A Christian Vision of Reconciliation: Embracing God's Gifts

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Reconciliation: The Heart of the Gospel

BY RICHARD B. HAYS

RECONCILIATION IS the heart of the gospel message: “In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself ... and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us” (2 Corinthians 5:19). And because reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel, it is also at the heart of the Divinity School’s mission.

Sometimes people think of this “message of reconciliation” exclusively as the offer of a way for human beings to get right with God. It is that, to be sure, but the range of its meaning is broader.

In ordinary Greek usage of Paul’s time, reconciliation was not a “religious” term. It did not refer to appeasing God by offering sacrifices, nor did it have anything to do with cleansing guilt or receiving divine pardon for sins. Rather, it was a word drawn from the sphere of politics; it referred to dispute resolution. In the ancient Hellenistic world, one could speak of the diplomatic reconciliation of warring nations or, in the sphere of personal relationships, the reconciliation of an estranged husband and wife (as in 1 Corinthians 7:11).

So when Paul uses the verb “reconcile” with God as its subject, he is declaring that God has launched a dramatic new diplomatic initiative to overcome human alienation and to establish new and peaceful relationships. This is clear in Romans 5, the other key passage where Paul uses this terminology: “While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10). God has unexpectedly taken the initiative to overcome our hostility and alienation from him and to restore us to peaceful relationship—not only with God but also with one another.

The church is the community of reconciled people who are now “entrusted” with the ambassadorial work of embodying and representing God’s reconciling work in the world. Thus, Duke Divinity School seeks to be a place that equips students and faculty alike for the hard work of making reconciliation visible.

The need for that hard work is painfully evident in our time. In the public sphere, our politics seem to have become uglier than ever. The popular media feed on resentment and polarization of opinion. We seem to be in danger of losing the art of civil discourse, as opposing factions withdraw to their corners and hurl angry slogans at one another over the airwaves and the Internet. The fracturing of our communities exposes many fault lines—divisions of ideology, gender, race, and nationality. And of course this same tendency infects not only our political culture but also the culture of the church.

In this poisoned, distrustful atmosphere, it is crucial for the church to recover and exemplify the politics of reconciliation: not just tolerance or compromise, but the deep reconciliation that comes from discovering our common identity as God’s people who participate in new creation as sharers in the divine mercy.

In this issue of DIVINITY magazine, you will find a sample of testimonies and reflections about the ways in which we are seeking to respond to God’s message of reconciliation and to become its ambassadors. One instrument of that ministry at Duke is the Center for Reconciliation, whose activities over the past few years have had a powerful impact. But as you will see in these pages, the work of reconciliation extends beyond any one institutional program or activity. The reconciling love of God radiates through our curriculum, our common worship, and the many acts of service in which members of our community are engaged. It informs our ministry to prisoners and our field education placements. It infuses our study of Scripture and theology. This is a place that takes seriously the call to be theologically and practically engaged in reconciliation with God’s creation, from the earth to our enemies. The fruits of this formation extend across the country and around the world.

What would it mean for a Divinity School to be a place where our imaginations can be reshaped to experience, embody, and share the message of reconciliation? That is what we are seeking to discover at Duke Divinity School. As you read this magazine, I hope you will join us on that journey of reflection and discovery.

RICHARD HAYS is the Dean and George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School.
One result of the wars, violence, divisions, and turbulence of our time has been the growing field of peace studies. This response is understandable: faced with the horror of conflict, is there anything we can do to change it? Traditional approaches include conflict management, conflict resolution, and peacekeeping. They are mostly focused on negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy. A later paradigm of conflict transformation went a step further to engage both the roots and the grassroots of divisions. The next development, peacebuilding, added the insight that the end of one conflict rarely marks its resolution, and it included concerns about how to make peace sustainable. Restorative justice provided another corrective by reframing the focus of justice from punishing offenders to restoring broken people and relationships.

In 2005, a leading voice in the field, John Paul Lederach, departed from the approach outlined in his own ground-breaking book, *Building Peace*. He declared that the idea of the “engineering of social change” is fundamentally flawed. “The evolution of becoming a profession, the orientation toward technique, and the management of process in conflict resolution and peacebuilding have overshadowed … the heart and soul of constructive change.” His new book, *The Moral Imagination*, argued for less emphasis on technique and skill and more on the “art and soul of building peace.”

So when we talk about reconciliation at the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School, which of these paradigms do we mean? Actually, none of these fully captures a Christian vision of reconciliation. If the God of Israel
changed the course of history by raising Jesus from the dead in order to reconcile a world of destructive conflicts back to himself—if the heart of what Christians profess to be the gospel is true—then reconciliation demands the Christian vision of power and life that transcends conflict resolution, peacebuilding, or even moral imagination. What Christians believe and who we worship make it possible to embody a fresh presence for peace and justice in the world.

THE NEW REALITY OF RECONCILIATION

A Christian vision of reconciliation is not just another program to help us get along with our neighbor. It is an invitation to enter a new reality that God has created, another vision of life where we are called to be God’s new creation. This reconciliation is grounded not in strategies, skills, or sociology, but in a story. The short version goes like this:

“All things are new. Therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view. ... So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:16–20).

Several crucial things emerge from this story:

• Healing conflict and divisions does not begin with us and our strategies. Reconciliation is God’s initiative, restoring the world to God’s intentions. Reconciliation is therefore a gift, participation with what God is already doing with the gifts God provides.
• God reconciled the world to himself, not just individuals. The scope of God’s reconciliation is personal, bodily, social, material, and cosmic.
• The “message” of reconciliation is far more radical and beautiful than a call to humanitarian tolerance. God’s “new creation” is a whole new dimension, a way of thinking and living that is different from our cultural assumptions.
• Reconciliation is not a theory, technique, or achievement. It is a journey. And this journey has not been entrusted to professionals and specialists. Reconciliation’s ambassadors are “anyone in Christ,” everyday
people. It is the ministry of the whole church. Because reconciliation is “in,” “through,” “for,” and “of” Christ, this journey is shaped by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

• Reconciliation is both “already” and “not yet.” The change is real and happening, but also yet to be fulfilled, for “the old” resists. It takes time to learn and live into God’s new reality.

This is the call to conversion into the way of Christ, a profound turning from an old place to a new place.

What does stepping into this story look like? And how does it shape a rich imagination and practice of reconciliation in the world? Four questions help us begin to see the heart of reconciliation as a fresh and exciting vision, each question pointing to a distinct gift that reconciliation makes available.

RECONCILIATION TOWARD WHAT?

The first and most important question concerns where reconciliation is headed. God’s gift of new creation provides this answer.

New creation is about interrupting the world’s brokenness with signs and foretastes of God’s reign. One example of this is the worldwide L’Arche movement, founded by Jean Vanier. L’Arche creates places where people who are disabled and people who are not disabled live together in households. Vanier said a few years ago during a visit to Duke Divinity School: “I want justice for the disabled in society; I want them to have access. But I also want more than that. I want to see the disabled and the not disabled eating at the same table together.”

The “toward what” of new creation redirects equality and diversity toward a telos, or goal, of a new future of life together. Reconciliation moves toward this future without divisions.

This vision of mutuality requires the church not only to bear witness to who the reconciling God is but also to become like Christ. Missiologist Andrew Walls drives at this when he writes in his article “The Ephesian Moment”: “The very height of Christ’s full stature is reached only by the coming together of the different cultural entities into the body of Christ. Only ‘together,’ not on our own, can we reach his full stature.”

Another powerful glimpse of new creation’s “toward what” is seen in the words of Martin Luther King Jr. during the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala. He insisted that a legal victory and the boycott were necessary. Yet these were not ends
in themselves. “The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends.”

For the church, the journey toward new creation requires this “type of spirit and this type of love” that is steeped in the cross and the resurrection. New creation means dying to one way of life and being raised into another. The beautiful, joyful shared life the New Testament calls koinonia is not possible without metanoia, a deep turning in the power of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE STORY OF WHERE WE ARE?
The modern confidence in our ability to fix the world asks, What’s the solution, and what do we do? But Christian reconciliation seeks a deeper understanding of the truth about where we are and how we came to be here. One gift God gives to help us answer this question is lament.

Praise and lament are the twin sisters of the Psalms, and they are always walking hand-in-hand. To lament is to learn to see, stand in, describe, and tell the truthful story about the brokenness around us and in us. To lament is to learn to refuse to be consoled by easy explanations or false hopes. Lament is bringing our analysis into conversation with God and learning to pray with urgency. Lament is the practice of becoming joined with others into God’s desires, a journey into seeing what God sees and feeling what God feels.

To learn to lament is also to protest against the way things are. Lament is the voice of Rachel at Ramah, weeping for her slaughtered children and refusing to be consoled (Matthew 2:18). Lament is Desmond Tutu crying out from the gravesite of a murdered apartheid victim, “God, we know you are going to win, but why are you taking so long?” In their book Living Without Enemies, Sam Wells and Marcia Owen tell the story of the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham. Every time someone is murdered in Durham, N.C., (about 25 people per year), the coalition holds a vigil at the site to pray and remember. The vigil is a way of saying, “Listen city! Listen churches! See what happened! This is not normal! This is not acceptable! God, we are here, crying out to you—come and intervene!”

These vigils of lament reveal a side of the city that’s often ignored by the privileged. They become a place of conversion that brings people together beyond “us” and “them” into a new community, a new “we.” Years of vigils have led to strangers becoming companions in a common mission. Eventually this birthed a “Reconciliation and Re-Entry” program, connecting victims, perpetrators, and those people no longer content to remain on the sidelines.

The coalition’s story reveals God’s powerful truth: the spine of lament is hope. The prophet Jeremiah warned about cheap and shallow versions of reconciliation, of those who love to say, “‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14). Shaped by the biblical discipline of lament, we see that hope requires that we truthfully name the brokenness, the pain, and the divisions.

WHAT DO HOPE AND PEACE LOOK LIKE?
Reconciliation depends on the hope that God is always doing something new in the world (Isaiah 43:19). And so Christian reconciliation also requires the discipline of learning to see and to name that hope (1 Peter 3:15). In order to do this, God has given us the gift of stories.

Scripture teems with stories of “a cloud of witnesses” for peace that illuminate what hope looks like: Abigail daring to confront David and turn him toward mercy for an enemy (1 Samuel 25); Jesus washing the feet of those about to betray and deny him (John 13); Peter agreeing to go to the house of a Roman military commander named Cornelius and learn there that the gospel includes reconciliation with Gentiles (Acts 10).

We are also surrounded by many witnesses and signs of hope in our world today. These stories confirm God is already breaking through the stubbornness to invite us into his revolution of love. In a post-9/11 world, at an epicenter of Christian-Muslim antagonism, the work of our friend Paulus Widjaja in Indonesia teaches us what this looks like. At the university where he teaches peace studies, Paulus insists that Christians and Muslims learn in the same classroom. He requires the Christian students to study the Koran, and the Muslim students to study the Bible, to enter into intense conversation by walking in one another’s shoes and learning to see the world from the standpoint of the other.

The dominant peace paradigms focus on tools for addressing conflict. But the vision of Christian reconciliation assumes that we are the ones that need to be worked on—and this happens in part through stories. This is both internal work within individuals and external work within communities, and reconciliation recognizes the inextricable relationship between communal and personal hope.

In his book Resurrection, Rowan Williams speaks of “communities of resurrection” that are “deliberately created in response to an overwhelm-
ing failure in the society,” communities such as “multi-racial ‘cells’ in a racist society” and the “giving-and-receiving of the L’Arche communities.” Communities of resurrection provide stories that correct and expand our imagination about new possibilities. We learn from them what it means to practice an incarnational reconciliation that is enmeshed in history, time, place, and structures. These are more than ministries—they are a means of grace, a school of conversion, a ground where people are being saved by dying to old identities and living into new ones.

WHY ME? WHY BOTHER?
This journey of reconciliation that God invites us into is beautiful, yet it is not sentimental. It is an invitation to be raised into new life with the one who “for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:2). Reconciliation calls us into the hard space between the “already” and “not yet.” The questions “Why me, why bother?” will confront us at critical times when the cost is too high, forgiveness too painful, the hurt too deep, the resistance too strong, Christ seemingly too far away.

This requires a way of living that names the truth—and the gift—that we are not God. Christian reconciliation keeps God’s action, not ours, at the center.

Desmond Tutu held together three truths usually forced apart: seriously engaging the truth of past and present captivities; the vision of a shared future between estranged enemies; and the truth that there is, as Tutu puts it, “no future without forgiveness.” We must take seriously the work of God behind Tutu’s witness. We have two favorite images of Bishop Tutu. One is from the cover of his biography, Rabble-Rouser for Peace, where Tutu is preaching before a large crowd. This is the public Tutu, the fiery prophet speaking truth to power, the Tutu people know. We have much to learn from this public Tutu about what reconciliation requires. Yet inside the book is another photo, one of the hidden Tutu. He is sitting quietly in the beautiful chapel he built in his own backyard, gazing at a cross of the crucified Jesus, worshipping and listening to God. This is the Tutu we don’t know.

We have just as much to learn from this hidden Tutu about what reconciliation means. There is no public Tutu without the hidden Tutu. He teaches us “there is need of only one thing” in this journey of reconciliation, seen in the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42): sitting at the feet of the Lord.

God’s gift of reconciliation is an invitation into restless advocacy for peace, justice, human rights, and an end to war and discrimination. But as Jean Vanier and Martin Luther King Jr. teach us, these are not the ultimate end. To sustain this struggle for a more just and peaceful world requires not only extravagant mercy and justice but also extravagant devotion.

This is why reconciliation requires worshipping communities. There is no work of conversion, no beloved community, no “new we,” without the central, prior action of the resurrected Jesus whose wounds did not disappear. The full equation of peace is not “us” and “them” becoming a new “we.” Rather, it is “us,” “them,” and God. Reconciliation is as big as engaging the great social divisions from America to Africa to Asia, as well as our rupture with all of God’s creation. Yet reconciliation is never bigger than the person nearest to you who is most difficult to love. The greatest force in learning to embrace and embody this new creation is not our love for God or for the world, but God’s love for us. This is why a Christian vision of reconciliation matters for each one of us.
When I graduated from Duke Divinity School in 1997, I was appointed to start a United Methodist Hispanic ministry in Durham. In order to gather support for the ministry, I was encouraged to visit and preach at churches all over the Durham area. My biblical text for those visits was Revelation 7:9: “After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.” I do not remember why it was that I settled on that text, but with the opportunity to reflect years later, I consider the choice providential. Every journey begins with a destination. Indeed, it is the destination that distinguishes a journey from a wandering. How fitting, then, to begin ministry at the end, to preach the gospel from back to front. The goal of my journey of ministry was ultimately not a Hispanic congregation, but that sanctified assembly out of every nation, tribe, people, and language. My destination was and is a mestizo community called heaven.

The Problem and Promise of Mestizaje

The Spanish word mestizo means “mixed.” It was used to describe the children born from the traumatic encounter between Spanish conquistadors and Amerindian women. The biological and cultural mixing that occurred was known as mestizaje. For the Amerindians, the mestizo was a living memorial to a lost way of life. For the Spanish, the mestizo represented an opportunity, a cultural and linguistic bridge that could be exploited to cement the conquest. In either case, the result was alienation; the mestizo did not really fit into either world.

In the 19th century, the concept of mestizaje was enthusiastically embraced by political elites in Latin America in their quest for national identities that would unite the diverse peoples inhabiting the continent. Expanding on its original usage, Simón Bolívar, the George Washington of South America, stretched the concept to include the contributions of Africans to the formation of the Americas. The nationalistic appropriation of mestizaje is on display at the Plaza of Tlatelolco in Mexico, the site of a climactic battle between the Spanish and the Aztecs. The monument to the event reads: “August 13, 1521: Heroically defended by Cuauhtémoc, Tlatelolco fell to the power of Hernán Cortés. It was neither a triumph nor a defeat. It was the painful birth of the mestizo nation that is the Mexico of today.”

Mestizaje became Latin America’s alternative to the vision in the United States of e pluribus unum. As Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos argued,
Mestizo Symphony of Heaven
The waters of baptism do not wash away ethnic particularity. We do not lose our accents in heaven, but our speech is refined so that we can join the mighty chorus out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation in praise of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The mestizo (not the Yankee) was the true American, the prototype of a new humanity, the forerunner of a cosmic race that would integrate all other races into a harmonious mixture. Yet for all the popularity of mestizaje in certain intellectual circles, the term and what it represents elicits resistance from others. Some fear that mestizaje will corrupt the existing ethnic stock. The title of Alfred Schultz’s 1908 treatise says it all: Race or Mongrel? A Brief History of the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Races of Earth: A Theory that the Fall of Nations Is Due to Intermarriage with Alien Stocks: A Demonstration that a Nation’s Strength Is Due to Racial Purity: A Prophecy that America Will Sink to Early Decay unless Immigration Is Rigorously Restricted. Fear of racial mixing has fueled much of the history of immigration policy in the United States. Such fears are by no means a thing of the past. Both Victor Davis Hanson’s 2003 book Mexifornia: A State of Becoming and Samuel Huntington’s 2004 book, Who Are We? The Challenge to America’s National Identity, warn readers of the dangers presented by Hispanic immigration for the integrity of the American story. For some, another word for whitening. Indeed, in the Latin American quest for national unity, mestizaje privileged whiteness and Europe to the detriment of other forms of identities. In the mind of the political elites of South America, typically the mestizo national identity was constituted by Spanish brains, brown land, and black bodies and identities are a patchwork stitched together from the corpses of their ancestors.

Others fear that mestizaje is simply another word for whitening. Indeed, in the Latin American quest for national unity, mestizaje privileged whiteness and Europe to the detriment of other forms of identities. In the mind of the political elites of South America, typically the mestizo national identity was constituted by Spanish brains, brown land, and black
remember its roots and rediscover its mission. If the destination of the Christian pilgrimage is a heaven of mestizos, then our life now should be anticipating that heaven. And yet, although our future is symphonic, we spend our present in section rehearsals.

Now section rehearsals are important. I remember my first section rehearsal. I first joined a choir when I attended college. I did not know anything about reading music or different parts, but after hearing me say a few words, the conductor instructed me to sit with the basses. I did fine during the warm-up exercises, but I became completely lost the moment the choir started singing in parts. Try as I might, all I could hear was the melody line carried by the soprano voices. After a little while, the conductor instructed the basses to go downstairs with the accompanist for a section rehearsal. In a small space where we could hear each other well and without the distraction of other voices, our part was played note by note until we learned it. When the section rehearsal was over we rejoined the rest of the choir and sang together. Thanks to the section rehearsal I found that I could now sing my part, but only by standing next to a strong bass who really knew the piece and by turning a deaf ear to the sopranos. The real proof that I had learned my part was when I left the security of my section and sat next to sopranos, altos, and tenors. I discovered that my singing was better in tune when I learned to listen to the other parts.

Much is required before we can leave the safety of our ethnic section rehearsals and come together in symphony. For many of us section rehearsals are all we have ever known. In the United States, one part has been dominant for so long that the other parts have only been preserved through section rehearsals. It is not easy to sit mixed together when one section blasts its part out of an exaggerated sense of importance. The truth is, it is hard to be in tune with Christ when we have tuned each other out for so long.

Needless to say, our ethnic section rehearsals usually started not in order to nourish a diversity of styles but in order to exclude other voices. At the origin of our section rehearsals lies sin; their ending requires confession and repentance—and end they must. The future is symphonic. Heaven is mestizo. Section rehearsals are at best provisional.

HOPE OF HEAVEN
For the past 10 years or so I have been part of a congregation that has sought to leave the safety of the section rehearsal for the challenge of symphony. At times it has seemed like a bit of heaven below—ethnically and economically diverse membership, multicultural and bilingual worship. At other times it has seemed like foolishness. Mestizaje too easily turns into a lazy celebration of diversity that short-circuits repentance and transformation. The cost of reconciliation is high, higher than I realized when I first started preaching about the destination of the Christian journey.

Why bother? Because in Christ we have a living hope. Hope pertains to a future good that is hard but possible to attain. The mestizo future that God promises us is very good; it is better than the little white rural chapel, the gentrified urban congregation, or the postmodern suburban multiplex. Yes, it is difficult to attain; the dangers of syncretism, ethnocentrism, or just old-fashioned Pelagianism are very real. And yet the goal is attainable with the divine assistance of Jesus. I close by citing a hymn written by Justo González for the 500th anniversary of the painful birth of the Americas; a hymn that expresses in verse the hope I have for the mestizo church.

From all four of earth’s faraway corners, flows together the blood of all races in this people who sing of their trials, in this people who cry of their faith; hardy blood that was brought by the Spanish, noble blood of the suffering Indian, blood of slaves who stood heavy oppression, all the blood that was bought on the cross.

From all four of earth’s faraway corners, from the flowering meadows of Cuba, from African coast and all Asia, from Borinquen, Quisqueya, Aztlan, God in secret has long been designing to this moment so blessed to bring us, bind us all to the same destination and a kingdom create of us all.

In all four of earth’s faraway corners sin is building embittering barriers; but our faith has no fear of such borders, we know justice and peace will prevail. To all four of earth’s faraway corners we’re a people who point to tomorrow, when the world, living sovereign and peaceful, is united in bonds of God’s love.
Just at the start of the sixth century B.C., the Judean exiles in Babylon received a letter from Jerusalem from the prophet Jeremiah. This must have generated tremendous excitement and anticipation within that desperate group, and we can imagine how eagerly they gathered to hear the messenger read aloud the letter that had traveled for some months over hundreds of miles to bring them the Word of the Lord. Here is some of what Jeremiah wrote:

“Thus says the LORD of Hosts, God of Israel, to the whole exiled community that I exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and settle down, and plant gardens, and eat their fruit. Take wives and have sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. And seek the well-being, the shalom of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray for it to the LORD, for with its shalom lies your own shalom. … For thus says the LORD: When seventy years have passed in Babylon, I will take note of you and fulfill for you my promise to bring you back to this place. For I myself know the thoughts that I am thinking concerning you—an utterance of the LORD—thoughts of shalom, well-being, and not of evil, to give you a future of hope” (Jeremiah 29:4–7, 10–11).

Surely this is not the message the exiles were hoping for. Look again: “Settle down in Babylon; make yourselves content. You will live and die in that place. So seek the welfare of the Babylonians, pray for them, because your welfare is linked inextricably with theirs.” We can imagine what the exiles must have said after hearing that letter from home: “This is prophetic encouragement? What kind of phony hope is this? Jeremiah has sold out to the Babylonians.” “We always knew he was a Babylonian collaborator,” some would have said. “We exiles are the true Judeans. We may be stuck in Babylon, but we’ll make no peace with our captivity. We may be here a long time—God forbid—but if so, then we will live by our seething hatred for every living Babylonian.” “Happy are those who...
take their little ones and dash them against the rocks!” someone shouted, and it became a chant, a spiritual of sorts; we know that enraged song as Psalm 137.

Abiding hatred for Judah’s Babylonian captors is well represented in the Bible and even within the book of Jeremiah. True, Jeremiah speaks a reconciling word in his letter to the exiles; he envisions Babylonians and Judeans prospering together. But reconciliation is not the final word in the book of Jeremiah, which concludes with two long chapters (chapters 50 and 51) of rage against Babylon, prophetic poetry declaring that Babylon is doomed by God, utterly damned and marked for destruction. So in the book of Jeremiah as we have it, the commitment to abiding hatred of Judah’s worst enemy trumps the great vision of reconciliation in chapter 29. And just in case that book is not enough, the book of Revelation celebrates Babylon’s fall all over again, although this time “Babylon” is a stand-in for Judah’s new Great Enemy, Rome: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!” (Revelation 18:2).

What we see in the Bible is what we see in every religious community, in every place in the church, and also in our own hearts: a profound tension between a vision of reconciliation on the one hand, and committed hatred on the other. This is the crucial thing for us to see: folks have good reasons for both reconciliation and hatred, even good religious reasons for both. That is why the tension is so deep and often seems impossible to resolve. The religious imperative for reconciliation is obvious enough to us, I suppose: “Love your neighbor.” But hatred of the neighbor near or far may be equally a matter of religious principle; the operative principle is Divine Justice. From a sixth-century Judean perspective, the strong denunciation of Babylon is an appeal for God’s just judgment on those who wreaked havoc on the holy city of Jerusalem, toppled the eternal throne of David, and exiled the king, along with thousands of skilled workers, teachers, musicians, poets, prophets, priests, and community organizers. Why would Judeans not believe that God hated the powerful and vicious enemy who had inflicted on them a forced march across the top of the burning Syrian desert to labor camps in Babylon? So we have two alternative messages
about the Babylonians, both of which seemed to come from God: on the one hand, seek shalom for Babylon; on the other, wicked, godless Babylon will be destroyed. It seems that even the prophet Jeremiah was torn between those two messages.

The problem for people of faith has not changed in the 2,600 years since Jeremiah spoke and wrote. We are still torn, in our churches and in our hearts, between the impulse toward reconciliation with our enemies and the conviction that God’s justice must be upheld. American Christians are still torn between the two in the long wake of 9/11; Christians are torn between the two every time we fight a war. I dare say that many of us feel that tension also in intimate situations: how do we relate to someone who is profoundly destructive, in our family, in the church, in the neighborhood? Do we keep reaching out, keep trying to work with her, or at a certain point do we cut our losses and treat her as “a Gentile and a tax-collector” (Matthew 18:17)?

It should be clear by now that Scripture does not settle our dilemma once and for all. It does not suggest that we can in every case make community with the Babylonian oppressor so we may prosper together. But if the Bible does not deliver us from tension, nonetheless it does offer guidance for living in tension, a kind of guidance that was not available even to the prophet Jeremiah. In calling the exiles to seek God’s peace for Babylon, Jeremiah was writing something completely unprecedented. No one in recorded history had ever said, as Jeremiah did to the exiles: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). Obviously many in his time thought that was absurd, and maybe the prophet himself wondered if he had gone off the deep end.

But six centuries later, the last and greatest of the prophets said that very same thing: “Love your enemies, and

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pray for them”—and when Jesus said it a second time, something changed forever. What changed is not that Christians are now disposed to love our enemies and pray for them assiduously, simply because Jesus said we should. With few exceptions, we feel just the same about our enemies as the Judeans felt about the Babylonians.

What has changed is that we can no longer call it absurd to seek their shalom; we cannot dismiss the prophet of reconciliation as possessed of an overheated imagination or having sold out to the oppressor. Because now Jesus has spoken, and we know for sure that seeking shalom for our enemies is what God expects of us. That is what a “future of hope” (Jeremiah 29:11) looks like in God’s own white-hot imagination: people praying without ceasing for their enemies, appealing to God for the godless, putting all their hope in God’s ability to craft shalom—well-being, peace, true prosperity—to make shalom in places where the only raw materials visible are human misery, the suffering of the planet, and profound spiritual poverty.

We dare not say that God cannot turn enmity and present misery to shalom, because often enough God has done it. There is hard historical evidence of this, including from the Judean community in Babylon. In time Babylonian Jews lived in relative peace alongside their former captors; the archaeological data suggests that Jews intermarried with Babylonians and did business with them. The Jewish community survived and even thrived in Babylon for more than 2,500 years, until the last century. A thousand years after Jeremiah, it produced the Talmud, to this day the greatest written expression of Jewish faith and culture apart from the Bible itself. The prophet’s vision for the exiles, “a future of hope,” was fulfilled, perhaps far beyond his own imagining.

As I understand it, our work is to attend seriously to God’s heated imagination. It takes courage to let that shape your life. What wild visions—extravagant, demanding, yet not absurd—occupy God this day concerning each of us and our communities? If any one of us is able to pose that question, and stand still long enough to hear an answer, that will be because we have managed to encourage each other to do something bold and otherwise unimaginable. It will be because we have sought to strengthen each other, as Jeremiah tried to strengthen the exiles, in order to stand and hear what God imagines. “For I myself know the thoughts that I am thinking concerning you—an utterance of the LORD—thoughts of shalom and not of evil, to give you a future of hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Just this is the beginning of the church’s ministry of reconciliation, and thus our task for this day and this lifetime: to stand together in a listening place, an envisioning place, strengthening each other to share God’s thoughts of shalom and move together into a future of hope.

Jesus has spoken, and we know for sure that seeking shalom for our enemies is what God expects of us.
Dirt, Bodies, and Food: Our reconciliation with creation

by Norman Wirzba
Some of my friends, only half-jokingly, refer to me as “the theologian of dirt.” I quite like that description. It puts me in a good location and in good company, particularly if we remember the scene in Genesis 2 where God is in the garden with hands in the dirt, holding the soil so close as to breathe the warmth of life into it. What a shocking and profound picture of God. What a contrast to other ancient pictures of the divine as aloof or violent. God the gardener loves soil, enriches and waters it, and blesses its growth so that our years might be crowned with bounty (Psalm 65). As a matter of ecological order, if God didn’t love soil, along with all the plants and animals that depend on it, God couldn’t love you or me—because there would be no you or me to love. We come out of the ground, depend on it daily for nurture and support, and will eventually return to it. The day God ceases to cherish and breathe life into the soil is also the day we all cease to exist (Psalm 104).

Scripture is clear that we are supposed to share in God’s love for the ground. Adam is created from out of the soil (adamah) and then is promptly told to take care of it (Genesis 2:15). Human identity and vocation center on the work of gardening, because it is through gardening that we learn who we are (dependent on and nurtured by soil), where we are (in a vulnerable world in need of protection and care), and what the goal of our living is (sharing God’s delight for a garden-world that is beautifully and wonderfully made). By becoming gardeners we are given the opportunity to participate in—and thus learn to appreciate, even if only minimally—God’s attentive, patient, weeding, and watering ways with the world. The “garden of delight”—for this is what the Garden of Eden literally means—is our first home. It is the place where we discover God’s creating love made fragrant, tactile, audible, visible, and delectable.

Today’s widespread, systematic destruction of forests, fields, wetlands, and waters indicates that we have refused, sometimes even held in contempt, our gardening responsibilities. We have denied our origin in and dependence on soil. We have forgotten that soil matters deeply to God, and that it is the medium through which God daily shows love for creatures. In what can be described as a fit of ecological amnesia and plain stupidity—or perhaps rebellion against our condition of exile—we allow soil to erode or be poisoned to death by the heavy use of synthetic fertilizers and increasingly toxic herbicides. Rather than living in sympathetic and harmonious relation with the earth and its creatures, we have often opted for neglect, exploitation, and war.

How this has come to be makes for a very complex story. One crucial and highly influential strand centers on a centuries-old disdain for materiality and embodiment. According to this world-view, what really matters about us is our souls. Embodied life, along with the dependence on soil and fellow creatures such embodiment always presupposes, is morally inferior as we make our way to a spiritual, otherworldly heaven. The philosophers Pythagoras and Socrates taught this view in their concept of dualism. For them, death is a happy moment because it marks the moment when the soul is finally freed from the pain, imperfection, and decrepitude of the body. It marks the beginning of the immortal soul’s eternal life of bliss.

Christians have long been tempted by various versions of dualism. They have been attracted to the idea that we can finally be rid of the fragility, vulnerability, and the mess—the dirtiness!—of life when we flee this old world for the bliss of heaven. But Socrates’ teaching is profoundly anti-Christian. Not only does it violate God’s original and continuing affirmation of the goodness of the created material order, it also runs directly counter to the Christian affirmation of the resurrection of the body. Even if we do not know all the implications of the teaching of resurrection, as Christians we are not permitted to hold that salvation amounts to either flight or escape from embodiment or our creation home. God did not become incarnate in the body of Jesus Christ in order to then condemn bodies and leave them behind. He came to heal, touch, and feed them; and in doing so he leads the whole of creation into redeemed, reconciled, and resurrection life.
God’s hospitality is comprehensive. It can be seen at all levels of eating, beginning with the hospitable soil that welcomes organic and mineral matter, transforming death into fresh fertility. It includes the care of all the creatures in the garden, making room for them to grow into strong and healthy beings that can be a source of nurture and help.

No passage in Scripture describes this as well as the early Christian hymn in Colossians 1:15–20 that describes Jesus as the icon (eikon) of God. Here we are told “all things in heaven and on earth … visible and invisible,” were created in him, through him, and for him. All the creatures of the world “hold together” only because Jesus, who is “the fullness (pleroma) of God,” is intimately present to every creature. Literally nothing—no sparrow, no blade of grass, no earthworm, no patch of ground—escapes God’s notice or concern. And then, in words that ought to shock us, we are told that God is reconciling “to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”

For the early Christian community to speak in this radical way they had to have seen from the beginning that God’s redemptive plan cannot stop with the rescue, and then ethereal flight, of a few individual souls. God’s redemption extends to the whole of material creation because all of it has been loved since time began. God does not ever abandon the bodies of creatures because to do so would amount to a reversal and rejection of the divine love that brought them into being in the first place. It is for this reason that Scripture ends with a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and with the New Jerusalem descending to earth, because “the home of God is among mortals” (Revelation 21:3). How disappointing—and frustrating—it will be for the Socratic soul to think it has arrived in heaven by going up and away, only to discover that the true God has come down and here, bringing heaven—the very life and love of God—to earth!

Of course it is one thing to say that God’s reconciling and redeeming ways include the land and all its creatures. It is quite another to figure out what this teaching might practically mean. What does the cross have to say about peace and reconciliation with the land?

One helpful way to get some clarity on it, I think, is to turn our attention to food: what it is, how we get it, and how we eat it. Food joins us to each other, the world, and God. It is the great connector, for as the Cambridge dean William Ralph Inge once put it, “The whole of nature … is a conjugation of the verb to eat, in the active and in the passive.”

For many people, food registers primarily as fuel to get us through the day. Neither where it comes from nor how it came to be engages our attention or inspires our love. The average American eater spends relatively little time producing or preparing it. How else should we account for the countless drive-thru lines at fast food restaurants and the thousands of microwaveable, precooked food items available in grocery stores? In contexts like these, food is a commodity that we want to get as cheaply, conveniently, and copiously as possible.

This is not how food appears in Scripture. Here we find that food is one of God’s basic ways of nurturing creatures into life and of providing for their most basic needs. It is God’s love made delectable. In Jesus it is God’s love made into the bread that nurtures us into the life of heaven (John 6). This is why the hospitable sharing of food is so important. When we share food we share life and love. When we welcome and feed others in need we also welcome and feed Jesus (Matthew 25). We participate in and extend to others the hospitality that God first and always shows to us.

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tures in the garden, making room for them to grow into strong and healthy beings that can be a source of nurture and help. Reading the prophets, we see that it demands the transformation of economic and political systems that are unjust in their treatment of farmers, workers, and eaters. And it challenges the social expectations that keep eaters segregated from each other or that neatly divide eaters into the welcome and the unwelcome. We need to remember that Jesus was known and despised by religious leaders as the fellow who “welcomes sinners and eats with them” (Luke 15:2).

Relatively little in the way we eat today reflects or extends this divine hospitality. To be sure, we are producing more “cheap” calories than the world has ever seen. But these calories are being provided at a very high cost: the destruction of agricultural land, degradation of water, poisoning of plants, abuse of domestic animals, exploitation of agricultural and food service workers, and ill-health of our own bodies. Remembering that God’s word is to be preached to every living creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23), what would it look like to be good news in contexts like these?

For Christians the nurture of gospel life happens as we are fed at the eucharistic table. Coming to this table with open hands, we receive and eat the bread of life and drink the cup of salvation so that Jesus can enter into the stomach and heart of our being and transform the eating we do. Christ takes over from the inside so that the growing, harvesting, preparing, sharing, and cleaning up of food can reflect God’s hospitable love for all creatures. Eucharistic eating is not confined to a table in a church building. It includes every kitchen and dining room table, and by implication every garden, field, forest, and watershed.

It is not easy to eat in a just, merciful, and hospitable manner, especially when we see how industrial patterns of production and consumption depend upon and encourage exploitation, anxiety, and ingratitude. Moreover, personal eating habits are very difficult to change (making it all the more important that we be merciful with each other). But churches can bear witness to a better way, joining with Jesus and becoming active participants in God’s soil and food business. Some Christians I know are already doing remarkable things: they are setting up community gardens in abandoned lots, training young people in the arts of gardening, and teaching them to share the gifts of God with others in need. Some are tearing up parking lots or turning over lawns so that church grounds can grow flowers and food. Others are partnering with local farmers to provide fresh, nutritious food to those who do not have enough to eat. The scientists and farmers at ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization) are developing innovative ways to grow crops in a world with less soil and water, growing poverty, and rising temperatures.

Eating has never simply been about the filling of a gustatory hole. It is about sharing in God’s feeding, cherishing, reconciling, and hospitable ways with the world. As my students often like to say, “Food is fellowship!” When we eat well we enjoy a taste of the communion life that God wants for us and has been calling us to since the beginning of time. In this mundane but also (potentially) delectable daily act we are invited to bear witness to the wide scope of God’s reconciliation.
Reconciliation:
A Journey of Personal Transformation
BY TOLU SOSANYA

IF ANYONE WOULD have asked if I were interested in the field of reconciliation when I enrolled at Duke Divinity School, I would have said, “NO.” In my mind, reconciliation meant dealing with issues of race and economics, and while I could recall experiences with racism and thought addressing the matter was important, I was at the Divinity School to prepare for youth ministry. I did not want to involve myself with intense racial discussions when I had a rigorous academic road ahead of me. Besides, I thought that growing up in Portland, Ore. gave me enough exposure to diversity to handle race relations on an individual basis. I had resolved that my role in bringing about justice would be through ensuring that African-American youth in urban settings received quality education and affirmation of their God-given gifts, talents, and worth. On my way to this ministry, however, I found myself on a journey of reconciliation, which has required my own personal transformation.

My first field education placement in the summer of 2008 was at New Song in Baltimore, Md., through the Center for Reconciliation (CFR). This community had a 25-year history of modeling...
justice through its church and ministries of education, healthcare, affordable housing, employment assistance, and drug recovery for women. Excited about the opportunity to witness this work, I had not considered the possibility that my passion for urban ministry might be met with less enthusiasm from the community itself. I had overlooked my own need to receive acceptance from the community. I assumed that I would automatically be embraced for sharing the same racial background as most of the community, but that was not so. I felt apprehension from some of the community members; they were cordial, but seemed suspicious of my authenticity. How I spoke and presented myself separated me from others in the community. Trust was something I had to earn. This opened my eyes to the reality of class divides (whether perceived or actual) among blacks and the need for healing and reconciliation.

Despite my slowness in forming relationships, being at New Song was an ideal location for me to learn about education in an urban setting and how the church could facilitate academic and spiritual growth for urban youth. When I was given the chance to return to New Song for a second summer, I took it—but this time with the intention of focusing more on relationships. I prayed, “God, help me to see more of your presence.” I wanted to see God’s glory in every aspect of my experience. Having this disposition helped me learn how the “ministry of presence” plays a powerful role in the work of reconciliation. I found that making myself available to spend time with people meant more to them than my passion for working in urban ministry. By the end of my second summer at New Song I felt confident that genuine relationships had been formed. The contrast between relationships in my first and second summers helped me to understand how much relationships matter in the development and maintenance of reconciliation ministries.

After graduation from Duke Divinity School I was offered the opportunity to return to New Song for a full-time position as director of education for the newly formed College & Career Program (CCP). This program was created to serve New Song Academy (K–8) graduates with academic assistance through high school and to aid them in the college admissions process. Because I have a passion for youth development and had some established history with the community, I saw New Song as the perfect location to fulfill my calling. I knew that I would continue to experience the ministry of reconciliation by deepening relationships with members of the community, but I was not prepared to have to work through reconciliation issues on my job—this time involving race and age. Focused on the task of running a program, I once again neglected the need to develop a genuine relationship with my co-worker. The tensions that arose from a lack of relationship also bred feelings of distrust.

We had differences not only in race and age but also in work styles and perspectives on the community, the students, and the program. I approached my work through the lens and training of CFR, which drew from Christian Community Development Association. My co-worker’s lack of adherence to these pedagogies was offensive to me. I could not understand how one could enter into ministry at a place like New Song and not seek to understand the social and political strongholds that plague urban communities.

But even now, I am reminded of my same apprehensions regarding matters of race and economics during my first year of divinity school. I had to learn to examine my heart and refrain from judgmental attitudes that assumed the worst of my co-worker’s intentions. Through this relationship I have been challenged to put my hope in the work of the cross and receive the proclamation that in the cross hostility is put to death (Ephesians 2:16).

Reconciliation is a journey of the heart; it requires us to expose our places of vulnerability and brokenness with the hope of seeing God’s power transform and equip our lives for effective ministry. The reluctance I had to discuss matters of race and economics during the beginning of my divinity school career reflected unresolved issues in my heart, and maybe even a degree of fear about wrestling with my own brokenness and the brokenness of the body of Christ. Yet after being at New Song I see that brokenness in relationships exists in many different forms. We cannot limit the work of reconciliation to social agendas, but must put our trust in God’s Word, which assures us that those in Christ are reconciled to God. With Christ’s presence we can overcome the tensions and divides; through Christ’s power all brokenness is healed; and with Christ’s love we are able to forgive and trust. The process of receiving and embracing these truths has been my transforming journey of reconciliation.
A “Child of Exile” Pursues Reconciliation
An interview with Abi Riak

In November 2011 Abikök “Abi” Riak became manager of operations and programs at the Center for Reconciliation. Riak spent the previous 13 years with World Vision International, where she was the director of external engagement for South Sudan and regional peace-building coordinator for the Asia Pacific region. We spoke to her about her background, her new role, and why reconciliation matters to her.

Tell us about your family. Where did you grow up?
I have a very unique family. My dad is from South Sudan, and my mom is from Jamaica. My dad left South Sudan when he was 15 as a refugee. He walked for seven days to central Africa, and he was in a refugee camp for quite some time. Mennonite missionaries arranged for him to go to college in the United States, where he met my mom at Bluffton College in Ohio.

They got married, had my brother, and then moved to Jamaica after they graduated. I was born in Jamaica and spent the first five years of my life there, and then we moved to Northern California so my parents could do their graduate work at Stanford. When I was 14, we moved to Kenya and I went to high school there.

Where is your name from? Does it have a specific meaning?
Abikök is a South Sudanese name from the Moinjeng tribe, and it means “a child born in exile.” In many ways it’s been a testament to my life, trying to find my place in a world that’s not my own.

What was it like going to South Sudan after the war ended?
Growing up, my parents were very committed to peace in South Sudan. Every conversation around the dinner table at night was about South Sudan. So to actually be there in January 2011 to vote in the referendum for independence, that was amazing and powerful. To be there in July to see the birth of this new baby nation and the flag being raised was overwhelming. To be able to be there with family and friends who were once in exile but were now home was a true gift. I don’t think anybody actually believed it would really happen. You know in your heart that you’re working for a better good, but the work itself and the challenges can be so exhausting. To see the fruit of your
labor and sacrifice is truly life changing. It’s inspirational.

After decades of civil war and displacement, has peace lived up to expectations?

During the war, my mom worked with Sudanese refugee women in Nairobi. They created an organization that was focused on working together and building community. At the time, so many of the language, ethnic, and religious divisions that would have separated them before washed away. As refugees, they needed to come together.

In South Sudan now, peace has opened up amazing opportunities, but it’s also created a downside where the expectations of the average South Sudanese are so high. There’s starting to be a sense of disillusionment about independence and peace. There are increasingly high levels of corruption, and sadly there’s increasing division between ethnic groups.

That’s one of the reasons that I’m excited about working with the Center for Reconciliation. A key focus is on creating the space for Christian leaders to live into the ministry of reconciliation; to lead from a place where their identity in Christ through baptism is stronger and more powerful than their identity through tribe or ethnic background.

Why did you decide to come to the Center for Reconciliation?

Simply stated, I wanted to be a better Christian. Over the past 13 years working with a very large corporation, I forgot who I was. I forgot about those core beliefs that had always guided me. Most importantly, I forgot how central reconciliation is to the gospel. I appreciate the uniqueness of Christianity in offering a space to think through and envision something different and something better than the world that we live in now. Working with the Center for Reconciliation is an opportunity to rediscover myself. An old friend and mentor introduced me to Chris Rice. We started talking about the Center, where it was organizationally, and what it was looking to accomplish over the next few years. It was a really good match in terms of what the Center was looking for and the skill sets that I have.

What are some of the ways you’ll help the Center?

Over time I’ve become increasingly interested in how organizations work, especially Christian organizations, which I think tend to focus a lot on relationships and not so much on the sound business processes, procedures, and policies that help an organization be effective independent of an individual or individuals. Don’t get me wrong, individuals are the key to any organization’s success. But without good systems and processes, those individuals find it increasingly more difficult to be effective.

Over the past seven years, the Center has been a dynamic entrepreneurial organization, and the Dean has made it clear that he wants to see the Center more integrated into the DNA of the Divinity School. To do that, the Center has to grow organizationally in terms of financial management, budgeting, fundraising, and communications. My role will include working with different entities within the Divinity School to integrate the Center more fully into the school. We will also work more closely with students and faculty.

How does the theology of reconciliation inspire your work here in a way that’s different from your work at World Vision?

When I first started working in international development, my focus was on working with individuals and communities to build peace. And it was very much a skills-based approach: Do this training, follow these steps, and you will have a better community. There was very little focus on the eternal aspect of a relationship with God. Reconciliation is a journey; it’s not a project. You can’t tick things off and say, “I’ve done this, and I’ve done that, and now I’m reconciled.”

Theology matters. It’s another thing that I really appreciate about the Center—the deeply theological approach to reconciliation. It’s not just this touchy-feely “Can’t we all just get along?” approach. It’s going back to the Bible and seeing what’s in Scripture that leads us toward reconciliation. Before, I looked at reconciliation as an end in itself. Now I’m thinking, “Reconciliation toward what?”

To see more of the video interview with Abi Riak, including her discussion about the Center for Reconciliation’s work with the African Great Lakes Initiative and the work of reconciliation that still needs to be done in South Sudan, see www.divinity.duke.edu/abiriak
ALL SOCIETIES DEVELOP procedures, processes, and institutions in response to violations of behavioral norms. The United States, shares designed to apprehend, adjudicate, and correct those who violate norms that have been codified into laws.

Underlying this criminal justice system is the premise that justice and correction demand retribution and punishment. The high incarceration rate and use of state-performed executions signify the fundamental role of retribution and punishment as the preferred response to wrongdoing in American society. Today approximately 2.3 million people are incarcerated in the United States, the highest in the world; one in nine adults is under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

Increasingly questions are being raised as to the effectiveness of the current criminal justice system. The disparities in sentencing driven by race and class raise serious questions about the fairness of the current system. The excessive cost of incarceration is forcing both state and federal governments to consider alternatives to imprisonment. The high recidivism rate indicates that “correctional institutions” seldom actually provide correction, but rather intensify isolation and alienation. The focus on punishment of offenders routinely leaves victims of crime unattended and even further victimized.

What is needed is a justice system that includes the offender, the victim, and the community with the goal of reconciliation, restoration, and transformation. The restorative justice movement offers an alternative lens through which to view crime and punishment. The focus shifts from merely punishing the offender for violations against the state to repairing the harm inflicted on the victim, the offender, and the community.

In Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment, Christopher Marshall provides a coherent and comprehensive theological critique of the current reliance on retribution and offers an alternative approach grounded in the New Testament. Marshall’s analysis uses both his knowledge as a New Testament scholar and also his experience as a restorative justice facilitator. The result is a compelling biblical and theological foundation for a restorative means of dealing with crime and wrongdoing, though his arguments are sometimes unnecessarily repetitive.

Forgiveness involves taking seriously the harm done and entering into the painful process of repentance and reconciliation within the context of covenant community.

While faith communities have supported and provided theological rationale for the system of retribution and punishment, they have also spawned the restorative justice movement. Marshall lets the reader know up front that he considers the Christian gospel as formative in understanding and practicing justice: “My premise is that the first Christians experienced in Christ and lived out in their faith communities an understanding of justice as a power that heals, restores, and reconciles rather than hurts, punishes, and kills, and that their reality ought to shape and direct a Christian contribution to the criminal justice debate today.”

Justice from a biblical perspective is shaped by God’s vision and action in history and supremely demonstrated in Jesus Christ. This justice is expressed through God’s saving action to create shalom within a covenantal community. Therefore, biblical justice involves covenant, redemptive action, and community empowered by and directed toward a vision of shalom. As Marshall affirms, “The justice of God is not primarily or normatively a retributive justice or a distributive justice but a restorative and reconstructive justice, a saving action by God that recreates shalom and makes things right.”

Marshall helpfully explores the role of punishment in justice and efforts in behalf of restoration. He writes, “The New Testament writers see a valid place for punishment in the administration of justice, though in nearly every case it serves a predominantly redemptive rather than retributive purpose.”
This kind of “restorative punishment” serves to demonstrate a society’s moral boundaries and to call forth repentance and reparation. Punishments employed as part of the early church’s discipline were inflicted out of equal concern for the integrity of the community and the spiritual welfare of the offender, not out of vengeance or as a means of inflicting pain on the offender.

While there is a proper role for “good punishment,” Marshall concurs with James Logan that many punishments employed in the current penal system, such as long periods of incarceration, are inherently destructive rather than restorative. Capital punishment is incompatible with a vision of redemption and reconciliation and contradicts basic foundational principles of restorative justice.

Marshall concludes that forgiveness is the consummation of justice, and it is grounded in God’s forgiveness as expressed in Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is not superficial; it is not permitting wrongs to happen with impunity or forgetting the past. Rather, forgiveness involves taking seriously the harm done and entering into the painful process of repentance and reconciliation within the context of covenant community. It is God’s forgiveness as revealed in Jesus Christ that we are to imitate.

While Marshall focuses on the criminal justice system, his analysis provides a strong biblical and theological lens through which to view all wrongdoing and violations of personal and societal norms. Beyond Retribution merits careful consideration by all those committed to reconciliation and transformation deeply grounded in justice and forgiveness.
RECONCILERS WEEKEND

The fifth annual Reconcilers Weekend (formerly Teaching Communities Week) was held at Duke Divinity School Sept. 16–17, 2011. This conference on reconciliation is designed specifically for congregational leaders, seminarians, and others who love the church. The theme was “The Future is Mestizo: Communities of New Creation at the Borders of Separation,” with featured speakers Father Virgilio Elizondo and Kit Danley.

Mestizo people—those of mixed ancestry, language, and culture—often experience rejection and oppression by both parent cultures. This weekend conference asked what it means to follow a Savior who was considered a child of an unknown father and who broke down identity barriers and crossed segregated borders. Participants explored how this mestizo Jesus is calling us into a new human family based on love of God and love of neighbor.

Reconcilers Weekend is an annual event that brings a leading practitioner and a leading theologian, each dedicated to a life of Christian reconciliation, to share their stories and wisdom at Duke Divinity School. This conference was sponsored by the Center for Reconciliation and the Hispanic House of Studies. For more information or to see videos from Reconcilers Weekend, see www.divinity.duke.edu/reconcilers

THE GRACE OF PRISON MINISTRY

Sister Helen Prejean, a nun in the Congregation of St. Joseph who gained national attention for her book Dead Man Walking, spoke to students and faculty at Duke Divinity School on the effects of the death penalty in America. The events were sponsored by the Certificate in Prison Studies. Her visit to Duke Dec. 1–4 came days after Pope Benedict XVI announced his support for those seeking to end the death penalty around the world.

Students and community members attended a Dec. 1 screening of the 1996 film Dead Man Walking, which was adapted from Prejean’s book. She then answered questions from the audience for another hour. On Dec. 2, Prejean spoke to students from a class on prison ministry taught by Douglas Campbell, associate professor of New Testament and director of prison studies. Prejean devotes herself full time to ministering to those in prison, including serving as a witness to executions so that prisoners will know that someone is there who does not want to see them dead.

While at Duke Prejean also participated in a vigil against the death penalty hosted at Trinity United Methodist Church in Durham Dec. 2 and preached at Duke Chapel Dec. 4.

SECOND ANNUAL AFRICAN GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE INSTITUTE

Participants met at Ggaba National Seminary in Kampala, Uganda, Jan. 15–21 to explore together the implications of Christian leadership for reconciliation in turbulent times. The 130 attendees represented many denominations, including Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal, from the countries of South Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the United States.

The institute featured plenary discussions on new creation, lament, hope, leadership, and spirituality. Panels, seminars, feedback sessions, and worship services provided opportunities for these leaders to share their experiences of struggle and hope and to eat, laugh, cry, pray, and listen together. This year’s institute included a cohort of health care leaders from East Africa who came to explore ways that Christian reconciliation can include the care for broken bodies as well as wounded souls.

The Great Lakes Initiative Institute is co-hosted by Duke Divinity School’s Center for Reconciliation, Africa Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries, Mennonite Central Committee, and World Vision International. To read more, see www.divinity.duke.edu/gli
PILGRIMAGE OF PAIN AND HOPE

The Duke Center for Reconciliation led a five-day immersion experience March 3–8, 2012, to urban communities striving to live as God’s ambassadors of reconciliation. The group of Duke Divinity School students and staff shared meals and stories with members of the Sandtown neighborhood in Baltimore, Md., and the Richmond Hill community in Richmond, Va.

The Center for Reconciliation leads a pilgrimage each spring as part of its mission to deepen theological and classroom learning at the Divinity School with wisdom from community leaders who have lifelong experience in reconciliation.

ENCUESTRO

Encuentro is a summer program available to Methodist students, faculty, staff, and pastors. It seeks to broaden relationships between Duke Divinity School and the Methodist Church in Mexico. This year, the program includes stops along the U.S.-Mexico border, from Tijuana to Nogales, Ariz.

The group will have conversations with experts on immigration and visit ministries on both sides of the border who work with immigrants. Participants will worship and share stories and meals with Mexican hosts. Encuentro is sponsored by the Hispanic House of Studies and the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative and will take place June 2–7.

SUMMER INSTITUTE: THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION IN A DIVIDED WORLD

Rooted in a Christian vision and hosted by the Center for Reconciliation, this five-day intensive institute serves to nourish, renew, and deepen the capacities of Christian leaders in the ministry of reconciliation, justice, and peace. This community of learning welcomes participants from across the country and around the world to experience intimate interaction with leading practitioners and theologians. Teaching, prayer, worship, and shared meals help to facilitate wrestling with real contexts and challenges so that participants have the opportunity to reflect on their own vocation and setting.

The next Summer Institute will be held May 28–June 2, 2012. To see a list of speakers and sessions, visit www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/summer-institute

TEACHING COMMUNITIES INTERNSHIPS

This summer internship program provides ministry formation through 10-week summer field education for M.Div. students at Duke Divinity School. Through this experience in a leading community of reconciliation practice, students can make connections between their Divinity School education and hope-filled communities that minister in the midst of social and economic brokenness. The communities who partner in this internship program include Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C.; L’Arche Daybreak Community in Richmond Hill, Ontario; the L’Arche Community of Greater Washington, D.C.; New Song Ministries and Church in Baltimore, Md.; Neighborhood Ministries in Phoenix, Ariz.; and LaSalle Street Church in Chicago, Ill.

Duke Divinity School interns join fully in the life of these communities, living, working, learning, worshipping, and leading under the supervision of seasoned practitioners. The Teaching Communities program is a collaboration between the Center for Reconciliation and the Office of Field Education.
A Company of Women Preachers: Baptist Prophetesses in Seventeenth-Century England
Edited by Curtis Freeman, Research Professor of Theology and Director of Baptist House of Studies
Baylor University Press, 2011
750 pages, Hardcover, $69.95

IN THE EARLY 17th century, Baptist women began to speak their minds. Through their prophetic writings, these women came to exercise considerable influence and authority among the early churches. When Baptists became more institutionalized later in the century, the egalitarian distinctiveness dissipated and women’s voices again, for a long period, were silenced. In A Company of Women Preachers, Curtis Freeman collects and presents a critical edition of these prophetic women’s texts, retrieving their voices so that their messages and contributions to the tradition may once again be recognized.

The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology
Edited by Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Professor of Theology, and Sheila Briggs
Oxford University Press, 2012
600 pages, Hardcover, $150.00

THIS INNOVATIVE volume highlights the relevance of globalization and the insights of gender studies and religious studies for feminist theology. Beginning with a discussion of the position of the discipline at the turn of the 21st century, the handbook seeks to present an inclusive account of feminist theology in the early 21st century that acknowledges the reflection of women on religion beyond the global North and its forms of Christianity. Globalization is taken as the central theme, as the foremost characteristic of the context in which we do feminist theology today. The volume traces the impacts of globalization on gender and religion in specific geographical contexts, describing the implications for feminist theological thinking. A final section explores the changing contents of the field, moving toward new models of theology, distinct from both the structure and language of traditional Christian systematic theology and the forms of secular feminism.

Taking the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective
By David Steinmetz, Amos Ragan Keams Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the History of Christianity
Oxford University Press, 2011
200 pages, Paperback, $21.95

THIS BOOK ARGUES in a series of engagingly written essays that remembering the past is essential for men and women who want to function effectively in the present—for without some knowledge of their own past, neither individuals nor institutions know where they have been or where they are going. The book illustrates its thesis with tough-minded examples from the church’s life and thought, ranging from more abstract problems like the theoretical role of historical criticism to such painfully concrete issues as the commandment of Jesus to forgive unforgivable wrongs.

The Christian Art of Dying: Learning from Jesus
By Allen Verhey, Professor of Christian Ethics
Eerdmans, 2011
423 pages, Paperback, $30.00

A RENOWNED ethicist who himself faced death during a recent life-threatening illness, Allen Verhey in The Christian Art of Dying sets out to recapture dying from the medical world. Seeking to counter the medicalization of death that is so prevalent today, Verhey revisits the 15th-century Ars Morirendi, an illustrated spiritual self-help manual on “the art of dying.” Finding much wisdom in that little book but rejecting its Stoic and Platonic worldview, Verhey uncovers in the biblical accounts of Jesus’ death a truly helpful paradigm for dying well and faithfully. The book closes with attention to the practices of the church that can enable dying well and caring well for the dying.
What Episcopalians Believe: An Introduction
By Samuel Wells, Dean of Duke Chapel and Research Professor of Christian Ethics
Morehouse Publishing, 2011
112 pages, Paperback, $14.00

EPISCOPAL IDENTITY tends to focus on history and worship, and sometimes on ethics—but “cradle” and new Episcopalians—plus seekers—will benefit from having a brief, accessible summary of the Christian faith as seen through an Episcopal lens. There are two underlying convictions behind the book: first, that ecumenism is at the heart of the Episcopal faith. Episcopalians are well placed to offer themselves as a place of convergence between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and even between Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. Secondly, in the current conflicts both within the Episcopal Church and between the Episcopal Church and some of its Anglican Communion partners, there is no fundamental difference in doctrine. The book is an attempt to portray what all parties have in common.

IN BRIEF, to-the-point chapters, preacher and ethicist Samuel Wells lucidly and compassionately explores topics Christians are often reluctant to face—death, weakness, power, difference, faith, and living life to the full—and offers down-to-earth guidance in facing common fears in the life of faith. Encouraging readers to look deep into the questions of their lives and deep into the heart of God, this book provides an intellectually rigorous but scripturally rooted and theologically accessible engagement with questions of faith.

Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis
By Lauren Winner, Assistant Professor of Christian Spirituality
HarperOne, 2012
272 pages, Hardcover, $24.99

In this book Winner describes how experiences of loss and failure unexpectedly slam her into a wall of doubt and spiritual despair. Witty, relatable, and fiercely honest, she lays bare her experience of what she calls the “middle” of the spiritual life. She explores why—in the midst of the overwhelming anxiety, loneliness, and boredom of her deepest questioning about where (or if) God is—the Christian story still explains who she is better than any other story she’s ever known. Still is an absorbing meditation combining literary grace with spiritual wisdom.

Making Peace with the Land: God’s Call to Reconcile with Creation
By Norman Wirzba, Research Professor of Theology, Ecology, and Rural Life, and Fred Bahnson
IVP Books, 2012
160 pages, Paperback, $15.00

THIS BOOK declares that in Christ God reconciles all bodies into a peaceful, life-promoting relationship with one another. Because human beings are incarnated in material, bodily existence, we are necessarily interdependent with plants and animals, land and sea, heaven and earth. The good news is that redemption is cosmic, with implications for agriculture and ecology, from farm to dinner table. Bahnson and Wirzba describe communities that model cooperative practices of relational life, with local food production, eucharistic eating, and delight in God’s provision. Reconciling with the land is a rich framework for a new way of life.
ESTHER ACOLATSE published “All in the Family: Recasting Religious Pluralism through African Contextuality” in Religion, Diversity and Conflict, edited by Ed Foley (Lit Verlag, 2011); and “Christian Divorce Counseling in West Africa: Seeking Wholeness through Reformed Theology and Jungian Dreamwork” in Journal of Pastoral Theology. She gave two lectures, “Raising Emotionally Healthy Kids in Diaspora” and “Rooted in Heritage: Expanding Horizons” at the February Lecture Series at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church in Gaithersburg, Md. Her preaching engagements include “A Line in the Sand” at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church on Feb. 11–12. As a co-instructor for the Duke Law course Customary Law, Statutory Law, and Spousal Property Rights in Ghana, she traveled to Ghana with students for field work in March.

ABDULLAH ANTEPLI moderated several sessions and gave talks on Islamophobia, Christian-Muslim relations, and religious peacemaking at the fourth annual United Nations Alliance of Civilizations forum, held Dec. 11–13 in Doha, Qatar.

DAVID ARCUS was a panelist and a performer for the Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative Conference on Improvisation in November. On Jan. 16 he presented a workshop in Raleigh, N.C., on service playing and improvisation to the Central Carolina Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

JEREMY BEGBIE delivered the Gray Lectures at the Divinity School’s annual Convocation & Pastors’ School, exploring the twin themes of joy and lament in Christ through a range of recorded and performed music. At Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City, he spoke on “A World Made New: The Art of Resurrection and the Resurrection of Art.” Begbie also took part in the Athens and Jerusalem Seminar at Indiana Wesleyan University, including a campus-wide interview discussion event on his 2007 book Resounding Truth (Baker Academic). In January, his essay “Confidence and Anxiety in Elgar’s Dream of Gerontius” was published in Music and Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain, edited by Martin Clarke (Ashgate, 2012), and his article “The Holy Spirit at Work in the Arts: Learning from George Herbert” appeared in Interpretation. His other publications include the foreword to Restoring the Shamed by Robin Stockitt (Cascade, 2012) and a review of Earthly Visions: Theology and the Challenges of Art by Tim Gorringe, published in The Tablet.

CHARLES L. CAMPBELL was appointed Professor Extraordinary at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, lectured at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, and taught at the Course of Study for Central American pastors in Ahauchapan, El Salvador. He preached at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Ga.; Federal Correctional Complex in Butner, N.C.; Church of the Reconciliation in Chapel Hill, N.C.; the installation of the Presbyterian campus minister at Duke University; and the noon Good Friday service in Duke Chapel.


KENNETH CARDER wrote a review of four books on restorative justice for the January–March issue of Christian Reflection. He contributed a chapter entitled “Our United Methodist Heritage” to the 2012 United Methodist Women’s Mission Study on Poverty and the article “Recovering our Methodist Heritage in Prisons” to the Winter issue of UM Men Magazine. At the Appalachian Ministry Network meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C., in October he delivered two keynote addresses on the theme “Rethink Appalachia.” He preached at Salem United Methodist Church in Irmo, S.C., Nov. 20.


MARK CHAVES received an $850,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment to launch the third wave of the National Congregations Study (NCS), a survey of a nationally representative sample of religious congregations from across the religious spectrum, which will be fielded in 2012. He delivered an invited lecture and led an all-day workshop, “Contributing to Knowledge in the Sociology of Religion,” for the Institut de Sciences Sociales des Religions Contemporaines and the Swiss Foundation for Research in Social Sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, in December. In April Chaves gave the plenary address, “Religious Trends in the United States,” at the University of Chicago Divinity School’s 2012 Conference on Ministry. His book American Religion: Contemporary Trends (Princeton, 2011) was named the best book on “Christianity and Culture” by Christianity Today.


PAUL GRIFFITHS published “Which Are the Words of Scripture?” in Theological Studies and “From Curiosity to Studiousness: Catechizing the Appetite for Knowledge” in Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith and Learning, edited by David I. Smith and James K.A. Smith (Eerdmans, 2011). He served as respondent to Peter Oehs and Eleonore Stump at an American Academy of Religion/Society of Christian Philosophers panel on scriptural hermeneutics at the annual meeting in Washington, D.C., earlier that month, in Chapel Hill, N.C., he delivered the lecture “John Paul II on Art and Artists” to the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh. He also spoke on John Paul II’s Theology of the Body at the annual diocesan convocation; Gerard Manley Hopkins and Flannery O’Connor at the Lilly Foundation’s Graduate Fellows Program in Indianapolis, Ind.; and the current state of play in the academic study of religion at a National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar for college teachers, held in Charlottesville, Va.

STEPHEN GUNTER presented a plenary address, “The Absence of Arminius in Wesleyan-Arminian Theology,” at “Rethinking Arminius: Wesleyan and Reformed Theology for the Church Today,” a conference of the Wesleyan Center, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, Feb. 24–25. He also led Bible studies on “Sin and Sanctification in Romans 5–8” at the...

RICHARD HAYS delivered a paper “Critical Response to Feldmeier and Spieckermann, God of the Living” and participated in a panel on Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage (edited by B.R. Gaventa and R.B. Hays) in dialogue with Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus (edited by D. Bock and R. Webb) at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in November. He presented the Chuen King Lectures at Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Oct. 17–21, and six lectures on “Israel’s Scriptures through the Eyes of the Gospel Writers” Jan. 16–26 as part of the Gunning Lectures at the University of Edinburgh School of Divinity. Hays preached at Park Avenue United Methodist Church, New York City, in March, and at the Maundy Thursday service at King’s College, Cambridge, England.

RICHARD HEITZENRATER published two articles in Church History: “Inventing Church History,” his presidential address at the 2011 annual meeting of the American Society of Church History in Boston; and “One Hundred Years of Church History,” presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. He received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Duke Divinity School at its Convocation & Pastors’ School in October, where he also presented a workshop on “The Arts and Christianity.”

STANLEY HAUERWAS delivered “Sacrificing the Sacrifices of War” at West Virginia Wesleyan College (Buckhannon), the Carondelet Lecture at Fontbonne University (St. Louis, Mo.), and “Suffering Presence: Twenty-five Years Later” at the Lupina Center for Spirituality, Healthcare and Ethics at Regis College (Toronto) this past fall. He also was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Geneva and installed as Canon Theologian at Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville, Tenn. In February he presented the Staley Lecture at Campbell University (Buies Creek, N.C.) and spoke at Saint Louis University. He delivered “Suffering Presence: Twenty-five Years Later” as the Christ and Culture Lecture at Canisius College, Buffalo, in March, and “America’s God” as part of the Richard O. and Cindy F. Connell Lecture Series at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa., in April.


WARREN KINGHORN co-presented (with Allen Verhey) a paper on “Medicine in Apocalyptic Context” at a Practice and Profession Symposium at the University of Chicago in November; participated that same month in a plenary panel on “Exploring the Moral Landscape: Military, Theological, and Academic Intersections” at the After the Yellow Ribbon conference organized by Duke Divinity School students; and in January presented the paper “Combat Trauma and Moral Fragmentation: A Theological Analysis of ‘Moral Injury’” at the Society of Christian Ethics annual meeting, Washington, D.C.

RICHARD LISCHER is serving as appointed chair of the search committee for a new dean of Duke Chapel. He interviewed novelist Marilyne Robinson during Convocation & Pastors’ School at Duke Divinity School.

ROGER LOYD was elected by the Durham City Council to serve as a member of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee, which advises the city and county governments about housing and community development needs. He will serve a three-year term, continuing his involvement in issues related to homelessness in Durham.


G. SUJIN PAK published a review article surveying four books on the history of Christmas in the “Christmas and Epiphany” special issue of Christian Reflection. She presented a paper entitled “Lutheran and Reformed Readings of Prophecy in the Sixteenth Century: Interpretation of the Minor Prophets and Confessional Identity” at the annual conference of the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference, held Oct. 28 in Fort Worth, Texas. In April she gave a paper on the history of the interpretation of Genesis 1 as part of the “Biblical Faith in an Age of Science” colloquium at North Carolina State University, and she taught the introductory church history course for the Spiritual Leadership Institute for Volunteers of America.
ANATEA PORTIER-YOUNG contributed entries on “Daniel,” “1 Maccabees,” and “2 Maccabees” to the recently published Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics (Baker Academic, 2011). At the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in November, she gave the panel presentation “The Future of Biblical Studies: What Research Still Needs to Be Done?” and responded to a panel review of her book Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism. In February she participated in the Old Testament Colloquium at St. John’s University and presented a paper for the Yale Workshop in Ancient Judaism entitled “Politics and Poetics of Space, Place, and Mobility in Daniel: Apocalypticism and Spatial Imagination.” She began a two-year term as consulter on the executive board of the Catholic Biblical Association in the fall, and on Jan. 1 began a term as an associate editor of the Catholic Biblical Quarterly.

DAVID STEINMETZ, since retiring from Duke in 2009, has held the MacDonald Chair in History at Emory University and received the Distinguished Career Award from the American Society of Church History (2010). He has also revised and added five new chapters to Calvin in Context (Oxford, 2010) and published a new volume of essays, Taking the Long View (Oxford, 2011).

ALLEN VERHEY published The Christian Art of Dying: Learning from Jesus (Eerdmans, 2011) and served as associate editor for Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics (Baker Academic, 2011). In November he presented an invited paper on the Ars Moriendi at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theology Society in San Francisco. At the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting he chaired a session on Scripture and ethics and contributed to a panel discussion of the Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics. He presented again on the Ars Moriendi to the Interest Group on Bioethics at the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics in January, where he was also elected vice president of the Society. In March he delivered “Would Jesus Get Tenure?” at the Davidson College Conference on Reformed Theology and Education, and “Remembering Jesus: Scripture, Christian Community, and the Moral Life” at the Christian Life Commission Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT’s book Embracing Purpose: Essays on God, the World and the Church, first issued in a British edition by Epworth Press, was released by Wipf and Stock in a U.S. edition in April.

In July and August 2011 he traveled to South Africa, where he taught at Stellenbosch University and participated in the meetings of the World Methodist Council and Conference in Durban. He also attended the congress of the international Societas Liturgica in Reims, France.

LACEYE WARNER preached “Advent Jubilee” at The Village Chapel of Bald Head Island, N.C., on Dec. 11, and served as Bible study leader for the 2012 Perkins School of Youth Ministry, held Jan. 9–12 at First UMC Richardson, Texas.

SAMUEL WELLS published What Episcopalians Believe: An Introduction (Church Publishing) and its English twin, What Anglicans Believe: An Introduction (SCM/Canterbury Press), in October, and Be Not Afraid (Brazos) in November. His book God’s Companions: Reimagining Christian Ethics was published in Mandarin (trans. Chen Choi; Christopher Publishing House, 2011). He gave four addresses on “Living Leadership” at the Ely diocesan clergy conference in Swanwick, England, in October. In November, Wells keynoted the “Bonhoeffer for the Coming Generations” conference at Union Seminary, New York City, and the Anglican 1000 worship conference in Durham, N.C., and served as theologian-in-residence at First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth, Texas. He preached in January at the Memorial Church, Harvard University, and in March at Washington National Cathedral and the Convention of Endowed Episcopal Parishes in Charlotte. Wells gave invited lectures at Vanderbilt University (Veritas Forum) in February, and at Ferrum...
BRITTANY WILSON was named a 2012 Regional Scholar by the Society of Biblical Literature for her paper “An Incapacitating Encounter: The Blinding of Paul and the Power of God in Acts 9.” She also delivered a paper, “Neither Male nor Female: The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:25–40) and the Intersection of Greco-Roman Masculinity,” at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in San Francisco.

NORMAN WIRZBA published “A Priestly Approach to Environmental Theology: Learning to Receive and Give Again the Gifts of Creation” in Dialog: A Journal of Theology; and “Preaching and Teaching ‘Good News’ in the Time of Climate Change” in Sacred Acts: How Churches are Working to Protect Earth’s Climate, edited by Mallory McDuff (New Society Publishers, 2012). His book Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating (Cambridge University Press, 2011) was voted “Book of the Year” by the Englewood Review of Books. He presented “Sabbath Keeping: A Matter of Life or Death?” at Bluffton University, Ohio (Nov. 1); the annual Scholar-in-Residence lectures on “Reconciliation with Creation” at Union University, Jackson, Tenn. (Feb. 14–17); the lectures “Living in God’s Garden World” at Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, Va. (Feb. 21); “Eating as a Spiritual Act” at Rothko Chapel, Houston, Texas (March 10); the Ingram Lectures at Memphis Theological Seminary, Tenn., on “Environmental Justice and the Church” (March 28–29); and “The Art of Being a Creature” at the Society for Continental Philosophy and Theology meeting in Los Angeles, Calif. (April 21).
TED R. MORTON JR. D’56 has been re-elected chairman of the board of directors for the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation. He has recently served as president of the South Carolina chapter of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, a patriotic lineage society that promotes the history and ideals of the revolution. He resides in Greenwood, S.C.

ROBERT W. JONES D’81 is in Sonoma, Calif., where he continues his ministry of pastoral counseling and spiritual direction. He is also the district bishop for the All Souls District in the New Methodist Conference.

RICHARD P. HEITZENRATER T’61, D’64, G’72, the William Kellon Quick Professor Emeritus of Church History and Wesley Studies at Duke Divinity School, was named the 2011 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. An accomplished Renaissance man, Heitzenrater, in addition to his distinguished teaching and scholarship—which has included the decoding of John Wesley’s Journals and Diaries—is an artist and graphic designer, a craftsman-builder of log cabins and fine furniture, a gold medalist senior runner and track events judge, and a faithful bass section leader in the Duke Chapel choir. He served as head referee for the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference championship cross country meet in Sewanee, Tenn., in October and has applied to be a volunteer at the Olympic Trials in Oregon this summer. He also does volunteer work at the Duke Athletic Hall of Fame and Basketball Museum and continues to serve as general editor of the bicentennial edition of the Works of John Wesley. He lives in Durham, N.C.

KEVIN ARMSTRONG D’85 is the new president of Methodist Health Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Indiana University Health Methodist Hospital. He was formerly senior pastor at North United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, and he serves on the Divinity School’s Board of Visitors.

JENNIFER E. COPELAND T’85, D’88, G’08, United Methodist chaplain to Duke University since 1999 and director of the Duke Wesley Fellowship, received the 2011 Outstanding Ministry in Education Award from the National Campus Ministry Association (NCMA) at the annual meeting at UC Berkeley. The Duke Wesley Fellowship won the NCMA’s top program award.

J. CLINTON MCCANN JR. G’85, professor of biblical interpretation at Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, Mo., is the author of Psalms in the Immersion Bible Studies Series (Abingdon, 2011).

RANDY CIRKSENA JR. D’87, D’94 teaches world religions as an adjunct professor at Riverland Community College in Faribault, Minn., at the largest prison for the state Department of Corrections. He is an insurance agent with State Farm.

LISA R. WITHROW D’88, D’89 served as editor for a new publication titled Alienation and Connection: Suffering in a Global Age (Lexington Books, 2011). She is also the author of Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians in the Immersion Bible Studies Series (Abingdon, 2011). She has been named associate dean at Methodist Theological School in Delaware, Ohio, and continues to serve there as the Dewire Professor of Christian Leadership.

PHILIP LEMASTERS G’90 gave the keynote address for Education Day 2011 at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y., titled “Orthodox Perspectives
on Peace, War, and Violence.” He is the pastor of St. Luke Orthodox Mission in Abilene, Texas, and dean of social sciences and religion at McMurry University, where he teaches Christian theology and ethics.

**JOERG RIEGER D’90, G’94**, the Wendland-Cook Professor of Constructive Theology at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, is the author of *Grace Under Pressure: Negotiating the Heart of the Methodist Traditions* (GBHE&M, 2011).

**TOBIAS WINWRIGHT D’91** edited and contributed to *Green Discipleship: Catholic Theological Ethics and the Environment* (Anselm Academic, 2011). He is associate professor of theological ethics at Saint Louis University, where he also directs the Manresa Program in Catholic, Jesuit Studies.

**KEITH E. ANDERSON D’94** and his wife, Alison, announce the adoption of Ethan and Elijah, born March 14, 2011, who join siblings Kiersten, Cara, and Adam. The Andersons reside in Springfield, Ill. Keith is executive director of the Preachers’ Aid Society and Benefit Fund for the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church.

**DANIEL C. HOCKETT D’94, D’99** was elected president of the Divinity School Alumni Association at the annual meeting in October. He is a United Methodist pastor in Concord, N.C.

**RENEE L. OWEN D’95** recently relocated with her husband, Tommy, from Los Angeles to Atlanta, where she is now serving as staff chaplain for the emergency department at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Egleston. She recently completed her chaplaincy endorsement with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

**LACEYE CAMMARANO WARNER D’95** and her husband, **GASTON WARNER D’99**, announce the birth of Elia Clare, who was born August 19, 2011, in Durham, N.C. Laceye is executive vice dean at the Divinity School. Gaston works with the Zoe Ministry’s Orphan Empowerment Program in support of children in Africa.

**KRISTEN L. BROWN D’96** is now working as a United Methodist missionary with the Christian communities of Palestine and Israel with Sabeel, an Ecumenical Liberation Theological Center in Jerusalem.

**DAVID A. COOK JR. D’96** has received the D.Min. degree from Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, N.C. He is a United Methodist pastor in Pinnacle, N.C.

**IN-YONG LEE D’00, D’02**, a United Methodist pastor in Asheville, N.C., is a newly elected member of the National Alumni Council of the Divinity School.

**MARK D. CONFORTI D’03** has been elected for service on the Divinity School’s National Alumni Council. He is a United Methodist pastor in Morganton, N.C. Mark is married to **MARY ALLEN CONFORTI D’01**, and they have two children.

**W. BRENT WRIGHT** and his wife, **LAUREN TYLER WRIGHT**, both D’03, announce the June 24, 2011, birth of Graham Tyler Wright. Brent is a United Methodist pastor, and Lauren writes about philanthropy and serves on the National Alumni Council for the Divinity School. The Wrights live in Indianapolis, Ind.

**M. BLAKE KENDRICK D’06** and his wife, Anna, announce the birth of their second child, Eleanor Catherine, November 25, 2011. The Kendrick family lives in Greenwood, S.C., where Blake serves as associate pastor for students and spiritual formation at First Baptist Church.

**SHIRLEY KEARNEY MCLEOD D’06** has earned the D.Min. degree in Christian education from the Apex School of Theology in Durham, N.C.

**BRIAN L. FUNDERBURKE D’07** and his wife, Sarah, announce the August 3, 2011, birth of Hannah Elizabeth, who joins big brother Caleb. The Funderburkes are residents of Acworth, Ga., where he is a United Methodist pastor.

**CHANEQUA WALKER-BARNESS D’07** is a 2011 recipient of the Louisville Institute’s First Book Grant for Minority Scholars to complete her book project, *Too Heavy a Yoke: Black Women and the Burden of Strength*. This was inspired in part by her work at Duke for the Certificate in Gender, Theology, and Ministry. She resides in Birmingham, Ala.

**JANE TUCKER LYON D’08** has been elected to serve on the Divinity School’s National Alumni Council. She is pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Red Oak, Va.

**MARK A. MONTGOMERY D’08**, who recently moved from United Methodist parish ministry in Corpus Christi, Texas, to become a campus minister at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., is a new member of the National Alumni Council for the Divinity School.

**BRADLEY R. TRICK G’10** is the new assistant professor of New Testament at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, N.C.

**CHRISTOPHER E. BRESLIN D’11** and his wife, Rachel, announce the December 4, 2011, birth of Noa June. The Breslins reside in Chapel Hill, N.C., where Chris is associate pastor of the Gathering Church.

**ANGELA ROACH ROBERSON D’11** has been called to serve as pastor of Congregational United Church of Christ in High Point, N.C.

**GOT NEWS? STAY IN TOUCH!**
You can email magazine@div.duke.edu, or go online at www.divinity.duke.edu/update to submit class notes or update your information.
DEATHS

WILLIAM DEVRIES SAMPSELLE D’46 died May 15, 2011, in Frederick, Md. His parish ministry spanned 40 years across the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church prior to his retirement in 1984. His wife, Joan Sampselle, five children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren survive him.

W. BURKETTE RAPER T’47, D’52 died August 1, 2011, in Mount Olive, N.C. He was an ordained minister in the Free Will Baptist Church and appointed president of Mount Olive College in 1954 at the age of 26. He served there for 40 years as president and, after retirement, another 10 years as director of planned giving. His life was dedicated to Christian higher education and its philanthropic support. His wife, Rose Mallard Raper, five children, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren survive him.

WALSTEIN W. “WALLY” SNYDER D’50 died August 30, 2011, in Burlington, N.C. Ordained in the United Church of Christ, he was a parish minister in North Carolina and Virginia, before serving for 30 years as the chief executive officer for the Elon Homes for Children in Elon, N.C. Surviving family members include three children, eight grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

FRED A. HILL D’53 died September 19, 2010, in Gold Hill, N.C. He served as a United Methodist pastor for 47 years in parishes across the Western North Carolina Conference. He is survived by his wife, Anna Morgan Hill, five children, 14 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

JAMES L. BEATY D’54 died November 9, 2011, in Savannah, Tenn. His career as a United Methodist pastor spanned more than 40 years as he led parishes across the Tennessee Conference. His wife, Sue D. Beaty, two children, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren survive him.

JEFFRY L.M. HENDRIX D’80 died June 28, 2011, in Falls Church, Va. He was a United Methodist pastor until 2001, when he was confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church. He served as a sixth-grade teacher at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School for the past decade. His book, A Little Guide for Your Last Days, was published in 2009. He is survived by his wife, MOCHEL H. MORRIS D’80, pastor of Christ Crossman UMC, two sons, and a granddaughter.

DIVINITY SCHOOL FAMILY

FRANCES D. PARRISH died May 30, 2011, in Durham, N.C. She was a secretary and staff supervisor for the Divinity School for some 20 years prior to her retirement in 1991. She is survived by her son and two grandchildren.

When you make a gift of $10,000 or more to establish a charitable gift annuity, Duke will pay you a fixed income for life. Take advantage of this opportunity and secure your gift before rates fall July 1.

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Contact us today to discuss gift annuities or other gift plans that can help you meet your financial and philanthropic goals.

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Phone (919) 681-0464
Email gift.planning@dev.duke.edu
Explore gift plans at giving.duke.edu/giftplanning
The Board of Visitors provides vital counsel and support for the leadership, mission, and programs of the Divinity School. This group of 36 people from across the nation represents the broad constituencies of Duke Divinity School. Terri Dean, a retired senior executive with Verizon and a Baptist laywoman from Philadelphia, Pa., chairs the Board. Duke University President Richard Brodhead appointed four new members in July 2011.

**DAVID A. JOHNSTON** of Winter Park, Fla., is a semi-retired insurance broker and executive director with A/E ProNet. A Duke University alumnus, he is a member of the Winter Park Civil Service Board, formerly mayor and city commissioner of Winter Park, chair of the Orange County Housing Finance Authority, and active in Duke Alumni Association leadership roles. Dave and his wife, Sally, are active members at First United Methodist Church, and he previously served as a deacon and elder at Winter Park Presbyterian Church. They are the parents of a son and a daughter, both Duke alumni from the early 1990s.

**ANGELA M. MACDONALD** of St. Louis, Mo., is a crisis intervention clinician with Behavioral Health Response in Creve Coeur, Mo. She completed the joint degree program in 2010, earning an M.Div. from Duke Divinity and an M.S.W. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Angela is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the American Association of Christian Counselors. She enjoys international travel and reading, and she joins the board as one of the three Recent Graduate members.

**GREGORY V. PALMER** of Springfield, Ill., is the resident bishop of the Illinois Area of the United Methodist Church. He is a Duke Divinity School alumnus who served United Methodist parishes in North Carolina and Ohio prior to his election to the episcopacy in 2000 and leadership as bishop in Iowa. Gregory is the immediate past president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops and former chair of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. He and his wife, Cynthia, a Duke alumnus, are the parents of two young adult children.

**DOUGLAS C. ZINN** of Chapel Hill, N.C., is the executive director of the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, a philanthropic organization supporting the arts and education. He earned a B.S. degree in zoology from Duke University in 1979. Doug serves on the Watts School of Nursing oversight committee, the Durham Rotary Club, the Durham Arts Council, and the Triangle Donors Forum. He and his wife, Jacquie, a Duke alumnus, are the parents of three sons and a daughter. They are active with St. Thomas More Church and School in Chapel Hill.

JOIN THE CHALLENGE!

You can partner with the Center for Reconciliation to ensure that the ministry of reconciliation continues to take root in the U.S. and around the world. The Center is responsible for raising 100% of our operating costs, and right now we are actively fundraising for a challenge grant. Every gift to the Center for Reconciliation today will help us toward our goal, and that means we’ll receive additional support from a foundation. You are key to our success with this challenge. A gift today supports the work of reconciliation for local, national, and international Christian leaders, communities, congregations, and students.

For more information on how you can support the Center for Reconciliation, contact Abi Riak at 919-660-3585, or go to www.gifts.duke.edu/divinity
A new commitment of $1 million will be added to the Mary G. and Donald H. Stange Distinguished Scholars Fund from the Stange Charitable Trust of Troy, Mich. The Stange Distinguished Scholars are outstanding students who bring exemplary leadership, academic strength, vocational integrity, and spiritual maturity to the work of pastoral ministry. The Stange Charitable Trust also continues to provide major support for several other endowed funds in the Divinity School.

Other foundation support has been received recently: $198,134 from the Ruth Lilly Philanthropic Trust of Indianapolis, Ind., for a Transformative Legacy Fund; $100,000 from the Daniel P. Amos Family Foundation of Columbus, Ga., for the Divinity Annual Fund and work in the Center for Reconciliation; $100,000 from an anonymous source for the Center for Reconciliation; $20,573 from the James A. Gray Trust Fund of Winston-Salem, N.C., for support of continuing ministerial education; $20,000 from the Lucille P. and Edward C. Giles Foundation of Charlotte, N.C., for D.Min. scholarships; and $20,000 from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation of Durham, N.C., for Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts.

Individual donors have been very generous as well. New gifts include $20,663 from Jack and Barbara Bovender of Nashville, Tenn., for the Divinity Annual Fund; $13,119 from Christie and Greg Whitehouse of Mountain Lakes, N.J., to be added to the William L. Carson Scholarship; and gifts of $10,000 each from Becky and Mac Briggs of Bethlehem, Pa., Jo and Sam Wells of Durham, N.C., and Ann and Vann York of High Point, N.C., for the Divinity Annual Fund.

Dean Richard Hays: “We are deeply grateful for these friends, graduates, and organizations that help to provide the financial resources that are essential for our mission: preparing faithful, excellent leadership for the church of Jesus Christ. These donors, along with many others, encourage us with their investments here and with their continuing engagement and prayers.”
DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

REVENUES

- Student Tuition & Fees: $9,582,073
- Endowment & Investment Income: $7,146,336
- Gifts: $8,440,236
- Grants: $4,056,990
- Other Revenue: $2,200,976

Total Operating Revenue: $31,426,611
Total Nonoperating Revenue: $1,783,633

EXPENSES

- Compensation & Fringe Benefits: $14,868,905
- General Operations: $9,618,300
- Financial Aid: $5,667,131
- Prepaid Expenses (Gifts, Grants): $1,272,275

Subtotal Operating Expenses: $30,154,336

Total Operating Expenses: $31,426,611
DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

GRAND TOTAL
$12,874,933
1,909 DONORS

FOUNDATION
$7,800,568
45 DONORS
(The Duke Endowment contributed $2,581,000)

CHURCH
$1,855,085
64 DONORS
(The Ministerial Education Fund of the UMC contributed $1,673,789)

CORPORATE
$1,060,628
27 DONORS

INDIVIDUALS
$1,902,919
Divinity School Alumni 1,111 DONORS $299,904
Other Duke Alumni 231 DONORS $1,307,933
Friends 424 DONORS $295,082

OTHER GROUPS
$255,733
7 DONORS
DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL is located in Durham, N.C., a city formed after the Civil War where both black and white citizens worked with some mutual consent about how development would occur. This does not mean it was some fictitious nirvana of equality, but space was open for some black people to flourish in business and cultural life. These mutual benefits created the social and economic currents that surrounded the Divinity School in the first half of the 20th century.

The faculty and students of the Divinity School were strong advocates of speeding up the integration of the student body. The first two African-American students were admitted in 1962: J.D. Ballard and Matthew Zimmerman. Some faculty also participated vigorously in demonstrations against segregation, notably Frederick Herzog and Harmon Smith.

One of the most decisive moves toward reconciliation was the establishment of the Office of Black Church Affairs, now called Black Church Studies. Under the leadership of Dean Thomas Langford, the Rev. Joseph Bethea was appointed director and Herbert Edwards was named to the faculty in theology and black church studies. Since that time, there has been continuous progress in the recruitment of African-American students in the Divinity School student body. The recruitment and retention of faculty has been more challenging; currently we have six black faculty members, four of whom have tenure.

A major interest of Black Church Studies has also been the move toward reconciliation. Collaboration between the director and faculty have resulted in bringing in scholars, sponsoring seminars and institutes, establishing lecture series, and teaching a robust array of courses. The underlying premise behind all of these endeavors was that reconciliation must be rooted in honesty. The “canon” of theological texts must be expanded; the story must be told truthfully; relationships must be interpreted to show the interpenetration of knowledges. This cuts against the history of scholarship as the nearly exclusive production of European and Euro-American males.

Reconciliation requires this increase of mutuality. In the past race relations have been dictated largely by those who held power. When change occurred, it was usually the result of a contest between the powerful and an alternative form of power. Among African-Americans there was the wide embrace of a prophetic Christianity that held in tension the quest for justice and liberation with a strong penchant for not violating or doing harm to the sister or brother. This resulted from faith, as well as from the experience of having been violated.

Honesty and mutuality are important for substantive reconciliation for at least two reasons. First, it is essential for setting the record straight and giving a true account. Second, there have been sincere debates concerning who God is, how to interpret Scripture, and what it means to live together in Christian community. The African-American church has produced a theological response to these issues that has often not been recognized. It has existed in sermons, pamphlets, songs, addresses, and books—as well as in the mode and manner of worship.

Honesty and mutuality that lead to reconciliation requires education. The Divinity School requires at least one course in Black Church Studies for every M.Div. student. It also requires interaction so that people can be in the same physical space—for dialogue, yes, but also to worship. It is a necessity to have communal space where they can live together as human beings who encounter one another in a way that compels ownership of their social construct and its impact on others. This moment of encounter can open into a human embrace that goes beyond projection, animosity, fear, or the will to overpower. Such redeemed space opens the possibility for the sincere quest of what it means to live together under God. These are propaedeutics—the knowledge necessary for learning—of reconciliation.

These ingredients of reconciliation have long been present at Duke Divinity School, and have been largely student led. The challenge going into the future has to do with the extent to which the faculty as a whole takes ownership of this valuable work and inserts it into its intellectual program as essential to the formation of leaders for the church.
IN THE SCULPTURE, the younger son is kneeling next to his father, exhausted, worn out, relieved. Reconciliation, the gift, has been achieved, a sign of the good news of the gospel, the hope for new life. And yet, that frail father’s attention is not focused on his younger son, but on his older son, a tall strapping young man in boots, jeans, with his arms crossed, his face looking away. The father’s arm is outstretched on those crossed arms of the older brother. The older brother’s body is taut, tense, angry, bitter. It’s not at all clear what will happen next. As you move around the sculpture, you can look at it from the perspectives of all three. But it’s in the sculpture, in its interrelations, that we discover both the gift of good news and the task of brokenness not yet healed, of witness yet to be offered.

The urgency of our task—of faithful study, of worship and prayer and spiritual formation, of service and ministry and witness in the world—is because there still is brokenness in the world to be addressed. There still is reconciling work to be witness to. There is still a faithful life to be lived. People are yearning like that father in the sculpture for reconciliation, for hope, for new life.

An excerpt adapted from “Practice Resurrection,” a sermon by former Dean Gregory Jones at the 79th Opening Convocation of Duke Divinity School on Aug. 30, 2005.
Experience even more from the CENTER FOR RECONCILIATION!

In January 2012, the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School helped sponsor the second annual African Great Lakes Initiative, a weeklong gathering of Christian leaders from across many denominations and countries in East Africa. This dynamic event is leading to transformation in the region, as the leaders return to their churches, hospitals, and other places of ministry and extend this message of reconciliation to thousands of others.

To see video interviews with attendees and hear them talk about the power of reconciliation, go to www.divinity.duke.edu/GLIvideos