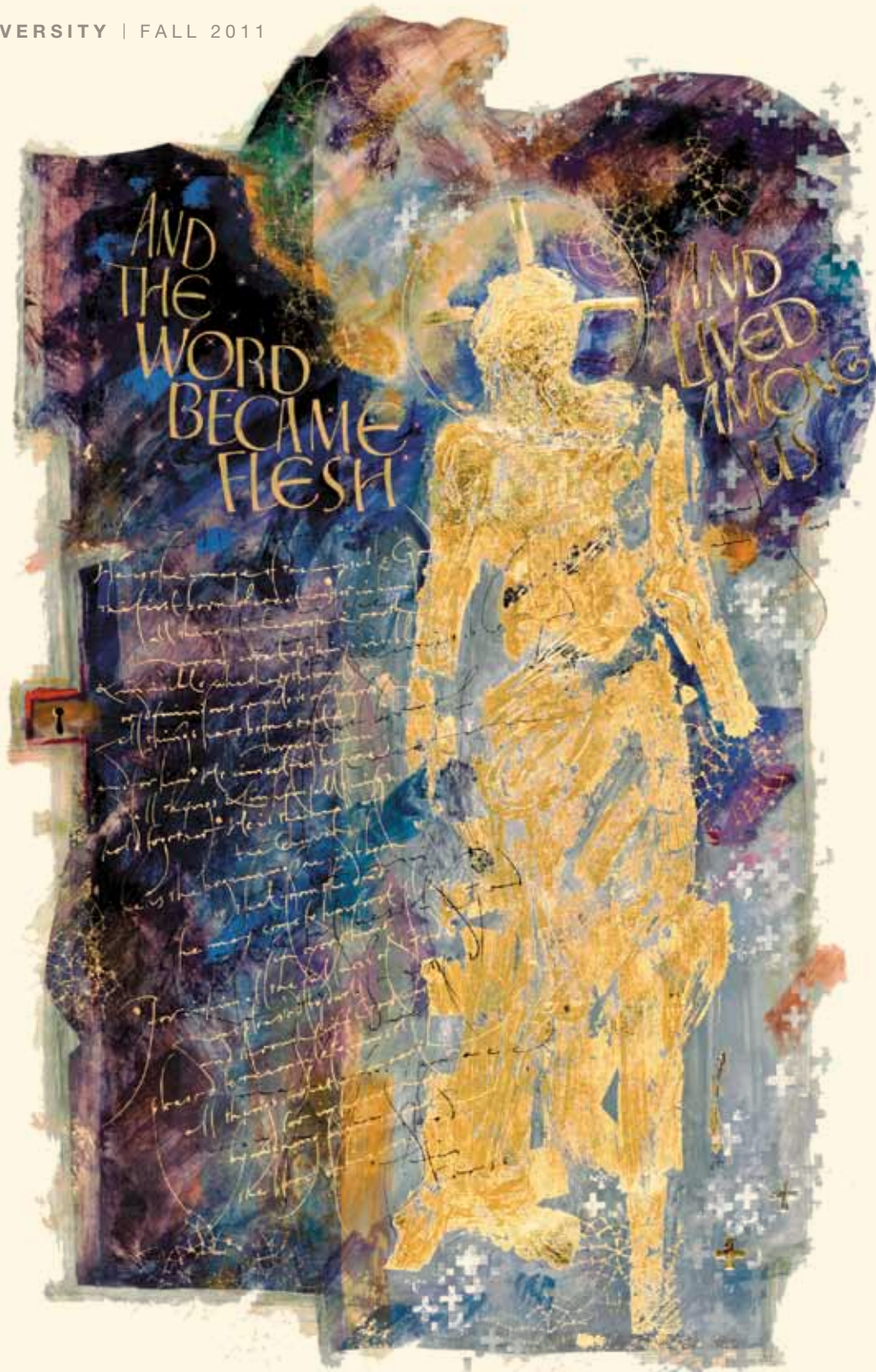


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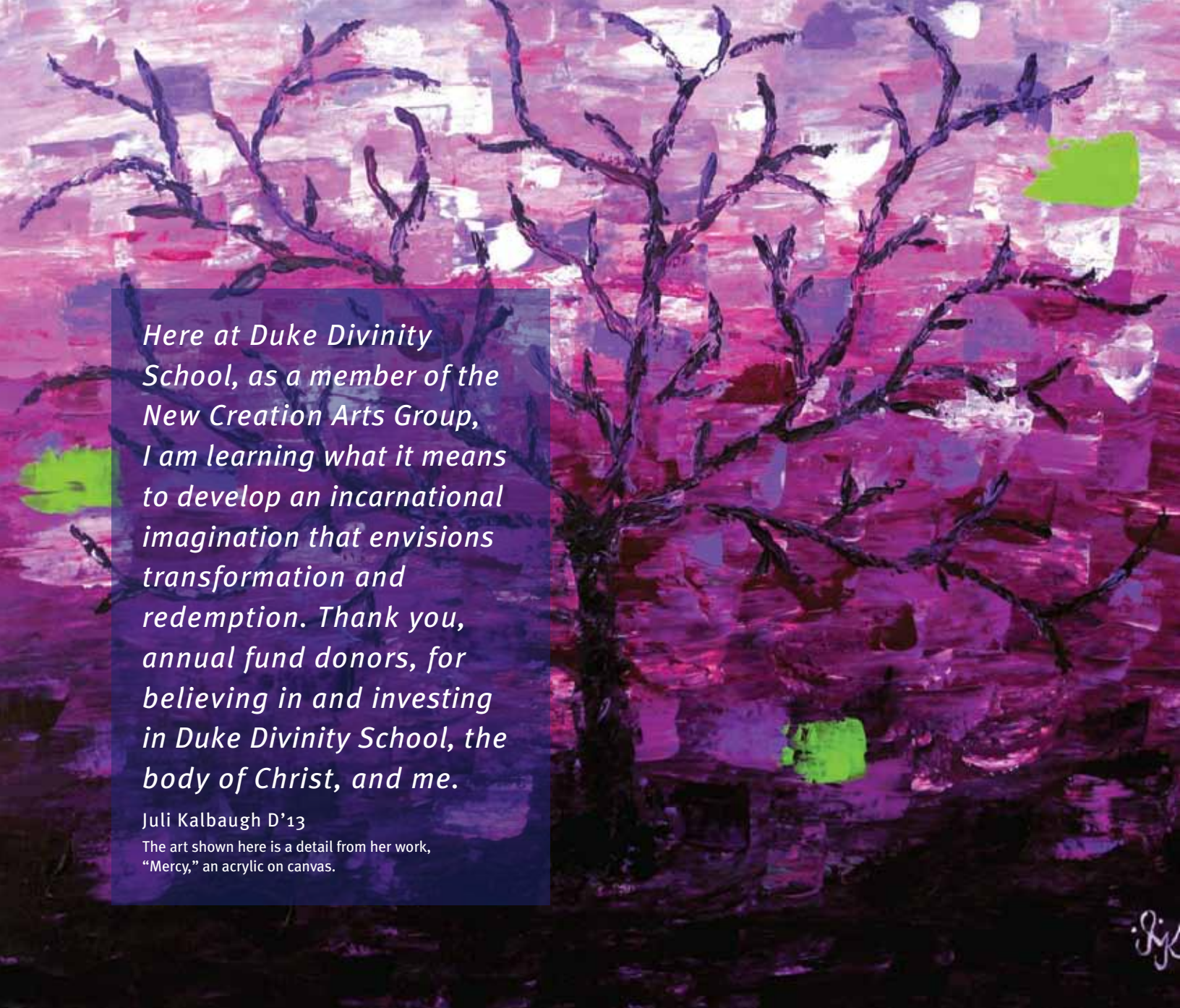
FAITHFUL NOVELTY

Why Artists and Pastors Need Each Other

ALSO INSIDE:

SEEING GOD IN JAZZ

THE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN MEMOIR



Here at Duke Divinity School, as a member of the New Creation Arts Group, I am learning what it means to develop an incarnational imagination that envisions transformation and redemption. Thank you, annual fund donors, for believing in and investing in Duke Divinity School, the body of Christ, and me.

Juli Kalbaugh D'13

The art shown here is a detail from her work, "Mercy," an acrylic on canvas.

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ON THE COVER

The cover image is *Gospel of John Frontispiece and Incipit* from The Saint John's Bible. For more information on this image and the illuminated manuscript, see Events and News on page 21.

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The Arts at Duke Divinity School

BY RICHARD B. HAYS

WHY HAS Duke Divinity School decided to focus its Convocation & Pastors' School this year on arts in the life of the church? Indeed, even more fundamentally, why should those who are engaged in the church's ministry care about the arts? I propose four reasons why the arts matter for the church and why we support this endeavor at Duke Divinity School.

First, whether we recognize it or not, the arts surround us: we are immersed in images, music, and stories. If theological education focuses only on *ideas* and fails to reflect critically on the artistic media that shape our *imaginings*, we will be tone-deaf to the creative ways and means the gospel may use to challenge and transform us. As philosophical theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff has observed, the arts can provide "data" for theology. If we want to teach students about sacramental sensibility, we can assign a dogmatic essay, but it may be equally effective to have them look at van Gogh's paintings and read poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Second, acts of corporate worship embody some artistic form. The question is whether we will do it well or badly. Will our hymns and proclamations beckon hearers to explore "the beauty of the infinite" (David Bentley Hart), or will they recycle sentimental clichés? For example, far more Christians have imbibed theology through singing the Psalms or the hymns of Charles Wesley than through reading the tomes of Thomas Aquinas or Karl Barth. If worship inherently includes artistic expression, then those who care about worship should care about the arts.

Third, participation in the activity of the arts might teach us crucial skills for the life of obedient discipleship. Consider: might participation in a choir shape in us disciplines of listening, self-restraint, and cooperation that would form us into more wise and peaceful people? Recent Duke Divinity graduate Bonnie Scott D'11 notes how her experience in the crafts of sewing and woodworking informed the way she approaches preaching (see her essay in this issue of *DIVINITY*). It is no coincidence that she won a national award for best student preaching and won awards for her art in competitions sponsored by the New Creation Arts Group here in the school.

If we are made in the image of such an inventive God, it follows that we will be makers of shapes, symbols, songs, and stories.

Finally, because we are made in the image of God the Creator, we are destined to be creators of images and stories. It's in our flesh and bones. God is the great artist who conceived and constructed the intricate cosmos, the sculptor who shaped the human form out of the mud of the earth. God is the poet who imagined Israel's improbable epic drama and then inspired psalmists and prophets to sing the story and to

reimagine it for later generations living new chapters in the drama of exile and return. If we are made in the image of such an inventive God, it follows that we will be makers of shapes, symbols, songs, and stories.

For all these reasons, during my term as dean I have sought to focus attention on our new program, Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts, under the direction of Professor Jeremy Begbie. We now have several students in our Th.D. program whose work engages the intersection of arts and theology. Additionally, during the past year we have sponsored numerous public events to celebrate and investigate the arts in the life of the church. These have included musical performances, lectures by internationally recognized artists, and intentional focus on incorporating art into the space of the Divinity School. You can read more about these events and initiatives in this magazine in our "Events and News" section. Of course, I must also mention our annual fall event, Convocation & Pastors' School, at which novelist Marilynne Robinson will be a featured speaker, alongside Professor Begbie and jazz musician Anthony Kelley of Duke University's music department.

When we sing with the psalmist, "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6), we declare that all creation breathes with the life of the *logos*. And so, through our arts, we are rendering back to God the creative praise that is fitting. This matters for the life of the church, and so it matters for Duke Divinity School. ■

RICHARD HAYS is the Dean and George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School. For more of his thoughts on the relationship between theology and the arts, see his essay at www.faithandleadership.com/hays






FAITHFUL

novelty

BY JEREMY BEGBIE | ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM LEWIS



*a*RTISTS ARE ATTRACTED TO NOVELTY. AS LEGENDARY FASHION DESIGNER COCO CHANEL SAID, “IN ORDER TO BE IRREPLACEABLE ONE MUST ALWAYS BE DIFFERENT.” THAT QUEST TO GENERATE SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND IRREPLACEABLE, THE NEED TO MAKE SOMETHING THAT STANDS OUT, AND THE DRIVE TO CREATE SOMETHING NEW SEEMS BUILT INTO THE DNA OF MANY ARTISTS.

OF COURSE, THE CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ARTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS. IN THE LAST TWO CENTURIES, DOING “THE NEXT NEW THING” SEEMS TO BE IMPLICITLY REQUIRED FOR ARTISTS. MANY ARTISTS—PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO WORK OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO NEED TO MAKE A LIVING FROM THEIR ART—FEEL A SUBTLE PRESSURE TO CREATE SOMETHING ORIGINAL, PREFERABLY SOMETHING CUTTING-EDGE. IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE GROWTH OF VARIOUS AVANT-GARDE MOVEMENTS INSTILLED HABITS OF THINKING ABOUT NOVELTY THAT ARE STILL WITH US. ART EMBODIES THE PURSUIT OF THE TOTALLY FRESH START—THINK OF ALL THE ARTISTIC ATTEMPTS IN THE LAST CENTURY TO BEGIN AGAIN AND WIPE THE SLATE CLEAN: FUTURISM, DODECAPHONISM, NEOCLASSICISM, DADAISM, PHOTOREALISM.



We find an eagerness to break with the past, to clean away the detritus of tradition and outdated wisdom of yesterday, and to dismantle the scaffolding of convention. Nothing must be allowed to become old: unless we are constantly creating the ever-new thing, we are heading for death. To be original demonstrates that you are alive. To repeat is to be captive to the law of sin and death.

This fascination with novelty is one quality that makes artists awkward people to have around, especially for pastors who want a quiet life. Poets, painters, songwriters, fashion designers—professional creators are notoriously difficult to work with. They’re constantly resisting the pressure to please the largest number, always defending their artistic integrity, frequently asserting their entitlement to do something that hasn’t been done before, and often reserving their right to rub our noses in subversive novelty. And for many peace-loving pastors trying to hold together a fragile group of eccentric Christians, artists are about the last kind of person they need.

For those of us who have been in the church for some time, we can easily forget that newness is built into the gospel. The aroma of novelty is on every page of the New Testament. It pervades the fabric of the Christian message. But what kind of newness is this? And how can artists and pastors *together* discover it? At the very least, I suggest, it involves a remarkable interplay between order and non-order.



ORDER AND NON-ORDER

We must first subvert our common assumption that only two basic shapes are possible for our lives—order and disorder. The other day a friend took me into his kitchen, which was littered with letters, bills, unwashed dishes, bottles, and boxes. This instantly produced a flood of apology: “I’m *so* sorry about the mess!” That’s because disorder is usually seen as something to be ashamed of, an unhealthy sign of being out of control. Order, on the other hand, is something to be praised: “My, your house is tidy! I wish I could get mine like this.”

We transpose this view into our theology: order signifies that God is around. Regularity, predictability, reliability, and consistent patterns in the world speak of God’s ordering rule and refusal to let things slide into anarchy. Any opposition to order is seen as a mark of the opposition, the evil one, bringing confusion and destruction.

But are order and disorder the only

options? What about laughter? The sound of laughter is hardly ordered—indeed, it is hard to predict and is anything but regular. At the same time, it’s anything but destructive; to the contrary, it often releases all sorts of possibilities. It’s a sign of goodness that is neither order nor disorder. In their book, *Living in Praise: Worshipping and Knowing God* (Baker Academic), laughter is an example of what Daniel Hardy and David Ford describe as “non-order,” or the “jazz-factor.”

Recall Sarah being told at the age of ninety she is to bear a child (Genesis 18:9–15). What does she do? She laughs. This is the hilarity released by the Holy Spirit in response to news of non-order—childbirth in advanced old age. In the New Testament, non-order explodes into the world supremely on Easter, subverting every expectation. More than that, it’s made available to us, accessible and enjoyable because of what happened at Pentecost.



Without non-order, there can be no newness. Without non-order, the world is condemned to futility, for in purely physical terms, everything is growing old and running down (as the physicists will remind us). In a world without newness the future is simply the unfolding of the past. The best we can hope for is to rearrange the existing order, to reshuffle our lives the way we might shuffle furniture around a room, knowing it will all need throwing out sooner or later. But in a world where Jesus has been raised from the grave—death being the ultimate enemy of all newness—non-order is possible, and through the Spirit, available to enjoy. We discover, as Gerard Manley Hopkins had it: “There lives the dearest freshness, deep down things.” We understand the clownlike remark of the painter Georges Rouault: “He who has forgotten how to laugh is only waiting to die”; we grasp the defiance of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who

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spoke of *hilaritas* while facing his own execution.

PASTORS AND ARTISTS

Many pastors crave regular order because they assume that the only alternative is destructive disorder. (Pastors like this tend not to laugh much.) They rightly see the need for consistency, liturgy people can trust, and well-planned calendars. The problem is that they can easily end up ordering all the non-order out of life, like Harold Crick in *Stranger than Fiction*. Worship becomes cleansed of anything remotely spontaneous; church meetings are impeccably prepared and entirely devoid of surprise; agendas are followed to the minutest details, “any other business” kept to the barest minimum. I once worked with a pastor who, on our first meeting, gave me a firm shake with one hand and clutched a clipboard with the other. With this mindset, there must be *no* “other business,” only the business we can manage.

Project this perspective onto God—and the way we pastor a congregation will, of course, reflect what we really believe about God—and we find God becomes the embodiment of order *ad infinitum*, lifeless and dull (as many both in and out of the church sadly believe). Redemption will be viewed as God restoring things to the way they were, as if our Christian journey were headed for a rerun of Eden. It’s as if God were basically in the business of restoring balance to the world, matching good with evil in some kind of exact equiva-

lence. Many theologies of the atonement work like this, where apparently all God does is match X amount of sin with Y amount of punishment, in order to restore “order.” Behind this theology lies a picture of God as impeccably balanced, a God of absolute equilibrium, self-contained proportion. We forget that evil can very easily masquerade as aesthetically perfect order: think of the military rally in a totalitarian state or the disciplined efficiency of the death camps of the 1940s.

If pastors tend to disparage non-order (for fear of disorder), creative artists tend to revel in it: the playful and experimental, the untamed improvisation, the off-the-cuff flourish. Award-winning architect Daniel Libeskind writes: “The tyranny of the grid! I fight against it all the time: buildings designed like checkerboards, with repetitive units that march along the same track. A marching grid is not what life is about. ... What good is a putative sense of order, if it’s a false sense of order?” What good is order without non-order?

And the question is hardly surprising, coming from an artist. The arts by their very nature are not tied to tight structures of predictability. You bring into existence something that didn’t exist before, something that couldn’t have been predicted to exist in exactly this form. That captures part of what the arts are about. When Bonhoeffer spoke about the arts as belonging to the sphere of “freedom,” he was saying they are not bound to the past and future by some chain of cause and

effect: the past has not made them necessary, and we do not have to practice art to achieve a future goal. We certainly don't need the arts for biological survival—it is unlikely we will ever read a death certificate that lists a cause of death as “a lack of music.”

Moreover, as Rowan Williams has recently stressed in his book *Grace and Necessity: Reflections on Art and Love*, the arts work by generating an excess of metaphorical allusion, which means we can't spell out in advance all their possible meanings. Although not necessarily vague, their meanings are uncontainable. Les Murray, in his poem “Poetry and Religion,” speaks of God as “being in the world as poetry / is in the poem, a law against its closure.”

The problem here, though, is that non-order can easily become an end in itself, and (ironically) can flip back into some form of inflexible order remarkably quickly. As many of us have experienced, nothing is quite as predictable as a weekly “spontaneous” church service.

INTERPLAY

I am caricaturing drastically, of course. But if there is any truth here, we can say this much at least: that one of the reasons artists and pastors need each other is to learn and relearn together that the *novelty* which enriches the life of the church comes not from escaping order, but from *the interplay between order and non-order*, between the stable chords and the improvised flourish, between the faithful bass of

God's grace and God's out-of-the-blue refreshment. Theologically, this is the interplay between the givenness of creation's order, rooted in Christ the Creator, and the creativity of the Spirit as that order is developed towards its final end; between both God's covenant faithfulness and God's endlessly invigorating and “excessive” surprises.

And the interplay is all the richer when—miracle of miracles—disorder is taken into its momentum, when the ugly and sordid is taken up into the Spirit's re-creativity. Such is the unforeseeable yet gloriously coherent logic of Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost. Something of this came to light in a sculpture from Mozambique called “The Tree of Life” that stood in the atrium of the British Museum. In the Genesis account, the tree of life grew in the Garden of Eden, but access was forbidden. In Revelation 22, the tree reappears, standing on each side of the river of the water of life that flows from God's throne, its leaves for the healing of the nations. The “Tree of Life” sculpture is constructed entirely from weapons reclaimed after Mozambique's civil war. It calls to mind Isaiah's vision of peace: “They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4).

The question for pastors, then, is this: are you prepared to allow artists room to provoke the church to venture into risky arenas of novelty such as a fresh perspective on a parable, or an unexplored zone of culture? Are

you prepared to allow artists to make mistakes in the interests of something fruitful that can't be predicted? Are you prepared to relearn from artists the non-order that belongs to the heart of the Christian life? (Of course, plenty of pastors are adept at non-order already, which is all to the good.)

The question for artists is this: are you prepared to allow pastors to remind you that fruitful novelty comes only through inhabiting order? Are you willing to relearn form and composition, the grain of wood, the edge of a canvas, the harmony of strings, the innate rhythms of physical movement? Are you able to go on relearning the bass lines of artistic tradition, and, more fundamentally, the bass lines of theological wisdom that God uses to anchor the church in the faith? As T.S. Eliot so pointedly asked in his essays, how can we be original until we've lived inside a great tradition? How can we even begin to improvise in a way that captivates our culture until we have something profound to improvise *with*—until we have sat patiently with Dickinson and Milton, with Polanski and Tarkovsky, with Scarlatti and Stravinsky? And how can we hope to ensure we are improvising “in the Spirit” unless, at those most soul-shaping levels, we are nourished by the Scriptures, and by Augustine and Basil the Great, Aquinas and Calvin, Barth and Bonhoeffer? As theatre improviser Keith Johnstone put it, pursuing novelty for its own sake is like someone at the North Pole trying to walk north.

The question for pastors, then, is this: are you prepared to allow artists room to provoke the church to venture into risky arenas of novelty such as a fresh perspective on a parable, or an unexplored zone of culture? Are you prepared to allow artists to make mistakes in the interests of something fruitful that can't be predicted?





I end with a poem. It has been suggested that making art after Auschwitz is a kind of obscenity, a denial of horror, a shameful attempt to beautify what can never be beautiful. The point needs to be felt head on. At the same time, it should be part of our commitment to “never again” to find ways of living that refuse to allow the forces of death to take hold—which means finding ways to feast, exploring ways to revel, and embracing ways to rediscover non-order. Micheal O’Siadhail writes:

*That any poem after Auschwitz is obscene?
Covenants of silence so broken between us
Can we still promise or trust what we mean?*

*Even in the dark of the earth, seeds will swell.
All the interweavings and fullness of being,
Nothing less may insure against our hell.*

*A black sun only shines out of a vacuum.
Cold narrowings and idols of blood and soil.
And all the more now, we can’t sing dumb!*

*A conversation so rich it knows it never arrives
Or forecloses; in a buzz and cross-ruff of polity
The restless subversive ragtime of what thrives.*

*Endless dialogues. The criss-cross of flourishings.
Again and over again our complex yes.
A raucous glory and the whole jazz of things.*

*The sudden riffs of surprise beyond our ken;
Out of control, a music’s brimming let-go.
We feast to keep our promise of never again. ■*

Micheal O’Siadhail, “Never,” in *The Gossamer Wall* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 2002), p. 120. Reprinted by kind permission of Bloodaxe Books.



All art by TOM LEWIS D’12.
Duke Divinity School hosted a special exhibition of his work, which uses the medium of Post-it® notes, in early 2011. He can be reached at tom.lewis@duke.edu



TELLING LIVES:

The Power of the Christian Memoir

BY RICHARD LISCHER



Not long ago a cartoon appeared in *The New Yorker* depicting a radiologist and a rather worried-looking patient gazing at a picture of the man's insides in which a medium-sized rectangular object is clearly visible. The doctor says, "Well, Smythe, you do have another novel in you." Substitute "memoir" for "novel" and the current preoccupation with autobiography, memoir, and life-writing is neatly summarized.

Traditionally, the memoir was the province of the "great man" who embodied the achievements of his age and helped steer the course of historic events, who now, with some leisure on his hands and in need of cash, has agreed to write about it. The chief purpose of the memoir was to provide an insider's perspective on external events such as wars, treaties, and scientific explorations. Among our memoirist Presidents, Ulysses S. Grant's *Personal Memoirs* epitomizes the category, though we could add to the list many other leaders from Julius Caesar to George W. Bush.

Many of today's memoirs, however, are cut from different cloth. A recent *New York Times* article characterized our generation as "the Age of Memoir," pointing not to the "greats," but to the average and ordinary people among us who are determined to share their stories. Thus we have memoirs written about depression, drug addiction, obesity, abuse, migraines, grief, and that perennial favorite, boarding school. Duke University professor Henry Petroski wrote an excellent memoir of his days as a paper boy. And these are only the published stories. Life-writing clubs and seminars continue to incubate thousands of unpublished stories written for family members and private circulation.

I began teaching courses on religious memoir when I wrote one myself,

Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery. It too belongs to the category of the "average," in this case, the story of a young and inexperienced pastor who is assigned to an ordinary country church. A memoir offers a thick sampling of a life, written from a single period or thematic perspective, for example, a memoir about grief; an autobiography purports to give an account of a whole life "so far." Augustine wrote *Confessions* when he was 43 and Thomas Merton published *The Seven Storey Mountain* at the ripe old age of 33.

In a "religious" or "spiritual" personal narrative, God may not be a character in the story, as in the book of Job, but the decisions and actions of the narrator are shaped by an awareness of God's presence in the warp and woof of a life. Unlike most secular reporting, spiritual life-writing recognizes the claims of religious faith to be essential and not incidental to life in its truest sense. It is unwilling to create a "world" from which God is absent. The plot turns on a conversion, a spiritual insight, or a faithful encounter, occurring most often in the ebb and flow of an ordinary life. As Karl Barth said, "God is so unassuming in the world." One thinks of the novel *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson, whose painstaking evocation of small-town clerical life reads more like a memoir than a novel. It is even written in the form of a letter,

one of the genres key to memoir and life-writing.

A spiritual memoir may not issue a direct appeal to the reader, but by virtue of its content and narrative shape, it implicitly invites the reader to identify with the story or its characters. It makes a "narrative offer" to the reader, as if to say, *This path is available to you, too*. There may be no better example of this than Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness* in which she characterizes the art of writing a spiritual autobiography as an act of "giving yourself away."

Today's resurgence of autobiography and memoir can be boiled down to the availability and goodness of experience. The novelist Martin Amis writes in his own memoir, *Experience*, "Nothing, for now, can compete with experience—so unanswerably authentic, and so liberally and democratically dispensed." One thinks of the proliferation of blogs and websites and other online cafeterias of experience that feed our desire to share our own lives or to enter into the lives of others. Life-writing has fully emerged toward the end of the ages of Romanticism, political individualism, and psychoanalysis, periods when the "I" ruled. It dominates today because we have the technology to make it all available.

On the other hand, contemporary memoirs may be viewed as a push-back against that same technology and the Centralization of Nearly Everything. I wrote about life in a small church because I wanted to preserve the texture of that experience in a culture in which the small congregation, like the neighborhood hardware store, is having a hard time staying in business. And words are disappearing too: 90 percent

of text messages draw on a vocabulary of fewer than 400 words; Shakespeare used 24,000.

Christians have deep and abiding reasons for telling the stories of their lives. We understand our lives to be inextricably bound up with another's life. The sacrament that brings us into the church, baptism, is plot-driven. It encapsulates the death and resurrection of Jesus and the believer's new life in him. The fact that the Christian plot turns on a death reminds us that, no matter how successful feel-good religion and the prosperity gospel may be, we follow the rhythm and curve of a different and more challenging narrative. Christian narrative does not indulge in the self-puffery of the ego trip because, as the Apostle reminds us, the Christian has a radically different view of the ego. "I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

The characters and plots of both ancient and modern autobiographies emerge from the fountain of the Word: Abraham's journey, Hagar in the wilderness, Jacob and Esau, the temptations of Christ, the Prodigal Son, Mary Magdalene, Doubting Thomas. These and many others are not hard to find in the stories we tell about ourselves.

It might come as a surprise to contemporary theorists that the autobiography was invented by a Christian for Christian purposes. We are not sure why Augustine chose to write his autobiography, but *Confessions* stands as a monument and an inspiration to the life of faith. Socrates said, "Know thyself," and a millennium later the bishop of a mid-dling North African city named Hippo

Christians have deep and abiding reasons for telling the stories of their lives. We understand our lives to be inextricably bound up with another's life. The sacrament that brings us into the church, baptism, is plot-driven. It encapsulates the death and resurrection of Jesus and the believer's new life in him. The fact that the Christian plot turns on a death reminds us that, no matter how successful feel-good religion and the prosperity gospel may be, we follow the rhythm and curve of a different and more challenging narrative.

did just that. In a searching account of his interior life he examines his motives for converting to Christianity. When he writes, "Before you Lord, I lie exposed, exactly as I am," he reminds us of the ancient psalmist or, more likely, the first Modern Man. Unlike most autobiographies, Augustine addresses his exposed life to God in the liturgical language of confession and praise. By opening his story with the words, "God, you are great," he deftly deconstructs the values and pretensions of the heroic ideal in Roman society. Thanks to Augustine, it is possible to conceive a life not as a showcase for achievement but as an act of worship.

Today's spiritual memoirists have shifted away from narratives of public events to probing and more private accounts of the narrator's spiritual development. The circumstances that restricted the memoir to the "great man" of the 19th century have been shattered by a new breed of writer whose subject matter is the discovery of the self through faith. In this too, Augustine remains an overarching (and controversial) influence. In the past two decades, women writers, now freed from the old model, have come to dominate the field: Anne Lamott, Kathleen Norris, Patricia Hampl, Nora Gallagher, Lauren Winner, Sara Miles, Barbara Brown Taylor, and the pastoral writer, Heidi Neumark, whose *Breathing Space* is assigned

reading for incoming students to Duke Divinity School.

The encouraging thing about this burst of spiritual memoirs is not that there are so many of them, but that they are increasingly focused on the corporate life of the people of God. Among the new group of writers the life of faith means life in community, either in the church or in devoted tension with it. Despite its intensely personal quality, the Christian memoir avoids the self-indulgence of the Me Era by grounding writer and reader alike in the community of our common story.

The Divinity School includes *Confessions* and other memoirs and autobiographies in several areas of the curriculum because literary nonfiction evokes another, valuable kind of learning: not a rule but a fleshly instance of a rule. Not a definition of grace to be memorized, but the experience of grace as perceived through the window of another person's life. Who is to say which comes first: the Rule or the Life? We read the stories of others and temporarily cross over to meet them. There we encounter another person's experience of faith in a world very different from our own. Then we cross back into our own time and place of ministry, newly enriched by a deeper spiritual understanding and better prepared for our own life of faith. ■



SEEING GOD IN JAZZ

BY WILLIE JAMES JENNINGS

I AM A GREAT LOVER OF JAZZ. IT ENTERED MY SOUL AROUND THE SAME TIME GOSPEL MUSIC AND SACRED HYMNS BEGAN TO GIVE SHAPE TO THE CONTOURS OF MY FEELINGS AND DREAMS. MY PARENTS, LIKE MOST OF THE CHURCH FOLKS WHO RAISED ME, UPHELD A STRICT SEPARATION BETWEEN SACRED AND SECULAR SOUNDS. I NEVER REALLY HEARD THE DIFFERENCE THE WAY THEY HEARD IT. ALL THE MUSIC OF MY YOUTH, BOTH IN AND OUT OF CHURCH, WAS BLUES-DRENCHED, JAZZ-LADEN, AND JAZZ-GESTURING—OR SHOULD I SAY GOSPEL-DRENCHED, GOSPEL-LADEN, AND GOSPEL-GESTURING.

LIKE SO MANY OTHER THEOLOGIAN-BROUGHT-UP-IN-THE-CHURCH, I CANNOT IMAGINE THINGS THEOLOGICAL APART FROM THINGS ARTISTIC. IT WAS NOT ONLY LISTENING TO THE MUSIC BUT ALSO THE VISUAL EXPERIENCE OF WATCHING PEOPLE



playing, singing, and dancing that helped introduce me to God. If I listened carefully and looked intently I could catch glimpses of something not definable, certainly not quantifiable, but nonetheless actually present. It might be called the work of the Holy Spirit, the operations of grace on the human creature.

I prefer to think of it as being seen more than seeing, that is, being in the presence of a God who sees us and allows us to give voice through our bodies to the depths of the human life that God has created. The “gift of expression” is probably too small a phrase to capture what I see as musicians give flight to their art. The human creature is a profound mystery, especially in its visibility. Christian theology has always been plagued with the danger of a terrible one-sidedness in which we place mystery on the divine side of things and forget the mystery of creaturely life itself. The incarnate life of God shown to us in Jesus Christ challenges that one-sidedness.

In Jesus, God did not remove the complexity of the divine life but became a companion for us, inviting us to live freely in the absolute unfathomable depths of grace and divine love. The Son of God’s life introduced us to the awesome complexity of the human creature itself. We are much more than we can grasp, understand, or certainly control, each of us and all of us together. What I have learned by listening to and watching so many musicians, especially jazz



musicians, is what it means to give witness to that complexity.

Certainly jazz musicians are not the only musicians that might be singled out. I could add a whole host of other types of musicians from a wide variety of cultures and artistic traditions. But I think of jazz musicians because they have found their way to the front of the camera and the canvas of so many visual artists who have captured beautiful angles into their lives and art. But what they have also done in ways quite astounding has been to capture glimpses into the depths of human existence in the presence of God. I especially appreciate both photographs and paintings of musicians in artistic flight.

I love this picture of **BILLIE HOLIDAY**, which is part of the legendary collections of photos done by William P. Gottlieb. The expression on her face reminds me of so many other singers I have watched sing and make productive use of their anguish and pain. Holiday had the perfect voice for jazz, not overly powerful, not a pure sound, but one that was deeply human. Her life story was majestically complex, and her music expresses the density of a life composed of twists and turns. This photo conveys an imperial mournfulness focused by the demands placed on a body to find the right note. Her extended neck, closed eyes, and wide-open mouth all reflect the hard work of singing something right. This photo always reminds me of the many church



women I grew up hearing and watching as they contorted their faces reaching for the notes their minds could hear and expressing the emotions their hearts were determined to set free. There is something so biblical, indeed godly, about the face of a woman singing out of anguish, even if the anguish is a distant memory leaving only its imprint in the expressive work of singing. I always see that imprint when I look at this photo of Billie Holiday.

Another favorite of mine is the classic photo of a young **JOHN COLTRANE**. This face-on photo of Coltrane as he is in a meditative posture suggests the powerful future that will unfold for this young black man. The photographer captured Coltrane at that particular place of translation when his thoughts were posed to extend themselves through his instrument. This posture seems to be implicit in all of his music: thoughtful, penetrating, profound, reaching deep within himself, yet reaching out for more than he can quickly grasp. It echoes for me so much of the process of serious theological reflection. This photo of Coltrane with his horn is like unto a theologian at work or a preacher preparing to preach: soon thought must be given flight in voice, word, and action. The small space between his mouth and his horn mirrors the tight space between imagination and proclamation.

Along this same line is the beautiful photo of **LOUIS ARMSTRONG**. I love this



photo because it shows us Armstrong at work. The visual instruction here is breathtaking. This is an older Armstrong, his age marked by both his face and hands. Yet I cannot look at this photo without immediately seeing a host of preachers with white shirt and white handkerchief, royal sweat rolling down their faces as they preached long and hard, bringing a congregation to its feet. Armstrong preaches through his horn, his face alive and sure, seeing the near but looking beyond the present to new possibilities for life.

I also appreciate the way some visual artists are able to capture sound in sight through their renditions of jazz musicians at play. **ROMARE BEARDEN** was a master of the musical visual. When I began teaching, the first piece of art I hung on the wall of my office was the Bearden piece above on the left. Bearden's genius begins with his colors. When I look at the colors he uses, I hear the music. Beyond color, this master of collage perfectly depicts musicians. The guitar player, centrally positioned, is in musical flight as he leans toward the band, pressing to hear each player. He is no solo act. The sax and piano players lean toward each other, also gesturing the important work of listening. Behind them is the trumpeter reaching over all to be heard. The drummer and bass player look as though they are joined to their instruments and each other. This is indeed the truth of an effective rhythm

section. They are the time keepers, the foundation on which all others build. They must be as one. Bearden's work here (and other pieces) invites us to hear the music.

Churches could learn much from reflecting on a jazz band. Here are a group of people who work very hard at listening, yet give up nothing of themselves in that process, but in fact only gain a true sense of themselves in the common task of making music, producing sound that makes a central statement that exists only through the constitutive performances of each musician. The Bearden pieces I love all share this exquisite quality of showing the many driving toward the one—the one sound, and the one ecstasy of playing well. I love the way he places musicians in very tight spaces reflecting the real world of most jazz club stages with their small spaces fit for big sounds. Musicians live and play in tight quarters, which is not only a matter of the given but also a matter of choice. They need closeness to hear. Would that Christians could grasp this basic truth of our witness: We don't simply need each other, we need to be close together in order to truly hear the words we should be saying to the world and, equally important, to hear more clearly the voice of the world, in its pain, suffering, and longing.

Jazz musicians in the midst of playing often gesture toward new possibilities, making visible the reality of hope.

It is a moment of transfiguration. As we watch them play it is as though an in-breaking has occurred and who we thought they were and we were gives way to a new revealing. My dear wife had an uncle, **STANLEY PATRICK**, who was a school teacher and also a serious jazz pianist. Uncle Stanley grew up in the church at the time of the strict separation of music, gospel on the kingdom of light side and jazz belonging to another less honorable realm. Yet he defied that segregation and became one of Montreal's most well-known jazzmen.

I keep this photo of him in my office because of the sheer serenity he exudes. As I look at it I can hear the piano playing, and then what often draws my eyes is his reflection hovering above him as he plays. It is another self born of the joining of musician and instrument. Wherever he is at this moment of playing I want to join him there, at this place where peace abides and we are more than our histories suggest. Jazz musicians expose a messianic secret, that deliverance from one-dimensional visions of life have come to us in the elegant act of performing. What is inescapable to me is the ways in which such photos and paintings of them gesture toward the true moment of deliverance, the incarnation of God. ■



baptism, speech, craft

BY BONNIE SCOTT

before my fifth birthday, my life had already been shaped by three significant events—two of which I can’t even remember. The first was my baptism. I was four months old when Pastor Wayne DeHart drew three wet crosses on my forehead and passed me around the congregation. As I grew, those hands through which I passed at my baptism would become my family. They would teach me of Christ, telling me the most compelling story I have ever heard.

At 11 months, I learned to talk. That this is an event in nearly every child’s life does not temper its significance for me. My mom was a school librarian who read children’s books like a gifted storyteller. I learned to speak while listening to bedtime tales of Anansi the Spider and Strega Nona. A high-school speech class led me to discover a natural gift and love of public speaking. As the lectern gave way to the pulpit, many teachers and pastors nurtured my penchant for storytelling and the power of my spoken word.

But perhaps the most unique of these events occurred when I was four. My parents gave me a toolbox for Christmas. The tools were child-sized but real—screwdrivers, two saws, and a hammer. The box said, “Stanley Junior” and the fine print read, “ages 10 and up.” I was only four, but my parents knew what they were doing. My dad was a woodworker and taught me the basics—how to hold a handsaw, how to pound a nail—and set me loose with his scrap-wood pile. I may have been the only little girl in town who

could change the blade on a coping saw. Mom also gave me a sewing kit, taught me to handsew, and promised that when I turned seven, I could use the sewing machine. To this day, my roommates enjoy the frequent hum of my sewing machine; they are less taken with my jigsaw running in the living room. I am grateful my parents taught me the patience and beauty of craft, that I grew up in a home where someone was always about the work of creation.

Baptism. Speech. Craft. These are God’s gracious gifts to me. And at the intersection of these gifts, I now find my life’s vocation as a preacher.

Anyone who has been strangely moved by a sermon—or any preacher who has wrestled with God in the writing of one—knows that preaching is a rather mysterious thing. If Bonhoeffer is correct, the proclaimed word is no less than

“the incarnate Christ himself ... walking through his congregation as the word.” Good preaching is hard to define—note Webster’s unsatisfying definition, “to give moral or religious advice, especially in a tiresome manner.” And sermon writing is a difficult process to explain: *Well, I pray, read, think, wait, and then it just ... comes?* Homileticians often best describe the work of preaching with metaphors. The preacher is variously likened to storyteller, explorer, midwife, or archivist. The sermon is a story, road map, living-breathing organism, or historical record.

But as much time as I spend with sawdust and thread, I inherently approach the work of preaching as craft. A sermon reflects the beauty and complexity of the Word within it, for the gospel is deep and wide. It does not exist in some other world than this world, and it cannot be boiled down to three simple points. Neither should the sermon. Preaching is wholly creative and artistic; it takes beauty as its medium and its message.

In my life and practice, a preacher is a craftswoman. The Scripture her medium, the Holy Spirit her guide, the sermon her craft. I do not mean to suggest that the preacher-crafter makes the sermon *ex nihilo*, as if the Word of God is not beautiful in its own right. Before the preacher considers crafting a word, the Word crafts the preacher. Artists immerse themselves in the subject matter and medium before anything else. My grandfather, a botanist and woodworker, loves wood—particularly its grain. He has a knack for spotting intricacies and idiosyncrasies in an unfinished board and crafting it into beautiful furniture. He knows which wood to choose and how to sand *with* the grain, all to reveal the wood’s natural beauty. Grandpa is not a master of the wood but a student and servant of

it. Likewise, preachers who are students and servants of Scripture are most free to create beautiful sermons.

The creation part of preaching may not be easy, but it is a gift. When I settle down each week to craft a word for my congregation, the process is uncertain, slow, often frustrating, but riddled with



Baptism. Speech. Craft. These are God’s gracious gifts to me. And at the intersection of these gifts, I now find my life’s vocation as a preacher.

moments of joy. It is like waiting for an idea for the next art project, combined with the tedious work of ripping out seams. People often ask, “How long did it take you to make that?” I can’t help but think, “About ten times longer than you could ever have imagined!” Crafting is time consuming. So is preaching. The text begs a thousand questions of us. What does this text say to my community? What might that look like? And for the skeptic visiting my church today, why does this Scripture even matter at all? There is rarely a straightforward answer to these

questions, and so the artist slowly sets to work, unsure of the result. But as the text is run through the loom of people, life, and community, suddenly a pattern emerges, an image comes to mind, a story is recalled. The seamstress weaves together text and context, heaven and earth, until the sermon is formed.

In an era of cheap furniture, the beauty I find in a hand-crafted, mahogany dresser is often unappreciated by others. The tools and techniques of my grandfather’s woodshop were simply never passed down, and much has been lost. And I so often find this true in the church. Few members of my generation in North America appreciate the beauty of the gospel, for its riches were barely passed down or poorly connected with our lives. Many of my dear friends have no faith commitment, and I long to communicate the Christian story to them. I want to strip away our veneered ideas of Christianity, run our fingers again over the grain of Scripture, and invite young people into the apprenticeship that makes real disciples. Preaching is an opportunity to present the Christian gospel in all its complexity and beauty, to finish the board of wood until its grain shines.

Artists are some of the most thoughtful, visionary, attentive people in our communities. They probe the depths, ask hard questions, seek beauty, and cultivate imagination. Craftspeople are not afraid of mystery or messes, and preachers have much to learn from their creative engagement with the world. So, the time the “sweet torture” of sermon writing besets you, try the approach of the craftsperson. Use your imagination, play with the text, expand your palate, paint a picture with words, ask hard questions, or just keep sanding. And if all else fails, try running a jigsaw in the living room. ■

THE CHURCH MUSICIAN AS (*Overlooked*) THEOLOGIAN

BY MARK GORMAN

No one goes to church and thinks, “I sure hope the worship will be dull and uninspiring!” People desire vibrant worship. Whether it’s the communal practices of Taizé or Iona, the anthems that resound in cathedrals, the gospel choir who brings the congregation to their feet, or the strum of guitars with a praise song, it’s clear that music has a central role in establishing worship.

Unfortunately, discussions about the relationship between music and worship have mostly been one-dimensional, focusing on the music itself, from style (traditional or contemporary) to instrumentation (guitar vs. organ). If churches hope to sustain practices of vibrant worship, the scope of the conversation must include not only church music but also church musicians.

This conversation requires us to think about how the church musician is also a theologian. This might come as a surprise. If we associate “theologian” with anyone in a congregation, it is usually the pastor or other ordained staff. Applying that term to our church musicians can seem like a stretch, espe-

cially when many church musicians lack the formal theological education clergy receive through master’s of divinity programs.

Part of the problem may lie in how we think about theology. If theology is mostly dried ink for a dusty classroom, then we may never learn to see musicians as theologians. But if one of the purposes—indeed, the chief purpose—of theology is doxology (the praise of God), then it is easier to see how the church musician does function as a practical theologian, complementing the theological role of the pastor. As David Arcus, adjunct associate professor of sacred music and Divinity School organist, told me recently, “Clearly, our tasks [of being musicians or pastors] are different. But we all share in the general responsibility of facilitating the praise of God.”

Arcus, an excellent conversation partner for thinking about the role of the musician in the life of the church, regrets “the loss of [understanding] the church musician as a professional leader, teacher, and visionary among ministerial staffs.” When he notes that

both clergy and musicians share a responsibility for the doxology of the church, he speaks not only as someone who accompanies hundreds of services each year on campus but also as someone of deep and sincere Christian faith.

The shared responsibility means many of the unremarkable, mundane activities of church musicians have real theological import. When I asked Arcus about the factors he considered in leading a hymn, only one stood out as explicitly theological: the liturgical season. The others were straightforward musical considerations, ranging from the size of the organ to dynamics to the presence or absence of a choir. But as musical considerations in the context of and for the purpose of the worship of God, they were musical factors with theological overtones. Playing the organ too softly during a hymn can deprive the congregation of its confidence to participate in acts of worship. Playing the organ too loudly can drown out the congregation and imply that their participation is unimportant. This communicates the theologically impoverished idea that worship is only for the leaders.



Detail of Opus 16, the organ in Goodson Chapel at Duke Divinity School

This is only one example, and we could doubtless think of dozens of other musical decisions made by organists, contemporary ensemble members, or gospel choir directors, decisions that form the worship life of churches, a distinctly theological activity. But the theological role of the church musician is not limited to purely musical activities.

For instance, consider what happens when a musician accompanies a song. She or he is, on the one hand, concerned with musical factors: how loud to play, how fast to play, whether the congregation needs extra help in order to sing well, and so on. On the other hand, she or he hopefully has noticed textual issues, such as whether the mood of

the words is celebratory or plaintive, penitent or joyful. Furthermore, the musician may also have considered how some textual element could be communicated in the music, perhaps by changing a chord to highlight a particular word or by playing louder or softer on a stanza. In other words, the musician is trying to communicate the theology of the song through the music itself. It is a complicated endeavor, and it requires the musician to be sensitive to the communication of theological ideas.

Some might protest that this level of subtlety is too obscure for the average person to discern during worship, but the subtlety is actually another opportunity for musicians to demonstrate

their theological role. Arcus has suggested that “occasional, brief annotations can be useful tools” to “prime” a congregation eventually to hear these musical subtleties without explanation. Bulletin notes, newsletter articles, or brief spoken introductions during a service can make connections for the congregation between the words they are singing and the music that is being played—or even, in the case of music without congregational participation (e.g., solos, anthems, or instrumental selections), between the music and the sermon, Scripture lessons, or prayers of the day. The church musicians’ ability to guide and teach the congregation in this way reinforces the notion that they contribute *theologically* to a worship service and not just *experientially*.

In most churches, the musicians are not world-class performers but volunteers or part-time workers, often overworked and underappreciated. In many cases, they are not even affiliated with the denomination of the church they are serving—or are not Christians at all. It would seem unreasonable or unrealistic to add “musical theologian” to their duties, or to ask that before each service they consider how their musical decisions contribute to the theological formation of the congregation.

This line of thought misses the point. Musicians, whether or not they are aware of it, are shaping congregations theologically through their music. Congregations, even if they don’t explicitly know it, are formed theologically by the music of their worship services, just as they are formed by the sermon, the prayers, and the sacraments. Vibrant worship, therefore, requires that both church musicians and the congregations they serve become more sensitive to the theological work of music.

This might mean that a congregation, for example, would pay for its musicians


to receive additional training in playing for worship services, or even in theology. While formal seminary study is one way to do this, many groups offer such training. The American Guild of Organists has regular continuing education opportunities. Hampton University offers a one-week workshop each summer for organists and choir directors, as does Westminster Choir College. Arcus also recommends denominational groups, like the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, which offer a broad variety of materials.

A cooperative relationship between the pastor and musicians is also vital. Too often pastors and musicians see each other as threats or competition in

ministry. Instead, whenever possible, pastors and musicians should work together in planning worship services so that musical and nonmusical elements of the service can be theologically integrated. In such a cooperative relationship, the pastor might be able to draw on discussions from worship planning for sermon illustrations or might even incorporate an anthem, hymn, or instrumental selection into the sermon, perhaps with some guidance from the church musicians. This acknowledges the musician's theological contributions and demonstrates pastoral respect for the musician's expertise, setting an example for the wider congregation.

Duke Divinity School professor Jeremy Begbie has written about what

the church can learn from music as it wrestles with its theology and its practices. If music can have theological implications, then certainly musicians can play theological roles. By acknowledging these roles, churches move toward sustainable practices of vibrant worship. This also changes the discussion about worship music from *What do we want?* and *What do we like?* to conversations about *Who, as a people, are we?* and *What do we need to do to be formed as the people God is calling us to be right now?* To their delight and surprise, such churches, by the grace of God, may even discover musical answers to their most searching theological questions. ■



DRAWN INTO SCRIPTURE: ARTS AND THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

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ABOUT THE COVER: THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE TO VISIT DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

The cover image is *Gospel of John Frontispiece and Incipit* from The Saint John's Bible. This vast, illuminated manuscript has been commissioned by Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minn. Contemporary scribe and illuminator Donald Jackson works in the Scriptorium in Wales, where



he handwrites the Bible and creates illuminations in a unique collaboration with other artists and scribes.

Gospel of John Frontispiece and Incipit includes words from Colossians 1:15–20, which transcend the shadows and provide the link between the Christ figure and the text opposite: "And Lived

Among Us." The Living Word steps from the darkness that recalls the chaos and nothingness of the Creation story and moves toward light and order. The texture behind the head of Christ is inspired from an image taken from the Hubble Space Telescope and lends a breathtaking cosmic character to the whole action taking place. To the left, an intriguing keyhole recalls the tradition of locked and hinged manuscripts securing, protecting, and holding the "key" to the Word of God.

Duke Divinity School will incorporate illuminations from The Saint John's Bible into both worship services and Tuesday morning prayer service during Convocation & Pastors' School. Displays of the Bible will also be available for prayer and reflection in Goodson Chapel. For more information on this example of the artistic interpretation of Scripture, visit www.saintjohnsbible.org

DAVID ROBERTS' LITHOGRAPHS COLLECTION GIVEN TO THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

In **March 2011**, a collection of David Roberts' prints, many from the "Royal Subscription Edition" of the British artist's famous lithograph series *Sketches in the Holy Land and Syria*, was acquired for the Faculty Conference Room in the Divinity School's Langford Building.

The acquisition was made possible by a gift from Marion and Wensell Grabarek of Durham, N.C.

Many of the works were produced during the 1840s based on sketches Roberts made during a lengthy tour through Egypt, Nubia, Sinai, the Holy Land, Jordan, and Lebanon. When he returned to Britain, Roberts worked with acclaimed lithographer Louis Haghe Roberts to produce the *Sketches in the Holy Land and Syria* and the *Egypt & Nubia* series.

Among the prints from the "Royal Subscription Edition" of the Holy Land folio are "Jerusalem from the South" and "Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre." These works were printed on India paper and colored under the artist's supervision to resemble watercolor paintings.

The folio collections became extremely popular in the United States and England, where they provided a first glimpse of biblical sites previously known to the public only by name. The enterprise was funded through direct subscriptions and included subscribers Queen Victoria (Subscriber 1, to whom the work is dedicated), Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, and Tsar Nicholas I of Russia.

In 1996, Duke University Press published *Jerusalem and the Holy Land Rediscovered: The Prints of David Roberts (1796–1864)*. The book, with a preface by Dennis Campbell, Divinity School dean from 1982 to 1997, and commentary by the late W.D. Davies, the George Washington Ivey Professor Emeritus at the Divinity School, reproduces in full color all 123 of Roberts's lithographs along with the unabridged text from 1842 by the Rev. George Croly LL.D. The book was printed from a set of lithographs acquired by the Duke University Museum of Art from a private collection dating to the 1850s.

RARE MENDELSSOHN MUSIC PERFORMANCE SPONSORED BY DUKE INITIATIVES IN THEOLOGY AND THE ARTS

In **April 2011**, Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts and Duke Chapel co-sponsored a performance of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*. This rarely heard choral work sets texts mainly from the Acts of the Apostles to music, carrying the listener through the drama of the church's story. The piece was performed by the Duke Chapel Choir and Orchestra conducted by Rodney Wynkoop, the director of chapel music and university choral music.

The concert was preceded by a panel discussion on the theme, "St. Paul's Conversion: From Word to Music." Presenters included Dean Richard Hays, an international authority on the writings of Paul; Larry Todd, Duke University professor of music and a world-renowned authority on Mendelssohn; and Siegwart Reichwald, associate professor of musicology at Converse College and author of "The Genesis of Felix Mendelssohn's *Paulus*."



"Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre"

MAKOTO FUJIMURA VISITS DUKE

This past spring, Duke Divinity School and the Duke University Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies (DAAV) hosted internationally acclaimed visual artist Makoto Fujimura for a two-day residency from **March 31 to April 1, 2011**.

Fujimura spent the first day of his residency visiting the DAAV. He spoke to Mark Olson's class about his experience as an artist in New York City and how to resist the commodification of art for financial profit. He also provided a technical demonstration of his style of painting, Japanese Nihonga, and a workshop for



Fujimura

Professor Raquel Salvatella de Prada's class.

On the second day of his residency, Fujimura spent the day at the Divinity School. He addressed Jeremy Begbie's Theology and the Arts class on how rigorous artistic technique can be combined with and informed by the richness of Christian tradition. At a lunchtime session, he described his firsthand experience of 9/11 and the resulting artistic collaborations that sought to "plant a seed of restoration for the downtown community."

On his final evening at Duke, Fujimura gave a public lecture on his latest project, "The Four Holy Gospels," an illuminated edition of the four New Testament Gospels published in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible of 1611. He also spoke about how his Christian faith informed this project, exploring the interplay of art and faith in a broader contemporary context.

Learn more about Fujimura in an interview with *Faith & Leadership* at www.faithandleadership.com/qa/makoto-fujimura-the-function-art

DUKE-CAMBRIDGE COLLABORATION

A team of scholars from Duke Divinity School and University of Cambridge are working together with composer James MacMillan on a new *St. Luke Passion*. On **October 2, 2011**, the Duke Chapel Choir will perform several of MacMillan's anthems during the Sunday morning worship service. The composer will be present, and the public is welcome to attend.

The Duke-Cambridge team will be meeting with MacMillan again during Holy Week 2012 (**April 2-8**) in Cambridge. Events scheduled for that week include a Maundy Thursday concert for two pianos in the Great Hall of King's College, given by Jeremy Begbie and London-based concert pianist Cordelia Williams. They will play Bach and the *Visions de l'Amen* by Olivier Messiaen. Commentary and visual art will be provided by members of Duke and Cambridge universities.

The first performance of MacMillan's *St. Luke Passion* is scheduled for **April 13, 2014**. The work will be available for general church use as well as concert performance.

ARTS AND THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IS THEME OF CONVOCATION & PASTORS' SCHOOL 2011

Convocation & Pastors' School is the signature fall event at Duke Divinity School, and the theme for 2011 is "Drawn Into Scripture: Arts and the Life of the Church." Featured speakers include Divinity School professor Jeremy Begbie, novelist Marilynne Robinson, and pastor Lillian Daniel. Anthony Kelley, a jazz musician from Duke University's music department, and the BLAK Ensemble will also participate. Those who attend are also able to choose from a wide variety of seminars that explore the way the arts and the church shape each other. Convocation & Pastors' School will be held **October 10-11, 2011**.



Daniel



Kelley



Robinson



King's College, Cambridge

THOMAS LANGFORD CHAIR INAUGURAL LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE



Begbie

Jeremy Begbie is the inaugural holder of the Thomas A. Langford Research Professorship in Theology. He teaches systematic theology, and he specializes in the interface between theology and the arts. His particular research interest is the interplay between music and theology.

On the evening of **February 23, 2012**, he

will give his inaugural lecture, which will include a live performance. The event is open to the public. Jeremy Begbie will also deliver the Gray Lectures as the keynote speaker at Convocation & Pastors' School, **October 10–11, 2011**.

To see one of his performance-lectures, visit *Faith & Leadership* at www.faithandleadership.com/multimedia/jeremy-begbie-theology-through-the-arts

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 This is a snapshot of events related to theology and the arts at Duke Divinity School. To keep up with all the news, events, and happenings at Duke Divinity School, see our website: www.divinity.duke.edu

NEW CREATION ARTS GROUP

New Creation Arts Group (NCAG) is made up of all kinds of artists, painters, singers, dancers, textile artists, woodworkers, storytellers, poets, instrumentalists, art lovers, and more. During the 2010–2011 academic year they presented a rotating exhibit of student art, a mural with the Black Seminarians Union, a concert series, social events including “crafternoons,” and the third annual Juried Arts Exhibit titled, “Places of Redemption.”

Sarah Howell D’12, one of the student leaders of NCAG, said, “Art is not optional but a necessary component of engaging in worship and theology. That is not to say that someone must be artistic in order to be faithful; it simply means that art and beauty—precisely because they are excessive and wasteful by utilitarian standards—are some of the most important expressions of the love and grace of God.”

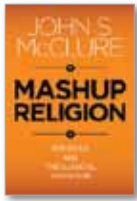


ART FILLS THE HALLS OF DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Jo Bailey Wells, associate professor of the practice of Christian ministry and Bible and the director of Anglican studies, is leading a group charged with enhancing the space of Duke Divinity School with displays and exhibits of various styles of art. Projects include a partnership with Duke University’s Nasher Museum of Art to install six modern American paintings in the Westbrook building hallway, a display of rural church photography sponsored by The Duke Endowment, and collaborations with Duke’s Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies to host visiting artists and their work. In the coming months, the group plans to install a series of portraits in the Langford building hallways, as well as update the Kilgo entrance to the Divinity School.



Art from students in the New Creation Arts Group (clockwise from left): “Franciscan Sandwich, Breaking Bread,” by Tyler Mahoney D’12; “Lines in the Sand,” by Eric Prenshaw D’11; “Healing,” by Katherine Hester D’13



**MASHUP RELIGION:
POP MUSIC AND THEOLOGICAL INVENTION**

By John S. McClure
Baylor University Press, 2011
250 pages, Paperback, \$24.95

REVIEWED BY **LESTER RUTH,**

Research Professor of Christian Worship at Duke Divinity School

AS IN REAL ESTATE, so in authoring a book: location is everything. And the book *Mashup Religion: Pop Music and Theological Invention* shows how critical an author’s location can be. Its author, John S. McClure, is the Charles G. Finney Professor of Preaching and Worship at Vanderbilt Divinity School. This fact—so easily skimmed over on a back cover—is vital for understanding this book, for Vanderbilt is in Nashville, a mecca for the production of popular music. *Mashup Religion* arises from this location, enabling McClure to reflect on how popular music is created and received as an analogy for what it might mean both to express theology today and to have theology heard by people shaped by popular culture.

The book emerges from the author’s broad experiences and interests, too. McClure has been active in songwriting for popular audiences as well as interested in the technologies of sound recording, editing, mixing, and mastering. Combine the author’s location and musical pursuits with his broad academic interests, and the reader gets a book that is an interesting conversation between professional musicians and music producers, ethnomusicologists, theologians, homileticians, and communication theorists.

The book’s title, referring to a “mashup,” is derived from the world of pop music and points to the cen-

tral analogy. As McClure explains, “a mashup is a song consisting entirely of parts of other songs,” with these bits being juxtaposed in the process of producing a final music piece with bits of music created by other artists. McClure describes the process of producing pop music—from initial songwriting to reception by fans—to suggest a parallel to what it could mean today to express theology in dynamic ways, cognizant of how people actually put together a religious worldview.

The analogy is both descriptive and prescriptive. Sometimes McClure uses it to describe the way things are. That approach comes across most helpfully when assessing the cultural impact of pop music on people today. And so the book raises useful questions, especially for preachers: in what way does listening to popular music—and becoming a fan of certain performers—influence how people listen to sermons, associate with preachers, and place what they are hearing in church into a broader mix to form a religious worldview?

McClure’s prescriptive use of the mashup analogy takes up more space in the book. In the first four chapters,

McClure walks the reader through what’s involved in writing, recording, mixing, and producing pop music, especially in the electronic aspects. He does this in order to argue that as creating music is a complex event, so should be the speaking of theology today. McClure wants to show theologians how they might “foster new ideas through creative juxtapositions across religious traditions, cultures, and traditional disciplinary lines.”

In what respects does listening to popular music influence how people listen to sermons, associate with preachers, and place what they are hearing in church into a broader mix to form a religious worldview?

The author applies the analogy most clearly when dealing with preaching, which is not surprising given his academic discipline. But McClure’s goal is broader than merely dealing with a creative way of writing sermons. He captures this breadth in the terms “inventing theology” and “inventors of theology.” It appears that he was trying to find a bridge between his analogy of inventing of a piece of pop music on the one hand and the process involved in coming to a specific expression of theology across a range of vocations (he mentions at one point theologians who are “academic, journalistic, ministerial, artistic, or activist”) on the other. But to place “invent” and “theology” side by side remained disconcerting. And I kept wishing that the book applied its insights to the process of being dynamically theological in corporate prayer.

At several points the book steps out of the analogy to note more literal insights for speaking theologically today. For example, three things were particularly helpful. First, he discusses how theologians release original work

to be used by others in remixing. Second, the appendix describes how to lay out notes for a sermon, based on visualizing multiple tracks in a sound recording. And third, he analyzes what is required in sound systems and electronic support for preaching that requires multiple sensory dimensions.

Who might benefit from reading *Mashup Religion*? Anyone who feels stuck in a rut in preaching, praying, and speaking theologically within a congregation would benefit especially. The book increases awareness of the

dynamics involved in creating ecclesial speech. And increased awareness of the process of creation is helpful in reconfiguring one's approach. The book's analogy allows the reader to become aware of processes in which one might be engaged but not previously conscious of.

The book does not reflect on the Triune God as the object of theology and ask how this God's nature should affect how we speak theologically. That omission does not sink the book (no book can do everything), but it should

serve to remind the reader not to become too enamored with the novelty of the main analogy, which is easy to do if one is desperate for a panacea and then forgets that there are other things to consider beyond culture in order to express theology in high fidelity. Indeed, the "mashing up" the author intends for readers would necessarily require the careful reader to contemplate God along with the history of theological expression. ■



READING, DESIRE, AND THE EUCHARIST IN EARLY MODERN RELIGIOUS POETRY

By Ryan Netzley

University of Toronto Press, 2011

304 pages, Hardcover, \$70.00

REVIEWED BY LAUREN F. WINNER,

Assistant Professor of Christian Spirituality at Duke Divinity School

CAN YOU WANT SOMETHING—
desire something—that you have?

Modernity's idioms, perhaps especially the idiom of psychoanalysis, push us to answer that question in the negative: desire presupposes lack. If you want something (a couch, a house, a child), you must not have it; once you have the couch, you may like it, or cherish it, or even esteem it, but—almost by definition—you don't want it.

In his insightful and thought-provoking investigation of 17th-century religious poetry, literary scholar Ryan Netzley suggests that the Eucharist reconfigures our assumptions about desire and lack. If there is any moment in the Christian life when we can say *God is present, God is here*, it is the

Eucharist. And yet, we feel and indeed cultivate desire at the altar. In the Eucharist, we want something that is precisely not absent. Indeed, the Eucharist trains "devotees to respond to an already existing divine presence" (and perhaps therefore to notice the divine in settings where God is less obviously but still present).

The Eucharist's reordering of modern notions of desire is the presupposition of Netzley's study. Through the lens of eucharistic desire, Netzley reads the spiritual poetry of George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, John Donne, and John Milton. In different ways, each of these four writers play with the concept of desiring what you have—that is, the concept of properly receiving the

Eucharist. For example, in Herbert's poems, Netzley finds persistent inquiry into what it means to "take" something—how properly to take a book and read it, how faithfully to take eucharistic bread and eat it. Herbert's poetry is "an exercise in how to ... respond correctly to a God to whom [devotees] already have access," and the proper mode of reception, finally, is a taking that "refuses to fall back into passive-aggressive oscillations of humility and self-abnegation." In a provocative riff on that theme, Netzley reads Donne to say that desire points not to our not being sated; rather, desire testifies to "divine overabundance or plentitude." I want God not because God is absent; I want God because God is so superabundant that I keep wanting God past the point of my own satiation.

The eucharistic reframing of desire and Netzley's subsequent reading of religious poetry would be quite enough reward for one monograph. But Netzley offers yet more. He notes numerous resonances between the Eucharist and poetry. Narrowly, in the context of early modern theological debates, thinking

about the Eucharist and reading a poem required the same kind of inquiry; the problem of eucharistic theology, and the problem of any encounter with a poem, was the proper interpretation of signs. More broadly, if God is present through the Eucharist, is God not also somehow made present by eucharistic verse? Is reading not, then, an exercise of divine encounter, of divine presence?

In the context of those resonances, Netzley turns his attention to the topic of devotional exercise:

both devotional practices writ large, and also the specific practice of reading. Netzley argues for the holy pointlessness—the aimlessness—of both the Eucharist and reading. Neither the Eucharist nor reading are things we undertake as instruments for some purpose. We do not receive the Eucharist to

fill a lack, and devotional practices generally are “intrinsically valuable,” not “mere means to a more important end.”

While Netzley’s primary audience includes fellow scholars of 17th-century literature, *Reading, Desire, and the*

Eucharist in Early Modern Religious Poetry has implications that go far beyond any one academic subfield.

For the church, one implication is this: Netzley’s model of devotional practice is in tension with the language of many 21st-century

Protestants use to explain our recent “recovery” of spiritual practices and devotional exercises (fasting, fixed-hour prayer, etc.). We speak of these practices as having many salutary ends and purposes: they connect us with God, they prepare us for the challenging moments of our spiritual

life, they make us more Christlike.

What if we set aside these ends and began to imagine devotional exercise not as instruments but as ends in themselves, as divinely purposeless?

And then there is what Netzley has to say about love. In his chapter on Herbert, Netzley writes that the best kind of “taking” is “when one tastes, desires, and reads without treating any of these activities as a struggle, when, instead, one freely takes without presuming, or fearing, that one takes away.” Making the same point more sharply in the book’s introduction, Netzley writes, “Loving God, it turns out, is hard precisely because it does not promise the reassuring logic of accomplishment and failure that attends any and all accounts of desire and reading that characterize them as work.” That is not merely a statement about 17th-century poetry. It is also a statement about the character of life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. ■

“Loving God, it turns out, is hard precisely because it does not promise the reassuring logic of accomplishment and failure that attends any and all accounts of desire and reading that characterize them as work.”

NEW BOOKS FROM DUKE DIVINITY FACULTY

American Religion: Contemporary Trends

By Mark Chaves, Professor of Sociology, Religion, and Divinity

Princeton University Press, 2011

160 pages, Hardcover, \$22.95



MOST AMERICANS SAY they believe in God, and more than a third say they attend religious services every week. Yet studies show that people do not really go to church as often as they claim, and it is not always clear what they mean when they tell pollsters they believe in God or pray. *American Religion* presents the best and most up-to-date information about religious trends in the United States in a succinct and accessible manner. This sourcebook provides essential information about key developments in American religion since 1972, and is the first major resource of its kind to appear in more than two decades.

Song of Songs: Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible

By Paul Griffiths, Warren Professor of Catholic Theology
Brazos Press, 2011

240 pages, Hardcover, \$32.99



PAUL GRIFFITHS' theological exegesis of the Song of Songs is a welcome addition to the well-received Brazos Theological Commentary

on the Bible. This commentary, like each in the series, is designed to serve the church—providing a rich resource for preachers, teachers, students, and study groups—and demonstrate the continuing intellectual and practical viability of theological interpretation of the Bible.

Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating

By Norman Wirzba, Research Professor of Theology, Ecology, and Rural Life
Cambridge University Press, 2011
264 pages, Paperback, \$24.99



THIS BOOK provides a comprehensive theological framework for assessing eating's significance, employing a Trinitarian theological lens to evaluate

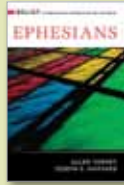
food production and consumption practices as they are being worked out in today's industrial food systems. Norman Wirzba combines the tools of ecological, agrarian, cultural, biblical, and theological analyses to draw a picture of eating that cares for creatures and that honors God. Unlike books that focus on vegetarianism or food distribution as the key theological matters, this book broadens the scope to include discussions on the sacramental character of eating, eating's ecological and social contexts, the meaning of death and sacrifice as they relate to eating, the Eucharist as the

place of inspiration and orientation, the importance of saying grace, and whether or not there will be eating in heaven.

Food and Faith demonstrates that eating is of profound economic, moral, and theological significance.

Ephesians: A Theological Commentary

By Allen Verhey, Professor of Christian Ethics, and Joe Harvard
Westminster John Knox Press, 2011
312 pages, Hardcover, \$35.00

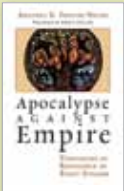


THIS COMMENTARY on Ephesians, part of the WJK Belief Series, was written with Joe Harvard, the pastor of First Presbyterian Church

in Durham, N.C.

Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism

By Anthea Portier-Young, Associate Professor of Old Testament
Eerdmans, 2011
486 pages, Hardcover, \$50.00



IN THIS FRESH and daring take on ancient apocalyptic books, Portier-Young reconstructs the historical events and key players from the year

167 B.C.E., a period of intense persecution for the people of Judea as Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempted to eradicate traditional Jewish religious practices. Her sophisticated treatment of resistance in early Judaism builds on a solid contextual foundation, arguing that the first Jewish apocalypses emerged as a literature of resistance to Hellenistic imperial rule. In particular, Portier-Young contends, the book of Daniel, the Apocalypse of Weeks, and the Book of Dreams were written to supply an oppressed people with a potent antidote to the destructive propaganda of the empire—renewing

their faith in the God of the covenant and answering state terror with radical visions of hope.

Nature and Altering It

By Allen Verhey,
Professor of Christian Ethics
Eerdmans, 2011

160 pages, Paperback, \$15.00



THIS TIMELY BOOK examines some of the cultural myths that have shaped the ways in which Western culture perceives “nature,” and then presents the biblical narrative as an alternative story that can shape a different ethos toward “nature and altering it.”

Living Without Enemies: Being Present in the Midst of Violence

By Samuel Wells, Dean of Duke Chapel and Research Professor of Christian Ethics, and Marcia A. Owen
InterVarsity Press, 2011
144 pages, Paperback, \$12.00



LIVING WITHOUT ENEMIES tells the story of a community's journey through four different dimensions of social engagement in response

to violence. After attempts to seek legislative solutions led nowhere, a religious coalition began holding prayer vigils for local victims of gun violence. It was then that Owen discovered the beauty of simply being present. Through her friendships with both victims and offenders, Owen learned that “being with” was precisely the opposite of violence—it was love. And to truly love others as God loves us meant living without enemies and taking small steps toward reconciliation. Owen and Wells offer deep insights into what it takes to overcome powerlessness, transcend fear, and engage in radical acceptance in our dangerous world. ■

THE DIVINITY ANNUAL FUND reached a record level of support for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2011. Some 2,072 donors contributed **\$610,306**, which will be used entirely for student financial aid in the new academic year.

THE STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION of Tacoma, Wash., has awarded grants to the Center for Reconciliation in the amount of \$407,411 over three years to fund an International Leadership Institute, to underwrite the African Great Lakes Initiative, and to support the ongoing CFR programs in the Divinity School. Part of the funding is a challenge-match opportunity to build additional support.

A total of \$234,082 in matching funds from the **MARY G. AND DONALD H. STANGE FINANCIAL AID INITIATIVE CHALLENGE FUND** has been added recently to qualified scholarships. Those which have benefited include the William and Patsy Willimon Scholarship, the Reconciliation Scholarship, and the York Family Scholarship.

A grant in the amount of \$163,800 from an anonymous fund managed by the **HOUSTON JEWISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION** will support the Wise Women and Community Health Project in South Sudan under the leadership of Peter J. Morris M.D. D’07. This is related to several Divinity School programs in partnership with the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

THE BONNIE JONES SHINNEMAN FUND has been established with a gift of \$50,000 from Susan Pendleton Jones D’83 and L. Gregory Jones D’85, G’88 of Chapel Hill, N.C., other Jones family members, and friends to honor Mrs. Shinneman—wife of the late Divinity School Dean Jameson Jones, mother of four including former Dean L. Gregory Jones and United Methodist Bishop Scott J. Jones, and grandmother of five including a Divinity School graduate and a current student—celebrating her lifelong work with missions and music. Mrs. Shinneman resides in Westminster, Colo., with her husband, Dean.

Generous commitments of \$45,000 each from **SUE AND NEIL WILLIAMS T’58, L’61**, of Atlanta, Ga., and from **JANE AND CHARLES ROYCE** of Greenwich, Conn., are providing vital scholarship assistance for Divinity Th.D. students working in Theology and the Arts with Jeremy Begbie, the Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology.

Thanks to a \$35,000 contribution from **MARION AND WENSELL GRABAREK** of Durham, N.C., the Divinity School has purchased a collection of royal subscription edition lithographs of the Holy Land from the 1840s by the renowned British artist, David Roberts. Their gift also enabled the renovation and lighting of the Divinity Faculty Conference Room where the Roberts materials are on permanent display.

Additional contributions of \$20,000 or more to scholarship endowments already established and fully funded in previous years continue to secured 1:2 matching funds through a grant from the **ARTHUR VINING DAVIS FOUNDATIONS** of Jacksonville, Fla. The most recent are the Sally McWhorter Spears and Marshall Turner Scholarship, which benefited from a generous bequest from Mrs. Spears, and the Jones-Pickens Family Scholarship given by Susan Pickens Jones WC’52 and L. Merritt Jones T’52 of Raleigh, N.C. . More matching funds remain to be claimed. ■

“ These very thoughtful gifts are deeply appreciated,” noted Dean Richard Hays, “as graduates and friends help to sustain our mission of preparing outstanding leadership for the church. Duke Divinity School depends upon outright contributions, particularly for the Divinity Annual Fund for student scholarships, as well as expendable endowment income to undergird the highest quality students, faculty, staff, and programs.”

IMAM ABDULLAH T. ANTEPLI gave a series of lectures on Christian-Muslim relations, Islam and Muslims in America, and religious peacemaking and interfaith dialogue in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Turkey. He was the keynote speaker for the annual Hartford Prayer Breakfast in Hartford, Conn., and a featured speaker at the Wild Goose Festival in Shakori Hills, N.C.



BETSY BARTON, SUSAN DUNLAP, and **JEANNE TWOHIG** (all from the Institute on Care at the End of Life) facilitated two workshops in April for pastors and lay members at the invitation of the Center for Congregations in Indiana. All participants received a copy of ICEOL's book, *The Unbroken Circle: A Toolkit for Congregations Around Illness, End of Life and Grief*.

JEREMY BEGBIE published "The Shape of Things to Come? Wright Amidst Emerging Ecclesiologies," in *Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N.T. Wright* (IVP Academic). His review article on John Butt's *Bach's Dialogue with Modernity: Perspectives on the Passions* (entitled "Pressing at the Boundaries of Modernity") appeared in the summer issue of *Christian Scholar's Review* (40.4, 2011). The June 19 issue of *Living Church* magazine featured "Minister of Music: An Interview with Jeremy Begbie." During the spring, Begbie lectured with live piano performance at a variety of churches and institutions across the United States, including Trinity School for Ministry (Ambridge, Penn.), Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Wake Forest, N.C.), Belmont University

(Nashville, Tenn.), and Christ Church, Greenwich, Conn. He led "The Sound of Hope," a study day organized by the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke, and presented a paper entitled "The Future of Theology Amidst the Arts: Why Reformed Protestants Need to Get Over Their Embarrassment" as part of the Faith and Learning Lecture Series at Wheaton College, Ill. In May he gave a solo piano recital at Wolfson College, Cambridge, England, and was keynote speaker at a Music and Worship Foundation residential weekend.

JASON BYASSEE spoke on Christology and allegory in Augustine at a class on spirituality at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and on the renewal of the small church at a conference in Perrysburg, Ohio, for the Detroit and Covenant synods of the Presbyterian Church (USA). He preached at Garden City United Methodist Church in Savannah, Ga., and at Center United Methodist Church in Snow Camp, N.C. He was the diocesan speaker for the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, and gave the address "Heaven on Earth?: The Future of Spiritual Interpretation" at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. Byassee published numerous articles: "Joining the Communion of Saints and Writing the Unwritable Word" (March 7), for *The Other Journal*; "Leighton Ford: Leadership Like an Aspen Tree" (April 11) and "An Argument in Stone" (May 24), at *Faith & Leadership*; "The Logic of Online Community" (June 16), a blog post on new media for *Sojourners*; and "Lessons for Large Churches" (June 16), in *United Methodist Reporter*. In addition to several book reviews, his article "The

Bishop's Dashboard" appeared in the May 31 issue of *Christian Century*.

CHARLES CAMPBELL lectured on "Preaching Lent and Easter" at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. He preached in a Lenten series at First UMC in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and at Duke Divinity School's Closing Convocation, Kirk of Kildare Presbyterian Church in Cary, N.C., and Christ UMC in Chapel Hill, N.C. He traveled to Uppsala, Sweden, to teach and preach at the Swedish Preaching Program and taught a D.Min. course for the Association of Theological Schools in Chicago, Ill. He served as plenary speaker at the Preaching Pastors' Retreat of the Sacramento Presbytery in Zephyr Cove, Nev., and taught a Sunday school class at Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, N.C.

KENNETH CARDER was named bishop in residence and Ruth W. and A. Morris Williams Professor Emeritus. He delivered the baccalaureate sermon at Emory and Henry College and preached as part of the Great Preacher Series at the Proctor Institute, which is sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund and held each year at the Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, Tenn. He preached at Munsey Memorial UMC in Johnson City, Tenn., as part of the Care for Creation celebration, and at Fairhaven UMC in Gaithersburg, Md., a racially diverse church formed by a merger when he was its student pastor in the 1960s. He also lectured on restorative justice and prison ministry at the Illinois Great Rivers Conference.

JACKSON CARROLL recently published a revised edition of his book

As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry (Cascade). The book focuses on the meaning and exercise of pastoral authority and leadership in today's challenging environment, and it introduces new case studies from pastors, including several Duke Divinity graduates.

STEPHEN CHAPMAN published "The Canon Debate: What It Is and Why It Matters," in the *Journal of Theological Interpretation* (4.2, Spring 2010). From April 30 to May 7 he traveled with a group from Duke Divinity School to Ahuachapán, El Salvador, where he taught a one-week introduction to the Old Testament for Methodist pastors from throughout Central America. On May 23 he spoke on "The Vocation of a Baptist Scholar" at Gardner-Webb University during the annual meeting of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion. June 4–5 he led the annual retreat for the Congregation at Duke Chapel, with remarks entitled "All Creatures Great and Small: Animals and God's Good News for Us."

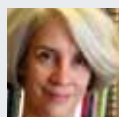
MARK CHAVES gave the plenary address, "Trends in American Religion," at the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland in Baltimore in May 2011. His book *American Religion: Contemporary Trends* was published in August by Princeton University Press.

SUSAN EASTMAN presented a paper on the Lord's Prayer for the 11th Building Bridges Seminar for Muslim-Christian Dialogue, convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Doha, Qatar, May 16–19. The topic of the seminar was "Prayer: Christian and Muslim Perspectives." In May she also

presented her research on "Imitation, Participation, and the Transformation of Identity in Paul's Practical Theology" to the Psychology and Religion Research Group at the University of Cambridge. In June she spoke on "Resurrection" for the Duke Youth Academy. In July Eastman assumed the responsibility of directing the Th.D. program of Duke Divinity School.

JAMES EFIRD was given a Distinguished Alum Award from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary on May 3.

MARY MCCLINTOCK FULKERSON



published "Forward," in *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (Continuum). She spoke

on the Pauli Murray Project for the Public Allies Group at North Carolina Central University and participated in "Good News at the Grassroots: A New Conversation on Theology & Community Organizing" at the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton, N.J. She presented "Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Eucharist" at the Ecclesiological Investigations Conference at the University of Dayton and "On Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church" at the Spring Institute for Lived Theology at the University of Virginia. She has been accepted for membership in the International Association of Practical Theology and as a participant in "The Moral Challenge of Poverty," a faculty project funded by the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University.

PAUL GRIFFITHS presented in New York City in December at a colloquy on the state of the Catholic doctrine

of marriage—particularly the Church's stance toward the marriage laws of secular states—sponsored by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. On March 19 he spoke at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, as part of the Wilken Colloquium, a project of the Center for Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue, on "Augustine and the Saeculum," and later addressed Augustine's significance for contemporary legal thought and practice at the sixth annual meeting of the Catholic Legal Scholars Conference, convened May 18 at the University of Oklahoma's College of Law in Norman, Okla. Griffiths also presented "How Do the Virtues Shape Intellectual Life at Catholic Universities Today?" at a symposium on intellect and virtue held at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in April and participated in the Colossian Forum on religion and science in Chicago, Ill., in June. He published "Tears and Weeping: An Augustinian View," in *Faith & Philosophy* (28.1, 2011), and "The Religious Alien," in *Oxford Handbook to Religious Diversity* (Oxford University Press). In June his theological commentary on the Song of Songs was published by Brazos Press.

EMMANUEL KATONGOLE published "Threatened with Resurrection: Martyrdom and Reconciliation in the World Church," in *Witness of the Body: The Past, Present, and Future of Christian Martyrdom* (Eerdmans). He presented "Africa Is Not Destined to Die? The Raising of Lazarus and the Sites for Theological Exploration and Engagement" at St. Mary's National Seminary in Kampala, Uganda, and served on the "Religion, Politics and Global Development" panel for the Duke Alumni Association conference,

“A World Together,” in February. He gave the Capps Lecture, “Daring to Invent the Future of Africa: Politics, Modernity and the Madness of Christian Faith,” at the University of Virginia. In April Katongole presented “Performing Catholicity: Archbishop John Baptist Odama and the Politics of Baptism in Northern Uganda” as the opening address for DePaul University’s Center for World Catholicism and gave “Justice and Peace: Hopes That Are the Wrong Size for This World” as the John Woolman Lecture at George Fox University. He also preached “Odd Bodies” at Capital Christian Fellowship Church in Washington, D.C.

ANDREW KECK was elected vice president of the American Theological Library Association’s board of directors. He also gave a paper at the ATLA Annual Conference in Chicago entitled “Second Harvest—Digitizing Church and Denominational Materials.”

RICHARD LISCHER was recently named associate dean for faculty development in the Divinity School. He lectured at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Naples, Fla., on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and preached in Duke Chapel on the anniversary of King’s birth. He appeared on Duke’s interactive online program, “Office Hours,” with the president of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP (and Divinity graduate), William Barber. He gave two lectures on religious autobiography at Christ Episcopal Church, Raleigh, N.C., and two on the passion and resurrection of Christ—“The Art of Losing” and “The Priority of Hope”—at the Episcopal Retreat Center in Kanuga, N.C. He also taught a senior seminar class in religion and

historiography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Lischer preached at the ordination of Divinity graduates Ann Sundberg, in Durham, N.C., and Kimberly Carlson, in Kendall Park, N.J. He preached the 50th anniversary sermon at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Virginia Beach, a congregation he served from 1974 to 1979. This summer he taught a week-long course, “Writing and the Pastoral Life,” at the Center for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Saint John’s University, Colledgeville, Minn.

RANDY MADDOX published “The Rule of Christian Faith, Practice, and Hope: John Wesley on the Bible,” in *Methodist Review* (2011), online at www.methodistreview.org. This is a longer version of the keynote lecture, “John Wesley on the Bible,” that he delivered at the 2011 Wesley Center Conference at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho, on Feb. 11. On March 28 he delivered a lecture, “‘Honoring Conference’: Wesleyan Reflection on the Dynamics of Theological Reflection,” at a conference in Atlanta, Ga., honoring Russell Richey’s retirement from Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

JOY MOORE participated in “Preparing Leaders for the Church in the 21st Century,” the National Hispanic/Latino(a) Leadership Development Consultation held April 11–13 at the Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas, and “Facing the Future: Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments in a Global Church,” a conference jointly convened by the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR)



“Preparing Leaders for the Church in the 21st Century,” the National Hispanic/Latino(a)

and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) May 15–18 in Los Angeles, Calif. She presented the keynote address for the South Carolina Annual Conference African American Clergywomen’s Luncheon and the Southwest Texas Annual Conference Methodist Renewal Movement Breakfast, and conducted a video seminar for the West Michigan Annual Conference. She was the World Methodist Conference Bible Study Leader at “For the Healing of the Nations,” held in Durban, South Africa. Moore preached during chapel services at Asbury University (Wilmore, Ky.) and Seattle Pacific University, and at Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church in San Diego, Calif., First Free Methodist Church in Seattle, Wash., and Duke University Chapel. She published “Preaching: Telling the Story in a Sound-Bite Culture,” in *Generation Rising* (Abingdon Press).

CHRIS RICE was the keynote speaker at the Charlotte District Leadership Conference of the United Methodist Church, which addressed the theme “Richness of Reconciliation: The Joy of Life in God’s Kingdom.” In March he led a Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope in Baltimore, Md., in association with New Song Community Church and Urban Ministries, and another in Richmond, Va., with the Richmond Hill retreat center and the Hope in the Cities program. During the Duke Summer Institute he hosted a gathering of Christian leaders from 11 countries to discuss forming a Global Reconciliation Network. Rice also preached the closing sermon at the 2011 Reunion of Korea Missionaries, Missionary Kids, and Friends at Lake Junalaska, N.C.

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

LESTER RUTH has been appointed research professor of Christian worship. His areas of expertise include the history of Christian worship (particularly early Methodism), creativity with the sacraments, and contemporary worship.

ALLEN VERHEY has published two books recently: *Nature and Altering It* (Eerdmans) and *Ephesians: A Theological Commentary* (Westminster John Knox), co-authored with Joe Harvard, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Durham, N.C.

LACEYE WARNER presented “Women, Witness, and Education in the Wesleyan/Methodist Tradition” at Greensboro College, N.C., and participated in the “UM Global Theological Education Summit” at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga. She gave the keynote, “Sustaining Ministry through Nurturing Vocation,” at a United Methodist District Event in Lake Louise, Mich., and co-presented “The Beloved Community:



Biblical and Theological Roots” with **WILLIE JENNINGS** at St. Luke’s UMC, Gethsemane Campus, in Houston, Texas.

SAM WELLS published *Living Without Enemies: Being Present in the Midst of Violence* (InterVarsity Press) with Marcia A. Owen. He lectured at Tennessee Wesleyan College and Greenville College and gave the Cammack Lectures at Campbell University. He led the Springtide Retreat for the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina and preached three sermons at the Virginia UMC Conference. In England he preached at Ely Cathedral, lectured to the clergy of Worcester Diocese, preached at the Chichester Cathedral at the launch of the Chichester Arts Festival, and spoke at the Renewing Preaching conference of the United Reformed Church in Cambridge.

NORMAN WIRZBA delivered the Parry Lectures at Plymouth Congregational Church in Fort Wayne,



Ind., and spoke on “Life on God’s Farm” at the Faith and Rural Life: Down to Earth Ministry conference at Mount Olive College, N.C. His book *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (Cambridge University Press) was released in June.

LUBA ZAKHAROV was a panelist in the session “Where Any Two Are Gathered: The Idea of Conferencing in Theological Librarianship” and participated in the planning of the session “Re-Envisioning the Theological Library: New Models of Service” for the Public Services Interest Group at the American Theological Library Association conference in Chicago, Ill. She also contributed an interview, “Lee Smith: A Lifetime of Paying Attention” (Feb. 1), to *Faith & Leadership* and presented “How Art Gives Theology a Voice” to the Adult Forum of St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church in Hillsborough, N.C. ■

CLASS NOTES

50s

GEORGE C. MEGILL D’52 is in his 17th year of work with the Kairos Prison Ministry at Central Prison in Raleigh, N.C. He was a long-time United Methodist missionary in Brazil.

M. JOLEE FRITZ ROBINSON D’54 has retired from her work as a social work supervisor in foster care in Silver Spring, Md. She previously worked with the American Friends Service Committee.

60s

S T KIMBROUGH JR. D’62 was guest lecturer for the theological forum at Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville, Tenn., on the theme of his new book, *The Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley: A Reader* (Cascade Books, 2011). He also presented his musical drama, “Sweet Singer,” on the life of Wesley; he was accompanied by his son, **TIMOTHY E. KIMBROUGH T’79, D’83**, who is dean of the Cathedral.

CHARLES M. SMITH T’62, D’65 has been presented the Distinguished Service Award by the North Carolina Council of Churches, celebrating his commitment to social justice and ecumenism. He is a retired pastor and administrator with the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and a Duke University trustee emeritus now residing in Washington, N.C.

DONALD D. DAVIS D’69 of Ocracoke, N.C., has published *Tales from a Free-Range Childhood* (J.F. Blair Publisher, 2011). He is a

professional storyteller with appearances over the years on National Public Radio, CNN, and *Nightline*.

70s

CHARLES W. BROCKWELL G'71 of Louisville, Ky., was a delegate to the World Methodist Conference in Durban, South Africa, in August 2011.

JAMES G. MENTZER G'72, D'99 is the new president of the United Methodist Foundation of New England based in Hampstead, N.H. A professional financial planner, Jim was previously the director of planned giving for the United Methodist Foundation in Garner, N.C. He has been a frequent writer for *DIVINITY* magazine.

DANIEL H. OTTAVIANO D'76, the pastor of Kelley Presbyterian Church in McDonough, Ga., and a certified U.S. Professional Tennis Association instructor, has launched a community outreach program that combines beginners' tennis clinics, Bible lessons, and youth activities.

RICHARD A. "DICK" DAILY D'78 retired after 36 years in United Methodist parish ministry and now working as a project consultant with Lynchburg Stained Glass Studio and as president of the Haiti Mission Foundation. He is also still coaching track. His wife, **ALICIA WHITE DAILY T'78**, is a professional artist/potter. They reside on a 54-acre horse farm in Goode, Va.

RONALD R. "RON" JONES D'78 and his wife, Lois, have been re-elected as co-presidents of ARMS, the Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses, in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. They live in White Stone, Va.

THOMAS A. "ANDY" LANGFORD III D'78 and his wife, **SALLY OVERBY LANGFORD D'79**, are the authors of *Living as United Methodist Christians: Our Story, Our Beliefs, Our Lives* (Abingdon Press, 2011). He is a pastor in Concord, N.C., and she is superintendent of the Salisbury District.

JAMES C. HOWELL D'79, G'84 is the author of *The Beauty of the Word: The Challenge and Wonder of Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011). He is the senior pastor at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, N.C. His and Lisa's daughter, **SARAH STOCKTON HOWELL T'08**, a singer and songwriter, is a current Divinity student.

80s

J. DAVID DAWSON D'82 is the new president of Earlham College in Richmond, Ind. He was a professor of religion and social responsibility and provost at Haverford College (Penn.) since 1987.

GILBERT W. FONGER D'82 has been named president and chief executive officer of Marklund, a nonprofit healthcare organization based in Geneva, Ill., providing quality care for individuals who have severe and profound developmental disabilities.

PRISCILLA POPE LEVISON D'83 and her husband, **JOHN R. LEVISON G'85**, were keynote speakers on "The Bible and Feminism" for the Engendered Lives Symposium at Trinity Western University's Gender Studies Institute in late March 2010. They serve on the faculty at Seattle Pacific University.

MICHAEL D. KURTZ D'84 recently authored his second book, *Crossings: Memoirs of a Mountain Medical Doctor* (iUniverse, 2010). The book chronicles his recently deceased father's nearly 50 years of medical service among the people of the Appalachian mountains. Michael is a United Methodist pastor in Oak Ridge, N.C.

MARK L. BARDEN D'88 was named Communicator of the Year by the United Methodist Association of Communicators at their annual meeting in San Francisco in October 2010. He directs communications for the Western North Carolina Conference based in Charlotte. He also published a 16-page photo spread in Catherine Ritch Guess's book, *Because He Lives* (CRM Books, 2010), about a Cambodian couple who fled the Khmer Rouge regime and returned years later as missionaries.

90s

W. MARK RALLS D'91 is the new senior minister at Centenary United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C. He was previously pastor at Asbury First United Methodist Church in Rochester, N.Y.

MARJORIE B. "MUFF" CARR D'92 was recently elected to the vestry at Christ Episcopal Church in Raleigh, N.C. She is a pediatrician.

BETH N. KREITZER G'94, G'00 writes an iPhone application titled "Faith & Action: Daily Inspiration and Deeds" for *Woman's Day* magazine. She teaches theology and history at Belmont Abbey College in Belmont, N.C.

KAREN KOONS HAYDEN D'96 of Columbia, Mo., is the director of pastoral excellence for the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church.

CATHY SMITH GILLIARD D'97 is the new senior minister at Park Avenue United Methodist Church, New York, N.Y. She is a member of the National Alumni Council for the Divinity School.

MICHAEL C. NATION D'97, an Episcopal priest, has been appointed by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey (SCI) as chaplain for the Lower Mississippi River and the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway. Founded in 1834, SCI ministers to personal, professional, and spiritual needs of mariners around the world.

ANDREW M. BELL T'98, D'08 returned in mid-2009 from a deployment to Afghanistan where he served as an intelligence officer with the U.S. Special Forces. He is now a Ph.D. student in political science at Duke. His wife, **BETSY JORDAN-BELL T'99**, is managing an international public health research project at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They reside in Durham, N.C.

ALBERT D. MOSLEY D'98 is the new president and dean of Gammon Theological Seminary, a United Methodist institutional partner of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Ga. He was previously the university chaplain at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md.

JAMES DAVISON "JASON"

BYASSEE D'99, G'05 is the new senior minister at Boone United Methodist Church in Boone, N.C. His wife, **JAYLYNN WARREN BYASSEE D'01**, is the pastor of the nearby Bethelview and Valle Crucis United Methodist Church parishes.

JOHN S. "JACK" MEWBORNE D'99 and his wife, Rebecca Cottingham, announce the Feb. 23, 2011, birth of John Everett Mewborne. Jack is vice president for operations at Sports Source Orthopedics in Apex, N.C.

00s

D. STEPHEN LEWIS JR. D'00 is the president-elect of the Fund for Theological Education, a national, ecumenical organization dedicated to identifying and supporting a new generation of talented, diverse Christian leaders who renew the church and change the world through vocations in pastoral ministry, theological scholarship, and community service. A former banker and Baptist pastor, Stephen has served as a program officer with FTE since 2003. A member of the Divinity School Board of Visitors, Stephen and his wife, Tamu, and their two daughters reside in Alpharetta, Ga.

THOMAS P. PERKINS D'00, his wife, Caroline, and their daughter, Veronica Jane, are celebrating the arrival of Delia Shannon Perkins on April 7, 2011. The Perkins reside in Macon, Ga., where Tommy is an associate minister at Mulberry Street United Methodist Church. Proud uncle and aunt are **GLENN KINKEN D'95** and **MARY PERKINS KINKEN D'95**, also United Methodist clergy.

CARMEN T. SKAGGS D'00 of Columbus, Ga., has published *Overtones of Opera in American Literature from Whitman to Wharton* (Louisiana State University Press, 2010), a review of a transformational time on the literary landscape. She teaches English at Columbus State University.

DONNA CLAYCOMB SOKOL D'00 has been appointed to the board of trustees of the Fund for Theological Education, an organization dedicated to supporting a new generation of Christian leaders. She is the senior pastor of Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., and former director of admissions at Duke Divinity School.

TERESSA MCCONNELL SIVERS D'01, pastor of First United Methodist Church, Oneonta, N.Y., was featured in *The Daily Star* newspaper for organizing a new ministry to the homeless.

KEN WALDEN D'02, pastor of First United Methodist Church, Lakewood, Calif., has earned the Ph.D. in practical theology with an emphasis on pastoral care and counseling from the Claremont School of Theology. He is an Air Force chaplain reservist.

LANECIA A. ROUSE D'03 is manager of the Art Project, Houston, which is an art therapeutic venture that works with homeless and transitional persons empowering them to become hope-filled painters and artisans. She is also the missions pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church working with The Bread of Life, Inc. She was formerly at Belmont United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tenn.

TRACEY WALSTON D'04 married Dan Daniel on Dec. 26, 2010. Tracey Walston Daniel is the director of congregational ministries at White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, N.C.

BENJAMIN L. WHITE D'04 has earned the Ph.D. in religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and accepted a

tenure-track faculty position in philosophy and religion at Clemson University in South Carolina.

RICHARD B. MCKINLEY D'05 of Scituate, Mass., has been named the new director of congregational development for the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church.

CHAD PULLINS D'07 and his wife, Amanda, are the parents of Charles Grayson Pullins who was born April 8, 2011. The Pullins reside in Fayetteville, N.C., where Chad is a United Methodist pastor.

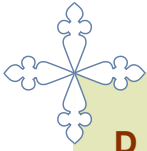
SARAH F. ARTHUR D'09 has published *At the Still Point: A Literary Guide to Prayer in Ordinary Time* (Paraclete Press, 2011). She is the author of six other books. She and her husband, **THOMAS R. ARTHUR D'08**, are the parents of Micah John. Tom is the pastor of Sycamore Creek Church in Lansing, Mich.

ANN E. SUNDBERG D'09 was ordained in February 2011 as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and called to serve Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chadron, Neb.

JESSICA W. WONG D'09 has been selected to receive a 2011 Fund for Theological Education (FTE) North American Doctoral Fellowship, a competitive national award supporting scholars from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups who plan to teach in theological schools. She is currently enrolled in the religion Ph.D. program at Duke, concentrating in theology.

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DEATHS

HENRY A. BIZZELL JR. T'49, D'52 died Feb. 21, 2011, in Newton Grove, N.C. He was a faithful pastor for more than 40 years, serving churches of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, and a longtime lover and singer of Sacred Harp music. He is survived by a daughter and other family members.

JAMES R. "JIMMIE" CROOK JR. T'50, D'54 died June 11, 2011, in Asheville, N.C. He served United Methodist parishes across the Florida Conference for 43 years before retiring to Waynesville, N.C., where for the next nine years he was resident staff minister for the Foundation for Evangelism. Jimmie was a past president of the Divinity School Alumni Association. He is survived by his wife, Jean Crook, two sons, three daughters, and 10 grandchildren.

HAROLD F. LEATHERMAN D'52 died March 1, 2011, in Lincolnton, N.C. A Navy veteran of World War II, he served in parish ministry for 60 years, beginning in the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. He was a dedicated Rotarian. Two daughters, a son, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren survive him.

JOSEPH M.G. WARNER D'52 died Oct. 7, 2010, in Irmo, S.C. He served United Methodist churches across the Western North Carolina Conference for 40 years. His wife, Carolyn Pope Warner, a son, a daughter, and seven grandchildren survive him.

SAMUEL J. WOMACK D'57, G'61 died Feb. 2, 2011, in Fayetteville, N.C. A decorated U.S. Army veteran from World War II and the Korean conflict, he was ordained in the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and served in many key faculty and administrative roles at Methodist College from its opening in 1960 until his retirement in 1984. He is survived by a daughter, a son, and two granddaughters.

H. RANDOLPH KIDD JR. D'63 died July 5, 2010, in Huntington, W.Va. He served churches across the West Virginia United Methodist Conference over several decades. He is survived by his wife, Mary "Katie" Kidd, two sons, and a grandson.

THOMAS JOON HWA AHN D'66 died Jan. 24, 2011, in Brookeville, Md. He was a United Methodist pastor who served Korean churches across the Baltimore-Washington Conference. His wife, Young "Sally" Ahn, two children, and four grandchildren survive him.

SYLVESTER L. SHANNON D'66, D'93 died June 7, 2011, in Alexandria, Va. He served with the U.S. Army Chaplain Service from 1966 to 1981, retiring with the rank of colonel. As the first African-American chaplain to graduate from the Command and General Staff College and the first to serve as senior pastor of the Pentagon pulpit, he conducted preaching missions all over the world and received the U.S. Army Legion of Merit Award for service in South Vietnam. After retiring from the army, Syl served Presbyterian Church (USA) pastorates in North Carolina, Virginia, Kansas, New York, and Washington, D.C. A former president of the Divinity School Alumni Association, Syl was also the recipient of the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award. His wife, Doris, two sons, a daughter, and five grandchildren survive him.

BENJAMIN F. DAVIS D'69 died April 27, 2011, in Lawndale, N.C. He had a long career in teaching and counseling and retired as director of counseling services and adjunct professor from Gardner-Webb University. An Air Force veteran and a Mason, Ben was also an avid Appalachian Trail hiker. His wife, Patsy Bridges Davis, and other family members survive him.

JOHN W. WILSON G'76 died Jan. 22, 2011, in Berwick, Australia. He was a retired bishop of the southern region of the Anglican diocese of Melbourne, a vice president of the Christian Missionary Society, author, and a founder in 1979 of Acorn Press Ltd. Australia.

He served as a parish priest in North Carolina, Tanzania, and Australia before his episcopal tenure. He is survived by two daughters.

GEORGE F. BLANCHARD D'77 died March 16, 2011, in Fayetteville, N.C. A U.S. Army paratrooper veteran, he served from Korea to Vietnam, and then over 36 years as a United Methodist minister in rural parishes. His wife of 59 years, Lillian Davis Blanchard, three sons, one daughter, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren survive him.

SUSAN P. FELDER OSTERBERG D'95 died May 30, 2011, in Yadkinville, N.C. She was a Christian educator and a loving wife and parent. Surviving Susan are her husband, **SCOTT A. OSTERBERG D'96**, three children, and other family, including her father, **CHARLES B. "BERT" FELDER D'66**.

CYNTHIA ANN BURRIS D'01 died Feb. 27, 2011, in Indio, Calif. She was a professor of theology at Anderson University in Anderson, Ind. She is survived by her parents and siblings.

RETA DOVER STECK D'05 died Dec. 7, 2010, in Concord, N.C. Her first career was in human resources, and she served as the human resources director for MedCath Corporation in Charlotte, N.C., over 10 years starting in 1995 as the company grew from 90 employees to more than 3,000. Following Divinity School she was ordained as an elder, and she served as associate pastor at Central United Methodist Church in Concord. She is survived by her husband, Todd Steck, and other family members. ■

A Defense of Christian Kitsch

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

THE TERM *kitsch* is usually intended as an insult. To call a painting or a musical composition or a piece of decorative art “kitschy” suggests that it’s crude, cheap, unsophisticated, unoriginal, mass-produced, and above all sentimental. It’s Norman Rockwell’s urchins, Soviet-era statues of heroic workers, angels and kittens (especially together), velvet Elvises, flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark, and Kylie Minogue. And, it’s the crucified coat hanger and the Sacred Heart you can see on this page.

Such things lack, above all else, nuance. They leave no doubt about how you should respond to them, and they don’t invite varied interpretations. You sigh with warm sadness at the sight of Jesus’ Sacred Heart, or a tear comes to your eye at the thought of hanging your coat on his crucified hands (you’ll probably need to be Catholic for the first and Protestant for the second). You’ll also likely feel, at least for a moment, pleased that you’re the kind of person able to respond in that way.

Kitsch is, by this account, trash; and you, to the extent that you like it, are trashy. You ought to be ashamed of yourself and go to some art appreciation classes at once.

So runs the anti-kitsch argument. It’s usually a finely tuned instrument of class hatred. Those who offer it are typically people who know what kitsch is, don’t like it, and want to educate others out of liking it. They’re rarely far from contempt for kitsch-lovers.

Christians ought to pause before accepting this view of kitsch. Christianity—Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox—has been and remains among the great generators of kitsch, and that’s because Christianity is and always has been a religion of peasants and proles. Most Christian art is and always has been kitsch: that’s what most Christians like. They—we—like it exactly because it’s nuance-free. The Stations of the Cross, present on the walls of every Catholic church, aren’t subtle and aren’t supposed to be. They’re there to conform you to the bloody sufferings of Christ. The American Protestant praise song (“Jesus is your boyfriend,” it seems usually to be saying, over and over again) is likewise



Above: “Coat Hanger (Jesus Welcomes You),” by Oscar Perez, www.pinkbubblebath.com
Left: “Sacred Heart,” from www.restoredtraditions.com

unsubtle, and supposed to be. It’s there to conform you to the love of Christ.

The connoisseur is the kitsch-lover’s opposite number. Connoisseurs cultivate a hushed, detached, analytic gaze; they’re acolytes of the aesthetic and the sublime, and they find kitsch either revolting or pathetic. Their gaze values subtlety, complexity, ambiguity, irony and (above all) novelty, and it is self-satisfied: connoisseurs are pleased to be people who like the rare and beautiful thing, and they tend toward contempt for those too crude, too uneducated, or too simple to be able do so. These

attitudes are very far from being acceptable to Christians.

But hasn’t Christianity also been the home of and stimulus for great, non-kitschy art? Haven’t Christians made beautiful as well as kitschy things? Aren’t there connoisseurs among Christians? Yes. And that can be celebrated, too, if you’re among the tiny minority of Christians to have a care for it. But let’s be clear that it’s not the main event. The main event in Christian art is kitsch, which is exactly as it should be. Among Christians, connoisseurs have much more to learn from kitsch-lovers than the other way around.

Can we then not make distinctions between the beautiful and the kitschy, between the Sacred Heart reproduced here and Rublev’s icons? Can we not say that Christian high art is more beautiful than what you’ll find in the souvenir stores of Lourdes or in the Precious Moments™ catalog? We can say this, and even argue for it; but it’s not easy (it raises some of the most difficult questions in the philosophy and theology of art), and attempting it is a hobby for the leisured few. The connoisseur is at the margins of the sacred page, if there at all; what kitsch-producers and kitsch-lovers do is, by contrast, at the center.

This is a fallen world. Kitsch-love and connoisseurship both have their deformities. But the former is much closer to Jesus’ beating heart than the latter. ■



“Carving Into Time: Firefly”

BY LUBA ZAKHAROV

MAKING ART is not just about practicing the skill of the imagination and the mind. It is about carving out the time, despite all that gets in the way, to go to that place where I can create. Even more, it's also about carving into time the memory of the sacred place where I am tethered to God.

This carving into time precedes the necessary stillness of listening to the whisper of God's breath. This involves bravery and the kind of faith that believes that remembering who I belong to and listening for the voice who calls me is as much a prayerful act as is saying words. Centering into this prayerful space reminds me of the generations of monks who entered

here while muttering the Psalms at daybreak and noon, with Vespers and Compline close behind. It is a sacred space full of remembering and forgetting, of listening and then obeying by literally taking the paintbrush in hand and following its lead as it (and I) sort through chaos in hopes of adding beauty to the cosmos. This purposeful choosing to be obedient to whatever work comes—a story, a painting, a song—is where the painting “Firefly” was born. The painting is more than a Firefly; it's also an act of light living in a dark place that threatens to overcome it. ■



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