our own time. Here then, students, is each sought to construct a way out of the basic commitments shared by the people each addressed. The ideas we hope to teach you, students, are the power of tradition and the need to be prophets in your own time—to break with the routine when necessary to do what is right.

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

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

Faithful study of one’s tradition and a nurtured spark of creativity make for living traditions that can meet the challenge of new times—even now when we think everything comes in the form of a critical and imaginative imagination. I pray that the students who are starting their studies at this School will develop “prophetic imagination,” for the world needs leaders who we events as they might be and who help others reach what can only be imagined.

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

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

• that this education isn’t just open to those whose churches sanction them to come, but is open to seekers and some rebels, too.
• that we believe whoever serves God by leading God’s people is not conditioned upon centuries-old understandings of human social hierarchies of gender, race, and sexual orientation.
• that the human species is not the only beautiful creation.
• that racial and cultural differences are given to be nuanced, not falsified to vanish, even after September 11.
• that this ministry is finally much bigger than the givens to understand, not liabilities to fear.

My name is Jennifer Casale, associate professor of English, and poet. The University’s annual literary magazine, A Holy Sorrow, is a point of change. I can tell you of this very morning. This day is the most holistic, whole, and full of signification and the painful awareness that this is historical and real.

I know to say, and these are the only lines you this letter, for these are the only words I can’t erase the image from halfway through the streets of Manhattan and search through debris for bodies—good people who will lay them on clean white sheets, who will lift them from this nightmare, carry them in their arms—good people who will be angels tonight.

And you will study this day in school—this day that I put on my bed and wrote a letter. This is a letter to my children, and if I never have children, this is a letter to the children of this country.

Today the world changed. The United States was paralyzed this day—this day that my hand brushes this paper—this day that I force ink from a pen and into words that can never describe this event for you—this day that I list here on my bed at midnight, more aware of each syllable in the words “freedom, death, hatred, terror, and fear” than when I rose from this bed this very morning. This day is the most important, most devastating day in the history of the United States of America. This is the eve of something historical and evil, but I pray that this also may be the dawn of something better, that tomorrow access to this nation wounded and bled red

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

Religious traditions are strong in a way that religious experimentation is not. On the other hand, every cherished feature of the traditions we collectively represent in this room began as what looked to contemporaries as heresy or even sacrilege. Luther’s choice to stand on justification by faith alone looked like a rejection of 15 centuries of church history. John Wesley’s methods seemed like dumbing down Anglicanism to reach the masses. Thomas Cranmer’s traditionalism was called this potent combination the “prophet-ic imagination.” I pray that the students who are starting their studies at this School will develop “prophetic imagination,” for the world needs leaders who we events as they might be and who help others reach what can only be imagined.

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Reflections on a Dry Rainy Season

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

ESSAY BY BRANDON GILVIN, MDiv3

Photographs by Adam Collin Sayler, MDiv3

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

It had been a dry rainy season, we were told. And while I know from growing up on a farm that there are growing seasons during which rain is expected but never comes, something struck me about it being a dry rainy season—as if rain could somehow be dry. A dry rainy season sounded tragic and absurd, poignant and poetic. But such could be expected in a Nation of Poets, as Nicaragua is called, where the scenery is as lush as language itself. Even here, on the side of the road, among the rot and ache of desperate poverty, people could evoke the beautiful and the magical with their words. But they could also demand justice.

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

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

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

A Divine Aberration?

It is hard to pinpoint the exact cause of the economic problems of Nicaragua. And getting a single answer is even more difficult. Is poverty an unavoidable economic condition that is part of a gradual global economic crisis? Is poverty the result of a corrupt government that makes politicians exorbitantly wealthy while ignoring the needs of the people? Are the roots of poverty in the imperialist and post-imperialist policies of the United States? Or did they begin with the Socialists? Or did they begin with the Sandinistas? Revolution of 1979 and the long civil war that followed? Or is poverty the result of an economy that is part of a gradual global economic crisis that is part of a gradual global economic crisis?

Nicaragua: the globalization of the coffee market.

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

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

According to Manuel, a campesino who also served as an organizer and spokesperson for the mass on the side of the road, last August hadn’t been much better. There had been a “silent period” in which the land had not produced much coffee as was hoped for by the workers. However, everyone had had a bit of work, and though wages were sub-
The Spi...
made promises of relief and had exchanged pointed fingers in each other’s direction for
the coffee crisis. For Ortega and the San-
danistas, the problem was the corruption of
the Almanan-Bolanos administration while
the Liberal Party portrayed Ortega as the
political force responsible for a 20-year eco-
nomic spiral downward and who would push
even more Nicaraguans into the plight of
the campesinos. But soon enough, tales
of sex scandals and accusations of terrorism
against Ortega filled the newspapers and te-
levision reports, and the devastation of
the coffee crisis soon sunk into the background,
becoming merely a footnote in the nation’s
political rhetoric and leaving the campesinos
alone in their daily fight for survival.

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

Feeling claustrophobic in the heat as
the crowd pushed in around us and watching
children scribble in the dust that coated our
tour bus, I couldn’t help but think about Car-
denal’s words. Here were people who had
been abandoned by their government, who
felt lost in a strange new globalized world
much different from the world promised by
a long, dead revolution. Here were children
wearing secondhand Nike tee shirts, old
men with gnarled hands and toothless smiles,
teenage girls days away from deliver-
babes—all of them hungry, angry, and
tired of promises that never seem to come
true. Here were people who had no other
choice but to start over, and to start march-
ing. It would be a long march, a painful
march, and one that would not guarantee
success. Would the government listen? Even
if a sympathetic ear greeted the marchers at
the conclusion of day one, we knew that
the government was not listening.

It is we who curse, bless
Marilyn, light candles for Elvis Aaron.
It is we who say prayers for
Your soul and beauty,
That is why you are everything else,
poets who are revolutionaries
Who are priests.

You know so very well, Ernesto,
That I have remembered more mythos
than logos,
that if I am to err, it is better to err
on the side of the Iconoclast
But if you should find that I have
For once erred in the opposite direction:
That I have remembered more mythos
than logos,
Knew that I did not wish to write a psalm for
Some distant, wondrous God,
But a prayer for a poet who is everything else,
Yet not a thing more.
—Brandon Gilson

Sources Consulted: The Guardian, BBC News
Smith.

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

For Ernesto Cardenal
on the Eve of the Feast of the Assumption
August 14, 2001
The Hotel El Convento
León, Nicaragua

Tomorrow morning,
I will have breakfast
With Sandino and Mother Theresa,
Elvis and Anarch.
They will be my company.

They will not say much, but of course,
Watercolored icons rarely say
Much of anything at all.

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

Poets who are revolutionaries
Who are priests.

So to you, Ernesto, I give my
meager attempt to write
a poem in a country full of poets—
poets who are revolutionaries
who are priests who in the end
are icons cast thicker than brass
and I write this poem, knowing full well
that if I am to err, it is better to err
on the side of the Iconoclast
But if you should find that I have
For once erred in the opposite direction:
That I have remembered more mythos
than logos,
Knew that I did not wish to write a psalm for
Some distant, wondrous God,
But a prayer for a poet who is everything else,
Yet not a thing more.
—Brandon Gilson
Pity would be no more,  
If we did not make somebody Poor:  
And Mercy no more could be,  
If all were as happy as we;  

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

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

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

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

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

---from Songs of Experience  
by William Blake (1757–1827)  
English poet, mystic, engraver, painter,  
printer, and social critic.
Dear God,

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

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

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

Joe and I eventually part ways, and I stop to talk with Paul Mulloy, director of treatment services for the Correctional Work Center. We both comment on the stench and how the inmates at CWC will spend their one hour outside each day breathing in the smell of burning animal flesh—a condition that most citizens of Nashville will never know, much less experience.

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

Mulloy often ponders the phrase “New Plantation,” an allusion to a policy he and the treatment program staff at the Correctional Work Center are working to abolish by promoting a more progressive attitude toward crime and incarceration.

Indiscriminate Enslavement

The similarities between the 19th-century slave plantation and today’s correctional facilities are uncanny and disturbing. While the white proprietor managed the 19th-century slave plantation, today’s politicians (or stockholders in privatized correctional facilities) manage the jails and prisons. On the slave plantation, the steward managed the overseers who worked directly with the slaves; on the New Plantation, the prison and jail administrators, usually Caucasians, manage the guards and officers who oversee the inmates.

As in the overseer-slave relationship, there is a very thin economic line between the guards and inmates. While the slave was seduced with alcohol, coffee, and other “Sunday Tricks,” today’s inmate has easy access to illicit drugs and also is numbed by television—the first privilege reinstated following a riot. And like the 19th-century freed slave, today’s ex-inmate often has very few real job skills or opportunities that could allow one to become integrated into the mainstream of society.

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

As the French sociologist and philosopher Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) argues, violence, especially suicide and homicide, increases in societies where there is a gap between people’s dreams and their lived reality. Durkheim’s premise is certainly relevant for the treatment program staff at the Correctional Work Center as they work to abolish the New Plantation.
an easy escape from this seemingly endless cycle of transactions on the street increases, and it turns to the drug trade as a major source of employment. The introduction of crack cocaine into ghettos during the 1980s was a major factor to this complex social problem by creating addicts who are often told that “peace, joy, love, Jesus, Allah, or any other word that you have to practice letting go.”

She believes that unless the men in New Avenues experience spirituality on a deep level, they will continue to practice their addiction. “We have an intensive spiritual component in the program, in fact, it is the heart of the program. Unless spirituality is addressed in a significant way, everything else will be lost,” says Gray. “Lee has introduced a method of prayer, a form of Christian contemplative practice of centering prayer. Into the New Avenues treatment program we introduced the concept of centering prayer, into the New Avenues treatment program, in this 20-minute session is simply “hanging out with the Trinity.” I explain to the men that this “hanging out with your Higher Power” means there is a seed of the Creator within us; instead of looking for peace and serenity outside of ourselves through alcohol, drugs, sex, or food, centering prayer allows us to look inside ourselves for that peace we’ve been searching for all along. For Gray, centering prayer is actually a way to unload some of our deepest issues from childhood. She compares the process to centering prayer to one of the wonders of the world meeting, the Gateway Arch in Saint Louis. “The arch’s strength and support reside underground, but if the structure had been built of wood one thousandth of an inch in the foundation, it would not have been able to support the uppermost interval,” says Gray.

This engineering fiction has become a metaphor in Gray’s chaplaincy. “Life’s experiences do not always come together because our foundation is off-center. Most of us are at an off-peak deep inside, and centering prayer gives us a way to bring your hands to your hips and find the honest truth that we could not fix ourselves here.” The power we are in line with God on a deep personal level, the more the parts fall into place instead of becoming fractured. We could talk about spirituality all day, but doing the prayer is different; you can’t just talk about it, you have to practice letting go.”

I have been told that jail can be a sacred place. Sometimes when I am standing in the D-1 pod, meeting the men in New Avenues, I feel as if I am standing on holy ground, a place where emotions are raw and where healing and spiritual transformation occur. It is a sacred space where those who are carrying heavy burdens from 20 years or more and often traumatic past can lay them down—through tears, laughter, silence, questions, dreams, and images and themes from their spiritual journeys.

I have had the honor to witness men who have been福建 as hopeless drunks or thugs begin a process of spiritual transformation. I think of Joe, a white man in his forties who has been prisonized for over 20 years due to a crack cocaine habit. He has spent 40 pounds underweight when he first came to jail and was literally dying on the streets from a crack cocaine habit. He has spent most of his adult life incarcerated. When I saw Bobby today, I see a spark of hope in his eyes, which are often filled with tears, a sign that he is slowly being healed.

Centering the Arch

My project during the summer of 2002 was to introduce the spiritual component of centering prayer, a form of Christian contemplative prayer, into the New Avenues treatment program. I trained 12 prison chaplains and a social worker, all of whom went on to train other chaplains in this ancient practice. In the D-1 pod, 50 men live in community for 45 days while participating in the New Avenues drug and alcohol treatment program. For one of their creative projects, the inmates transformed the walls of colorful murals designed with images and themes from their spiritual journeys. In the D-1 pod, 50 men live in community for 43 days while participating in the New Avenues drug and alcohol treatment program. For one of their creative projects, the inmates transformed the walls into colorful murals designed with images and themes from their spiritual journeys.
my knowledge and experiences to the inmates. During my internship at CWC, I have had the opportunity to preach, give lectures on spirituality, teach meditation and centering prayer, and facilitate spiritual activities and exercises. At some point, however, I learned that this internship was not really about preaching and praying.

As Susan sometimes reminds me, the work we do at the jail is often not about what we bring to the inmates, rather it has more to do with what the inmates bring to us. In other words, this internship has allowed me to examine my own inner life and spiritual journey. As the Gospels teach us, Jesus came to proclaim the Gospel, to heal the sick, and to set the captives free. Rather, through my own experiences, I have gained freedom. This has been my step toward true compassion.

A native of Fort Worth, Texas, essayist Lee Davidson County Sheriff’s Office stipulate that inmates may not be photographed frontally.

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

Unmasking Self-Made Worlds

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The photographs accompanying the essay were taken by Peyton Hoge of Franklin, Tennessee.
When Paul found they were tentmakers of the same trade as himself, he lodged with them, and they worked together.

—The Acts of the Apostles 18:3

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

Bedside Lessons in Chaos and Grace

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

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

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

With the exception of working 18 months as a pharmaceutical sales representative, Nickell elected to remain in the ER for two decades instead of pursuing appointments in other areas of the hospital. In a profession that has been characterized by inadequate staffing and employee burnout, Nickell attributes her longevity in ER nursing to a partner to pursue your interests,” Nickell was reminded of a quotation by theologian Frederick Buechner: “Calling is where your deep hunger meets the world’s deep needs.”

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

The Tentmaker
A Portrait of the Minister as Theologian

BY VIS. J. O. JULIAN

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My nursing education did not include coursework in critical thinking and argumentation, no one cared if I understood why cardiopulmonary resuscitation worked, the only concern was that I could perform the procedure correctly,”

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

The Floodgate Opens
To help her family adapt to her new role as graduate student, Nickell elected to enroll at VDS on a part-time basis. “I returned to the classroom at the time my son was entering college, and I could accomplish that immersion by taking online courses,” says Nickell. “To prepare for my role in worship leadership, Nickell requested that she be assigned to the Office of Field Education and the Executive Presbytery to a church that was not multi-ethnic, and where she would gain experience in delivering sermons. In February 2000, the student in ministry ascended the pulpit of Central Presbyterian Church (USA) in Culleoka, Tennessee, and preached to the 13 members who comprise the congregation.

they know who is not in attendance for the service,” says Nickell. “When they nod their heads and smile, I know they’re engaged in the sermon, and the church and the choir—occasions such as the pronouncement of clean underwear, but when I make a conscious effort out of obligation—but with joy because they believe their confession matters.”

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

Nickell was the leading candidate in the student body because its denominational affiliation was comparable to opening the floodgate. “I wept privately when the interviewer made that statement because it was such a visible connection between pastoral ministry and nursing. My vocation had involved touching people, and I wanted to be minister to anyone whom they received air, and my experience in the mock interview affirmed what I had always believed—that a minister is a conduit for the breath of the Spirit and has the serious responsibility of helping congregation remain a vital community.”

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

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Fractions, Fortran, and Hebrew: The Hunt Equation

Alice Wells Hunt, MTS’96, MA’00, associate dean for academic affairs and lecturer in Hebrew Bible School in 1996 and was awarded the J.D. Owen Prize for her scholarly accomplishments in Hebrew Bible, but earning the master of theological studies degree did not suit the questions that motivated her to pursue graduate education. She continued her studies by enrolling in the University’s Graduate Department of Religion and working toward the doctorate of philosophy in Hebrew Bible under the direction of Professors Douglas A. Knight and Renita Wewer.

Chalkboards, computers, and students’ papers—attributes from her former careers—figure quite prominently in her current roles at the Divinity School as lecturer in Hebrew Bible and associate dean for academic affairs, an appointment she accepted in July before she and her sons, 13-year-old Carl and 10-year-old Eric Hudiburg, moved to Nashville. From her computer at home, however, she edits the final draft of her doctoral dissertation on the Zadokite priesthood of ancient Israel or occasionally writes software programs for friends. Apart from her academic work, she also acts as a research assistant, she enjoys reading biographies, novels, and essays on critical theory.

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

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

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

While grading papers in the faculty lounge in Guntersville High School, Hunt overheard a colleague remark, “My husband works for Boeing, and the company is recruiting mathematicians to train as computer programmers.” The fellow teacher’s words, though mere casual statement proved to be a rather fortunate turn of phrase for Hunt.

“While grading papers in the faculty lounge in Guntersville High School, I overheard a colleague remark, ‘My husband works for Boeing, and the company is recruiting mathematicians to train as computer programmers.’ The fellow teacher’s words, though a casual statement proved to be a rather fortunate turn of phrase for Hunt.”

When you work side by side with people and experience them as human beings, you learn that ‘the other’ is not a category. Otherness is created by people and imposed upon individuals or groups, but once you study and work with people, any notion of otherness fades.

The diversity at the Divinity School is an intentional diversity; consequently, the School faces a constant challenge of creating and advancing a sense of community, but intentional diversity always challenges the category of otherness.

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From Southern Finishing School to University

Revisiting the Lawson Affair

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

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

“The Lawson affair” became one of the defining moments in the Divinity School’s history. It was about issues that were then controversial but though it might even bring down the Divinity School itself and have serious repercussions for the University as a whole. It was touched on briefly by the activities of James M. Lawson, an African American divinity student, in his leadership of the sit-in movement in Nashville, and of Froilanrollo L. Backer, who told me that we needed to build up physics in the South. “You can come back if it doesn’t work,” he said. So I arrived at Van- derbilt holding a faculty appointment at Cal Tech, where things were going quite well. I stopped on the way and talked with Holmes Richter, dean of the faculty at Rice University. The matte
DAVENPORT: I want to pick up on something that Wilson said when he was talking about Will Campbell organizing marchers. A half-dozen or so of us on the Student Cabinet did go downtown fairly often as observers. At one point one of us, Wilson Yates, suddenly was in the middle of the demonstration. The marchers were walking in a circle, carrying placards, and one of them had left the circle. I do not recall exactly how it happened—whether the demonstrator was arrested, just left the circle, or what, but Wilson wound up carrying the abandoned placard. I was on the rear right edge of the circle outside, he stepped up, hit Wilson on the back of the head, and knocked him to the ground.

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

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

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

When we decided to resign, the admission of having been refused, I got on the phone with David Rogers in the Medical School and said to him, “We have decided this, and this includes most of the faculty.” I said to David, “You have been urging us to resign all the time; we have decided this, and this includes most of the faculty, and we are being turned into a southern finishing school.” Vanderbilt put down his newspaper and said, “What do you mean?” Then the other man told him our story. I think that Vanderbilt was embarrassed and a bit outraged that the faculty in the demonstration were getting into this kind of trouble, and he was there at meetings showing his support for Harvie. That was something I think that impressed Harvie. Apparently it did not impress the Executive Committee of the Board of Trust. I think we should record that Harold really did help at that point and was very courteous and charming to us.

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

—Lou H. Silberman

ROOS:...It was a long, sleepless night. I kept reviewing the arguments that Branscomb and I had exchanged in correspondence. When morning came [Wednesday, June 8], I suddenly realized that I knew what made Branscomb tick. I had had thirty-three years’ experience. He was just like my father. He was a man quite sure of himself, very intelligent, he knew what he was doing. When my father died, he was the economic advisor to half of the productive capacity of the United States. He was a man who was right 95 percent of the time, and he was pure hell when he was wrong. I realized that Jim Lawson, whether he was a good man or bad man, did not really have anything to do with it. Branscomb was concerned about saving that he was in charge, just as Langdon said. I had been wasting my time arguing Jim Lawson’s case, this was really about administrative power.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Peace,

Trudy H. Stringer, MDiv/’88
President, VDS/GDR/Oberlin Alumni/ae Association
trudy.k.stringer@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-3962

James Cole, MDiv/’91
Vice-President
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(615) 321-8500, ext. 35

GREETINGS TO OUR ALUMNI/Æ ASSOCIATES

Thank you for being part of the Vanderbilt University Divinity School community. As alumni/ae you are an important part of the life of the School.

We are excited to announce the addition of the Global Perspectives Program to the curriculum. This program will offer students the opportunity to engage in experiential learning opportunities involving the “two-thirds world” and questions surrounding faithful responses to the phenomenon of globalizations. The alumni/ae trip described above offers graduates an opportunity to engage in this study and learning.

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A Sanctuary Without Definitions
Alumnae Create a Place for the Spirit—Inside and Outside the Classroom

BY LEIGH PITTINGER, MDIV

“The wind bloweth where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”
—John 3:8

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

Vanderbilt Divinity School alumnae Donna Scott, EdD’79, MDIV ’95, Ann Van Dervoort, MDIV ’93, and Jennifer Crane, MDIV ’97, were in attendance as well as those invited to this retreat while Billy Fondren, MTS’01, entertained children and families with his creative improvisational theater. When I later asked Donna why the retreat is an integral component of her course, she responded, “Sanctuary is very important to me because that is where I remove myself; it is the reason I get up every morning and begin my work—knowing that I can return to my sanctuary.”

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

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

Vanderbilt Divinity School professor, emeritus, of church and pastoral psychology, Terry Turner, PhD, served as the program development consultant for Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center.

Winter 2002

E-mail: crosswindsretreat@bpridge.net
Post Office Box 138
Contemplative Center
College Grove, Tennessee 37046
Telephone: (615) 368-7525

For more information about Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center contact:  
Lucy Morgan  
Director of Cross Winds  
Contemplative Center  
Post Office Box 138  
College Grove, Tennessee 37046

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

Spirituality and experimental learning, reflects a new development in the curriculum and atmosphere at Vanderbilt. When she was a graduate student in the 1970s, no such course existed. She wanted to integrated her interests in religion, spiritual- ity, and psychology. Donna left the University to study for a year at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, Switzerland, and became a Jungian- oriented counselor. After returning to Van- derbilt in 1981, she continued to feel dissiatis- ed by the fragments of the spiritual dimension in theological education. “My interest was in spiritual formation—for our society and for our theological institutions— but at that time there was no interest in spir- itual formation,” she says.

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

“I kept when Jack asked me to offer the course; I love to teach, and this invitation provided an opportunity to teach a subject for which students were hungry and which I felt was missing in their education.”

In her class, Donna emphasizes that theolog- ical education should be integrally connected in the early Christian tradition. Evagrius, the fourth-century monk, said, “If you are a the- ologian, you truly pray; if you are a theologian, you pray as a theologian.” Donna endeavors to recover this integrated vision in the present. She is committed to the belief that spiritua- lity has a place not only in the classroom but also in the centers provide the conditions necessary for spiritual growth; they fulfill a need in our society by retreat and rest, so do prayer, to become more aware, to be open to the breaking in of God’s presence.  

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

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

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

Once more for information about Cross Winds Contemplative Retreat Center contact:  
Lucy Morgan  
Director of Cross Winds  
Contemplative Center  
Post Office Box 138  
College Grove, Tennessee 37046

Winter 2002

Left: Retreatants walk the classical seven-circuit labyrinth at Cross Winds ecumenical and inter- faith contemplative center.
BY SUSAN ELIZABETH STEINBERG, MDIV’92

Robes in the Closet

But people don’t go to their offices on Saturdays!” I thought. We already were heading in that direction. Anna and I were both my love and my time. I left the church on good terms, and there were plenty of tears to go around on my last Sunday. The farewell was full of both sweetness and sorrow. I left the church with a 22-month-old girl and a 3-year-old boy. I have been humbled to the core since hanging my robes in the closet.

Making such a radical shift from full-time ministry to full-time mothering has been a serious challenge. As confident as I had become in the pulpit, I was anything but sure of myself with a 22-month-old girl and a 3-year-old boy. I have been humbled to the core since hanging my robes in the closet.

There is nothing glorious in toilet training, searching for hidden pacifiers, and sponging spilled milk, but what it takes to do all of this—day in and day out—has left me in total awe of childcare workers, single parents, and anyone who has more than two children.

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

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

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

But as much as I grieve my role and my robes, I need to hear the good news from where I am sitting, with my son next to me in the pew. I need to be right beside him instead of rows and rows in front of him. I, in spite of my tears, I sense I am in the right place on Easter Sunday. I know I am without-a-doubt on Easter Sunday. I sense the act of lighting one’s own Easter candle without a doubt. When Henry hounds out of his bath—naked and jubilant—and excitedly says to me, “Excise me, Mommy; peace be with you!”

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

Diane M. Jones, scribe, of Sewanee, Tennessee, created the essay’s initial “D” in the decorative illumination of the fifth edition of their textbook, The Spirit of the Church in West Virginia.

Three Worlds, by Ford. “I have many fond memories of my classmates and the faculty, and I always am glad to recognize familiar names when researching the last issue of THERESPIRE. I have discovered a very special ministry in relating to refugees from so many different countries, cultures, and religious beliefs.”

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

Alumni/ae Class Notes

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

Darrel E. Linder, Oberlin BD’81, is the author of Living Life in the Savior’s Lane, a collection of homilies based on learning to accept timeless themes. A cancer survivor and facilitator for the American Cancer Society’s Man-to-Man Program, Linder serves as a volunteer at St. Rita’s Regional Cancer Center in Lima, Ohio, where he also is a board member of the Saint Rita’s Hospital Foundation.

Roger W. Merrell, Oberlin BD’83, pastor, emeritus, of Newburg United Methodist Church in Lavonia, Michigan, and his wife, Josephine, have earned three world weightlifting championships since 1997 when they began practicing the sport in an exercise rehabilitation program for improving their health.

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

Emmet C. Pennington, BA’60, BD’84, retired in February 2001 after 49 years as a pastor in the Church of God. He continues to serve as a supply pastor, as a certified hospital chaplain, and as a member of the State Council of the Church in West Virginia.

For a new church in Belville, Illinois.

Alumni Susan Steinberg with her children, Henry and Anna Farmar.

Alumni Susan Steinberg with her children, Henry and Anna Farmar.

Alumni Susan Steinberg with her children, Henry and Anna Farmar.
Larry Stephen Clifton, MDIV’82, collaborated with filmmaker Eric Entwine to produce a documentary on the ghostly legends of Tennessee for A&E and the History Channel. Awarded the Terrible Filmmaker of the Macabre, a biography of the 19th-century British dramatist Edward Fitzwilliam Clifton, also is a partner in the wedding chapel industry in Gatlinburg. He writes that he has fond memories of being in Professor Douglas Knight’s first Hebrew Bible course.

Douglas Beam Paysour, MDIV’84, serves as the chaplain at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Fincastle, Virginia. He and his wife, Gail, are the parents of three sons—one is a medical student at Duke University and has decided to accept this position. The other five Nashville women have been inducted into the YW’s Academy for Women of Achievement in October. The five other Nashville women have been honored for their leadership and influence as role models for young women were Deborah Yowell Faulkner, EJY’74, deputy chief of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department; Deborah C. German, senior associate dean for medical education, professor of medical administration, and associate professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University; Delene A. Lewis, executive director of the Tennessee State University Foundation; Margaret Ann Robinson, chair of the Nashville Public Library Board; and Elise L. Steiner, community volunteer. The Academy for Women of Achievement was founded in 1992 by the Young Women’s Christian Association. She and her husband, Stephen Farmer, reside in Carrboro, North Carolina, and he serves as senior associate director of the Vanderbilt University and executive director of the YWCA’s Good Samaritan Home Pathways in Evansville, Indiana.

Susan Elizabeth Steinberg, MDIV’90, who served for seven years as associate pastor of a Presbyterian church in Charlotteville, Virginia, has accepted a part-time campus ministry position at Duke University and has decided to spend time with her children, Henry, 4, and Anna 2. She and her husband, Stephen Freeman, reside in Carrboro, North Carolina, and he serves as senior associate director of the Vanderbilt University and executive director of the YWCA’s Good Samaritan Home Pathways in Evansville, Indiana.

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

At Vanderbilt University Divinity School, we’re always interested in learning about your professional and personal accomplishments. Please keep us and your classmates informed of your vocation as well as your avocations by sending a class note to spire@vanderbilt.edu or to The Spire, VU Station B 307073, 2901 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, Tennessee 37235-7703.
Obituaries


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

Eugene Murray, BD’31, of Tarasoo, Florida.

James P. Sanders, M’44, BD’45, of Sacramento, California, on March 10, 2000.

John L. Knight Jr., M’48, of Friendship Village in Tempe, Arizona, retired Methodist minister and former president of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Baldwin-Wallace College, on July 21, 2000.


Howard Farmer Huff, BD’49, Robert W. Hall, D’45, MA’45, Wesleyan University, and Baldwin-Wallace College, on July 21, 2000.

Wesleyan University, and Baldwin-Wallace College, on July 21, 2000.

Hampton, a librarian for 30 years at the Jean Muilenburg at Union Theological Seminary in New York City; he and his wife, Rosemary Rowers Huff, served for ten years as missionaries in Japan for the United Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ; he died at the age of 78 on September 16, 2001, following an extended illness.

Sergio J. Reyes, Oberlin, BD’39, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, minister, emeritus, of Bethany Christian Church in Tulsa and former professor at Phillips Graduate Seminary in Evan, recipient of the 1949 Founder’s Medal for first honors at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Huff also studied Hebrew Bible and Christian ethics with Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and James Mclsauglin at Union Theological Seminary in New York City; he and his wife, Rosemary Rowers Huff, served for ten years as missionaries in Japan for the United Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ; he died at the age of 78 on September 16, 2001, following an extended illness.


William G. Harris, BD’59, of Itasca, Illinois, on September 27, 2000.


Clarice Ann DeQuaisse, MLS/66, of Oak Hill, West Virginia, a librarian for 30 years at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library of Vanderbilt University who also attended the Divinity School where she served as editor of Proceedings, worked as a library assistant, and received the J.D. Owen Prize in Hebrew Bible; known for her keen sense of humor, clever writing skills, and inventive Halloween costumes, she was an ardent fan of Lucianu Piovanni and traveled the country to attend his concerts; her friendship with the tenor and his family is documented in the Chinese DeQuaisse-Lucianu Piovanni Collection which she bequeathed to the Heard Library’s Special Collections; Will D. Campbell, preacher, civil rights activist, and author was a eulogist at her memorial service culminated at McKendree Village Chapel in Hermity, Tennessee, she died at the age of 63 on June 12, 2001.

William G. Walker, PhD’64, of Owensboro, Kentucky, a Presbyterian minister and servant of humankind for seven decades, established and served as first director of the Kentucky Council of Churches and was instrumental in organizing the Tennessee Council of Churches; Walker provided leadership during the civil rights movement in Middle Tennessee and served as president of the Owensboro Churches for Better Homes, a precursor to the international organization Habitat for Humanity, he died on January 24, 2001.

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


In Memoriam

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

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

Terence Edward (Ted) Addlecker Jr., BA’01, a securities analyst for Fred Alger Management; Incorporated, son of Vanderbilt University Board of Trust member Mary Beth Addlecker and Terence Addlecker of Bloomfield, Michigan.

Davie Geier “Derg” Sessa, BA’01, an employee of Sanders-O’Neill & Partners, L.P.; the son of Gail and Davie Sessa Sr. of Wilmington, Delaware.

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

—from Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation by Samuel D. Resnik, 1993

Confessional, 1994

from the series Secrecy

by Michael L. Aurbach, sculptor

American (born 1952)

Professor of Art

Vanderbilt University Department of Art and Art History

mixed media

10½ x 12 x 36’

The antihumanistic vision of power, a prominent theme in postmodern discourse, inspired sculptor Michael Aurbach to create Confinement. Viewers are invited to contemplate the intricate relationship between secrecy and institutional power while walking through a series of insular arches constructed of cold short metal and fashioned with motion detectors and alarms. Upon entering the confessional booth, an individual encounters one’s own speaking image projected from the screen of a closed-circuit television. According to art historian Glen R. Brown, Confinement serves as a reminder of the constant vigil we necessarily maintain over the information that defines us and the vulnerable posture we assume by the indiscreet revelation of secrets.

Recent sculpture by Aurbach will be featured in the Exhibition Diverse Visions 2002: Works by the Studio Faculty of the Department of Art and Art History, which will be mounted in the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery from March 30 to June 8.
Our graduates have been committed to speaking “a good word to the world” since 1875, the year Methodist Bishop Holland Nimmons McTyeire, the first president of the University’s Board of Trust, proclaimed the Vanderbilt theological community a Schola Prophetarum. Bishop McTyeire’s pronouncement, inscribed in the stone lintel above the entrance to Old Wesley Hall, also serves today as the name for the Divinity School’s donor society.

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

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

For information regarding membership in Schola Prophetarum, please contact:

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