VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Journal

SUMMER 2015

On the Cover:

The baptismal font for the Immanuel Chapel was made by Lucas House, a North Carolina iron artisan. The bowl on the font is hand-blown glass by Pablo Soto, an artisan at the Penland School, also located in North Carolina.

Right: Morris King Thompson IV was born May 2 to Morris Thompson ('15) from the Diocese of Mississippi and his wife Emily. Here father is holding baby Mack after his senior sermon in the finished Immanuel Chapel on Ascension Day, May 14.

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VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY Journal

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The African American Episcopal Historical Collection

A joint project of Virginia Theological Seminary and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church

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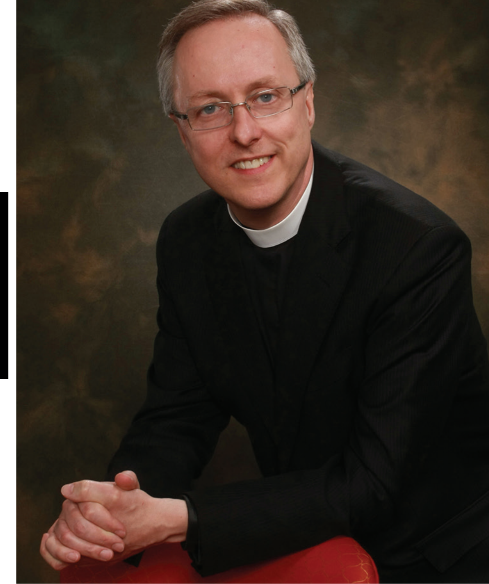


Dean's Report

An historic year for VTS

When one is living life, it is hard to know which years of life are truly historic. The term historic captures a year that is transformative for a country or an institution. One should only use the term occasionally. For the United States, the Civil Rights Movement was historic; for the Seminary, the arrival of women on campus, studying in the M.Div. program, and permitted to be in the ordination track, was historic.

So as you browse this issue of *The Journal*, I hesitate to describe this year as "historic," but I am going to suggest that perhaps this is the right term. There is much that has happened. We had several Inaugural Lectures, faithfully reproduced in this issue. We had a fabulous Convocation, with some profound and thoughtful contributions from the ethicist Dr. Charles Mathewes. But "history," I want to suggest, was made when the new Immanuel Chapel was opened.

We lost our Chapel to fire. That was a painful day. We wept, we remembered, and we prayed. That was 2010. Now in 2015, after the largest capital campaign in our history, we have opened our new Immanuel Chapel. Designed by America's leading architect, Robert A.M. Stern, it is a testament to a remarkable traditional exterior (that looks like the Chapel has always belonged on the campus) coupled with a strikingly modern interior (which is Church in the round, Eucharistically centered, and using light in beautiful ways). The exterior promises continuity; the interior promises that VTS is creating a new future for the Church.

Architecture shapes a community. Now when one arrives on campus, the brilliantly designed landscaping by Michael Vergason forces the visitor to turn to the right. Then one arrives at a motor court with the Welcome Center on the left and the new Chapel on the right. On the left, love of neighbor; on the right, love of God. These are the signature themes of the Seminary. Now our guests are welcomed onto the campus in the Welcome Center. And right next door, there is a visible witness to the priority of worship.

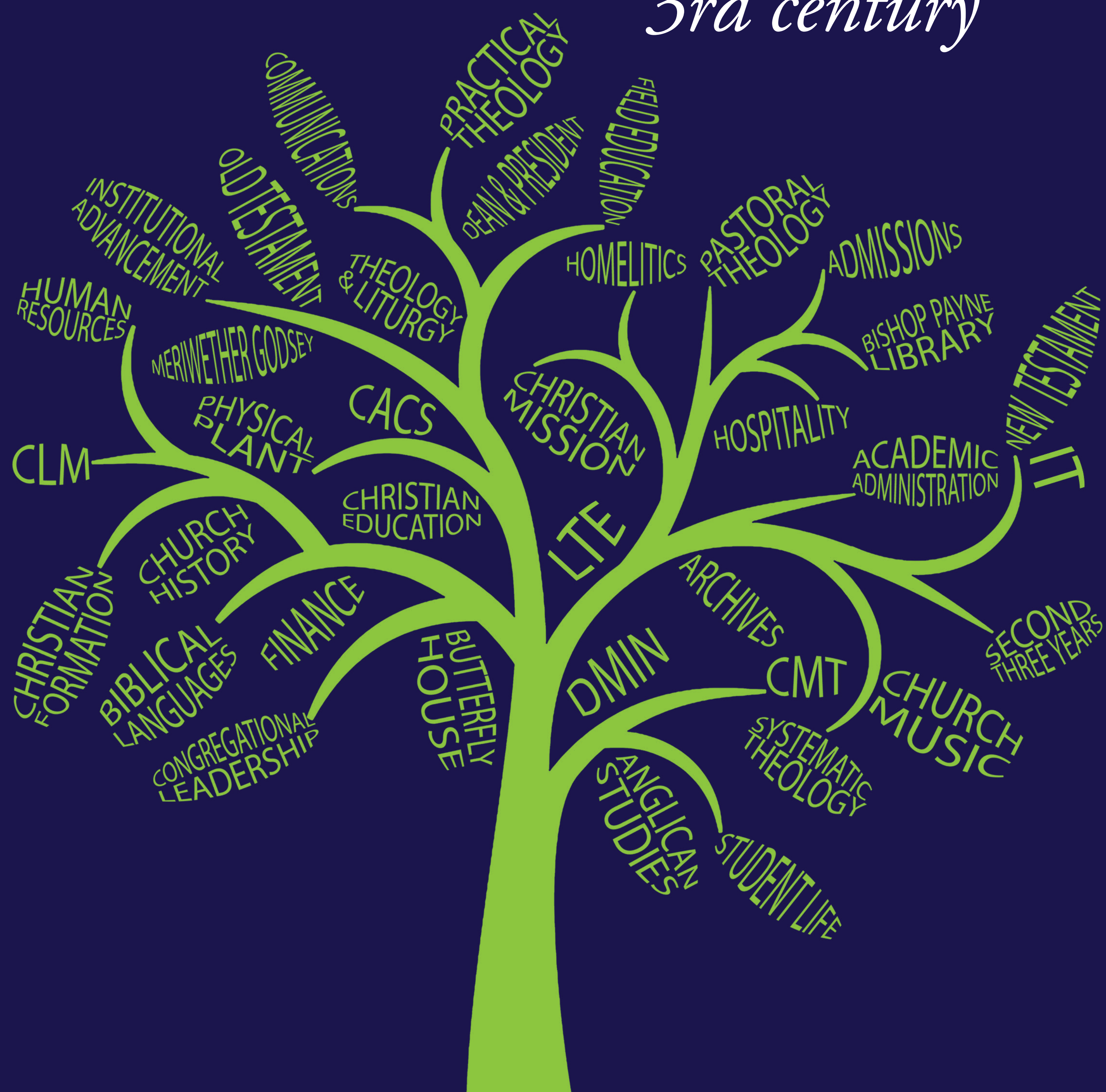
This architecture will change the Seminary; my prayer is that we will become more hospitable and that our worship will be deeper and more passionate. We have built a new Chapel. It was an effort made possible by the entire Seminary community—friends, alums, dioceses, and congregations. It is with a deep sense of gratitude to our global VTS community that I want us all to give to God the glory. This is an amazing time.

Yours in Christ,

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President

Strategic Plan 2023

Preparing for our 3rd century



By Kathryn Glover, MPA
Vice President for Human Resources and Institutional Effectiveness, Secretary of the Corporation

In February 2014 the Board of Trustees began a strategic planning process that would focus on the years leading up to our 200th anniversary celebration in 2023. The Board and faculty worked with a consultant from InTrust to consider questions around process, involvement of stakeholders, institutional priorities, and to reflect on how our institutional history would influence our plans for the future. The following May, the Board worked with the faculty in small groups to consider further what the Seminary would look like in 2023, what VTS would be doing to serve the church, and what VTS graduates would look like. The responses formed the foundation for a vision statement which the Board approved at the May 2014 meeting.

Between May and December 2014 various constituency groups including trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends were invited to submit ideas and initiatives within the parameters set by the vision statement. In January 2015 the Executive Committee of the Board worked with the Administration to review each of the 287 suggestions and determine the priorities for the plan. A preliminary draft of the strategic plan was submitted to the Board in February, further revisions were made, and a final draft was submitted and approved in May 2015.

The vision statement approved in May 2014 outlined four themes around which to build the 2015 Strategic Plan. Our center of gravity will remain **Episcopal**, serving the tradition of Anglicanism as expressed in the broad range of the ministry and mission of the Episcopal Church; we will continue to be a **Residential** seminary living and learning in community; our perspective will remain **Global**, celebrating our historic connections in the Anglican Communion; and our programming will continue to be **Graduate**, focusing on our accredited Masters and Doctoral programs.

VTS's primary mission is to provide graduates for the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion who are globally and culturally aware. We have been fulfilling this mission since 1823 for changing and evolving ministry settings in an ever-changing world. As we consider our history while looking to the future we see a Seminary that is open to both affecting and being affected by change. Seven windows provide a means of seeing the details of those themes and help map our course to 2023.

One Through Window One we see a church where educating God's people is a priority. The M.Div. degree will offer students an opportunity to focus on chaplaincy, spirituality, and theologies of mission and congregational spirituality, and will be more open to students from historically disadvantaged communities. The D.Min. program will enhance its online and hybrid curricula while attracting and graduating the finest Christian leaders and reflective practitioners. Courses in our degree programs will be more widely available to students, prospective students and guests through digital forms, with courses available on Friday evenings and Saturdays. The Center for Anglican Communion Studies will continue to develop the Cross-Cultural

Educational Programs (CCEP) to ensure a more globally and culturally-aware student body. In order to achieve these goals we will concentrate on recruiting, supporting and graduating candidates the church needs and dedicate support for enhanced use of educational technologies. Our faculty will be instrumental in bringing these goals to fruition, enhanced by additional appointments in new areas such as Theology and Sustainable Ecology, and Educational Technology. We will increase awareness and ease of access to library services, expanding electronic resources so that the library is an intellectual center able to support research and writing both within the VTS community and the wider Anglican Communion.

Two Through Window Two we see exciting non-degree programming that feeds the people of God. Non-credit courses for lay leaders and the congregations and institutions they serve will focus on Bible and Theology, while recognizing the multicultural

nature of our church and society. Clergy will find courses that will feed and train them in congregational dynamics and cultures, working with lay volunteers, or better manage the demands of being bi-vocational. Our Center for the Ministry of Teaching will take a lead in transitioning from Christian formation that is focused on programs and static resources to dynamic networks and content curation. We will work with VTS Chapters of Alumni and non-alumni and Episcopal groups, such as diocesan chancellors, standing committees, commissions on ministry and the House of Bishops, to strengthen the current and future leadership of the Church.

Three Window Three provides a view of a Seminary connected with community and congregations. Bringing the Center for the Ministry of Teaching, Lifetime Theological Education, and the Center for Liturgy and Music under one unified center will provide us with an opportunity to have a more holistic approach to learning from congregations the best ways to serve while staying informed of current and best practices. Planting churches is part of our history; as we prepare for our bicentennial in 2023 we are looking to found and revitalize worshipping communities and congregations to enhance the wider church and the Seminary curriculum. We will work with congregations and dioceses to assist young people in exploring the vocation of ministry. Seminarians will learn and be formed in a culture enriched by the finest theological, religious and pastoral minds through a partnership with the Scholar Priests Initiative. VTS will be recognized for its work for social justice in the surrounding community through partnerships with local advocacy groups. We will work to bring the community to campus for lectures, performances, consultations and musical offerings that celebrate the diversity of our church and the world. Our commitment to increasing the number of students of color is ongoing as we strive to foster an environment where all students—both domestic and international—are affirmed and integrated into our community life.

Four Window Four allows us to see the centrality of worship as we live into the new chapel and explore new worship opportunities in a new space. The worship life at VTS will honor its daily rhythm while recognizing its place in the wider community using a wide range of liturgical practices, and liturgical resources approved by General Convention will allow for liturgical renewal in celebrating and participating in the full range of the Church Year and seasons. There will be ecumenically and interfaith sensitive worship experiences in the Chapel. An evaluation and review of worship planning will provide clearer aims and goals that will teach students how to plan and lead the services of the Book of Common Prayer more effectively and with greater innovation. Worship will be enhanced by increased incorporation of the full range of musical traditions of the Episcopal and Anglican traditions. The VTS community will continue to value personal prayer and devotions through formation and advising groups that foster spiritual growth and a spiritual direction program. A new Lilly funded program will enhance the effectiveness of Episcopal clergy through intensive training in the art of preaching and peer groups that nurture and support thoughtful and able preaching. Windows One through Four allow us to see the next eight years sketched out in broad strokes. Through ***Windows Five, Six, and Seven*** we share the emerging structure and environment in which these strokes take on greater form and function through an enhanced and strengthened infrastructure.

This infrastructure includes effective governance where a nimble and engaged Board and consultative groups support and enhance the Seminary's mission. Strong communication that is focused, timely, and responsive will bring VTS into the community and the community to VTS while keeping alumni and friends engaged and involved. A developed and sustained culture of employee excellence and wellness are necessary for achieving these goals. An institutional commitment to professional development and continuing education, an increased focus on effectiveness and efficiency, and enhanced institutional and educational technology, will make this a reality. Effective budgeting and financial planning will safeguard the future of the Seminary and a safe, well-maintained, and hospitable campus will ensure VTS is a landmark of formation for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Initiatives such as these depend on financial support from all our constituencies. As we embark on this path towards our 200th birthday celebration in 2023, we will launch a third century capital campaign to support our continued and growing impact in the next 200 years. ✠

Episcopal

Residential

Global

Graduate

Convocation 2014

Sermon

By the Rev. Kimberly S. Jackson ('10)
Chaplain, Absalom Jones Episcopal Center
Atlanta, Georgia
and President AAEC, 2014-15

Occasioned by the 2014 Annual Convocation
at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia

October 6, 2014

Psalms 124,125,126
2 Kings 22:1-13
Acts 23:12-24

May the words of my mouth and the mediations of our hearts be pleasing to you, O God. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.

A little over a year ago, a friend asked me to drop her off at the airport. She was running late for her flight, so I did what many of us have done. I broke a few speed limits and may have rolled through a stop sign. But we pulled up to the passenger drop off just in time for her to catch her flight. Relieved to have gotten her to the airport safely and on time, I calmly started making my way back to my house.

About three miles from home, I look up and see blue lights flashing in my rearview mirror. But I don't panic, because I just know that these lights aren't for me. They just couldn't possibly be for me. So, because it's a relatively narrow road, I pull onto the shoulder to get out of the officers way. Much to my surprise, he slides in right behind me!

At this point, I'm really shocked. And quite frankly, I was feeling pretty indignant about the entire situation. I knew that I wasn't speeding. There was just no way that it was possible. Now admittedly, if this had happened on the way to the airport, certainly. But not now. I wasn't in a hurry and I felt like I was moving with the flow of traffic. But even more factually, my car had a manual transmission and I was only in 4th gear when he pulled me. There was no way that I could have been going more than 55 mph in fourth gear.

So when the officer came to my window and said that he'd clocked me at 60 mph in a 45 mph zone, I tried to argue him down. I knew that he was wrong. He was absolutely mistaken, because I know my car. My car won't go that fast in fourth gear! But, despite my conviction—despite my insistence that I was right—he gave me a ticket.

A few months later, my spouse was driving my car with me and we were on the same street where I'd gotten that "erroneous" ticket. Looking down at the speedometer, my spouse remarks, "huh, I didn't realize that you go 60 mph while still in fourth gear."

You see my friends, I was so sure that I was right, but it turns out that I was so wrong.

In today's lesson from Acts, we meet a group of 40 men who are so sure that they are right. The men in this story in Acts are devout followers of Judaism. They care about maintaining the sanctity of the religion and they seek to protect the people from false prophets.

And, they weren't only ones doing this. Remember Paul before his conversion? Well he had been just like them. Zealous about his faith, well studied, and by his own testament a keeper of the law. Saul, like the group of 40 Jewish men that we encounter in today's text, was so sure that his way of interpreting the Scriptures and reading the times was the right way. And in Saul's mind, those who didn't have it right, deserved to die (remember Stephen?) … at the very least, in Saul's mind, they didn't belong in the community.

Now from the comfort our 21st century Christian chairs,

it's tempting to read this story and immediately identify with Paul. It's easy to see ourselves in his place —trying to serve God—trying to share the great Gospel of a Risen Christ, meanwhile people are predicting and plotting out the demise of our seminaries and of our churches.

In fact, many preachers use this text to preach just such sermons. Sermons that tell us to "look at how good God is" —when we're in trouble, God sends our nephew to help us out. Or better yet, when people plot against us, God sends an entire army to keep us safe. We identify with Paul because he's the hero in the story… he's the winner, and well, in truth, we all like to be winners.

But this evening, I want to suggest that there are moments in our lives—well, let me just talk about me—there are moments in my life when I much more closely resemble the Pharisees and Sadducees in this text. There are times in my life, when I hide behind piety and tradition in order to preserve the status quo that suits my tastes and keeps me comfortable. Let me say that again, "There are times in our lives when we hide behind piety and tradition in order to preserve the status quo that suits our tastes and keeps us comfortable."

There times when I feel so sure that my reading of the text—after all I did receive my theological education at Virginia Seminary—so there are times when I'm so sure that my interpretation of the Scripture, my way of leading the liturgy, or of critiquing a sermon is of the the "right way." And regretfully, there are times in my life, when I've felt so right that I've refused to listen—I refused to even recognize the humanity in those who read the story differently.

Let me tell you a story.

I work with college students—young adults who are alive with energy. Many are full of so many unanswered questions, while others exude more confidence than I'm able to muster even on my best days. During my first year as chaplain, I had a young student who was far from confident. He was living with Asperger's Syndrome, and thus incredibly timid and shy, especially in social settings. After months of prompting and cajoling, and encouraging, Khalil finally agreed to take his turn at leading Sunday night Compline. We practiced multiple times to be sure that he would know how lead the service correctly. So, when it was time, I felt pretty sure that I had taught him how to get it right.

The opening sentence squeaked out of him like a young boy just entering puberty. But he cleared his throat and continued on like a seasoned priest. Then he arrived at the point in the service in which he said to the folks gathered, "Let us confess our sins before God." We all paused for some intentional reflection (like good Anglicans do)—all of us, except Khalil. Instead of silence, he, rather awkwardly, yet beautifully began making a public confession.

Lots of thoughts ran through my head when Khalil started telling us about the jealousy that he held in his heart towards a guy who was dating "his girl." I remember thinking, "He's doing this wrong! This is not how the liturgy works—that's not what we practiced!" I wanted to cut him off before he "over-shared." I wanted to get him back on page so that we could properly honor the richness of our Compline liturgy by doing it right.

But I didn't interrupt. Instead, we sat in silence as his public confession challenged me to truly consider my own sin.

Friends, my impulse to shut him down—to turn him back to the liturgy that's printed in the Book of Common Prayer—that impulse isn't inherently wrong. Certainly, our liturgies are beautiful without additions. And our impulses to protect the things that we hold sacred and dear in our churches and in seminary—those impulses make sense. We are called to "stand firm" on the Word of God—called to believe, to truly believe and cling to our faith.

But my friends, even in our clinging, we must still have our ears open to the new ways that God reveals God's self in sacred texts, in liturgy, and in communities through out the world, because sometimes we are right. But sometimes we can also be really wrong.

Now let me be clear. I'm not pointing fingers this evening or placing blame anywhere. I know that many of us are striving to be the most faithful people that we can be. Like King Josiah in the Old Testament reading, we want to honor God. We seek to obey and love God. But King Josiah discovered that he didn't have all of the answers. He hadn't read that sacred scroll that once served as a guide to his people. While his good intentions were there, Josiah needed help. He needed someone to share with him the wisdom contained in that lost scroll. He needed help seeing the places and the ways in which he and his people had been wrong.

And friends, you and I need help too.

VTS commits to being an "outstanding theological resource for students, scholars, the church, and the larger public." And VTS commits to doing this work in a racially and ethnically diverse community as she seeks to live out her mission.

A commitment to theological scholarship alone would lead us to becoming yet another group of Pharisees and Sadducees—good intentioned, learned people who are blind and deaf to new revelations from God. Episcopal theological scholarship alone creates an educated people who can only recognize the Holy Spirit when she comes in the form of good exegetical work or finely sung Anglican hymnody.

But when theological studies and faithful reflection are coupled with a diverse community (a racially, ethnically, theologically, economically, and yes, even politically diverse community) that's when our blind spots are made known to us. You see, it was VTS's commitment to diversity that changed a part of my life. I remember a student from Haiti offering a different interpretation of a Scripture when I was sure that I had it right … but in that moment, the Holy Spirit broke in and I realized that sometimes I am so wrong, and sometimes people who look or sound different than me can get it really right!

Friends in Christ, sometimes it takes the gentle nudging of a friend or spouse to help us see what we've been missing. And other times, we just need to open up a book—a Bible, an assigned reading, or a poem to notice something new about God and God's creation. Still other times, we must sit down over our favorite beverages with someone who looks, sounds, or thinks differently than we do in order to see the face of God that we so faithfully seek.

Sometimes we're exactly right. And other times, well, we have to be open to learning something new.

So my prayer for us is this: My prayer is that we will take advantage of this diverse community that we live in. And that we will share our stories with each other, so that the Holy Spirit can break in and allow us to encounter God afresh.

Amen. ✠

Kimberly Jackson AAEHC President for 2014-15 delivers opening and welcoming remarks at the 2014 Convocation.

Page 12—(*clockwise from top left*): The Rev. Dr. Kit Carlson ('00, '15), the Rev. Elisabeth Sinclair ('15), Frida Mndolwa, and Timothy Watt ('17) attend a Convocation workshop; Dr. Donyelle McCray ('06), Instructor in Homiletics and Director of Multicultural Ministries at VTS leads a Convocation workshop on "John Jasper: Insights from a Folk Preacher." ; The Rev. Geoffrey ('64) and Jill Walpole, who travelled from New Zealand to join the 50th reunion celebrations of the Class of 1964; Members of the Class of 2004 and their family members gather to celebrate their 10th reunion. Front row: The Rev. Sven vanBaars ('08), spouse of the Rev. Jennifer Kimball ('04) who is next to him, the Rev. Anne McNabb ('04), the Rev. Mark Wilkinson ('04), his wife Wendy, the Rev. Mariann Babnis ('04), Ken McKenzie, the Rev. Elizabeth (Betsy) Tesi ('04), the Rev. Kristin Sullivan ('04), the Rev. Canon Blake Rider ('04). Back row: The Rev. Brad Ingalls ('04), his wife Meg, the Rev. David Wacaster ('04), Steve McNabb, the Rev. Ellie Thober ('04), the Rev. Marianne Davidson ('04), the Rev. Jennifer McKenzie ('04), Martin Tesi, the Rev. Sarah Midzalkowski ('04). Sally Franklin ('94) and Kim Folts ('94) enjoy the Alumni Reunion Reception. The Rev. Kim Jackson ('10), AAEC President 2014-15, and the Rev. Canon Tony Jewiss ('92) share a moment of conversation.

Page 13—(*clockwise from top left*): Dean Markham, Bishop Shand, and Vice President Melody Knowles prepare to present an honorary doctorate to the Tr. Rev. Maimbo William Fabian Mndolwa ('00), Bishop of the Diocese of Tanga; Top right: The Revs. Neal Goldsborough ('81) and Jennifer McKenzie ('04); Bottom left: Professor Ruthanna Hooke and the Rev. Luther Zeigler ('07), one of the 2014 John Hines Preaching Award winners. Bottom right: The Rev. Craig Biddle and the Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson, both members of the Class of 1964, exchange memories during their 50th Class Reunion.

A Social Gospel *for the 21st Century*

Two Zabriskie Lectures by Dr. Charles Mathewes

Charles Mathewes is the Carolyn M. Barbour Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia where he teaches religious ethics and religious thought.

Occasioned by the 2014 Annual Convocation at the Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia

October 7-8. 2014

I begin, as theologians always should begin, with scripture; in this case the book of Hooker, Chapter 1, verse 1:

> *Though for no other cause, yet for this; that posterity may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men's information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavor which would have upheld the same.*

I begin this way because this wonderful sentence, amidst the doing of several other things, reminds us of what theology is: fundamentally a report, a record of what the church is, what it has done and it is doing, and what those who would care about it are doing for its sustenance and advancement. It is a report both in being primarily retrospective before it is prospective, and in that it tries to discern in our all-too-human actions the Divine's providential governance.

In the two ways in which it is a report, theology is confessional: we confess what we know of the course of the church until now, and we confess that what we know is only the part we perceive of that course. The destiny of the church, the fate of the church, is not primarily in our hands.

This is reassuring, and means to give us confidence, both to look fearlessly and gracefully at what we the church have been doing, insofar as it is held up to us to see in God's loving and merciful judgment; and as best we can to look hopefully for what we are called to do, insofar as God gives us the grace to discern that. It is good that this is ultimately gracefully hopeful, for it is fair to say that there is always reason to fear the future, and to despair of the church's mission, absent that grace. Since Eden, after all, humans have been doing their damndest to refuse God's love, and I find no evidence that our refusal has in any way softened in recent centuries, or decades, or years. At times the only hope I can see in human history is that God's love for us is evidently at least as stubborn as our resistance to it; perhaps, indeed, that is the only hope that can be seen. And in any event, I know which side will win.

A report is what I aim at here—a report of where we have been, where we might be going, and what this entails for those of us who would uphold life in our context, here and now, in this particular site of our refusal, and of God's gracious and gentle struggle against it—namely, the church of God established amongst us, the Episcopal Church. God knows, we have our struggles. I will not attempt to sketch them here. I do note that the most recent public struggle in our church, the rather disquieting chaos that has befallen General Theological Seminary, encapsulates much of our problem, and cannot be far from our minds today. As a citizen of another republic of learning that suffered some similar, and equally unwelcome, tumult several years ago—the University of Virginia—I can only say, and I hope I say for you as well, that my thoughts and prayers are with all those who are caught up in that conflagration.

More basically than the immediate whirlwind of the moment, however, my task here is to speak a word about the state of our churches, Episcopal and otherwise, in our national setting, in the United States today. I speak with some concern, and even alarm, for I feel that the church continues to conform to society's injustices rather than to Christ, to the detriment of its twin vocations of discipleship and evangelical witness. I want to suggest that what we need in a revived Social Gospel, both because that is true to the church's vocation, and because such a gospel will help us see how the church can live in this age without becoming, in Martin Luther King's words, "an irrelevant social club" [1] devoid of faith and prophetic fervor. I feel this both for personal and for larger reasons.

King's words strike deep for me, in a personal way, for I have seen the dangers of which he speaks at first hand. Over the past several years I have become a frequenter of a yoga studio in my town. It seems to me that there are a great number of people who attend such places, and they attend them several times a week, for an hour or more at a time. I wonder what the proportion of yoga practitioners spend more than three hours a week at the yoga studio; I would imagine a quite substantial number. I wonder how many of my fellow parishioners spend more than two hours a week at church; I don't know, but I suspect that my fellow yogis are by and large more devoted to their yogic practices than my fellow parishioners are to their Christian ones. One might excuse this by saying that that is because they find yoga more refreshing than most parishioners find their churches; but that of course is simply to restate the problem, in an even more embarrassing way. How is church going to be different from yoga? Will yoga be a more relevant social club than church?

King's words strike deep for me in a larger way as well, because it seems to me that the church has not been doing a good job of placing itself in contradiction to the broader pathological social patterns in which we live, move, and all too often have our being, and speaking another word, a better

1 Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Signet Classic, 2000), 80.

way, instead of them. I say this not in anger but in anxiety, in concern, and in the hope that, when we are recalled to our calling, we may renew ourselves yet again. (Can these dry bones live? Less plausible resurrections, after all, have been heard of.) I also say this not as a call for churches, or preachers, to be more strident, but rather to be more subtle, in pursuing a different way.

Let me say it like this: In my view, the church has, as its first mission, discipleship: the cultivation in discipleship of its members, and the propagation of that invitation to discipleship to the neighbor. It does this in various ways, at best, but it has to at least give witness of its own purpose as a school of charity, a hospital of grace, not only with its lips, but in its life. Yet the church will be stymied in this unless it names and addresses those patterns in our lives that resist that discipleship.

Today, the churches find themselves in a social order where certain social and political pathologies are so vivid as to render certain dimensions of the gospel very hard to preach in sincerity, and very hard indeed to apprehend and be informed by, in the proper sense. That is, our social and political condition is strictly speaking un-Christian. And we need to confront this condition, not first and foremost for political reasons, but for reasons of Christian discipleship and pedagogy. We need to educate our political-theological imaginations better to name and respond to these challenges. We need to bring the challenges of our particular moment into view, not simply as those challenges may be understood in secular terms (though achieving even that understanding is an achievement); they also do so in such a way that those challenges can come to be understood in ecclesial terms, as complicating and undercutting the discipling and evangelizing mission of the churches.

The churches must undertake this diagnostic task, not in order to make the churches "useful" for the political order, but for something like the opposite reason. The churches, that is, must describe a set of social challenges in a way that illuminates their salience as theological challenges; a way, further, that calls the churches to engage those challenges in an explicitly theological manner, both for their own betterment and for the betterment of the social order itself. This task is a work of the church for the church, and through being for the church it can be for the social order as a whole.

And this is what I mean when I state, as the theme of my lectures, that we need a renewed social gospel, for the sake of our Christian souls.

I. The Social Gospel: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Think back with me, to 100 years ago. Several notable events happened in 1914. One you might not think at much is the publication of Walter Rauschenbusch's small book, entitled Dare We Be Christians? It is a nice popular summary of his overall position. Jesus embodied love; Paul preached love; we need a modern supplement to Paul's preaching, but the supplement will simply be an extension of the gospel of love and fellow-feeling in modern society's larger and less organically-related structures. If we do this, we can use the training we receive in the church to help bring in the Kingdom in the social order itself. "Christendom" may be over, but only because we are truly going to Christianize the social order entire. It was a poignant and heartfelt proposal, and it fell flat on its face and was seemingly soon forgotten.

Rauschenbusch's program failed, for many reasons. First of all, it failed because of history, exemplified by the apocalyptic conflagration of what we now call the First World War. We typically don't appreciate what a radical change that meant for the Christian world, but consider this: 100 years ago to the day I gave my first lecture—October 7, 2014—more people had been killed and wounded in the combat in Europe in the previous two months (from August 4 to October 7, 1914) than had been casualties in the entire century before that, and the war would last twenty five times as long as it had so far endured, and cost upwards of thirty times the lives already spent. So part of the problem with Rauschenbusch's formulation was that the optimism of control and agency died, as it were, on the Somme. Other events, such as the Great Depression and the persistence of racial and national hatred, seemed also to speak against the idealism of the social gospel. Perhaps, many worried, only the particular superficial configuration of our social injustices could be modified, while the deeper, darker energies that drive group exclusion and competition were, in fact, natural to humanity.[2]

But there were a second set of reasons, famously formulated by Reinhold Niebuhr, about the internal limitations of the view itself—that it purchased social insight and mobilized social energy at the cost of sacrificing a properly theological analysis of sin and grace. Niebuhr's "Christian realist" critique came to be heard as devastating and unanswerable. And while many later criticized Niebuhr himself—either for not being sufficiently politically radical (the critique launched by liberationists in the 1960s), or for not being sufficiently theological (the critique launched by Stanley Hauerwas), the social gospel itself has never really been resurrected; today it seems as quaint as sock hops or pet rocks. And so the social gospel, which actually signaled a massive shift in theological attitudes, became known as a brief enthusiastic but embarrassing episode on the way to a more mature and sober faith, but little else.

The earliest formulations of this profoundly idealistic vision were certainly too theologically simplistic, and politically and psychologically naïve, but we cannot let our critique of this naiveté blind us to all that all later theology learned from this vision. For we critique that thing most vehemently that is most proximate to us, and while all these criticisms have force, they are not radical rejections of the social gospel but rather, as some have pointed out, friendly emendations to it.[3] They share a recognition that individualism is insufficient; that the social order is contingent and demands critical intelligence; and that the churches themselves need to provide that intelligence on their own terms, not wait upon secular thought-forms to provide it for them. Reinhold Niebuhr, Stanley Hauerwas, Emilie Townes and Walter Rauschenbusch all share far more with each other on all these matters than they do with any theologian between their age and that of John Calvin.

A. The Social Gospel Defined

The social gospel is a complicated thing, of course. Many think of it as a perhaps too-simplistic attempt to apply a rather naïve reading of Christian love to all social problems, on the model of the Beatles' song "All You Need is Love." I understand where those assumptions come from, but I think actually it is deeper than that. I need to explain what I mean here.

Traditionally the social vision of the churches was really quite straightforward: we ought to offer "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). By and large the churches for a long time assumed that, so long as the gospel could be preached, and proper worship allowed, the particular socio-political order was a matter of indifference.

When Walter Rauschenbusch named the "Social Gospel," amidst the social tumult of an industrializing America, he named a change that was very important, for the church and society. It had a number of aspects that were idiosyncratic to him, but several that were more perduring, and which we continue to inhabit today. Indeed almost all of theology today, from liberationist theologians like James Cone to communitarian theologians like Stanley Hauerwas, are broadly "social gospel" theologians. That is so outrageous a claim that I ought to explain what I mean.

The social Gospel was properly named, for three reasons. First, it recognized "the social" as a distinct site and topic of theological reflection. Most earlier forms of Christianity had targeted only part of the object that contemporary Christianity needed to engage, Rauschenbusch thought. Christianity should not concern itself simply with the inner individual lives of distinct particular individuals, and whether or not they have been saved; it should look at the whole person, body and spirit, and in their existence as participants in a larger social order, for the gospel aims to create a new social order—the Kingdom of God—not just new individuals. (That he thought that that new community was a present reality, and one durable enough to be expected to grow in coming decades, was perhaps naïve on his part; but the deeper insight, on the scope of the Christian message, was valid.)

2 Such was the belief of Sigmund Freud, for example.

3 Gary Dorrien, *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995).

Second, and entailed in the first, the Social Gospel insisted on the contingency of the social realm, that is, the fact that the social order was not a simple natural given of human life, that it could change, adapt, enrich, corrode. Early social Gospelers, such as Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong, struggled to convince their fellow Christians that the way things are is not the way they always have been and must be. Even in a culture so expressly anchored in revolution as the United States, the tendency to naturalize contingent social orders, such as the divisions and hierarchies of leisured rich and working poor, of race, ethnicity, and gender that structured American society, was a powerful force; Rauschenbusch's argument that the society is in crisis was a recognition that industrialization was changing America beyond all imagining of its past, and the churches needed to understand and work for those changes to go the right way. This is partly why the Social Gospel was so intimately tied up with the emergence of the direct, academically disciplined study of the modern social order, namely, the academic discipline we call "sociology." (It is noteworthy that the field of Christian Ethics did not emerge out of the academic discipline of philosophy, but rather out of the social thinkers increasintly populating the universities around the year 1900.)

Third and finally, and in a way most apologetically, the social gospel insisted that mere secular reason was not enough; that there would need to be an explicitly theological moment in the analysis of our situation and a theological component for any adequate proposed response to it. If the first point above was an intra-theological debate, about the propriety of this kind of analysis as a form of theology, this last moment was a debate in public discourse, about the propriety of this kind of theology as a kind of analysis, a contribution to a larger public conversation. In the burgeoning discussions of "the social" that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it would have been very easy for religious voices not to play an explicit role; it is almost entirely due to the Social Gospel that we now have a self-consciously Christian form of public witness.[4]

There have really only been two analogous eras of such swift and dramatic social transformation, and theological reflection on them, in Western Christian history—the end of the Roman Empire, and the early modern era; and in both of these eras, and only in these, do you see anything akin to the theo-social imagination expressed by the social gospellers, in figures like Augustine and Luther. Nor was this a uniquely North American movement; analogous movements can be seen in figures from F.D. Maurice and R.H. Tawney to Karl Barth and Christoph Blumhardt, and indeed the tradition of Roman Catholic Social Encyclicals was quite akin to this as well.

In short, we can say that the social Gospel was the form that Christian reflection on this-worldly life should take after the collapse of Christendom, in two senses: first, after the de-naturalization and de-divinization of the social order, and the recognition that our social structures were in a way not directly an expression of God's will, but rather up to us, hence if we found them problematic we could, and perhaps should, transform them (thus the connection between social gospel and language of "crisis"). Second, it was a form of theology developed in response to the churches' "declaration of independence," as it were, from the political authorities of the nation-state, not just in their structural disestablishment (however tacit that may be in many countries), but in the sense that those authorities needed to be contested not just over the topics that they claimed illegitimately as their own proper purview, but even over the topics over which those authorities had legitimate concern.

4 And we can be very grateful that this kind of theological and ethical reflection emerged in complicated dialectical conversation with the emergence of the academic discipline of sociology, rather than as part of a professionalization moment in philosophy.

B. The Social Gospel in America Today

In these lectures, I want to carry this tradition forward, in our context. For over the past century, the Social Gospel has simultaneously accomplished much and been forgotten. In this I am broadly in agreement with David Hollinger's account of the kenotic travails of what he calls "Ecumenical Protestantism" in the twentieth century. This is a better (because more descriptive) name for what we have often called "mainline Protestantism." It is ecumenical across denominations and ecumenical outside explicit Christianity. Its deemphasizing of doctrine has been its danger, and its energy. This movement, Hollinger writes, genuinely contributed to a substantial Christianization of the social order, in some ways—by welcoming greater participation of all sorts of people in the American experiment, in particular women, Jews, and African-Americans; by working to create a more humane environment for workers, the aged, and children in society; and even by working to keep America (after World War Two) involved in the world. However, Hollinger argues, Ecumenical Protestantism, in gaining so much of the world, also lost a lot of its soul. Today, he suggests, the moral energies these churches had a hand in unleashing are independent of the churches, he suggests, while the churches are husks of their old selves.

Hollinger thinks this is in many ways fine. I do not. I have reasons for this that I could give to a secular audience, but I will not waste your time with such reasons here; I think we already agree that what our social order needs now is not fewer intentional structures preaching the proper moral formation of humans for the welfare of the city, but more—particularly when we are surrounded by so many cultural forces that mis-shape our understanding of the nature of our agency, deform our moral imaginations, and warp our appetites. What rival sources of moral formation would Hollinger and others point to—Facebook? TV shows? Universities? Walmart? The thought that churches are being beaten out by rival sources of excellent moral formation would be laughable if it were not a crying shame. Hollinger may be right that the moral capital cultivated by the churches has over time gained its own autonomous social structures (think non-church related charities) and has become a free-standing source of moral formation. But if the history of social change teaches us anything, it is that free-standing moral energies, no matter how vigorous, do not remain stable sources of social and individual renovation and reform over the long term; existing without any explicit distinctive social structures that stand in some tension to the dominant social institutions, they are too likely to be coopted by those institutions, digested into the dominant secular value systems they promote, and thereby become nothing more than yet another sub-species of the consumerist identity politics that our free-market culture loves to produce. Moral passion without structure or system is invariably transformed into the fools' gold of exhibitionist status-seeking and inert moral voyeurism. In short, passion without institution is blind, even as institution without passion is inert.

Besides this general sociological point, I have an empirical bone to pick with him. I think he overstates the defeat of the churches, so I think the churches still have a chance. And yet I think his overstatement is little more than an overstatement; that is, his point still carries profound weight. I believe the churches need to figure out how to fulfill their basic vocation—discipleship and evangelization—in light of Hollinger's worry, what was also Niebuhr's critique of Rauschenbusch, and Hauerwas's critique of Niebuhr. For while the past century has been helpful in thinking about the churches' vocation of social concern, it has come at some cost to that more fundamental vocation, of training its members to become fit for the weight of glory that is our eschatological destiny as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. How can the Social Gospel be a part of this broader Christian pedagogy of discipleship?

A renewed social gospel will speak of matters traditionally of concern in this way, but seek to find out how to understand those concerns more thoroughly rooted in the church's vocational context of spiritual pedagogy. As the core of this social gospel, the churches should teach parishioners to see the social world aright, to give them a good "sociological imagination" as part of our spiritual pedagogy. Then, the churches must teach us to respond appropriately with action in properly perceived situations—to care about the social order, both in itself, as its current situation may be so scandalous as to make our efforts at proper worship of God hypocritical and thus offensive to the Lord; and they ought to care about the social order as a foreshadowing of the kingdom, a potential icon, if you will, of the world that is to come. (There is a deep theological argument to be had here, about the relationship between this age and the age to come, and suffice to say I stand with those from Augustine to Barth who hold to a more vital connection than more pessimistic thinkers such as Pascal, and perhaps Luther, will allow; yet I also disagree with Thomist and other forms of natural law thinking, which exhibit an over-confidence in the easy communication between this world and the next.) I hope to show you that a social gospel, so preached, would have diagnostic bite, prescriptive promise, and pedagogical and discipling power, in our churches today—not to mention being a word badly needed in our societies as a whole.

C. Our Contemporary Social Crises

If we want to rehabilitate something like the Social Gospel, what shape will this rehabilitation take? In particular, what social structures in the United States are those most in need of theological engagement?

I will talk about two dimensions of the social order that can well serve us as prompts for this rejuvenated approach to the Social Gospel. Both have been massive though still underappreciated changes in our social order, so talking about them at all is, I think, a step in the right direction. And both have larger implications for the health of our social order that we would do well to acknowledge and consider. But most importantly for my purposes, both present significant problems for the churches' primary vocation in ways that the churches have not fully recognized. I mean the twin crises of rising economic inequality and the criminal justice system.

The first reinforces doubt about the common good. The second reinforces doubt about the possibility of justice. And both are deeply implicated in America's original sin, of racism. Were the churches to take on these challenges, they would lead their congregants on a harrowing journey, through the valley of the Shadow of Death, to hear God's judgment in a new and terrifying way, making them able also to receive God's liberating forgiveness in an equally powerful manner. To confront these facts we would make our religion something other than an irrelevant social club. It would make it dangerous for us, and threatening. It might even give the Spirit a wider field on which to play.

II. The Scandal of Inequality

I start in this lecture with the scandal of inequality. I do this not because I want to hasten the apocalypse, and urge on us some sort of postmillennial confidence that we can build the kingdom, but rather about the local ways in which savage patterns of inequality undercut some basic moral and spiritual energies that are intrinsic to the pedagogical path that defines the Christian life. I will first talk about the facts on the ground, as it were, and then explore, through a theological lens, some of the ways that these facts, and the dynamics they represent, present a deep problem for cultivating Christians today. I end by suggesting a series of general practices that Christians ought to undertake to resist, and counteract, these challenges—general practices that, in their overall shape, represent a broadly social gospel approach to Christian life today.

A. Overview: The Crisis of Growing Inequality in the United States

We know, in general terms, of the crisis of U.S. society over the past decade—we know wages have stagnated. What's worse, the 2008 crash destroyed a lot of the false wealth that had appeared over the previous few years in the form of inflated home prices. The United States is the most economically inegalitarian it has been in a long while, and that this inegalitarianism has as one of its most pernicious aspects the rise of an almost permanent impoverished multitude which has been set adrift from the common good. To show what I mean, I will look at four kinds of evidence: overall social economic stagnation; a decline in individual economic mobility; increased economic insecurity and stability, at least for those in certain strata; and rising economic stratification. The point of unpacking all of these factors is to help us appreciate the deep challenges that this puts before people, believers and unbelievers alike, in the United States today.

1. Stagnation. The median annual income for a male full-time, year-round worker in 2013—$51,939—was a little lower, in 2013 dollars, from its level in 1973, when it was $52,500. Yes, that's right—men in 2013 made slightly *less* than they did in 1973. And this has happened in an era in which worker productivity has more than doubled since the late 1970s—that is, employers are now getting twice the productivity at the same cost. This has not been totally catastrophic for our economy only because women have entered the work-force at high levels. But larger patterns reflect similar trends; over the decade of the 2000s, the median household income actually dropped by 8.9%—effectively wiping out the gains of the 1990s and much of the 1980s. In fact, all things considered, median household income hit a peak of $56,893 in 1999, and has declined ever since. It's as if you worked hard for a decade and a half and were actually making less at the end of it. When economists talk about "a lost decade," this is what they mean.[5]

2. Mobility. Second, the consequences of this for economic mobility—for the possibility that people can move out of their wealth bracket—have been substantial as well. Americans like to believe that what we lack in European-style social security we make up for in American style social mobility. Well, despite what Fox news will tell you, that's just not true anymore. America has less social mobility than European nations like the United Kingdom and Denmark: The most recent studies show that "42 percent of American men raised in the bottom fifth of incomes stay there as adults, substantially higher than in Denmark (25 percent) and Britain (30 percent)." Furthermore, "just 8 percent of American men at the bottom rose to the top fifth," while with 12 percent of the British did, and 14 percent of the Danes.[6] As Elisabeth Jacobs, an economist at the Brookings Institution, puts it:

> Assuming the last generation's patterns continue, a child born into a family in the bottom fifth of the income distribution has about a 17 percent chance of making it into the top two-fifths of the income distribution (i.e. roughly $90,000 in total annual household income). In contrast, a child born into the top two-fifths of the income distribution has about a 60 percent chance of remaining there as an adult. America today is not an "equal opportunity" society. Indeed, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom all perform better in terms of relative intergenerational mobility than does the United States.[7]

The economists Raj Chetty and Emmanuel Saez have established that "intergenerational mobility" in the U.S. (the chances of a child moving into a class different than their parents') has remained essentially static for the last half-century. A child born into poverty (that is, into a family in the bottom fifth of income) in 1971 stood an 8.4 percent chance of achieving a well-off lifestyle by their late 20s (that is, an income in the top fifth); a child born into similar poverty in

5 http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2014/09/16/97203/what-the-new-census-data-show-about-the-continuing-struggles-of-the-middle-class/ See also "The American Middle Class Hasn't Gotten A Raise In 15 Years," 538.com (http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-american-middle-class-hasnt-gotten-a-raise-in-15-years/).

6 Jason DeParle, "Harder for Americans to Rise From Lower Rungs," *New York Times* Jan 4, 2012: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/05/us/harder-for-americans-to-rise-from-lower-rungs.html?pagewanted=all . The original report is by Markus Jäntti, et. al., "American Exceptionalism in a New Light: A Comparison of Intergenerational Earnings Mobility in the Nordic Countries, the United Kingdom and the United States" (2006), available at: http://ftp.iza.org/dp1938.pdf

7 Elisabeth Jacobs, "In the Wake of the Great Recession, Don't Lose Sight of the Big Picture"At: http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2012/0315_economy_jacobs.aspx . *Economic Mobility Project* of the Pew Charitable Trusts: http://www.economicmobility.org/ . See also Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*.

1986 would stand just a 9 percent chance.[8]

So despite our collective belief that we are the Land of Opportunity, the income hierarchy in America is pretty "sticky." That in itself is no big surprise (though Europeans have improved in the past several decades); but what has changed is the importance of that mobility. As thinkers like Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson argue in their book *Winner-Take-All Politics* and Timothy Noah has in his *The Great Divergence*, the US has experienced a substantial increase in income inequality over the same period of time. So the lack of churn is combined with a rocketing rise in the top income levels. Furthermore, because of tax reforms, this inequality is ever-more durably cross-generational, so that the super-rich are now more likely than ever to be the heirs of those who built up the pile of money on which they perch. The "birth lottery" matters more than ever. The wealthy are not themselves the "makers," if there ever were such Atlas-like heroes, but the children of the putative "makers", and as such are quite likely to take for granted the wealth they have always enjoyed, though they pretend to have earned it.[9]

The poor we will always have with us; but they don't have to be the same poor, generation after generation. We may not be able to remove the fact that some get fabulously wealthy and some end up immiserated; after all, it is inevitable that human agency takes different paths in life, and some do well and some do not. But the consequences of our deeds should not enchain future generations. To secure that, we need a fairly high rate of "churn" across economic boundaries, and that is precisely what we do not have today.

3. Economic Instability and Insecurity. Third, while

8 "Is the United States Still a Land of Opportunity? Recent Trends in Intergenerational Mobility," Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, Emmanuel Saez, and Nick Turner), American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings 104:5 (2014): pp. 141-147. They note (on p. 144) that this low level of mobility may extend back to the 1950s. It may simply be that a substantial level of intergenerational mobility is actually quite hard to come by. More generally, see the "Equality of Opportunity Project" run by Harvard and Berkeley; their main website is: http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org .

9 Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—and Turned its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010) and Timothy Noah in *The Great Divergence: America's Growing Inequality Crisis and What we can Do about It* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012).

peoples' hopes of rising through the economic classes have plummeted, the fear of falling even further behind has risen. Objective measures of instability have increased, while long-term employment for both blue-collar and white-collar workers has declined, and with a continuous cultural and legal pressure to reconceive everyone as an individual independent contractor. Furthermore, the decline of manufacturing which had encouraged just the sort of jobs conducive to long-term stability, led to this, as did other changes in relation between workers and management. In such a short-term winner-take-all economy, appeals to a long-term common good can come to seem unrealistic, even irrational.

4. Stratification. Fourth and finally, what growth there is, is profoundly unequal. Consider the growing economic stratification of American society. From the 1940s to the early 1970s, stratification decreased; but then in the late 1970s the gap between rich and poor began to widen again. In 1945 the total income share of the top 10 percent of the working population was approximately 1/3rd of the nation's total income; by 2008, it was approximately one-half. In the period from 1979 to 2007, overall US GDP increased by 125 percent—the economic productivity of the US, that is, more than doubled. But in fact the gains were surprisingly skewed. The after-tax income of the top 1 percent grew by 277 percent, and everyone else grew at rates lower than the GDP. That is to say, the after-tax income increase of the next 19 percent—that is, basically 81-99 percent—grew by 65 percent; that of the 60 percent of the US between the top 20 percent and the lowest 20 percent grew by 38 percent; while that of the lowest 20 percent grew by 18 percent.[10]

One consequence of this is that the middle class has been shrinking for some time. In 1970, slightly more than 50 percent of all households fell within fifty percent of the national

10 Elisabeth Jacobs, "In the Wake of the Great Recession, Don't Lose Sight of the Big Picture"At: http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2012/0315_economy_jacobs.aspx .

median income; last year, just 42 percent of all households fell in that middle band—almost a twenty percent decline in forty years.[11] Another consequence is that the rich and the poor are drifting ever farther apart. By 2011, Median household income for the bottom tenth of the income spectrum had fallen by 12 percent from its peak in 1999; in contrast, the top 90th percentile declined by just 1.5 percent, and the top 1 percent had done significantly better.

This stratification is relatively unusual in contemporary America, in this way: Whereas most forms of difference are becoming forms with which we are increasingly intimately related—so that religious diversity, racial and ethnic diversity, and even sexual-orientation diversity is increasingly common within American families—we are growing less familiar than we have been with people in significantly different economic conditions than ourselves. As we accept all sorts of other kinds of diversity except economic, we increasingly "sort" geographically via income. If you doubt me, compare the people you find in a check-out line at Whole Foods with the people you find in a waiting line at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Only our political alienation from one another is increasing at anything like this rate.[12] Insofar as the United States is, indeed, a "creedal nation," bound together by ideology more than cultural or ethnic continuity, the decay of so central pieces of the national creed as social mobility and rough economic

11 See Alan Kreuger, "The Rise and Consequences of Inequality in the United States." January 2012. (At: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/krueger_cap_speech_final_remarks.pdf.)

12 Consider: statistics suggest that if you are liberal Christian but not a Baptist, it is easier to imagine a Baptist going to heaven than a Republican going to heaven; if you are a conservative Christian but not a Baptist, it is easier to imagine a Baptist going to heaven than a Democrat going to heaven.

equality is bound to have profound effects on national self-understanding.

B. The crisis in poverty in the US

You'll notice that I haven't even talked about the character of poverty in our age. As you might expect, it's gotten harder and harder, and there are more and more poor. These facts about the United States economy are, in general, troubling enough, or ought to be, to get a conversation going about economic wealth in a serious way. But also, as a consequence of all this, the bare facts about the contemporary crisis in poverty take determinate and disturbing shape. Overall, median household incomes in 2010 fell to levels last seen in 1996—the first time since the Great Depression that this had happened. In 2010 the number of Americans living below the official poverty line, 46.2 million people, was the highest number in the 52 years the bureau has been publishing figures on it; and as a percentage, the proportion of Americans living below the poverty line in 2010, was 15.1 percent, the highest level since 1993.[13] (The poverty line in 2010 for a family of four was $22,314.) African-Americans experienced the highest poverty rate, with 27 percent of African-Americans in poverty; Hispanics were close behind, with 26 percent, while Asians were at 12.1 percent, and whites at 9.9 percent. Poverty has also engulfed more children, with about 16.4 million in its ranks in 2011, which amounted to 22 percent of all children in the United States—the highest numbers since 1962, and the highest percentage since 1993. The suburban poverty rate, at 11.8 percent, looks to be the highest since 1967. Also rising is concentrated poverty, neighborhoods where at least 40 percent of the people live below the poverty line; this has increased in the past decade, after declining in the 90s. (Note: concentrated poverty is far more white and native-born than African-American or immigrant.)[14] The number of Americans in deep poverty—defined as less than half the official poverty line, or about $11,000—now stands at 20.5 million, or about 6.7 percent of the population, up from 4.5 percent in 2000.

This is not a matter of inexorable natural forces, but of contingent political decisions taken in the 1990s, such as the significant replacement of government support for

13 For all these statistics, see the HHS website: http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11/ib.shtml .

14 http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube.pdf

nonworking poor families by the expansion of the earned-income tax credit (in the so-called "welfare to work" programs). In this period, government aid began to reward effort, measured in sheer economic terms, rather than need. The implications for care for the poor are dramatic. Consider this: From 1959 to 1973, growth in the United States economy meant steadily fewer people living below the poverty line. That relationship ended in the mid-1970s. If the old relationship between growth and poverty had held up, some scholars have argued, the poverty rate in the United States would have fallen to zero by 1986 and stayed there ever since.[15] Since then, things have taken a quite different course. In the two and a half decades since 1990, cash aid—the giving of a "welfare check"—dropped precipitously; the rolls of poor people receiving such support in many states dropped by 90 percent. The 1996 welfare-reform law imposed stringent requirements upon adults (mostly single mothers) who received that aid, forcing them to either be working or actively looking for work. Without providing the kind of childcare support that would make that a realistic expectation. Furthermore, the last two decades have seen a shift in the nature of government aid to the poor. In 1984, federal aid to poor families was progressive, meaning that the poorest families—the "deep poor"—got the most help.[16] But over the next two decades the aid became "paternalistic," shifting its center of gravity towards the elderly and those with special needs, while the deeply impoverished got less and less. They show that aid to families in deep poverty declined 38 percent, while aid to families in shallow poverty rose by 86 percent. At least since 2004, we as a polity have been helping families in shallow poverty more than we have been families in deep poverty, more to those in paid employment (no matter how lousy the pay) than to those not working (say, for child-care reasons), and more to two-parent families than to single parent families. (This consequence penalizes two-parent working families, which are increasingly common among working class poor, while upper class families that are able to afford one parent staying at home get a tax benefit.) Get to work, we say; but that's no solution, because as I said above, wages have stagnated for three decades, and the most impoverished have little access to the education and training that would allow them to build a career.

All of these social policy changes occurred in a time of economic growth, mind you. But when the economic tide recedes, as it inevitably does, then you see what the effects are of policies like this. And the effects are dire: if you're a single mom who wants to stay at home with your kids rather than work the night shift at Walmart, you and your children will suffer for your choice.[17] And because there are seven million American children whose families earn below 50 percent of the poverty line today, and those children suffer most profoundly the effects of this deep poverty, the direct effects of these policy decisions will be with us until almost the twenty-second century.

This kind of poverty is a scandal to the well-formed Christian conscience. It should not exist, in a rich society like ours. Furthermore, in earlier eras, it was not this way; our age is especially pointed in its meanness to the impoverished.

C. Theological reflections on this

This is important, obviously, in itself—poverty is intrinsically bad, and leads to horrible outcomes for people in health, education, and overall participation in society; it is especially bad in our kind of social order, in which many more social goods, relatively speaking, are monetized than they were a hundred years ago. (Relatively speaking, a greater proportion of "social goods" were free a hundred years ago compared to today; even to get to a shopping mall, you have to travel there, typically by car or public transportation (which cost money) instead of walking (which is free).) And extremes of inequality are associated with all sorts of social malevolences—greater crime, poorer education improvement across generations, less public health, and a general decline in social well-being; it seems to be a vicious cycle.[18] So these are obvious secular reasons to be alarmed. Furthermore, speaking as a cold-blooded geopolitical realist, I want the US to be powerful in the world, as it is not infrequently, if always at best imperfectly, a force more for international order than for disorder[19]; these declines in equality and the social strains attendant upon them damage US wealth and power. My reasons for this are not American nationalism, but rather the simple calculation that, all things considered, American hegemony is preferable to anarchy or hegemony by one of the other contenders. In other words, you may not like US foreign policy today; but just imagine if China were the world's dominant power.[20]

Nonetheless, I don't mean to focus simply on the secular consequences here; I want to ask about how living amidst these realities, and ignoring them, harm the churches' mission, not just as regards their duty to care for the weak and vulnerable, but also in their obligation to be the site in which

Christians most self-consciously inhabit and manifest the grace of God in their lives. For these realities magnify the worst parts of ourselves, and harm our capacities for discipleship—as we become increasingly indifferent to one another and complacent—and the churches' witness to serve all of the community. For whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do as well for Christ.

First of all, our failure simply to recognize what has happened leads us into a blindness about our culture that is itself morally culpable. For by and large, Americans simply do not see the fact of this rising unequal society, all around us. Indeed, Americans continue to think we live in an egalitarian culture: A recent study showed that Americans are far more likely than Europeans to believe that they live in a middle-class society, even though income is really much less equally distributed here than in Europe (where, in contrast, people believe they live in a far more unequal society than they actually do). When Americans are asked what an ideal wealth distribution would be, they prefer one that is actually like Sweden's.[21] We do not recognize the world in which we live for what it is. In this, believers are no different from anyone else. Such unknowing is deeply destructive of the truthful vision Christians are called to develop.

Second, even as we fail to acknowledge to ourselves what our world is truly like, we have begun to feel it in our bones; for living in this context encourages everyone to cultivate a zero-sum, "winner-takes all" mentality. Paralyzing poverty and rising inequality damages the social compact by communicating a powerful message to all members of society that we needn't care for each other in the ways necessary both to help so many get out of poverty, and simply to see one another as colleagues in a common struggle, the struggle to become a true community.[22] If in fact there is no reliable safety net, and if in fact the social conditions are such that those who are not on the top are those who are left behind, even unto their children's children—well, in this case, an attitude of "I've got to look out for myself" develops. An Ayn Randian ethos of selfishness looks increasingly attractive, and so the social order itself reinforces some pretty universally powerful tendencies towards self-centeredness and an apparently necessary indifference towards others. Thus it is that the idea of generosity, of mercy, of grace, becomes a sucker's bet.

Third, and as the flip-side of this zero-sum mentality, living in this condition encourages us to be blind to how we do already benefit from the labor of others, and thus how we

15 Josh Bivens, Elise Gould, Lawrence Mishel, and Heidi Shierholz, "Raising America's Pay: Why It's Our Central Economic Policy Challenge", Economic Policy Institute, http://www.epi.org/publication/raising-americas-pay/

16 In 1984 single-parent families below 50 percent of the poverty line received, on average, $1,231 (in current dollars) per month from the federal government. Those in what could be considered shallow poverty, between 50 and 100 percent of the poverty line, received $448.

17 Yonatan Ben-Shalom, Robert Moffitt, and John Karl Scholz, "An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Programs in the United States" (available at: https://ideas.repec.org/p/jhu/papers/579.html), see esp. p. 11.

18 Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone* (New York: Penguin, 2010).

19 I recognize that this is quite an arguable point, but, dear reader, you don't want this longer, do you?

20 Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Perseus Books, 2005).

21 The study is reported in the Financial Times at http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/33c9aa64-260b-11e4-9bca-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=uk#axzz3F5VMas00 ; the direct link, aber auf Deutsch, is http://www.iwkoeln.de/de/studien/iw-trends/beitrag/judith-niehues-subjektive-ungleichheitswahrnehmung-und-umverteilungspraeferenzen-175257

22 Economic inequality leads to political inequality: see Martin Gilens, *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

ourselves are always already in a position of indebtedness to others. The fact is, not even the richest of Americans can rely on themselves or those they can directly pay to live as they do. (In the words of the 2012 campaign, they, on their own, "didn't build that!") We all need roads, and a postal network and a phone system, and police and firefighters and snowplows and a million relatively invisible structural realities that we do not ourselves create for ourselves. But we ignore these realities, much to our moral peril. There is a Pelagian and Pharasaical strain of works-righteousness in a lot of our political speech. The blindness of people, especially very rich people, to the ways they depend on other people is of course a notorious fact. There are no self-made men, because everyone depends on the social infrastructure that we all collectively pay for, and collectively sustain, or not. But much of the rhetoric that legitimates inequality—we can call it the theodicy of social injustice—appeals to a patina of libertarian justice. As Reinhold Niebuhr put it,

> *Since inequalities of privilege are greater than could possibly be defended rationally, the intelligence of privileged groups is usually applied to the task of inventing specious proofs for the theory that universal values spring from, and that general interests are served by, the special privileges which they hold.*[23]

Consider the invisibility of government support: 53 percent of student loan recipients, 44 percent of Social Security recipients, and 40 percent of Medicare recipients believe that they "have not used a government social program"![24] A dangerous level of self-ignorance develops, which works as an acid to quickly eat away at our capacity for gratitude, and our concomitant ability to care for one another. Thus it is that, in the recent recession, even as those earning less than $100,000 gave roughly 5 percent more of their income to charity, those who earned more than $ 200,000 per year—those, that is, whose income has actually grown in this period—actually went down by 5 percent. (Those between $100,000 and $200,000 lowered their level by about 3 percent.)[25]

Fourth and finally, the pressures on individuals towards living in a zero-sum environment, pressures to deform their self-knowledge and refuse to recognize their involvement with their neighbor, encourages especially white Americans towards a deeper entrenchment in racist attitudes that still so deeply mark our society, and divide us from one another. In tough times, societies are more likely to re-segregate into smaller and more close-knit sub-groups.[26] So this is a fact of human nature, East of Eden anyway. But it is also the case that our more proximate political decisions can exacerbate or diminish that tendency, and determine the particular aspects of our identity become salient in the consequent balkanization. And so we must ask: Given the manifest value to society as a whole—and to each of us as members of society—of these efforts at enabling greater social churn and uplift, why are we so hostile to social programs? Part of the story is surely a legacy of skepticism about government and suspicion of political authority, forces powerful in American history. But part is the consequence of the association of welfare programs with race, a force at least equally as powerful in US history. To be frank, Americans believe that welfare is not an American thing, but a black thing. This association seems to have developed since the 1970s, as part of an intentional plan on the part of the GOP to delegitimate the welfare system.

Government benefits have been racialized, in the sense that white people see government support to be disproportionately directed to minority groups, and especially African Americans. (Consider Reagan's mythical welfare queen, or the "Obamaphone" scam in right-wing media around the 2012 election, or Mitt Romney's discussion of "the 47 percent".) Of course, the irony is that the majority of people supported by government programs are poor rural whites. And well-off white people manage to believe that the social benefits they receive are ones that they have pure and simply earned—for those who rely on the government do not look like them.

In all these ways, living in an increasingly unequal society makes us smaller, meaner people; it encourages selfishness, narcissim, suspicion, hostility, and racial animus; and it discourages generosity, vulnerability, openness and care for the neighbor. It also works towards the subtle undermining of the idea of the common good, not just politically and morally but also psychologically and spiritually.

This is the pathological context facing any church that has, and seeks to inculcate in its members, both a richly sacramental vision of creation, and that urges us to see ourselves and our neighbors not as Ayn Randian Atlases (shrugging or not), but as mutually vulnerable and commonly dependent, sharing a community of care and nurture. Both in the churches' confession of sin and in their practices of giving glory and praise to God, this condition is harmful. It hinders our confession of sin, our confession of our weakness and need of God, our need of one another, and our need of love and mutual support, within and without the churches. And it hinders us from seeing the world as charged with the grandeur and glory of God, provoking in us wondrous gratitude; that hears the world groaning in the labor pains of bearing a new world of redemption, inducing in us a joyful eagerness to seek the kingdom; a sacramental vision that dares to dream that a new and wondrous world is always already coming into being in our midst. This is not a "liberal" or "conservative" agenda: this is a central and inescapable part of the historical Gospel message, and can be something cultivated on the political "right" and the "left" of the churches.

Cultivating this sanctified vision—of a world of grace, and of a humanity humbly vulnerable before God and always in need of one another—is a struggle in the best of times. Today it cannot be done without confronting the powers and principalities that effectively order our social world.

The churches must teach their congregants, and preach to the wider society, that ours is not a zero-sum world; we're all vulnerable and dependent, and in our politics we do share a complicated and quasi-sacramental community. The churches, that is, for their own purposes, must teach a social gospel. ✠

23 Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Politics and Ethics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 117

24 Suzanne Mettler, "Reconstituting the Submerged State: The Challenge of Social Policy Reform in the Obama Era," *Perspectives on Politics* (September 2010), pp. 803-824, at p. 809.

25 See http://philanthropy.com/article/The-Income-Inequality-Divide/149117/ .

26 Benjamin Friedman, *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth* (New York: Knopf, 2005)

A Social Gospel *for the 21st Century*

Part Two of the Zabriskie Lectures by Dr. Charles Mathewes

In the first lecture, I talked about inequality and social goods. I argued that the growing inequality we face is a very serious challenge in many ways, not least to our common commitment to the common good. This is both a direct challenge to the immediate sustainability and health of our social order, and also a challenge to any church which aims to cultivate in its members a sacramental imagination of creation.

Churches should respond to this challenge, I argued, by shaping their pedagogy of Christian discipleship to identify these challenges as spiritual challenges and work to resist them through a liturgically informed way of life.

In this second lecture, I shift from "the good" to "the right," from questions of the common good to simple justice, criminal justice in particular but the possibility of justice more broadly. If the challenge of the common good troubles the metaphysics, as it were, of "we the people"—of whether we are truly a we—this one challenges the meta-ethics of our society—that is, whether we believe that there is justice, or ethics, at work in public life at all.

The lecture is organized on the same lines as the previ-

ous one. First, I want to offer you some data, some information that you may not have encountered, or encountered in this fashion. Then I will offer some analysis of the trends captured by that data, trends that suggest disturbing patterns of expectation about the scope and nature of justice available in our political community today. As before, the problem partakes of both a universal form, in the way it encourages in us skepticism about the possibility of justice in this world, and of a local and concrete particularity, as it manifests in a certain racialization of justice in our country. Finally, as the completion of this discucssion, I will suggest some ways in which an ecclesial response to these challenges might take shape. And as a conclusion to both these lectures, I will end with some general thoughts about why the overall program I have sketched must come from ecclesial institutions, not the overall academy, if it is to come at all.

I. Criminal Justice in the United States Today

A. The Facts

Consider first of all the astonishing explosion in the US prison population from the 1970s forward. From 1925 to around 1980 (and some statistics suggest going back to the 1880s at least), the incarceration rate varied around 100 per 100,000 people (from 85 to around 120 but always reverting to the mean); after about 1977, but especially after about 1982, the rate began to rise; in 2008 it was over 700 prisoners per 100,000, and while it seems to have begun a modest decline in the past few years, it remains over 700.[27] That means that one out of every hundred and fifty people in the United States—more than half a percent of the population—was incarcerated in any given year over the past decade.[28]

Furthermore, this imprisonment system is hugely racially disproportionate. Michelle Alexander has argued in her book The New Jim Crow, that there is a good case to be made that the main effect of the change in US criminal justice since the 70's is to create and sustain a "carceral underclass" of overwhelming African-American men, who are thereby marginalized from the social order and kept out of the "nice" parts of American public life. An African-American baby boy born today in the U.S. has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison. More African-American men were in prison or on parole in 2013 than were enslaved in 1850. And the effects of this carceral underclass echoes massively across generations again, as children of criminals are 7 times more likely to go to prison themselves.[29]

Finally, this system is radically punitive. We incarcerate, but we don't correct. There has been a huge disinvestment since the 1980s in the number of correctional facilities and correctional aid for prisoners, at the same time that the cost of incarcerating prisons has risen or stayed steady at about $40,000 per year. In the past two decades, the emergence of private for-profit prisons has done nothing to improve things, either. Today, US prisons are factories of criminality—the best predictor of whether a person will be arrested in the future is whether they have been in prison before.

Considered on its own, all of this is terrible. But what makes it cruelly ironic is the fact that all this has happened in the midst of a huge *decline* in actual crime rates. From 1993 to 2012, the violent crime rate across the United States dropped by 48 percent. (And not because the criminals have all been locked up, by the way—better policing and changes in demographics have contributed far more substantively to this change.) The last time violent crime was at the levels it is at today, was 1963. Still, poll after poll shows U.S. population believes crime continues to rise.

This is a genuine crisis in the character of American criminal justice, with some large spillover effects across the culture as a whole, and in theological reflection, and reflection in the churches, more particularly. The crisis is twofold: one being the crisis of criminal justice system, which may be a crisis in criminal justice itself in the US; and the second being the fact that there is hardly any attention given to this fact by the churches (let alone academic theologians!) in America—that this crisis has hardly been noticed, and addressed, at all.

There is a curious story about how this vision of "justice" emerged in the 1970s and 80s, and there is a profound gap between this rhetorical presentation of the criminal justice system and the factual realities of that system; but what I want to note here is the almost total lack of engagement, in Christian ethics or anywhere else in theology, with this most palpable, most patent, most intimate and perhaps most astonishing of social changes of our era. Of course, some Christian ethicists do talk seriously about the death penalty in the United States. But in fact this may be a symptom of the deeper problem: for the focus on the death penalty is too shallow to get us a good grip on the full breadth and depth of the malformation of justice; we shriek at the poisonous blossom, as it were, and seek to clip it off; but it is really only the end point of a growth whose roots and vines are far more widespread than we properly understand.

B. Causes of our Situation

This situation has several interlocking causes. First, over the past few decades (since, say, the 1960s and the Miranda era) we have seen what William Stuntz has called, in his book The Collapse of American Criminal Justice,[30] the procedural "rights revolution" which has led to a procedural revolution in justice. Today we have a bureaucratized system of justice, in which not justice, but bureaucratic rationality, is the most highly prized reality. The system is designed not primarily to deliver justice, but to produce convicts like widgets; that is why 95 percent of all criminal cases never make it to court, but are pled out between prosecutors and defense attorneys.[31]

Second, in several different ways most people today are farther away from the criminal justice system, and criminality itself, than they once were. This is so for immediately political, and racial, facts about criminal justice in the US. In brief, there is a large divide in who makes and enforces law, and who gets punished. The same era that saw the appearance of mandatory minimum punishment regulations and severe drug laws, saw the deregulation of Wall Street. Furthermore, policing is itself maldistributed in several ways, not the least being that the "justice" so enforced is enforced by police, and juries, who themselves live far away from the site of policing (as the events of Ferguson, Missouri could remind us from the summer of 2014). In sum, we have designed this system in

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27 See http://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/incarceration1925-2008.html . See also Ernest Drucker, *A Plague of Prisons: The Epidemiology of Mass Incarceration in America* (New York: New Press, 2011), which studies prisons in the US since the late 1960s as if they were a "plague", interestingly enough.

28 See Vesla M. Weaver and Amy E. Lerman, "Political Consequences of the Carceral State," pp. 817-833 in *American Political Science Review* 104:4 (November 2010).

29 Creasie Finney Hairston, "Prisoners and Families: Parenting Issues During Incarceration," report available at: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/prison2home02/hairston.htm .

30 William J. Stuntz, *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

31 For analogous discussions of the crisis of justice in the social order, see Oliver O'Donovan, *The Ways of Judgment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005) and also Richard A. Posner, *Reflections on Judging* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

such a way that we just don't see it at work, because it mostly works on a small underclass of our social order.

But this distancing from criminality is also true in a deeper way, for the moral anthropology of modern liberalism seduces us into a too-optimistic and simplistic vision of the human being, which has as its inverse the stigmatization and alienation of human mis-behavior. There is a long series of studies on this, from Norbert Elias through Michel Focuault to Karen Halttunen's work Murder Most Foul, that chart the ways that we have come to find unimaginable the idea that humans, as ordinary humans, could do evil. Whereas once there was an entire genre of religious discourse—called the "execution sermon"—whose aim was to rhetorically re-enroll the criminal into the realm of the rest of humanity (by arguing, to the non-criminal audience, there but for the grace of God go all of you, for we are all sinners and thus held from murderous action only by God's mercy)—now we have, at best, a "medicalization" model for human malfeasance which explains criminality by medically-determined pathology, rather than locating its basis in an individual's intentional (if utterly inscrutable) voluntary will. Increasingly today, we fail to see any continuity between ourselves and criminals: "They" are monsters, we think, or they are sick; but either way, surely they are not in any significant continuity with us.[32]

Third, the politics of crime is quite pathological in the US today. The moralism with which this topic is commonly discussed in public discourse cries out for engagement by Christian ethics. This moralism appears, particularly, in two different forms. First, what we decide to label as "criminal," through legislation establishing a legal code, is itself clearly and increasingly designed to punish lower-class and non-white citizens while excluding upper-class white collar (and typically white) citizens. As the criminologist John Hagan argued in *Who Are the Criminals?*, in the 1980s, we deregulated finance at the same time that we hyper-regulated drug use, and especially certain kinds of drug use.[33] What we judge criminal, and what not, is itself a matter of racist prejudice dressed up in moralistic sheets. (The well-noted differences between sentencing for possession of crack—rock cocaine—which is seen as a "black" drug, versus "simple" cocaine, seen as a white drug, are simply the most well-known example.) Since Plato, philosophers have pointed out that a community's laws are an especially revealing expression of its values; and so they should reflect what we truly care about morally, however distant and complicated, in a liberal society, that connection may be.

This legal moralism also appears, secondly, in the bare fact that punitive justice almost has a death-lock on the language of morality in American public life. What do I mean? Consider: In no other context or sphere of American public life does a more immediately ethical language appear so apparently naturally than it does in speech about crime and what we continue to call, in our no longer truly excusable ignorance, the "criminal justice system." If the language of "justice" is heard in American public discourse, particularly on the lips of politicians, it is almost inevitably about punishment; and justice seems, in these moments, to be rather securely tethered to the severity of punishment proposed, as if the wisest Solomon were in fact the fiercest Torquemada. It is hard to recall a politician who ever risked looking "soft" by appealing for a more humane, let alone a more merciful, criminal justice system.

All of this cultivates in us a certain moral and political ignorance and cynicism. We protect ourselves from knowledge of what we do to our neighbors in the way of criminal justice by a willed ignorance of some of the most fundamental dimensions of our so-called self-government. Yet this ignorance is a willed disavowal of our duties as citizens. (For consider this question: what would it mean for a nation to be proud of the way it handles criminal justice? Shouldn't that be, politically speaking, the goal of political practice here?)

32 Karen Halttunen, *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

33 John Hagan, *Who are the Criminals? The Politics of Crime Policy from the Age of Roosevelt to the Age of Reagan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Furthermore, insofar as we cannot avoid knowing it, we smother that knowledge with cynicism. This protective cynicism about public justice leads to a corrosive skepticism about the possibility of a truly decent justice system, or justice at all in this world. This undermines people's faith not just in law, but also in the idea of justice itself. (Once again, our socio-political system has implications for our broader psychology and moral character; the very savagery of our justice system encourages us to think better of ourselves than we should.) And so the pathologies of our criminal justice system strongly encourage us to cultivate a moral and political nihilism.

C. What ought Christians to do?

How should Christians exist amidst this context? They should come to know for themselves, and they should show their fellow citizens, what our criminal justice system is like. They should learn what prisons are like, and how the police operate, and how the criminal justice system functions to administer a parody of justice, and how all this relates to the ongoing reality of crime in our society. They may find themselves compelled to be mobilized by this knowledge to agitate for prison reform.[34] But this kind of reformative action is not just a matter of righting a particular wrong; it is also a matter of acknowledging responsibility, of acknowledging our own political implication in the injustices of the justice system, and thereby of reminding ourselves of our own duties as citizens, and neighbors. (Just as Jesus puts himself in the place of the victim and the weak, when Matthew quotes him as saying, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'…'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:35-6, 40).)

Second, they must learn how to render visible what criminals are like. Criminality is human, not monstrous. They must, that is, recognize the humanity of murderers, rapists, and thieves. This will help us, not simply to expand our own moral imagination in a proper way to include our criminal fellow humans; it will also help rectify our own moral self-understanding, making us see the logic of the confession of sin as a practical and moral undertaking.

Third and most abstractly, perhaps, the churches should teach their members to demand that criminal justice be just that—justice. In our courts, it should be justice that is done, not procedural rationality. We are afraid of justice—that is reasonable, understandable; but we cannot, as a society, try to avoid it. While they are not to be shunned, and have many good effects, bureaucratization and proceduralism have had (at least) pernicious side effects in the deliverance of justice, not simply, as criminologists have noted, in the way that they distort the justice system, but in theological terms, in the way that they allow us to deceive ourselves that somehow, with the institution of apparently impersonal systems of justice, we have escaped responsibility for them. But in truth, and in the eyes of God, we have not; and we must take responsibility, in fear and trembling, for the awesome and terrible burden of being God's agents in delivering justice on earth. So we must demand (not least of ourselves) real trials, not a vast majority of plea bargains, and real judgments, not evasions; we must demand that justice be done—a shocking idea in our contemporary political environment.

In undertaking this project, "progressive" and "conservative" Christians can actually come together to agitate for reform of the criminal justice system. For complicated reasons, many evangelical Protestants still understand themselves to need to undertake prison ministries (think Charles Colson). Indeed, some members of the evangelical churches have remained, with some Afircan-American churches, the only ones substantially committed to this part of Jesus's command to his followers. (Chuck Colson's "Prison Fellowship" is an admittedly imperfect, from my perspective, example of this—but it is certainly better than anything the Ecumenical Protestants have heretofore produced.) Certainly the two communities of Christians may differ on how to do this, and what the end of such reform might be; but such differences may themselves become productive, if both sides enter into conversation on such matters with an open mind and heart.

D. Mercy and Politics and the Liberal State

This last point is important, both for its cultivation of justice, and for how in that cultivation of justice, a further, and more intimately Christian, possibility may appear—namely, that of mercy. Both directly, in our own lips and lives, and indirectly, through agitating for political reform, Christians should teach about the possibility of mercy, both for social and evangelical power, as a message about the moral order of the universe. In our worship, and hopefully in our lives, we

34 As I say a bit further on, this is a practice that both conservative and progressive Christians may be able to support; consider evangelicals such as Chuck Colson here.

believe—at least we confess—that mercy is truly available for all of us, though it may need to be articulated in multiple diverse registers; and this tells us, among other things, that strict justice and procedural politics are not all there is. The use of mercy is, on theological grounds, a sacramental reality: it speaks of, and participates in, realities that have no native home in the worldview of sheer zero-sum, quid-pro-quo, retributive justice; but it makes an appearance there in a way that simultaneously affirms the moral energies that make us seek such justice but also graciously relativizes whatever justice we manage to achieve.

This is especially important in the liberal social orders that we all, in different flavors, inhabit today—for better or worse, perhaps, but till death do us part, anyway.[35] The liberal state is all about de-theologizing politics, disenchanting the human sphere, or at least the explicitly political mechanisms within human society. But justice, I submit, inescapably (though not exclusively) entails enchantment: it speaks of a metaphysical reality, the reality of right order. (This is in part why worries about the use of discretion in the justice system are often framed as worries about humans "playing god.") As William Stuntz put it, "legal condemnation is a necessary but terrible thing;"[36] the aroma of the apocalypse hangs about the judge as she or he goes about her daily work. Questions about justice are, I think, inevitably if often covertly theological; in particular, the criminal justice system has an ineliminably ritualistic aspect, as regards its visibly meting out justice for crime through a broadly public judicial process. Political and legal theorists sometimes try to capture this ritualistic dimension in a sheerly immanentist language of "legitimacy," but it seems to me that in this aspect of human political reality, more than all other aspects, we feel the faint brush of ultimate matters. Human politics must of necessity court ultimacy, though in a liberal political era such as our own, political institutions, and the humans who enflesh them, often cannot easily be brought to acknowledge this fact, much less think through how that necessary courting ought to inform our understanding of politics and shape our inhabitation of it.

Furthermore, this use of mercy teaches us about the limits of the polity, and of "earthly" politics, as well. It reminds us that full and absolute justice is not a proper ambition of a liberal society, and so living in liberal societies, on liberal societies' own terms, is a fairly complicated and far from straightforward thing to do. One achievement of the liberal secular state is the prying apart, over several centuries and still ongoing, of the theo-ethical horizon from the secular political one; and a second achievement, less frequently understood and less reliably enacted, is the recognition of our continued need to remind the secular state, and its more vigorous, more enthusiastic devotees, of that distinction, as a bit of rain on their Rousseaueanparade. Law's asymptotic ambition may be to achieve a one-to-one relation between civic justice and morality, but speaking in politically realistic terms, we should not, we must not allow that longing free rein in mobilizing and guiding our legislative energies. Speaking institutionally and somewhat crudely, I mean that, in liberal modern states, lawyers and preachers play separate roles, and should remain separate.

E. Humility, Authority, and the Liberal Order

All this is right and good, but I suspect (check your own response for yourself) such a call for mercy may well raise curious anxieties in us as citizens. Who, after all, are we to show mercy to anyone? Who gave us the right? Certainly these are powerful and legitimate concerns. But I believe they can be met on a cognitive level, yet the anxieties that compel their expression will still remain. These anxieties teach us about our culture, because it bespeaks the larger and ironic crisis of authority in which we exist today. What we might call the consumerization of justice, the managerialization of justice, and the proceduralization of justice, are all not simply bad tendencies in the criminal justice system. They also all express a common fear—the fear of judging, of imposing one's subjective reality on others, or trusting others to do that, which is also the fear of authority, and more precisely of humans exercising authority over one another. This anxiety is expressive of an attempt to escape the human situation, in which we have nothing more reliable than our own apprehensions on which to base our efforts.

We should frankly recognize our desire to make justice impersonal and hence beyond critique, to make it ultimately unquestionably legitimate and hence non-political. Such a longing is an attempt, in Augustinian terms, to hasten the apocalypse.[37] This need not be a surrender to relativism or an appeal to some sort of pragmatic communitarianism; any sane form of theological or moral realism and certainly the ecclesiology of all the major Christian churches and many other religious bodies frankly recognize the fact that our judgments are *our* judgments, and that we are responsible for them, and will be responsible to others for them.

Yet our anxiety about our exercise of authority is ironic, for we live in a culture of expertise, the likes of which we have never inhabited before.[38] The differentiation of roles and functions in contemporary society means that we are required to trust various forms of authority, personal and (apparently) impersonal, more than ever in the past; so that just as our self-conscious acknowledgement that we need to respect others' authority has become cognitively, and perhaps affectively, discomfiting, the reality of authority is coursing through the societal capillaries more vigorously than ever before, and those capillaries extend across more regions of life than ever before. All sorts of regions of human life have come under expert, or pseudo-expert, guidance in recent years. (Hardly any of us can even our own cars these days; and think about the idea that we have "life coaches".) This is part of the reason why even in our judicial situation, much of the matter that the criminal justice system seeks to oversee never comes to a moment of explicit judgment—consider the increasing number of crimes that never come to court—via plea bargains, or other forms of settling matters before they reach the trial stage. Yet our explicit commitments to democratic egalitarianism and the legitimate privacy of the liberal individual vex any straightforward attempt to authorize sheer obedience to authority.[39] So we live in ironic contradiction to the very conditions that make our lives possible.

This is not an escapable condition, but it is good to be reminded of it, and every exercise of mercy reminds us that we are the ones who must in the end judge in this dispensation, and that that role is inescapable for us. This is so individually and institutionally. Individually, the recognition of our duty to judge, and its civic exercise "in fear and trembling," can in fact turn out to be a useful civic pedagogy, as well as a Christian training, for those of us who are Christian, in humility, love, and patience. Furthermore, institutionally, in thinking about the system of punishment, Christian churches will need to articulate a successful theological understanding of justice within which their parishioners can understand their own individual civic duties. Will such an understanding involve Hell? If not, what will it include? Some discussion of civic penal justice is needed in our own seminaries, divinity schools and colleges, and it seems to me that such a discussion is long overdue.

35 My understanding of liberalism may be surprisingly undemonizing to some academic readers, and those influenced by theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas. For more on what I take liberalism to be, see my "Augustinian Christian Republican Citizenship," pp. 218-249 in Michael Jon Kessler, *Political Theology for a Plural Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

36 In William J. Stuntz, *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice*, p. 311.

37 This critique could be expanded into a larger criticism of certain forms of liberalism—some variants of second-generation Rawlsianism, forms of "deliberative democracy," perhaps others.

38 For a somewhat older, but still incisive account of this, see Stephen Brint, *In an Age of Experts: The Changing Role of Professionals in Politics and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

39 Posner's *Reflections on Judging* is pertinent here.

Conclusion to Lecture Two

Both of these challenges partake of the larger challenge in the United States context to achieve something like a genuine community amidst conditions of quite radical pluralism. We have never done this very well, but the depth of pluralism we face now seems to me a crisis and an opportunity, neither of which has been fully realized.

It is charming, and not entirely artificial, to conceive of our age as that age from Rauschenbusch's 1914 book, and the onset of World War One, to today. So conceived, now imagine splitting the century since 1914 at the half-way mark, so that it ran from 1914, to 1964, to 2014. What do we see this way? The Civil Rights Act was signed in 1964, and the Immigration and Nationality Act was signed in 1965, and those two facts about our society are momentous. Those two pieces of legislation signify a radical change in public culture—an attempt seriously and systematically to include something like the full shape of the United States in the deliberative body that putatively governs the United States. In the last 50 years, we've been engaged in a great, long, cold civil war, in which the forces of white privilege have fought tooth and nail to keep their status as long as possible. So far they have done a pretty good job. But perhaps the battle's not entirely lost yet.

Furthermore, that was just about the same time that the Ecumenical Protestant churches crested, in terms of their vitality and their centrality for the lives of their members. So perhaps the churches ought to see the opportunities made available to them, both in discipleship and in witness, in this context as incredibly exciting. As I've tried to suggest, the setting today offers many opportunities for a deepening of the Christian witness, and perhaps a revitalizing of the churches themselves, not least through a rejuvenated Social Gospel of the sort that could participate in the great social, political, and cultural tumult of the cold civil war mentioned above.

Conclusion to both Lectures: The Role of Theology and the Churches Today.

What sort of role can theology and the churches play in this conversation? I think there are at least two roles. First and foremost, theology can offer an indirect and long-term contribution through its support of the churches' practices of discipleship and evangelization: by institutionally shaping those whose practices, habits, consciences, and worldviews are formed in substantial part by the ecclesial structures that theology seeks to inform. This is, as it were, a long-term, indirect contribution to the cultural and political climate. The social scientists, law professors, criminologists, and lawyers who work on these matters are in some important and necessary ways more immediate pragmatists, interested in working within the system, trying to figure out how to make it work better. Churches do not really work at such short ranges; we aim, or should aim, to have an impact decades in the future. And in the United States context, we have failed, over the past forty years, to grapple with several of the largest social changes in American society. (I think it is importantly because we have been captured by an overly-academic incentive structure that prioritizes "difficult" and mandarin work over socially pressing but more quotidian matters; but that is a longer argument, and one for another day.)

The fact that this is a long-term project should not lead us to discount its importance. The "long run" is and must be the primary mode in which the Christian churches influence public debate: not by the immediate introduction or imposition of theological categories or frameworks on such debate, whether or not such categories or frameworks are welcomed by all participants; but rather by the slow and steady drip of shaping minds in the churches and schools and other fora where the theological voice has its primary—not its native, nor its exclusive, just its primary—home. This is the main constructive way that Christianity has influenced the imagination of societies across history: consider the well-known cases of the abolition of trans-Atlantic chattel slavery, the rise of the anti-abortion movement in the US, the temperance movement, the transformation of Roman patriarchy in the fourth through sixth centuries, or the transformations of understandings of wealth and poverty that happened around the Mediterranean in the same era.[40] If we think of the state of play in a culture at some moment as akin to the "weather" at a certain moment, we should think also of climate change as crucial too—the churches should be playing the role of cultural climate change agents, as they have so often in the past.

Furthermore, theology and the churches can also contribute directly to public discourse, for those who have ears to hear; for they can bring into salient view new and hitherto obscure aspects of an issue. (For example, theology has at times encouraged new conception of the person's relationship to the political community and their relationship to their religious and spiritual community, as in the case of Augustine's revision of Roman patriotism in terms of Christian citizenship, or Luther's reconceptualization of Christian conscience.) Perhaps theology can identify certain epistemological perplexities, or psychological conundrums, that humans in a certain setting or context confront, and perhaps theology can do so because its own special idiom gives it conceptual capacities or psychological insight that other approaches may lack. Similarly, the churches may have practical and institutional idiosyncrasies that allow them to interact gratingly but constructively with the social order, vexing in creative ways the smooth functioning of a system designed without full concern for justice.

We will need to undertake both of these kinds of efforts, indirect and direct, in coming years, to respond to a condition that is unlikely to improve in any permanent way, but is amenable to medium-term amelioration, with God's help. And the "we" who needs to undertake this is not university academics like myself, but seminary professors, students, and pastors. This movement, that is, needs to be seminary-led. The non-seminary academy is caught in a kind of "Babylonian captivity," lured away from its heritage by the mess of pottage that is success in the neo-liberal capitalist order, and professors of religion, ethics, society, and philosophy are not immune to these incentives. You are mistaken, that is to say, if you think that the churches can simply out-source their brains to the university. For the university, as hospitable as it presently is to me, is likely to become a far country where theology will, at best, squander its inheritance. The university, while now it can still pretend to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, is fast becoming an institution modeled on corporations and consumer culture; it will not permanently be a hospitable place for the contemplative disciplines, verging on spiritual practices, out of which a vital theological (or even ethical) form of thinking can genuinely emerge. The theological disciplines—the disciplined formation of the Christian intellect—must finally return to the churches, for the sake of their mission and long-term intellectual integrity, perhaps.

In this we can take inspiration from our forebearers, that great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, preached and taught and prayed and failed, by the standards of the world, time and time again, in the service of displaying, not only with their lips but in their lives, a better way, a new way, not of living death but of life, of being called to life, life abundantly. They so displayed the Gospel that, through them, the eyes and ears of others were opened, their hearts appropriately broken in order to be rightly mended, and their ways of life aligned ever-more appropriately to the Kingdom. Such is always the task of preachers; and so I hope that in all this you can find shape, and strength, and guidance, and it is with the saints, and their example, so called to mind that I end my talks and say to you: Go now, and do likewise. ✠

40 For historical studies of several of these episodes, see Kate Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), and Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Page 36—(*Clockwise from top left*): Board of Trustee member, the Rev. Doug Wigner ('72) enjoys conversation with Marian Windell and R. Baldwin "B" Lloyd. The Rev. Becky Zartman ('13) (on the right) and her colleague Erin Betz Shank from the Diocese of Washington, offer a Convocation workshop on "Worship Outside the Walls." Class Stewards gather on the steps of Aspinwall. Front row: The Rev. Lauren Kuratko ('05), the Rev. Julius Jackson ('88), the Rev. Jenny Montgomery ('98), the Rev. Ann Ritchie ('78), the Rev. Robby Vickery ('76), the Rev. Al Votaw ('64), the Rev. Jennifer McKenzie ('04), the Rev. Tim Backus ('09); Middle row: The Rev. Sven vanBaars ('08), the Rev. Al Reiners ('54), the Rev. Jim Sell ('69), the Rev. Becky Zartman ('13); third row: The Rev. Tony Jewiss, ('92), the Rev. Dick Lewis ('63), the Rev. Ted Edwards ('77); Top row: the Rev. Benjamin Speare-Hardy ('90), the Rev. Peter Stube ('79), the Rt. Rev. David Reed ('51), Tom Bailey ('93); the Rev. Doug Wigner ('72), the Rev. Canon Blake Rider ('04), the Rev. Stewart Lucas ('01). Alumni gather in the Chapel Garden for Morning Prayer during Convocation.

Page 37—(*Clockwise from top left*): Front row: Dr. Joseph Thompson, the Rev. Dorian del Priore ('14); back row: the Rev. Ramelle McCall ('11), the Rev. Jim Said ('13), the Rev. Kim Coleman ('01). The Very Rev. Troy Mendez ('09). Rose Mpango ('17), Ernest Ndahani ('16), the Rt. Rev. Maimbo Mndolwa ('00). VTS Alumni gather at the Alumni Reunion Reception to hear remarks from Dean Markham. The Rev. Ryan Kuratko ('06) speaking at his workshop, "The Social Gospel of the 21st Century: Bringing it Home". The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins, Ph.D. and the Rev. Ramelle McCall ('11).

Martha and Mary

By The Rev. Jeanne Hansknecht

Rector of St. Peter's Church, Cazenovia, New York and 2014 Recipient of the Seminary's John Hines Preaching Award

Occasioned by the 2014 Annual Convocation at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia October 7, 2014

Galatians 1:13-24; Psalm 139:1-14; Luke 10:38-42

Holy God, Open our eyes to your presence. Open our ears to your call. Open our hearts to your love. Amen.

As much as an honor as it is to be here sharing the Gospel with you today, my first thought when I looked at the readings was: "Mary and Martha? Really? Could it get more cliché? How I am supposed to tell a bunch of clergy and seminarians that they shouldn't be so distracted by their ministries that they forget the better part—to be at Jesus' feet? It's a tough message to sell to busy people but you are here and not at work—so good job. (I can sit down now. You wish! Buckle up!)"

Besides the impracticality of the message what I especially dislike about this text is that it is told through the sisters. Why them? Why not James and John? I don't like what it says about them or how that message both subconsciously and overtly gets transferred to women today. I will elaborate on that in just a minute, but in doing so I want to frame the conversation using Brian Norman's book, *Dead Women Talking: Figures of Injustice in American Literature*. In introducing his work, Norman writes, " …dead women, at least the more literary ones, constitute a tradition in which writers address pressing social issues that refuse to stay dead. When they talk they speak not only to their own lives but also to matters of justice, history, and dearly held national ideals—whether the community welcomes it or not."[1] Basically, authors have given dead women voice as ghosts in order for them to say the things they were not allowed to say when alive. Now I realize that Martha and Mary are not dead women in today's reading, but they have the potential to speak to very relevant social issues if we give ourselves permission to get a little annoyed, if not outraged by the text.

Believe me there is plenty to get upset about. The first thing we run into is the enormous problem that it doesn't pass the Bechdel test for gender bias. Which is so ironic because this is actually one of those rare occasions in the Bible where the women are both named and the focus of the text and yet the narrative still manages to perpetuate the stereotype that women fall into one of two categories: bitchy or passive. And guess which type gets praised by Jesus? Sure Mary got to sit with the men and that's a breakthrough but she isn't given a voice. She sits. Good women, obedient women, faithful women are passive women. That is not just cliché; it is offensive, which makes it the perfect text to hold up as a "pressing social issue that won't die" because women in this country desperately, desperately need to be elevated right now. In some states women's bodies are more regulated than guns. Doing anything "like a girl" is still a put down and promotes homophobia. "She was asking for it" is still an acceptable legal defense. The onus of safety is primarily on women when it comes to rape, but when women transfer that ownership into other unequal arenas and speak out or act out in their own defense or in defense of other women we get labeled or worse, targeted. From these experiences women learn early on to hate their bodies and we have learned not to trust each other. Like Martha, we don't give our sisters a break for making different life choices than we have. There is still a divide between mothers who stay at home and those who enter the workforce, for example.

People like to polarize and with this text it is very difficult to achieve anything else because we are set up by the author to contrast the two sisters and then make a value judgment, because, well, Jesus did. "Mary has chosen the better part."

Mary is better. It is difficult for me to hear anything else because I am of a generation where being a good girl was a big deal. I wasn't sure what it was to be one, but I was often reminded what it was not. Good girls don't put their elbows on the table. Good girls don't talk about their accomplishments. Good girls don't talk back. You get the picture. What I learned is that good girls don't really do much of anything! And I have spent my whole life trying to reconcile that as a Christian I can be obedient, faithful, and even "good" (whatever that means!) without having to be passive. Just when I thought I was making progress, just when my therapist was proud of me, I see myself in Martha. And I take this scolding by Jesus very personally. I assure you, there are more like me in your congregations so, tread carefully or this will not be a social gospel but rather a shaming one. Shame for being distracted and not putting the first things first. Shame for not dropping everything to pray or study scripture. Shame for being over extended. Shame for thinking that hospitality is a burden and not a gift. Shame for asking for help. And the most ridiculous one of all—shame for worrying. Please, please do not tell women not to worry. I know Jesus did this and he's God and everything so I will give it a pass, but from anyone else it's patronizing. It's not like Martha was concerned that her soufflé would fall and even if she were, it's a metaphor for everything else that may crash around her. Women carry many burdens. We carry children. We carry water. We carry the cost of war. We carry the result of insufficient and ineffective education and healthcare. Of course we are worried! Have you seen the news? Do not shame women for that. We may as well be shamed for breathing. Instead say, "How can I help?"

What really bothers me about Jesus' interaction with Martha is that he completely shuts her down. Granted she was trying to triangulate him, and good for Jesus for not getting hooked, but still there was no pastoral element to their conversation at all. In contrast, a couple of chapters later he talks to the disciples about not worrying or fearing about the future and he's all "Don't fear little flock, it is the father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. You will have what you need."[2] The disciples are called cute little sheep and yet Martha gets scolded. What's the big deal about that? Peter gets scolded all of the time. The difference is that Jesus calling Peter Satan is not the only story we hear about Peter. Peter has many dimensions. But this is the only time we hear of Martha in Luke's Gospel and her shining moment of welcome, her radical hospitality, is tarnished immediately by her treatment of her sister. The only voice we are given to remember her by is a nagging one.

I find this upsetting. Don't you? So let's reframe the story. Let's allow ourselves to make it richer by including what we know about the sisters from John's Gospel. I know this isn't great scholarship to do this but it's important. It's important for Martha and Mary and it's important for all women who have ever identified with them or have been identified by them. Think about how the nature of the story changes when we remember that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were all extremely close friends with Jesus. They were not his students, like the disciples, but his friends. Friends you can drop in on announced because you know you will be welcomed. Friends you can kid with AND talk truths to. Hearing that you are distracted from a friend takes the sting out of the words. Mary may have appeared passive at Jesus' feet in Luke's Gospel, but remember that listening is an active skill and in John she takes a really assertive role from the very same position when she anoints him. And Martha, well yes she's still direct with Jesus when Lazarus dies but she also proclaims his glory. "'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.'"[3] She knows who Jesus is and she's not afraid to proclaim it and if that is bitchy may we all be a little more so.

I invite you to consider that the sisters had rich full lives with Jesus at the center. And he loved them both for being exactly who they were created to be. That is the good news. That is always the good news of Christ. Listen to him say it, "Martha, Mary, Jeanne, seminarians, faculty, clergy, all children of God, I love you! And I am here to ease your burdens. You don't need to worry. I've got this. I've got this all the way to the cross." And if we can't reimagine this text to that end, we risk perpetuating a hollow alternative where Martha and Mary become just two more dead women used as props in a story that wasn't even really about them. And I don't think that was Luke's intent. Mary and Martha were named for a reason, and I think it was to allow them more voice. Because given the chance, these sisters can preach. Amen. ✠

The Rev. Jeanne Hansknecht is pictured with the Rev. Ruthanna Hooke, and the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.

1 Brian Norman, *Dead Women Talking: Figures of Injustice in American Literature* (Baltimore: the John Hopkins University Press, 2013), p1.

2 Luke 12:32

3 John 11: 21-22

Photo by Emily J. Garcia

"Then God spoke all these words . . ."

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

God's Ten Words for Us

By The Rev. Luther Zeigler ('07)

Episcopal Chaplain at Harvard and 2014 Recipient of the Seminary's John Hines Preaching Award

Occasioned by the 2014 Annual Convocation at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia October 8, 2014

As a child of the 1950s, I have a distinct memory of going to the movie theater with my parents to see Cecile B. DeMille's epic film, "The Ten Commandments." Although the movie seems almost comically campy to me now, to a young boy of that generation it was magisterial, intense, awe-inspiring. To be sure, I had learned the Decalogue in Sunday School directly out of my grandfather's copy of Luther's Small Catechism, handed down to me by my father, but it was Hollywood that, for better or worse, etched this piece of biblical narrative in my imagination.

What is less well known about DeMille's film is that in the years following its 1956 release, he joined forces with a state court judge by the name of E.J. Ruegemer to promote the film by erecting granite monuments of the Ten Commandments" all over the country. Judge Ruegemer had founded an organization called the Fraternal Order of Eagles whose aim was to combat juvenile delinquency by doing religious education around the Ten Commandments. DeMille, however, saw a marketing opportunity. And so he bankrolled the Fraternal Order of Eagles to manufacture dozens of gigantic monuments, enlisted the likes of Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner, and Martha Scott to do promotional photo-shoots at the monuments' installations, and thus transformed a sincere, if naïve, program of religious education into a Hollywood public relations campaign.

The story doesn't end there. In the decades since, these granite monuments themselves have become the focus of intense public controversy, as many of them were installed in quite public places, like state capitols. Just as DeMille saw a marketing opportunity for his film, politicians around the country jumped on the bandwagon, endorsing the erection of these monuments in governmental spaces for their own political purposes. And so, one such monument erected in Austin, Texas, became the subject of one of the leading Supreme Court cases on the Establishment Clause, Van Orden v. Perry. A divided Court, in a muddled collection of separate opinions, held that the monument's placement on the capitol grounds did not encroach upon a constitutionally appropriate separation of church and state.

When you examine these monuments closely, however, as my Harvard colleague Michael Coogan has done in his recent book on the Ten Commandments, you see just how far we have come from the text of Exodus and its underlying story. The language of the commandments on the monuments

is carefully edited and sanitized, freed from any theological complexity or nuance. Gone is any reference to the Hebrew people or to God's self-identification as the one who brought them "out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves." Instead, the commandments are presented as abstract, moral principles, and are positioned under a very prominent image of an American bald eagle, holding in its talons an equally prominent American flag.

I don't need to tell you that there is considerable irony here. Words from a compassionate God to the Hebrew people about the dangers of chasing after idols and making graven images of false gods, and about the life-giving possibilities of living in right relationship with God and neighbor, have somehow been hijacked by Hollywood movie moguls and Texas politicians and made into its own pernicious idol, only to be used as one more blunt instrument in ongoing culture wars about national, religious, and class identity.

Lest we require proof of this, we need merely consider recent polls that show that while 76 percent of Americans strongly believe that our Constitution ought to allow for the Ten Commandments to be displayed publicly, less than 25 percent of them can name even four of them. We want the power to assert our views against others, even when we're not sure exactly what they are.

One of the challenges for us as a church is to take on the hard work of re-directing this cultural conversation and re-telling our foundational stories in fresh and compelling ways; and perhaps even more importantly, embodying these stories authentically in our own communities.

As we know, when we place the Ten Commandments back in the broader context of the Exodus wilderness narrative, we begin to see that these "ten holy words" are not abstract moral principles, but rather an invitation from God to identity and purpose, a framework for living in relationship as community.

The fact, elided by DeMille's monuments, that the Decalogue begins with God reminding His people of their deliverance from captivity is crucial, not least because it demonstrates that these commandments are rooted not only in God's power to enunciate them, but also in the redemptive and merciful experience of salvation that speaks to His nature. God has heard a people's cries. Sensitive to their suffering, he has freed them from captivity in Egypt, led them through the wilderness, fed them, raised up for them prophetic leaders, and now assures this once-bereft group of slaves that they are indeed His treasured possession, who will find life if only

they embrace and embody these covenantal words.

Seen this way, the Commandments are a way of forming and nurturing an alternative community, one that chooses to organize itself not around idols of wealth, power, and prestige, but around right relationships with God and neighbor. Indeed, the Ten Commandments' very architecture reflects these commitments. The text literally begins with "God" and ends with "neighbor," and it is in the space between these poles – between a radical commitment to God and compassion for the neighbor—that we are invited to live.

And just as the Commandments fall neatly into tablets about God-relationship (the first four commandments) and human-relationship (the last six), so too at the center of the text is the hinge of the Sabbath Commandment, with its insistence on rest and restoration for every person, animal, and field, revealing that life is more than productivity and work.

The Commandments, as a whole, thus present an alternative vision to life in Egypt, a land where there had been little interest in relationship, regeneration, or rest. In contrast to that life of bondage, this new community refuses to define itself in terms of violence or human power. With these carefully structured Commandments, God makes it possible for His people to view their new lives, not as chaotic and terrifying, but as meaningful and potentially fruitful.

My first call as an ordained priest, long before I came to Harvard, was to serve as chaplain to an Episcopal elementary school. Among my duties was to teach the Hebrew Bible to young children, including, of course, the Ten Commandments. When I first started out, I naively thought that the best way to teach them was to require my students to memorize the Commandments and repeat them back to me. The next year I learned how important it was to embed the Commandments in their larger narrative, as well as to discuss some of the simple theological values that they express.

But it wasn't until my third year of teaching that I came upon the idea of also engaging my students in the exercise of writing their own covenant to shape our classroom life together. And so, we sat down as a class at the beginning of the year and, with the Ten Commandments in mind as a backdrop, we wrote out our own community covenant. The students decided that it was important to start each class with prayer, to develop norms of respect and care that would guide our interactions with one another, and in the midst of our learning, to foster a culture of support rather than competition. And this became the covenant we lived with as a class over the course of the year.

What I discovered along the way is that the best way to teach the Ten Commandments is not to objectify them into hollow words to be regurgitated, but to look for opportunities to incarnate these holy words in shared community life. Rather than writing the Commandments up on a blackboard, or etching them into a monument, or litigating our 'right' to do either, perhaps our time and energy would be better devoted to looking for creative and faithful ways to model these holy words in our homes, our churches, our schools – and, dare I say, in our seminaries, too.

My heart breaks, as I'm sure yours does, as we watch two of our Church's great seminaries (General in New York and Episcopal Divinity School, our neighbor on Harvard Square) unravel in such public ways—and not just because of external realities, but because of internal divisions as well. I don't pretend to understand how it all happened, and I'm quite sure there is nothing to be gained by assigning blame. My only hope and prayer is this: That as a Church we will find our way back to creating and sustaining healthy models of covenantal communities, grounded in love of God and love of neighbor, that give authentic witness to the power of God's Word to change lives. For if we can't embody what we preach, we have no hope of being heard over the din of money, power, and all the other false idols that vie for God's people's attention.

In Christ's name. Amen. ✠

AAEC members gather in front of Aspinwall to celebrate being "all in" for the 2015 Annual Fund. First row: Shelagh Casey Brown, the Rev. Kitty Babson ('92), the Rev. Kim Jackson ('10), the Rev. Kim Coleman ('01); Second row: Sharon Ely Pearson ('03), the Rev. Lauren Kuratko ('05), the Rev. Barbara Williamson ('92); Third row: the Rt. Rev. Dean Wolfe ('92), the Very Rev. Troy Mendez ('09), the Rev. Dorian del Priore ('14); Top row: The Rt. Rev. Cabell Tennis ('64), the Rev. Phoebe Roaf ('08), the Rev. Jim Said ('13).

Theological Reflections on the Human Trafficking Crisis

During a January Term 2015 Immersion Course, led by Professors Mitzi Budde and Katherine Grieb as a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, members of the course spent two weeks studying early Christian historical sites and engaging in ecumenical conversations during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. An important part of the course was a conversation on biblical theology and human trafficking with Archbishop David Moxon, director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Personal Representative to the Holy See.

Following the conversation, Archbishop Moxon commended the group's ability to think theologically about this critical global issue. He requested that members of the course, which included faculty, staff, and students of Virginia Theological Seminary, articulate these thoughts in a document that could be used in his work with the Global Freedom Network. (globalfreedomnetwork.org). Joyfully responding to his request, Dr. Katherine Grieb, Broderick Greer, Neil Norris, and Christine Hord drafted and edited a document of biblical theology on behalf of all of the members of the course.

Reading the Bible in the Light of Human Trafficking

Reflections from the Anglican Centre in Rome

By The Rev. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D. ('83)
Meade Professor of Biblical Interpretation and New Testament

Before the Civil War in the United States of America, there were widespread debates on the issue of the morality of slavery, which consisted largely of piling up biblical texts on one side or the other, pro or con. Those proposing the abolition of slavery had the harder case, because the practice of enslavement is assumed throughout the biblical writings of both testaments, but they ultimately prevailed, since sound biblical exegesis has never been simply a matter of adding up the number of texts on either side of an issue. Instead, Christians have always read the scriptures through a set of theological lenses and with a rule of faith that disposed us to privilege some readings over others. For example, Christians have tended to privilege the words of the Double Commandment attributed to Jesus which combines the commandment to love God with everything in us (Deut. 6.4-5) and the commandment to love the neighbor as oneself (Levit. 19.18). Following St. Augustine of Hippo, who was already following St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, Christians have been encouraged to read with *caritas*/charity, that is, to test our readings of scripture to see if they are loving. Moreover, because we follow Jesus Christ, whom we confess as God incarnate, crucified, and risen from the dead, Christians tend to value "the brother or sister for whom Christ died" (Romans 14.15) The author of Hebrews urges us to "remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured" (13.3). In the same way, Christians remember the words attributed to Christ the Judge of all by St. Matthew in the parable of the sheep and the goats: "just as you did it (or did not do it) to one of the least of these, you did it (or did not do it) to me" (Matthew 25.40,45) and look for Christ in all persons, especially those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned, or otherwise vulnerable. In addition, because St. Paul urged us to have "the mind of Christ" (Philipp. 2.5-11) who identified with human beings for our salvation, Christians strive to behave towards others as we think Jesus would behave or would want us to behave. These fundamental assumptions about reality inevitably shape our reading of the scriptures that have been entrusted to us.

What follows is a list of biblical texts that might be considered relevant to this discussion. There are many others, but this is a starting point. It must be admitted that the biblical record is a mixed one, so the hermeneutical or interpretive keys mentioned above will be important. Some of these are discussed in greater detail below. In the Old(er) Testament:

Genesis 1.27 describes humanity as created in the image of God (see the essay below entitled *Obscuring Icons: The Image of God and Human Trafficking*).

Exodus 1.8–15.20 the liberation of Israel from Egypt (plus many references to this event throughout the scriptures, e.g., Psalm 78.12-16) Many Liberation theologians have understood this event as evidence that God wills the freedom of all people everywhere, although some Jewish scholars insist that the story is Israel-specific and should not be conflated with all situations of oppression everywhere.

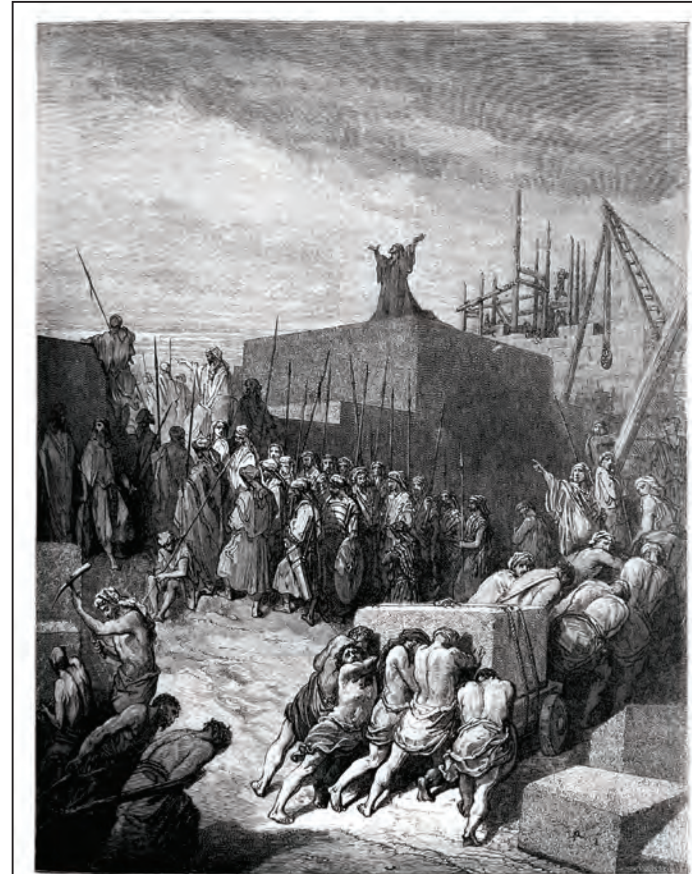
Legislation about enslaved people, in Exodus and Leviticus mainly, that treats them as a form of property, e.g., Exod.20.17. In theory, no Hebrew could be enslaved forever to another Hebrew: those who had been sold into slavery or who had sold themselves into slavery were to be freed when the debt was paid or at the end of seven years or the Jubilee Year (7x7) whichever came first. Those enslaved were entitled to Sabbath rest, as were animals in Israel (Exod.20.8-10). Some biblical scholars have questioned whether the Jubilee was ever actually practiced. It would be hard to find decisive evidence either way, but even if the Jubilee legislation was not widely followed, it still functioned as a standard or model by which the community was shaped and guided.

In addition to debt slavery, people in the ancient world could become enslaved if they were taken as prisoners of war, or captured by pirates. Members of their families would attempt to ransom or redeem them. Importantly, God's action of rescuing Israel from Egypt was theologized as an act of redemption, and God became known as the "Redeemer" of Israel. (See the essay below entitled *The Church Called to Participate in God's Work of Redemption*).

King Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem using forced labor , for which he was criticized in the biblical record. (See the essay below entitled *Forced Labor and the Commodification of Human Lives in Slavery*).

In the New Testament world, slavery is still assumed, and there are several references to people being imprisoned because they cannot pay a debt (cf. Matthew 18.23-35). The Greek term "*doulos*" is ambiguous, describing both a servant and one who is enslaved.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus describes his mission, by quoting words from the prophet Isaiah, as one who is sent to proclaim "release to the captives" but we do not see Jesus enacting this work specifically with regard to those who are enslaved. Jesus is described in Matthew's Gospel as healing the servant/slave of a centurion (Matthew 8.5ff) and in the course of the story Jesus praises the centurion for his faith without engaging the institution of slavery. Because we have no writings of Jesus, we cannot simply assume that in every case the evangelists captured what Jesus himself would have thought or done, but these writings are our only real access to the teachings of Jesus, so the matter is far from clear. There is a great deal of master/servant language in the parables attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. In some of Matthew's parables of Jesus, a household owner/master appears with the ability to cast servants/slaves into outer darkness or even torture them, but it would be a mistake to equate the "master" in the story with either God or with Jesus Christ, as if the social structures of the day were somehow divinely inspired. In Luke's Gospel, known for its frequent reversals of the known social structures, we have a master described as returning home and being so pleased with the work of the servants that he serves them at table (Luke 12.37).


THE RE-BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

When we get to the apostle Paul, the situation is immediately complicated by the question of Pauline authorship. In the seven uncontested letters of Paul, the structures of slavery are assumed but not recommended. Paul's letter to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, his runaway enslaved person, comes very close to requiring manumission, but the argument is ambiguous. Those who read the letter alongside of Paul's letter to the Galatians (see 3.28 and 5.1) read Philemon and 1 Corinthians 7: 21 to show Paul's rejection of slavery; while those who believe that Paul wrote the Pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) and Colossians and Ephesians—all of which have household codes requiring obedience of enslaved people to their masters—reach the opposite conclusion. One thing is clear, however: Paul identifies with the enslaved population by describing himself and his fellow apostles as slaves/servants of Jesus Christ (most of his letters), and he urges Christians to become slaves of righteousness instead of enslaved to sin (Romans 6). He also describes himself as a prisoner of war for Christ, as one led in triumphal procession behind the victory chariots the Romans used to shame those they conquered, thus identifying with those who were enslaved. This bold metaphor hardly endorses the practice or institution of slavery.

The strongest indictment of slavery in the New Testament is found in Revelation 18. Before the description of God's judgment against the City of Babylon (Rome) in 18:20, we are given a list of the luxury items traded by Roman merchants as if it were a sales catalogue. At the climax of the list appears "slaves, that is, human lives" (18:15). (See the essay below entitled *Revelation 18 and the Responsibility of the Christian Consumer*). ✠

Obscuring Icons:
The Image of God and Human Trafficking

By The Rev. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D. ('83) and The Rev. Broderick Greer ('15)

"If one member suffers all members suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:26-27)

From the very beginning, the biblical witness about humankind is that we are made in the image of God. God rejoices in the beauty of the created order, pronouncing it *very* good, and the creation of humankind is the final action of God in this good creation. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). In creative tension with this idea, Christian theology has described Jesus Christ as the "image of the invisible God"—the *incarnate icon* of the God who dwells in heaven. Moreover, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is a sign of the reconciliation of humanity to God, of that which is sinful and finite to the holy and infinite One. This work of reconciliation is clearest on the cross where its vertical dimension represents peace between God and humanity and its horizontal dimension summons us to peace with one another.

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him, all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:15-16, 19-20).

Imagine, if you will, an icon of Jesus Christ, which has hung in a church for many years. Over the course of time, the vivid hues and gold of the icon have deteriorated, making it impossible to read as it was originally intended. Surely the work of that icon's custodians include restoring the image of that icon to its original beauty. Human trafficking does more than tarnish the image of the human icon: it *desecrates* it. Before people are fully enslaved, they are often dislocated, disoriented, and demeaned in some potent physical way. Often they are drugged, tortured, and abused as part of the process of dehumanization. These–once beautiful icons of God - become unrecognizable to themselves and others. Surely, part of the church's work is to restore these lost icons to their former, rightful glory.

From the very beginning of Christianity, the church has sought out those rejected by the surrounding culture and cared for them, founding hospitals, leprosariums, schools for orphans, homes for widows, and other such institutions. One of the church's earliest bishops stated our agenda in terms of advocacy for the poor and oppressed, especially those who had been enslaved as follow:

> God said, Let us make man in our own image and likeness. If he is in the likeness of God, and rules the whole earth, and has been granted authority over everything on earth from God, who is his buyer, tell me? Who is his seller? To God alone belongs this power; or, rather, not even to God himself. For his gracious gifts, it says, are irrevocable. God would not therefore reduce the human race to slavery, since he himself, when we had been enslaved to sin, spontaneously recalled us to freedom. But if God does not enslave what is free, who is he that sets his own power above God's?" ~Gregory of Nyssa, in *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* (original language retained).

We who are the body of Christ, not by virtue of any achievements of our own but by God's gracious goodness, are called to reflect that grace by inviting others into the love we have received. Whenever we lift up our hearts to God in the Eucharist, we remember the body of Christ throughout the world and pray for those parts of the body that are injured, broken, and in danger. The icon of the body of Christ will not be fully restored until every part of it shines brightly in freedom and abundant life. ✠

The Church is Called to Participate in God's Work of Redemption

By The Rev. Broderick Greer ('15)
Diocese of Tennessee

"We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." Romans 14:7-9

In the tradition of Israel, Christians have identified ourselves—and indeed all the people of the earth—as the people of God. More specifically, Christians are marked as Christ's own forever in baptism. Inherent to the trafficking, enslavement, and forced labor of human beings is the assumption that human life can, in some way, be commodified by other human beings. As human lives are tracked down, transported, obtained, and abused as economic and sexual capital, Christians are confronted with a number of questions regarding a Spirit-inspired, Paschal-shaped course of contemplation and action. Time and again, God visits Israel in the work and witness of prophets and sages, reminding them of the intimate ways in which God has sought them out, delivered, and redeemed them. In Scripture, therefore, redemption occurs not as a lofty theological theory, but as definitive acts of Israel's God throughout history.

Christians have read Psalm 72 as a witness to God, in Jesus Christ, as Redeemer. The psalm was originally written, perhaps, about David and Solomon, but its description of the king and the king's son do not fit the historical David and Solomon, neither of whom defended the needy among the people, rescued the poor, or crushed the oppressor (72:4). So both Jewish and Christian readers looked for another redeemer. Christians believe that Jesus Christ fulfills the job description of the Redeemer described in the psalm:

> For he shall deliver the poor who cries out in distress, and the oppressed who has no helper. He shall have pity on the lowly and poor; he shall preserve the lives of the needy. He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence,

THE WEDDING OF BOAZ AND RUTH

and dear shall their blood be in his sight (Psalm 72:12-14)

The people of Israel would also have remembered the story of Naomi, a woman who is left with her two daughters-in-law after the untimely deaths of her husband and sons. Since all three women are socially and economically vulnerable, Naomi encourages her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to return to their families of origin for shelter and food. Orpah takes her mother-in-law's advice and returns to her family. Ruth, however, decides to remain with the mother of her dead husband. Together, they embark on a journey to Naomi's homeland, Judah. When the arrive in Judah, Ruth's loyalty to her mother-in-law captures the attention of her late father-in-law's relatives, Boaz, who looks upon the young woman from a foreign land with favor. This favor leads to Boaz marrying and bearing a son with Ruth, effectively redeeming her for the sake of her own flourishing[1]. This narrative, therefore, stands as a launch pad for a creative and challenging way forward for baptized Christian people, following in the way of Jesus Christ, one of Ruth's descendants.

God's act of redemption in Boaz—making the necessary arrangements for Ruth's flourishing—is an incarnation of God's own desire to purchase and redeem the whole cosmos. Just as Boaz had the right to redeem Ruth because he was related her as a distant family member, and just as God redeemed Israel as next of kin, so in baptism, Christians are "sealed by the Holy Spirit...and marked as Christ's own for ever"[2]. In baptism, followers of Christ are invited to join God in recognizing the ways in which economic and social oppression obscure the image of God in every human being. Entering the waters of baptismal chaos, old paradigms of terror and torture are washed away, clearing the way for God's redemptive love in the person of Jesus Christ. Like Boaz, God watches day laborers and other workers in God's own vineyard, preparing ways in which God might purchase them as God's own. ✠

1 Ruth and Boaz's son, Obed, is the grandfather of King David, an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Ruth 4:13-22; Matthew 1:4-6).

2 *Book of Common Prayer* 1979, p. 308

Forced Labor and the Commodification of Human Lives in Slavery

By Neil Norris
Director of Financial Aid

One of the earliest references to slavery and enslavement for purposes of gain is depicted in the Old Testament, at 1 Kings 1-9 describing Solomon's intent to create something worthy of God's approval for God's Kingdom on earth—the Temple in Jerusalem. Humans were commodified to accomplish a feat that took seven years away from their lives to complete. They were deprived of basic human rights and made to work for free for someone else's intents and purposes. If humanity is truly created in the image of God, is it not counterproductive to use God's likeness as a commodity for commercial and financial gain? 1 Kings demonstrates how Solomon was leveraging power and influence to suppress and dehumanize a people. These are the same tools used throughout human history to institute, justify, and maintain the ownership and servitude of one person or group of people to another: a combination of slavery, enslavement and forced labor like that used by Solomon during his reign over Israel.

In order to effectively combat this commodification of the human race by forced labor—whether enslaved, coerced or leveraged as voluntary—we must understand how we can be agents of change responsible for over 5,000 years of recorded human history. Early civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Sumeria, and Kemet all used slavery and forced labor from spoils of war in conquering and oppressing territories, lands and other people in conquest. Both native and foreign people were used as free labor and forced into slavery by condition or disposition. There were societal hierarchies established to enforce this division between people based on class. Other criteria were soon established to justify the commodification of human beings based on differences instead of acceptance based on similarities. As long as there is a *demand* for goods and services, a supply of resources/labor to provide these goods and services and *profit* associated with maximizing the margin between supply and demand, the most precious of all commodities—human life—will be devalued, diminished, and degraded as a renewably disposable resource. The supply and demand aspects of free market enterprise are not a new concept. They have existed as long as the concept of bartering and placing a value on something. What is the value of a human life, you ask? According to God, it is priceless. After all we are infinitesimal extensions of God and if God is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, does not God have a say in all of this?

In Solomon's context in 1 Kings, there is an attempted justification of slavery for God's purpose and the quantification of slavery as maximized output for God's plan. The precept behind the institution of slavery throughout the ages has been based on religious references that were dichotomous and contextually nuanced. As a faith based community that recognizes our responsibility to humankind, we must work to encumber any profit, gain or leverage associated with forced labor and slavery in the 21st Century. But in order to provide an ecumenical approach to a global issue, we must revisit history to revise it instead of repeating it. ✠

Revelation 18 and the Responsibility of the Christian Consumer

By The Rev. Christine Hord ('15)
Diocese of Central Gulf Coast

The Global Freedom Network states clearly its understanding of modern slavery and human trafficking as "the systematic deprivation of a person's liberty and abuse of his or her body, for example through mutilation or organ removal, for the purposes of commercial exploitation." An important question to ask ourselves then is what role we play in perpetuating an economic system that encourages such exploitation. In exploring this question we can look to Revelation 18:10-20. The city of Babylon, the "great city" has fallen and is burning.

The merchants "weep and mourn" for no one "buys their cargo anymore." Included in the list of cargo that once created wealth for these merchants is the trade of "human lives." This great city, Babylon, "will be thrown down." The wealth will have been "laid to waste" those who trade on the sea will also mourn.

Modern slavery and human trafficking, the 21st century trade of human lives, presents a significant call to Christians to examine closely how our economic decisions either support the City of Heaven or perpetuate the City of the World (Augustine's, *The City of God*).

The Global Freedom Network's Goal to eradicate human trafficking at its source requires a commitment from us, as consumers, to take responsibility for how our lives of abundance, luxury and demand perpetuate global systemic oppression. Revelation 18:10-20 can offer a reference for us to reflect on how our way of life is a Christian witness to the commandment to love our neighbor. How might we shape a society where the "merchants" no longer have anyone to buy goods that are produced at the expense of freedom of human lives? ✠

A ROME REFLECTION

By The Rev. Broderick Greer ('15)

Dean Markham had a brighter-than-usual glow about him. "You can shake a hand that's shaken the hand of Pope Francis," he exclaimed. He had just returned from the Vatican where he witnessed his friend Richard Burridge receive the 2013 Joseph Ratzinger Prize for his exceptional scholarship in the gospels. Upon hearing the dean recount—with joy—his time in Rome, I knew that if the Seminary were ever to offer an opportunity to study in the Eternal City, I had no choice but to take advantage of it. This opportunity came to fruition in January 2015. I flew to Rome one day after completing the General Ordination Exams. Dr. Mitzi Budde and Dr. Kathy Grieb led a group of us to the land of daily Roman pizza, gelato, and cappuccino.

Walking the streets of Rome is a delicate dance of assertiveness and timidity. On one hand, if one doesn't walk out in front of a speeding scooter, then the street may never get crossed. On the other hand, if the scooter driver blinks, the pedestrian may very well find an eternal resting place in one of the catacombs. Toward the end of our group's Roman pilgrimage, we visited the Catacombs of St. Callixtus. With every descending step, our learning community was invited deeper and deeper into the compelling stories of ancient Romans. Each layer of molten volcanic rock was thick with Christian history. This phenomenon wasn't unique to the Catacombs. At site after site—from St. Peter's Basilica to the Pantheon to San Damiano's Crucifix in Assisi—we joined the Church catholic in bearing witness to Italy's liminality.

A part of this liminality is the work being done through the Anglican Centre in Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury's official presence in the Eternal City. Last year, Archbishop David Moxson joined Pope Francis and other leaders of the world's faiths in signing a commitment to end sex slavery and human trafficking, thus creating the Global Freedom Network. In joining forces with other Christians and people of faith to stamp out social institutions of dehumanization, the Global Freedom Network seeks out points of entry that will secure a more just future for all. While the Anglican Centre's work is truly global, its staff does not forget about practicing one-on-one Anglican hospitality. Every time we visited for prayer or a class session, we were greeted with smiles, hot tea, and other refreshments.

In the words of Archbishop Moxson, they are our "Rome away from Rome" and their generosity of spirit will not soon be forgotten. ✠

Members of the Immersion Course to Rome and Assisi, led by professors Mitzi Budde and Katherine Grieb included faculty, students, and staff. From (*left to right*): Linda Dienno, Neil Norris, Douglas Barnes (*foreground*), Daniel Lemley (*behind Barnes*), Brad Linboom, Jan Sienkiewicz, Mitzi Budde, Marcus Walker (*the guide facing Budde*), Tim Meyers, Scott Parnell (*behind car*), Broderick Greer, Kathy Grieb, and Katherine Malloy.

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Ending Homelessness

From VTS 1986 to Zero: 2016

by The Rev. Linda M Kaufman ('86)

I attended VTS in the mid-1980s. We were not known as a hotbed of social justice, and my middler year we got called to the carpet for that. It was a Thursday in January, 1985. The Rev. Jack Woodard was rector at St. Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. Jack was invited to talk to the social action committee. He told us that day that "Virginia seminarians were pietistically insular." Before I could even begin to wonder what he meant by that he went right on to tell us: We lived ten minutes from downtown DC and we never came to the City to do justice work. We came in to go to the monuments, or plays at the Kennedy Center or to the galleries, but we never made the short trip to do justice.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry said that some words we hear stick to us, and that is a sign of the Holy Spirit. Well, those words stuck to me, and I asked a classmate of mine, Mariann Edgar, if I could go with her the next time she went to volunteer at a women's shelter. That weekend she took me to Luther Place Shelter, and that experience has stuck with me ever since. I have never escaped the call to end homelessness. Mariann went on to become the Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, and I work with neighbors of ours who have no homes.

Thirty years later, I am still in the field, but I have learned a lot in those 30 years. When I first ran a soup kitchen, I thought that homeless folks fell into two categories: those who would be in need of emergency help forever, and those who just needed a kick in the butt to move on. And, I thought that I could tell the difference. The longer I do this work, sometimes the less confidence I have in my ability to sort and support folks, but I would like to share with you some of what I have learned.

Find a huge, intractable problem and commit to solve it (lean startup)

In December of 2014, I had the privilege of attending the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine in New York City. They wanted to know about the work Community Solutions has been doing to end homelessness. Specifically they wanted to know our model of taking an innovation to scale. As you can imagine, there are many medical issues that need to go to scale: ending obesity, Ebola, smoking cessation.

I had the privilege of presenting some of those models to the Academy. Ten years ago my old boss, Becky Kanis Margiotta, developed an idea from her work to end homelessness in Times Square. This is the work of "housing first" that started with Pathways to Housing. Before this work, the prevailing thinking was this: As folks get ready for housing (clean and sober, taking psych meds and having some income) we will then help them get their own place. This had been the practice for decades, and we had not moved the needle at all on reducing homelessness. Community Solutions had even renovated a 653-unit apartment building right on Times Square: low barrier housing for people with extremely low incomes. At the time there were almost 100 people living in Times Square. The old model was not working.

So Becky did something very different: she had the outreach workers triage *everyone* living on Times Square, determine those most likely to die. Then she said that those who are worst off go into housing first. Right away; not when they are ready. Right away. Over the past decade that model has spread all over the US. What I learned last week was there actually is a clear model spreading that kind of idea. Housing first started with Pathways to Housing. We adapted it; others adapted it and it spread.

It's called lean start up, which means you don't do a lot of planning and that is perfect for me. I seldom plan. So this is lean start up:

First, we had a terrible problem in New York City: People without permanent homes were dying on the street. We developed an innovation: get folks housed based on acuity,

not readiness. That prototype reduced street homelessness on Times Square by 90 percent. That was our **prototype**. Figure out who has the highest acuity; house them.

Second, now that we had a prototype, we went for a **pilot**. We piloted it in DC, Charlotte, Denver, Brisbane, and LA, and made adaptations to each locality. All those communities found that it worked.

For the past four years I have been working on the 100,000 Homes Campaign. That Campaign spread this innovation all over the country. We spread it to 186 communities in the Campaign. That's number **three: spread the idea**. Those 186 communities housed 105,580 people in just over four years. Boy, did we celebrate that. At the White House, and front and center at a national conference. What a joy!

And number **four** is: **take it to scale**. We are working now on Zero: 2016. Seventy-one communities (including four states) have said we will end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015, and long-term homelessness by the end of 2016. Including in Washington, DC. We are taking this idea to scale.

Prototype, pilot, spread, scale.

So, here's the deal: whether you are running a stewardship campaign, trying to start small groups, making sure everyone in your community has a place to live, or trying to end poverty, give lean startup a try. Come up with an idea; if it's new, test it out; if it works, spread it around; and if that is successful, take it to scale. Don't spend a long time trying it out. Don't wait for twelve data points to determine a trend. Just do it, and keep going. Do your part to bring to earth the reign of God.

For the past four years I have had the amazing privilege of preaching the gospel of ending homelessness all over this country: At conferences, in cities, in churches, and even at the Starbucks in the Atlanta airport. I have traveled to every state in the union except Alabama. If you are reading this in Alabama, please invite me to visit. I'll preach, plan, talk to community leaders, and lead a pep rally. I love this stuff.

Find your genius and maximize your time in flow

In early 2011, I was hired by the 100,000 Homes Campaign to lead a group of field organizers. For the first year, I was the only field organizer so I only had to lead myself – and I had a great time. I traveled and stirred up the crowds, and learned that I am a really good plenary speaker. I have a message and I deliver it well (thank you, Becky Dinan, for that homiletics class). But one day, my boss called me and said it was time for me to take over the field organizer team. And that day I sat at my desk and cried. I didn't want to lead the group. I didn't want to put our goals into Smart Sheets©. I did not want to take responsibility for the budget. I didn't want to supervise anyone.

I had done all those things, and done them well. Over a four-year period, I grew a floundering organization from serving 75 formerly homeless people to almost 500; from a budget of $500,000 to over $7 million; from 15 staff to over 100. And I supervised a boatload of them. I didn't want to do that again. So I told my boss and she reminded me that I was hired to do this, and I should just suck it up. I suppose I should have known there was a problem when the budget email sat in my inbox for weeks without my opening it. I had found out what made me really, really happy and I was not willing to let it go. I told Becky I was looking for another job.

Not a threat; not a bargaining action. Just a recognition that I was happier than I had ever been and was not willing to give it up.

Luckily for me, Becky was learning to live consciously and had just read *The Big Leap* by Gay Hendricks. It is all about maximizing the stuff we do best: living in our genius. You know, the stuff we do when time just seems to disappear. When we feel the power and at the end of the work you can almost feel electricity shooting out your fingers. That kind of genius. We all do that work, and our main work is to do as much of it as possible. That night at dinner at the Farm to Table Restaurant in LA, we finally heard each other. And Becky came up with a plan.

When our virtual team (the staff for the 100,000 Homes Campaign was twelve people in seven different cities) met for our next team retreat at a ranch at Kenosha Pass in Colorado, Becky invited us to divide up our work into two buckets: things we would do even if no one paid us and those things we would pay someone else to do. We put those up on the walls on post-its and then we did the great genius swap. Mike hated doing public speaking; I loved it. I scored that post-it. I hated administrative work; Mike loved it. He scored that one. And in the end, a group of tasks remained unclaimed and we hired someone whose genius was logistics. We were all happier, and the work was done happily, efficiently, and brilliantly. Living in our genius!

Letting the younger generation take over

The first time I visited my boss in Los Angeles, I mentioned that I had graduated from high school in 1969. Gosh, she said, that's the year I was born. What I had known intuitively really hit home: I was seriously older than the rest of the team. I was in my sixties; my boss was barely 40; everyone else was in their thirties or twenties (some just barely out of college). I remember Jessica Marcus's joy when she turned 25 and could rent a car. And she was my boss for a while. And it was a struggle not to be in charge, and not to be asked to be interviewed, and not have time with Anderson Cooper when 60 Minutes covered the Campaign, and not even to be asked to help plan for the future. I had a job, my genius job (remember?) and I had to let go of other things. At my first press conference with the Campaign, I was reminded not to interrupt the boss in public. Yikes. I was no longer the boss.

What I came to realize was that I could not have run the Campaign. It took someone with better technology skills, and more innovative than I. I was doing exactly what I was best suited to do, and sometimes I forgot and got depressed. When I was told that facilitating was not my genius, I was hurt and angry, but they were right. My skills are in training and preaching. But letting go of being in charge, which I didn't even want to do, still hurt. I had gotten what I asked for and I was pissed.

If you are a baby boomer in your sixties or seventies, look around you. See if you could not learn a new role, maybe a role supporting the next generation. Younger leaders will take us places we never even dreamed possible (ending homelessness?). We have wisdom to help but may not have the skills to lead the show. Because I recognize how hard this can be, I have taken to praying for those who are sitting at the top of a once-vibrant organization and keeping it from moving forward. I pray for those leaders to recognize the gifts they have given to this work, to know our gratitude, and then retire, or use their genius in a way that doesn't stop forward progress. I know how hard this can be so I can pray with real understanding. And I pray for those younger, innovative leaders who are coming up the ranks. At the same time, we must share with younger leaders everything we know so we can easily hand over the reins of our industry, or even the church for that matter.

Final word

As I was graduating from VTS I was offered a job working with poor folks in McDowell County, West Virginia. I turned it down because I was afraid. A few years later I was invited to work in homelessness in Washington, DC. I turned it down because I was afraid. When I heard about the soup kitchen job, I figured I had better take it or God would quit offering. I had no idea what I was doing. I took a significant cut in pay. On my first day in the office, my predecessor told me to go in the office and lock the door if I got afraid. There wasn't even a peep hole in the door. I was never afraid of the folks who gathered for a meal. I had found my calling.

Today is the day to ask God what you are called to be and do. Pay attention to what brings you joy, what you do that makes you forget what time it is and wonder where the time went. Ask God to remind you which words you heard in the past that stuck to you. And then ponder those things in your heart.

Alice in Wonderland was a sensible girl and told the Queen, "One can't believe impossible things." The Queen responded, "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." It is time for us to believe, really believe, the impossible: that this country might end homelessness; that a human being could be raised from the dead. And most of all, that God could call us, yes us, to change the world.

The Episcopal Church has been on the forefront of many deep and powerful social changes. The institution has been strong. It is time for each of us as individuals to be as committed as our institution has been. We do not have a tame leader or a tame faith. It is time to act as though our lives depend on it, for they do. ✠

God is Love: A Johannine Motif and Its History of Effects

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The Bible contains many remarkable narratives about God's self-revelation and human experiences concerning important theological themes, such as, creation, election, exile, return, Messiah, church, and eschaton. In those narratives, God is presented as almighty, holy, faithful, or loving. People of Israel and early Christians encountered God in marvelous ways and experienced God in those wonderful terms. Which of these words best characterize your own experience of God? My guess is that most will say "loving."

Of course, God is not only a God of love but also of justice, not only mercy for the poor but also wrath to the wicked. God is the Alpha and the Omega, who creates the world and is in charge of history. All devout believers would have been touched by God in some of those ways, but Christians would have experienced God's love as revealed particularly in Jesus Christ, which becomes a basis of our doctrine, liturgy, and ethics. In the Bible, the Johannine Literature, which includes the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and the Revelation to John, presents several important references to God's love. The word "love" appears 111 times in this body of writings. To reflect critically on the meaning of God's love, I will raise four questions:

1. How is God's love conceived in the Bible, especially in the Johannine Literature?
2. What functions does that concept play in the life of the Johannine communities?
3. How does it affect the belief and practice of the church in subsequent history?
4. What does it have to say to our church today?

I. God's Love in the Bible

The Johannine motif of God's love has distinctive expressions but it shares some basic views with noticeable precursors in the Bible. So, let us begin with the OT.

1. Pentateuch: God's love is revealed in Exodus and Torah

In the Pentateuch, God's love is manifested in mighty acts of power for salvation, closely linked to the spectacular event of Exodus and the granting of the Torah. In Exodus 34, for instance, when the liberated Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai to worship God, Moses was summoned by God to go up to the mountain with two tablets of stone to receive the Torah. Before giving him the Ten Commandments, God proclaimed this about God-self:

> The Lord, the Lord, (Yahweh, Yahweh), a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (חֶסֶד) and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation. (Exod 34:6-7)

The narrative context of this self-revelation of God suggests that the awe-striking experience of liberation from Egyptians and the incredible survival through the desert revealed Yahweh, the God of Israel, to be merciful, gracious, loving, and faithful, as well as almighty and powerful. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob also promised never-failing love, if the Israelites obeyed the Ten Commandments. Like the liberation from Egypt, the giving of Torah on Mount Sinai was understood as another sign of God's steadfast love to the Israelites who had just made a covenant with God to be God's people. Observing the Torah is the right way to respond to God's marvelous love and will keep them in right relationship with God. As demonstrated in the divine acts of salvation and instruction, steadfast love is a character trait of the Lord God.

In order to remind them of God's steadfast love and their duty to serve God with all abilities, the Israelites were instructed to recite the Shema everyday:

> שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד׃
> וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ
> וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ׃
>
> Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deut 6:4-5)

2. Prophets: God's love is revealed in Exile and Return

Among Exilic and post-Exilic prophets, God's wrath is of course a major theme in their prophecy. God's righteous indignation was made known to the Israelites. They had forgotten their covenant with God to worship foreign idols and violated the Torah to commit injustice against others. So, God allowed them to be defeated—their holy city uprooted and their holy temple destroyed—and sent as prisoners of war to foreign land. Even though they deserved the punishment because of their sins against God and against each other, God did not give them up. Their humiliation and suffering in Exile was a discipline from God who loved them nonetheless. It

was tough love from a loving God who was willing to allow God's own name be despised among the goim, the Gentiles.

Thus, the prophet Jeremiah said:

> For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to banish from this place, in your days and before your eyes, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, "Why has the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?" then you shall say to them: It is because your ancestors have forsaken me, says the Lord, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law; and because you have behaved worse than your ancestors, for here you are, every one of you, following your stubborn evil will, refusing to listen to me. Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor. Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, "As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt," but "As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them." For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors. (Jer 16:9-15)
>
> Therefore I am surely going to teach them, this time I am going to teach them my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the Lord. (Jer 16:21)

Listen also to the prophecy in Isaiah 43:

> But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. (Isa 43:1)
>
> Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth--everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (Isa 43:4-7)
>
> Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentation. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isa 43:14-19)

For the prophets, the Exile was understood as a discipline out of God's steadfast love. After teaching the Israelites in a a a foreign land, God will bring them back to their own land.

3. Writings: God's love is revealed in Grace and Creation

The concept of God's steadfast love is so central to the spiritual life of Israelites that it is often found explicit in their prayers and praises. One good example is Psalm 51, in which King David pled for divine forgiveness after being chastised by the prophet Nathan for his adultery with Bathsheba:

> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
>
> According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. (Ps 51:1)

In Psalm 136, the psalmist used "for his steadfast love endures forever" as a refrain in all 26 verses repeatedly to praise God's amazing work of creation and salvation. One can imagine how it was chanted by the leader and the congregation responsively:

> O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.
>
> O give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.
>
> O give thanks to the Lord of Lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;
>
> who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever;
>
> who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;
>
> who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;
>
> who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever;
>
> and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever;
>
> but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever.
>
> (Ps 136:1-6, 13-15)

It is noteworthy that here God's steadfast love is linked to God's creation as well as God's salvation. While in Exile, the Israelites came in contact with Babylonian mythology and other cultural traditions. Their worldview was broadened and they began to see their God as the only true and living God who shall triumph over hand-made idols, as Isaiah 45 has so eloquently argued, and this Lord God manifested love not only in the Exodus event that liberated their ancestors and made them the chosen people, but also in the beautiful world, heaven and earth, that God created for them to inhabit.

4. Jesus: God's love is revealed in daily life and in parental care

In the Gospels, Jesus called people's attention to the daily life to see the presence and love of God, and he described God's love as parental, thoughtful, and forgiving. In the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, Jesus advised his disciples not to worry about food or clothing but to trust in God's care. Because they were God's children, they were more precious than the birds in the sky and the flowers in the wilderness (Matt 6:26-31). He continued to say: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matt 7:11). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught his disciples to pray to the almighty and holy God as "Abba" who will provide them with daily bread, forgiveness of sins, and protection from the time of trial (Luke 11:2-4). The Parable of the Prodigal Son also presents God as the gracious Father who is ready to forgive and happy to welcome the prodigal son back into the family (Luke 15:22-24).

Because God is our Father in heaven who loves us so dearly, it is only right that we return God's love with grateful love, Jesus taught. To answer a lawyer's question about the greatest commandment, therefore, Jesus replied: "You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). This was a quote from Deut 6:5 in the Shema that all the Jews knew by heart. What is notable is that Jesus added one more thing right away: "And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt 22:39). In Jesus' view, loving neighbors is equally important and complementary to loving God, because these two actions combined summarize the requirement of the 613 rules in the law and the prophets. Here Jesus proved himself a wise teacher of the Law.

Most striking of all is his idea to include enemies in the love commandment. Going beyond the reasonable lex talionis of "eye for eye and tooth for tooth," Jesus ordered his disciples to love their enemies and pray for them, leaving vengence to God (Matt 5:44). Why did he issue this counter-intuitive commandment? What he said in Matt 5:48 provides a hint: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt 5:48). Loving enemies was regarded as a reflection of God's perfect character. God's love is inclusive. God has sent sunshine and rain on the righteous and the wicked. Hence, God's children should love not only God and neighbors, but also and even enemies!

5. Paul: God's love is revealed in Jesus' death on the cross

Like Jesus, Paul found God's love gracious and self-giving as a father loves his children, but it was most astonishingly displayed on the cross where Jesus died as a "sacrifice of atonement (ἱλαστήριον; hilasterion) to redeem all sinners (Rom 8:25). Jesus' saving death is life-changing and God's love is unfathomable! Reflecting on the meaning of the cross, Paul asked why God would allow Jesus his only Son to die for the wretched sinners. It defied common sense. Why should the innocent receive punishment for the guilty? It is not fair. In doing so, however, God declared that justice needs to be upheld. Sin has consequences and a price needs to be paid. By paying the price of sin with the blood of the righteous Son of God, God also demonstrated a profound love for all people because all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Therefore, Paul solemnly announced: "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8). This is also why Paul would say: "the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." (Rom 1:16).

Indeed, God's love made available by Christ is the gospel that surpasses all human understanding! God's love does not simply cleanse us from our sins in the past, but grants us peace and joy for now; and it offers us hope of glory in the life beyond death. God's love in Christ is reliable and

everlasting, as Paul exclaimed at a climax of his theological argument in Romans 8:

> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39; see also 5:3-5)

Having received such wonderful love of God in Christ, what should believers do? We should love other people in the same way, especially those in the same community of faith. Saved by Christ, we become brothers and sisters in the household of God. To the contentious and honor-chasing Corinthians, therefore, Paul advised that they should pursue the most excellent way that lasts forever, namely, love.

> If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor 13:1-2, 13).

In the teachings of Jesus and Paul, God's extravagant love for the undeserved sinners echoes God's covenantal love for the enslaved Israelites in the OT. God's fatherly love for the prodigal children and God's gracious offer of redemption through the death of Jesus Christ are life-giving and life-changing. In response to such love, believers should love God with all heart, all soul, and all might as Israelites should do. More than that, God's children are also expected to imitate the perfect God their Father in Heaven by loving neighbors, fellow-believers, and even enemies. Inheriting these incredible prior traditions, how did the Johannine Communities understand God's love?

II. God's Love as a Johannine Motif

The Johannine Literature, that includes the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and the Revelation to John, was written in the last two decades of the first century between 80 and 100 AD[1] and was first circulated in the Christian Communities located in major cities of western Asia Minor. In these writings, God's love is a major motif that informs the theology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics of the Johannine Communities. What did they think of God's love? How did that motif help address the theological issues and pastoral crises of their communities? Let us consider a few texts to see whether we might find some answers.

1. John 3:16 “God so loved the world”

In the Johannine Literature, the most well-known statement of God's love is John 3:16:

> For God so loved the world that he gave (ἔδωκεν; edōken) his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

This saying is part of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus the Pharisee in Jerusalem about “born again” or more accurately “born from above” (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν; gennēthēnai anōthen). Jesus said, without being born of water and Spirit, no one can enter the kingdom of God nor can they understand heavenly things. He was the Son of Man who descended from heaven and would be lifted up on the cross to give believers eternal life, in the same way the copper serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness to heal anyone bitten by the snakes (John 3:13-15; see Num 21:6-9). The comparison to the copper serpent being lifted up shows that God's “giving of his only Son” in 3:16 refers to Jesus' hanging on the cross. This reference suggests that Jesus' saving death, which brings eternal life to believers, is the most telling act of God's love for the world. A similar idea can be found in Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:8 afore-mentioned, “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” Like Paul, John the Evangelist confirmed God's love in Jesus Christ as life-giving!

Also noteworthy is the succeeding verse 3:17, which is an exposition of 3:16:

> Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:17)

This verse makes it clear that in John's view, eternal life and salvation are two sides of the same coin. It also suggests that God's “giving of his only Son” means the coming of the Son of God “into the world,” i.e. the incarnation of the Word of God. Here, I think, we find a distinctive view of John the Evangelist: God's love is embodied not only in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross as Paul argued earlier, but also in the very revelatory life of the Son of God as the incarnate

1 Paul Anderson, “The Community that Raymond Brown Left Behind: Reflections on the Johannine Dialectical Situation,” in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles* (R. Alan Culpepper and Paul Anderson, eds.; Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 47-94, see 77.

God. Jesus Christ is God's love on earth! Since God's love is embodied in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the incarnate God, everything that Jesus said and did, in life, death, and resurrection, revealed God's amazing love for the world. God's love is Jesus Christ! This concept echoes the statement of incarnation in the Logos Hymn: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14). Through his glorious life and sacrificial death, Jesus has made the profound love of the invisible God explicit to the world: “No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known (ἐξηγήσατο).” (John 1:18). Jesus is the exegesis of God! His actions, discourses, and prayer in every turn of his life and death as reported in the entire Gospel of John then expressed God's love in multiple ways.[2]

John 3:16 says, therefore, that God's love is revealed in Jesus Christ the only Son of God, through both the incarnation and the cross, and it is life-giving to all believers in the world. Like the Exodus, John the Evangelist understood God's love as a mighty power of salvation that brings new life to those who are enslaved, but in terms of spiritual freedom from sin and death. Also, for John, God's love is now extended to all peoples in the world, not only the people of Israel. Like Paul, John saw God's love revealed in Jesus Christ the Son of God, but he believed that it was made explicit not simply by means of the cross but also the incarnation. Jesus' whole life embodied God's love.

What would John 3:16 have meant to the Johannine Communities challenged by the Jewish synagogue?[3] The Johannine Communities were facing an external challenge from the Jewish synagogue about the divine identity of Jesus whom the Christians worshipped. The fact that it was set in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus suggests that it could have been read as an apologetic statement about Jesus Christ in their debate with Jewish rabbis. In three ways, 3:16 could be very useful. (1) For the Johannine Christians, Jesus was not only the Messiah of the Jews, but also the Son of God, indeed the only Son of God (1:18), who had come into the world to reveal God's love and died as the Lamb of God to remove the sin of the whole world. (2) Jesus' coming and his death bring eternal life, that is, a life in God which means in reality life abundant in the world (10:10) and life everlasting in the world to come (11:25). Thus, Jesus is the embodiment of God's love. (3) 3:16 also emphasizes that eternal life, the gift of God's love made available through Jesus Christ is offered to the whole world. Thus, Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles were all children of God and legitimate members of the Johannine Communities.

2. John 13:34-35 “a new commandment”

If Jesus is the embodiment of God's love, what does it mean to be Jesus's disciples? It means to follow his example of self-sacrifice to love other people and bring eternal life to them. For the Johannine Communities, in response to their contexts, however, it meant, first and foremost, to love their fellow-Christians, as Jesus said:

> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

The commandment to love one another was regarded as a new commandment, probably because it differed from the first commandment to love God and the second to love neighbors already circulated in Jesus' teaching tradition (Matt 22:37-40). This new emphasis, I believe, was necessitated by the social-historical settings of the Johannine Communities. Compared to the commandment to love enemies (Matt 5:44), it does seem inward and self-interested. However, as a small under-privileged group harassed by the Roman Asian society and the Jewish synagogue, the Johannine Communities could not afford to divide. Mutual love to sustain one another was absolutely essential for its survival. Besides its social function for community-maintaining, this commandment is remarkable also because it sets a very high standard. They should love one another as Jesus Christ their Lord has done to them, that is, foregoing his divine privilege as the Son of God to come into the world and die a humiliated death on the cross for the undeserving sinners, as Jesus said:

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I

2 Francis Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), ix.

3 See the so-called “two-level” reading strategy and the polemic contexts of the Johannine community with the Jewish synagogue in Louis Martin, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979). For a critique of this view, see Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 116-117. Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 40-43, 66-69. Francis Moloney ed., *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* by Raymond Brown (Garden City: Doubleday, 2003), 157-175.

> have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:12-13)

Challenging and difficult as it is, this Christ-like love is a distinguished mark of Jesus' disciples and will bring recognition to Jesus. Thus, it also has the function for community-building.[4]

In the Gospel of John, Jesus also invites his disciples to keep his commandments so that they can "abide in my (Jesus') love" in the same way Jesus has kept God's commandments and "abide in his (God's) love." (John 15:10). The idea of "abiding" (menein) is distinctively Johannine. Just as the Word was with God in the beginning, Jesus has always abided in God's love in his life and death. How does he abide in God's love? By keeping God's commandments doing everything according to God's will. Here, again, Jesus offered himself as a model to teach his disciples how to remain in his love. They should obey his commandments, the new and urgent one of which is to love one another, as stipulated in 13:34-35 and 14:23-24. When they do so, they will abide in Jesus' love. Since the Father and the Son are one, they will also abide in God and be one with both the Father and the Son, an inter-penetrating fellowship in love, which Jürgen Moltmann called "perichoresis."[5]

3. 1 John 4:7-21 "God is love"

Different from John the Evangelist who tried to defend Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God against the Jewish defamation from the synagogue, John the Elder faced an internal crisis in the Johannine Communities, a heart-wrenching schism that was caused by a Christological debate with the so-called "antichrists" (1 John 2:18-19,22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).[6] His main purpose in writing the Epistles was to rally his readers around the authentic tradition of truth to resist the new teaching and bad influence of the secessionists and hold the disheartened broken communities together in unity (1 John 1:1-4). In order to maintain unity in good faith, they needed to love one another. How did John the Elder convince his readers to do so?

First of all, he reminded his readers of their privileged status as children of God. It was God's love that made it possible for them be God's children, as he said:

> See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. (1 John 3:1)

Recalling their memory and experience of God's love as God's children, John the Elder delivered a powerful homily on God's love and mutual love in 4:7-16. This homily begins with a direct appeal to the readers as his "beloved" brothers and sisters, inviting them to "love one another."

> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

Why is it important for John's readers to love one another? John the Elder gave three reasons. First, love is a virtue and a gift from God, so it has intrinsic value of good. Secondly, because love comes from God, love can serve as evidence for a person's relationship with God. Thirdly and most curiously, John the Elder argues that loving one another has to do with knowing God. Indeed, everyone can claim to know God, but only those who love their fellow-believers can truly know God. Why? Because God is love, John argues; only those whose life has been changed by God to exhibit the same love to their fellow-believers can possibly know who God is and what God plans to do. What John the Elder was trying to say then is this: the secessionists may have claimed that they know God and Jesus' real identity; however, the very fact that they have separated themselves from the brothers and sisters of the Johannine Communities (2:19) indicated that they could not possibly know God because they did not even know God as love. If the lack of love for fellow-believers disqualified the secessionists from knowing God and thereby discredited their theological opinions, the remaining members of the Johannine Communities should take it as a serious warning and make sure that they love one another. God is love, and love precedes knowledge. So, true children of God should love one another before they try to understand the mysterious God.

Following the opening appeal to love one another on the premises of "love is from God" and "God is love" (1 John 4:7-8), John the Elder developed a powerful topos in 4:9-16 to argue for "God's love in Christ" which then demands believers to "love one another." What is remarkable is the convergence of traditions on the same motif found in the Gospel of John 3:13-17 (God so loved the world), 13:34-35 (a new commandment of love) and 15:10 (abiding in God's love) discussed above. In the citations below, similar motifs between the Gospel and the First Epistle are italicized and distinctive ideas of 1 John are underlined to make their comparison easy to see.

> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10 par. John 3:13-17)
>
> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:11-12 par. John 13:34-35)
>
> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. (1 John 4:13-15 par. John 15:9-10, 4:42)
>
> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:16-17 par. John 15:10)
>
> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. (1 John 4:18-21)

The parallel ideas in the Gospel and the First Epistle indicate that the Elder shared with the Evangelist similar views of God's love and its ethical implications in the same pool of source tradition circulated in the Johannine Communities. A closer comparison shows that the new ideas in the First Epistle function to clarify the Gospel's points on love and to supply reasons or causes for those ideas. So, it is highly probable that the Elder have used the Gospel (at least the earlier edition of the Gospel) as a major source and added new ideas to develop a coherent topos and persuasive homily to articulate the meaning and implications of God's love. From a Wirkungsgeschichte (history of effects) point of view, the Elder became the first interpreter of the Evangelist concerning God's love. What are the differences between the two?

1. While the Evangelist talked about God's love manifested through the cross and the incarnation, the Elder emphasized it was God who first loved us, not that we loved God.
2. While the Evangelist talked about the Son of God made the invisible God known in the Logos Hymn (maybe in the final edition of the Gospel), the Elder suggested that brotherly and sisterly love among them could also make the invisible God known to the world.
3. While the Evangelist talked about abiding in Jesus' love, the Elder talked about abiding in God's love.
4. While the Evangelist talked about God's love being revealed in Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Elder talked about God's love being perfected or made complete in our love for one another.
5. While the Evangelist talked about Jesus as the savior of the world, the Elder talked about the gift of the Spirit and the confession in Jesus as the Son of God.
6. While Evangelist talked about God's act of love (God loved the world), the Elder argued that love is of God and from God, so he boldly equated God as love itself (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν; God is love). Even though he could have meant it metaphorically, this is theologically significant. In this linguistic expression, the Elder was not talking about God's action but God's nature.
7. While the Evangelist talked about human love as witness to God's love, the Elder saw it a reason for confidence in the face of the final judgment. This reminds us of Jesus' Parable of the Sheep and Goat in Matthew 25:31-46. In the final judgment, the righteous people to be rewarded are those who love

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4 Francis Moloney, Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 161-190.

5 Jürgen Moltmann, "God in the World – the World in God: Perichoresis in Trinity and Eschatology," in The Gospel of John and Christian Theology (Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser eds.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 369-381, esp. 372.

6 Raymond Brown, "Origin of I and II John in a Struggle with Adversaries," in *The Epistles of John* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), 47-68.

the "least of Jesus' brothers" in actions. Faith that leads us into God's grace should bear the fruit of love so that we may present it to God in the final Day of Reckoning.

8. These brief comparisons indicate that the Elder did follow the tradition of the Johannine Communities from the beginning as he claimed at the beginning of the First Epistle (1:1-4). While following and combining the basic views of God's love in the Gospel of John, the Elder also developed several new ideas to argue for the importance of brotherly and sisterly love within his communities. [7] Loving one another is good and right, because God has loved us first by granting us eternal life through the coming and death of the Son of God in Jesus Christ. It is good and right also because it can make the invisible God known to the world. Moreover, it keeps us living in God's love and completes God's love in perfection. It is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit and will prepare us for the final judgment. In short, loving one another is right and necessary because God is Love itself.

4. Revelation: God's love is assumed

The key theological theme in the Book of Revelation is the almighty God who sits on the throne (4:2; 5:7) and will reign for ever and ever (11:15).

Scholars and preachers are often taken back by the violent images and actions in the Book of Revelation. Indeed, there is much violence in John's visions, just as there is much evil in the first century and in all ages. We all prefer love, but we cannot pretend that evil does not exist. For the Johannine Communities under the temptation and persecution of the imperial cult and its social and political cronies, symbolized by the beast from the sea and the beast on the land, violence was the reality that coerced and forced them to make choice of faith on many practical decisions. God or Cesar is an issue with life-and-death consequences.[8] "How much longer, o Lord?" the martyrs under the altar asked God (6:10). So, theodicy was the burning issue in the front. The fact that the Son of Man came to John the Prophet with messages for the seven churches, the secret of the scroll unfolded that God and the Messiah shall reign over the kingdoms of the world forever, and the visions of the New Heaven and New Earth all reveal God's love that is bubbling right behind the skin of the surface of the narrative and the visions. Gorman is right to say: "But in the end, . . . God is portrayed in Revelation, not as uncontrollably angry, but as inexorably just. God's faithfulness to the creation, all humanity, and the church leads to the divine war against evil, Empire, and their lies, represented by the unholy trinity and named 'Babylon'."[9] The almighty God remains in control and has a plan for a new world. Even though we still experience the temptation and persecution of the evil and violence on earth, God's love in Christ will be revealed and in due time all evil powers will be defeated. In Revelation, God's love is thinly vailed, but it sustains all the faithful to keep their hope alive in the face of evil.

5. Summary

Based on this brief survey, I would summarize the evolving view of God's love in the Bible as follows.

1. In the OT, God's love was experienced by the Israelites in the saving act of the Exodus, the disciplining of Israelites in the Exile, and the creation of the world.
2. In the NT, Jesus taught that God's love could be observed and experienced in God's daily care as Heavenly Father for the righteous and the wicked, especially the poor and the sinful.
3. Paul explained God's love christologically, focusing on the gospel of Jesus' atoning death on the cross for all believers, both the Jews and the Gentiles.
4. Following the same christological interpretation, John the Evangelist argued that God's love was manifested cosmologically in the coming of God's Son, the incarnate God, to give believers eternal life. John the Elder went so far to confess that God is love itself!

The Bible also contains teachings on human love as a proper response to God's amazing, powerful and abundant love. They can be summarized as follows:

1. In awe of God's mighty acts of salvation, the Israelites were expected to love God with all their heart, soul and might as people of the Covenant by observing the Torah and praising God always.
2. As the kingdom of God arrived with Jesus, the disciples were commanded to trust in God's care as God's children and to love their Heavenly Father by loving neighbors and even enemies.
3. To keep the church from falling apart, Paul's readers were exhorted to love one another as members of the Body of Christ by sharing their spiritual gifts humbly with the same mind. Loving one another has to do with ecclesiology.
4. To defend their faith in Jesus Christ in the hostile world, readers of John the Evangelist were urged to abide in Jesus' love by keeping his commandment to love one another as he did them so that they could be recognized as Jesus' disciples. Confronted by the internal debate and the crisis of schism, the readers of John the Elder were then advised to remember God's amazing love manifested in the incarnation of the Son of God and to love one another as God had loved them first, so that the Johannine Communities could remain in unity and survive in love.

III. Johannine Love in the History of Effects

The motif of God's love as developed in 1 John 4 became an important basis for Christian theology of love, especially the concepts that (1) God's love is revealed most clearly through the incarnation and the cross of Jesus Christ the Son of God, (2) God's love revealed in Christ is the reason and model of our love for one another in the church, and (3) loving one another completes God's love and makes the invisible God known in the world. How do these Johannine concepts affect Christian view of love? Let us look at a few examples in the history of the church.

1. Augustine (AD 354-430): a homily on Love is God

In Homily 7 of Ten Homilies on the Epistle of John, Augustine took special interest in the theological statement: "Love is God" (4:8, 16). Notice, however, that he used an old Latin translation, the Itala, but the original Greek reads: "God is love"; the subject and the predicate in this sentence are not convertible because of the article used before God (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν). He began by saying solemnly: the scripture that has authority over the church and has edified the whole earth, makes this bold statement, so it is the Spirit of God who said so. Hence, "Now if you dare, go against God, and refuse to love your brother!"[10]

Augustine went on to explain how John the Elder could say that Love "is" God. The Elder's main argument is: since love is "of God," love "is God." Is his argument convincing? To clarify the causal relationship between the two ideas, Augustine used the three persons of God in one in the doctrine of Trinity to explain the logic. He said,

> Of the Father alone the Scripture has it not to say, that He is of God: but when you hear that expression, Of God, either the Son is meant, or the Holy Ghost. Because while the apostle says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5), let us understand that He who subsists in love is the Holy Ghost. (Homily 7)[11]

In other words, the Holy Spirit is "of God" and "is God" and by analogy, love is "of God" and "is God."

In his famous treaty, On the Trinity, Augustine once again used a Trinitarian type of analogy—the mind, the knowledge, and the love—to explain why love is of God and is God.

> And so there is a kind of image of the Trinity in the mind itself, and the knowledge of it, which is its offspring and its word concerning itself, and love as a third, and these three are one, and one substance. Neither is the offspring less, since the mind knows itself according to the measure of its own being; nor is the love less, since it loves

7 Urban C. von Wahlde saw the same tendency in the Elder's use of the traditions of the Gospel, arguing that Jesus came to the world not just to give the Spirit as stated in the Gospel but also to die as an atonement for sin, thus both by water and blood (1 John 5:6). Urban C. von Wahlde, "Raymond Brown's View of the Crisis of 1 John: In the Light of Some Peculiar Features of the Johannine Gospel," in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles* (R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson, eds.; Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 19-46.

8 See N. T. Wright, "Revelation and Christian Hope: Political Implications of the Revelation to John," in *Revelation and Politics of Apocalyptic Interpretation* (Richard Hays and Stefan Alkier, eds.; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), 105-124.

9 Michael Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness, Following the Lamb into the New Creation* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011), 158.

10 Augustine, "Homily 7 of Ten Homilies on the Epistle of John," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* First Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1888), 503.

11 Augustine, "Homily 7 in Ten Homilies on the Epistle of John," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 7, 503.

itself according to the measure both of its own knowledge and of its own being. (Book IX, Chapter 12)[12]

Augustine's "Trinitarian" explanation of God's love reflects his intellectual curiosity about the mystery of love and the mystery of God. It also demonstrates his high regards for the virtue of love in Christian doctrine and practice. Oftentimes, we use the scripture to explain doctrine. In this case, however, Augustine used doctrine to make sense of the scripture. Why did Augustine find it proper to make this hermeneutical move? I think it might have to do with his experience of conversion. It was the inexplicable power of God's love in Christ that had moved Augustine into tearful repentance while he was a sinner living a wanton and purposeless way of life in Carthage, so there is no surprise that the life-changing experience of God's love would also lead him to consider Jesus' commandment to love God and neighbors the chief principle of Christian belief and life.

2. Calvin (AD 1509-1564): A commentary on the incarnation and the cross

While Augustine focused his homily on God's love, it is interesting to see that Calvin in his commentary found faith an important factor in understanding God's love in 1 John 4. He called the readers' attention to God's gratuitous love in sending the Son to the world and die on the cross for undeserving sinners. Even though John the Elder's object was to set forth God as an example to be imitated by us, Calvin emphasized that God "loved us before we were born, and also when, through depravity of nature, we had hearts turned away from him, and influenced by no right and pious feelings."[13] Here Calvin raised a subtle but important theological question. If God's love was revealed to us by both the coming and the death of Jesus Christ the Son of God, does the incarnation that comes first make the cross a superfluous second reconciliation? Calvin went on to argue that both are important.

> God interposed his own Son to reconcile himself to us, because he loved us. For we were yet enemies to God, continually provoking his wrath. What is more, the fear and terror of a bad conscience deprived us of all relish for life. Therefore, as to the feeling of our faith, God began to love us in Christ. And although the Apostle [John the Elder] is here dealing with the first reconciliation, let us know that it is a perpetual benefit of Christ to propitiate God to us by expiating sins. (Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle of John, 1 John 4:10)[14]

In other words, the incarnation provides the "first reconciliation" that dispels our apprehensions caused by guilty conscience so that we may approach God, and the cross of Christ makes the absolution of sins available to us. God's love requires righteousness. We must necessarily come to Christ in whom alone righteousness is to be found, so that we may be persuaded that we are loved. In order to help his readers understand the mistake of the Roman Catholic doctrine of salvation by satisfaction of good works, he wrote:

> The Papists also concede this in part. But then they go on to weaken and almost annihilate this grace by introducing their fictitious satisfactions. But if men redeem themselves by their works, Christ cannot be the unique propitiation, as he is called here. (Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle, 1 John 4:10)[15]

Calvin's question derived from the soteriological debate in the Reformation may shed light on the controversial "theological reconstruction" that Ding Guangxun (aka. K. H. Ting), the last Anglican Bishop of China and leader of the Three Self Patriotic Church, advocated. Bishop Ding proposed to replace the doctrine of "justification by faith" with "salvation by love."[16] He followed what he believed to be the Johannine-Anglican emphasis of God's love rather than the Pauline-Lutheran emphasis of divine justice in an effort to reconstruct a new doctrine of salvation that may be more inviting than threatening to Chinese people, especially in the Communist Society of China. In a hypothetical conversation, I think Calvin might say to the debate in China that both concepts are necessary. God's love is manifested in both the incarnation and the cross to show God's love and maintain God's justice. The incarnation offers prevenient grace to invite us to see God's love and the cross offers atonement to redeem us from sins.

Calvin also commented on the comforting words that read, "in love there is no fear':

> But it may be asked, When does perfect love cast out fear? For we are endued with only a taste of divine love for us, and therefore can never be wholly freed from fear. I reply: Although fear is not completely shaken off, yet, when we flee to God as a quiet harbor, safe and free from all danger of shipwreck and tempest, fear really is cast out, for it gives place to faith. Therefore, fear is not cast out in such a way that it does not assault our minds; but it is so cast out that it does not disturb us or hamper the peace that we obtain by faith. . . . On the contrary, the apostle [John the Elder] is telling us that when anyone fears (that is, has a disturbed mind) it is the fault of unbelief. For when the love of God is properly known, it calms the mind. (Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle, 1 John 4:18)[17]

In these few excerpts, we can see clearly how faith serves as the hermeneutic key with which Calvin tried to unlock the meaning of 1 John 4 for his contemporaries during Reformation when the debate on the relationship between faith and works was a burning issue that divided the church. God's love is freely given in Christ, so faith is important. For Calvin, loving one another should be practiced out of faith, not as works to demand reward from God. Peace of mind, as well as salvation of soul, comes from the reassuring love of God.

3. Charles Wesley (1707-1788): a hymn entitled "Jesus, Love divine"

Charles Wesley is well known for writing popular hymns that converts and renews many Christian lives. His beautiful and memorable hymns are scriptures on rhymes, which reflect his insightful reading of the Bible. One of his most famous hymns, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,"[18] often used in Advent season, is a perceptive interpretation of the Johannine view of God's love revealed in the incarnation and the cross of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down; fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown! Jesus thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art; visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast! Let us all in thee inherit; let us find that second rest. Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.
3. Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive; suddenly return and never, nevermore thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above, pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.
4. Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be. Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee; changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

In this hymn, Charles Wesley captured what John the Elder tried to preach in the First Epistle. Jesus Christ the Son of God, in his coming to the world and his death on the cross, has revealed himself to be the incarnate God who is Love. Verse 1 speaks of the "Love divine" that grants us salvation and calms our trembling heart of fear. As Calvin has argued, it refers to the "first reconciliation" (or the "prevenient grace") that expels our apprehension and leads us to confess our sins before Christ and accept the grace of his atonement from the cross by faith. This hymn also prays for the coming of the loving Spirit of God to set our hearts free (verse 2) and the giving of eternal life so that we can serve God in heaven incessantly (verse 3). Finally, verse 4 expresses the desire to be renewed until the End in heaven when we may "cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise."

Even though Augustine, Calvin, and Charles Wesley all recognize that John the Elder's final purpose in talking about God's love was to encourage his readers to love for one another, they each also found important messages for their

12 Augustine, "On the Trinity," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 3. Edited by Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887), 133.

13 Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 291.

14 Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle of John*, 292.

15 Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle of John*, 292.

16 K. H. Ting, "Theology Adapting to a Changing Culture," in *God is Love: Collected Writings of Bishop K. H. Ting* (Colorado Springs, Cook Communications Ministries International, 2004), 451-456. Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 333-369.

17 Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John and the First Epistle of John*, 296.

18 *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), No. 384.

times. The specific contexts of their homily, commentary, and hymn—the debate over Trinity, the importance of faith, and the devotion to Jesus—contribute to their discovery of fresh meanings out of the same text, as fresh water that continues to gush out of the same source of spring. And in different ways, they enrich the Christian understanding of God's love in Christ and the ethos of loving one another in the church.

IV. Final Reflection on the Johannine Love

This brief study of the Johannine motif of God's love and its history of effects reveals the multi-dimensional meaning of a key theological theme in Christian doctrine and ethic. God's love has been revealed to us in mighty salvation, tough discipline, Fatherly love, and above all in the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God's love demands us to keep the Torah and to imitate God in loving one another. It also reveals the mystery of God's character, reassures us of salvation and calms our minds, and inspires us to pray and praise God.

While exploring a major theme in biblical theology, this study also discloses four important hermeneutical principles in biblical interpretation.

1. Canonical. A key motif often evolves as a theological tradition and presents new meanings in different biblical narratives. OT is not only the source but also the language of the NT authors. So, the whole canon should be considered.
2. Contextual. Theology is context-specific, so each text pertaining to the motif should be understood in its social-historical context to make sure that its theological view is properly explained.
3. History of Effects. Biblical interpretation has a powerful claim on believers' mind and life and has created serious social consequences. So, major interpretations of the motif that appears in influential commentaries, sermons, and hymns deserve a critical review to help us teach or preach it faithfully, ethically, and effectively.
4. Incarnational. In the end, our purpose for reading and researching the Bible is to articulate the word of God that is life-giving and life-transforming. As the living Word of God, Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the world to reveal God's love and make available eternal life through his death, so should the written word of God, the Bible, be carefully listened and its teaching be practiced so that God's love may be manifested in our love for one another! ✠

Above: The Rev. Lloyd "Tony" Lewis, Ph.D. ('72), who held the Molly Laird Downs Chair before retiring in 2012 is pictured with John Yieh at his inaugural lecture.

Left: Friends of Prof. John Yieh from the Taiwanese Presbyterian Churches in DC and Virginia attend Yieh's inaugural lecture.

Dogmatics for a New Millennium: Creation, Christology, and Ecclesiology

By The Rev. Katherine Sonderegger, Ph.D.

Occasioned by the William Meade Chair in Systematic Theology Lecture

April 10, 2015

'Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is One; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."
(Deuteronomy 6.4)

At the head of Israel's Scriptures stands this majestic teaching, that the LORD our God is One; it is the golden verse, the capstone and foundation of all Holy Scripture. So central is this teaching to the people Israel that it has come to be known as the Shema, the Hearing, from its first word, its first commandment: Shema, Hear, O Israel. Just this, that the LORD is One, is the Doctrine of God in Holy Scripture—we can speak that boldly, for it is that strong. We need not draw back one inch, as Christians, from this bold claim, for the Gospels record our Lord Jesus Christ teaching the scribes and disciples that the Shema is the greatest of all commandments. 'One of the scribes drew near' St. Mark tells us, and 'asked Jesus, 'Which commandment is first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' (Mk 12. 28-30) Archbishop Cranmer, with his uncanny ear for Scriptural idiom, faithfully reflected the profound gravitational pull of the LORD's Oneness in all Holy Scripture: Cranmer begins the Eucharistic liturgy with the Summary of Law, the Shema in its Matthean dress. The teaching of Divine Oneness is doctrine, certainly the touchstone of all Biblical teaching. But it is not doctrine alone! It is commandment, too, an ethical teaching, Torah or Law: it is the Doctrine of God joined to the life of love, fealty, obedience, and praise that constitute the people of God before its LORD. We know that God is One, Scripture tells us; and to know that truth is to be changed, altogether and at the root. This teaching is the shining claim upon all our lives, upon the life of the whole earth.

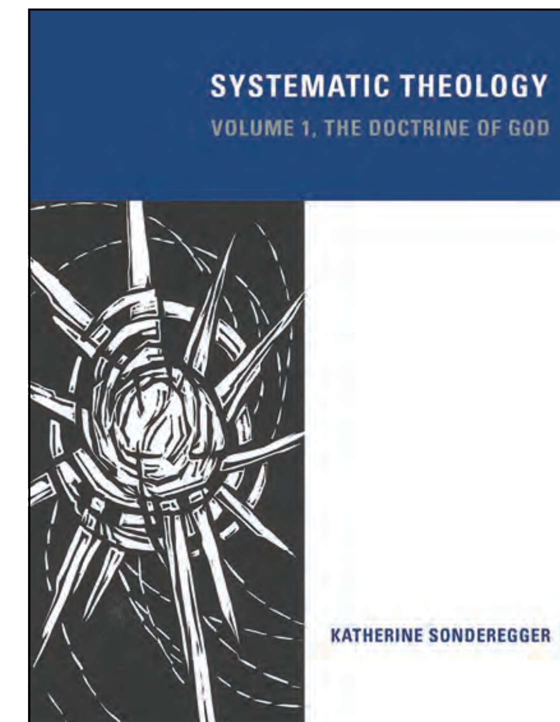
The Doctrine of God, as set forth in Christian dogmatics, is nothing but an exposition of this One Commandment. Nothing but, you say? Yes, I do indeed mean this statement in all its stark radicality. The Doctrine of God in Christian theology, as in all Abrahamic faiths, rests upon, delights in, and devotes itself without measure to the Surpassing Oneness of Almighty God. The Doctrine of the Divine Attributes or Perfections—the Doctrine that sets out how we are to praise and describe and name Almighty God—and the Doctrine of God's mighty works ad extra, beyond Himself to the world in Creation, and in Providential Care and in Redemption, all these are unfoldings of the Divine Oneness. But I believe we must go further still. The Doctrine of Trinity, the Christian Mystery of the Doctrine of God, must also, I say, be a Doctrine of Divine Oneness. All God's Ways and Nature and Being are One.

Now some of you here may find yourself a bit disappointed at this early stage of my talk. Why all the big noise, you may say, about something that is perfectly true, and I have known from my youth upward. Of course God is One! We are not animists, are we; or polytheists? Every stream or star does not speak to us of a new Divine Name, does it; nor is every grove haunted by spirits and sprites? We are not practitioners of some magical art; nor do we cotton onto a cosmos riven into two by archetypes of male and female polarities, say, or by primal forces of light and dark, good and evil. We may not even believe in God, you may say. But if we did, it would most certainly be One! The Utterly Unique and Undivided Deity is the only candidate, you might say, for Divine Being, at all.

Now I take no second to those who triumph the rational cogency and persuasiveness of the Divine Unicity: of course I agree that God is One, and that no other candidate could possible attract our intellectual assent. But those of you who felt the stab of disappointment in such obvious truisms as the Oneness of God may find yourselves surprised by the forceful opposition to such straight forward teaching in the Doctrine of God. Matters in theology do not sail on undisturbed seas; always the truths of the Faith are complex, challenged, subject to the tidal pulls of many great waters. It is so in the Doctrine of God.

As an example, let me begin with the challenge some others of you might raise to my starting point in Deuteronomy 6. Is it really so altogether clear and straight-forward for Christian dogmatics to begin there, you might say? Does your straight forward starting point not neatly evade an altogether messy and complex world, the variegated world of the 5 central teaching books of Israel's Scripture, the 5 Books of Moses? The Pentateuch is not in truth such a ringing endorsement of Divine Unicity, is it? Do we not rather see rival teachings about the reality of God, about God's Identity in the life of a nation, in contest with other national gods, about Divine Throne-rooms and heavenly beings and holy places scattered widely across the land in which Israel dwells? There is an air of harmonization about your treatment of Scripture here that makes me, the historian of ancient Israel, distinctly uneasy. What makes this one Deuteronomic verse golden?

In fact, we can sharpen this worry about starting point; we can dig deeper than any simple query about the unity and coherence of the Biblical canon. A critic might well wonder if something alien is not being quietly imported into the tents of Israel, something that savors not of Israel's soil but rather of the tang of the Aegean sea, the light of ancient Greece and not the lux ex orient. In philosophical idiom, we could say: Have you not brought great metaphysical freight on board here, where ancient Israel saw none? This is a deep point, and there is no evading how far it cuts into the Doctrine I have laid out before us. Caught up in this one, brief, query is a great harvest of theological controversy. What, after all, do I intend to import into this little word, One? I have already quietly dropped down into our discussion a broad semantic field for the One: Unity, Unicity, Uniqueness, Radical Oneness. I am moving with seeming effortlessness from bare denotation to a broad, and rich connotation—and all of these with extensive scholastic and dogmatic pedigrees. Walter Brueggemann can stand for a whole company of exegetes and historians who say that the thought-forms, aims, and cultural idioms of ancient Israel are incommensurate with the philosophical argument and conceptuality arising out of ancient Greece and the great schools of Plato and Aristotle. To say that God is One, Echod , in the mouth of an Israelite prophet, these critics charge, is to say something radically other than do Plato or Plotinus, when they speak of the One and the many. And such arguments about cultural distinctiveness and pluralism belong not just to the exegetes! We should think, certainly, of Karl Barth here and his massive, sustained polemic against the alien language of Hellenism and its 'natural theology.' And he does not stand alone. Robert Jenson, the great American theologian, has sharply demarcated the God of Israel and Church—the 'God who raised Jesus from the dead,' as Jenson identifies the One Lord—from the God of Greek and Roman philosophy, a philosophy that was in truth, he says, the 'religion of the ancient Mediterranean.' In slightly different idiom, we might think of Kendall Soulen's intriguing first volume in Trinitarian theology, The Divine Names and the Holy Trinity, which argues that the Name given to Moses for the One LORD, the Unpronounceable Tetragrammaton, is a Proper Name, not a property of Being or Nature, and acts more like a 'rigid designator,' to borrow a phrase from Saul Kripke, than a description of the God of Israel. In short we might say that for these critics, the Oneness of God should not be pressed into metaphysical service. Its proper duties, they say, lie elsewhere: to show the primacy of God in the life of Israel, His Sovereign Superiority over other powers and thrones and gods, and His Utter Distain for all rivals to His own Glory and Might. That is one side of the debate about Deuteronomy and its place in the proper Doctrine of God. But there is another side, one we might think of as its antipode, its shadow or double. We might ask, these shadow critics would say, whether we have rightly understood the whole scope and measure of the Christian Bible, and its great weight in the development of Christian Doctrine. Have we not noticed, they say, that there is a New Testament in the Christian Bible? Have we not actually reflected on the great, saving fact that the very Son of God entered into our world and 'became flesh?' Is there nothing in the development of God's own Self-disclosure and Presence as our Grace and Truth, nothing foundational there to the Doctrine of God? Have we learned nothing from our Lord Christ's going in and out among us, nothing from his very Life as God with Us, His own great Name, Emmanuel? Must we rely only on His teaching, His answer to some



Systematic Theology: The Doctrine of God is a newly published book written by The Rev. Katherine Sonderegger, Ph.D., the William Meade Chair in Systematic Theology.

faithful scribes, to guide Christian reflection on God's very Reality? Surely Jesus Christ is more than the supreme teacher of seeking souls, is He not? How can the Divine Oneness not be determined, radically and finally shaped and grounded by the whole canon of Scripture, by our Lord's descent and Self-emptying among us, and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, the Fire of God, upon all flesh? Has the history of Almighty God's Ways with us in truth simply ended at Deuteronomy, the Second Law of Moses?

Now, there are several ways to think about this deep question about the Doctrine of Revelation, the Doctrine of God's Self-disclosure among us creatures. One is a pattern of growth and development that we Christians have long promoted, and should now—indeed, long ago—put away from us, as both false and pernicious. This is the all-too-familiar notion that there is something or someone called the 'god of the Old Testament' and Another, much beloved, and so clearly superior, the God of the New. This 'theory of development' is in very truth a rather modern form of an ancient Christian heresy, the falsehood we might call, Marcionism or anti-Judaism. The aim in this false teaching is to think of the relation of the Testaments in the Christian Bible as one that moves from darkness to Light, from cruelty and wrath and punishment to mercy and forgiveness and grace. The god of the Old Testament, in this anti-Judaism, promises nothing but a crude form of penalty for disobedience and an even cruder form of praise and prosperity for those who obey. This is the god of 'works righteousness' who demands and demands, exiles and punishes, tears at his enemies and drives his people to holy warfare and a pitiless sharp sword. Against the darkness shines the bright light, these heretics say, of a New Testament bathed in a God of grace, who loves, only loves, without judgement, without wrath, without counting the cost. Who would not love the God of the New over the tyrant of the Old? This question expresses Christian supersessionism in the Doctrine of God.

Now I have reserved some rather old-fashioned and crusty terms for such a view—that it is heretical, false, pernicious. I do indeed believe this and repent of the wide-spread Christian teaching of this dangerous Doctrine of God, most especially among Protestant dogmaticians, my ancestors and teachers in the faith. But I do not mean by these stern words to deny that there is another way to express the Doctrine of Development that is interesting, respectable and I think, true. And that is the teaching that God does indeed accompany His people through their seasons and years, and that during our earthly pilgrimage, deeper truths, deeper graces and gifts from the LORD of Life are showered down upon us. Our God is inexhaustibly rich, the very Fountain of Truth, and in our journey as creatures through this world we are taught and shown more and more of that Superabundant Life. There is a true sense of development, that is, a true insight gained over the course of history and of covenant, and we would miss one of the central graces of Holy Scripture were we to deny this.

Take, for example, the Divine Self-disclosure to the Prophet Moses in the Thorn-bush that burns yet does not burn away. Moses, you remember, is tending someone else's sheep: this Prince of Egypt begins the long Scriptural pattern of shepherds who guard Israel's flock, not for their own sake, but for another's. In the high country, Moses spots a desert bush, bathed in flame, yet standing unconsumed. Moses draws aside—the great words of Scripture are given in the by-ways, not the main thorough-fares of life—and encounters there the Living God, the Fire disclosed in this earthly bush. Here the God of Israel's primal history, the God of Sarah and Abraham and Rachel and Jacob, this God declares Himself the LORD, the One Who Is, and gives the Name that will remain unpronounced by Israel and the Church out of godly fear and reverence. This Name, the Tetragrammaton, the 4 Letters, catches up the Hebrew word for Being in a novel and inimitable form. 'I Am that I Am:' this I believe is the unfolding and spelling out in ordinary speech of the Mystery of the Divine Name, the Name of the LORD. Now, notice here that we have within the very canon of Israel's Scriptures—this time, in the Book of Exodus—a development of Doctrine. Moses, the Prophet without parallel in Israel's history, has received a Word from Almighty God that is both novel and an extension and deepening of the primal history of God's Ways with His creatures. The God of the Ancestors, the Almighty God we encounter in the cool of the evening in Eden, or in the High Heavens when Noah and his family board the Ark, or appearing in dark mystery at the Jabbok when the primal ancestor, Jacob becomes both blessed and lamed by an Angel who is also the Almighty God—this God, the Burning Bush tells us, is also and now and always, the One Who Is, the LORD, the I AM, who brooks no rivals. Now this pattern the great English divine, John Henry Newman called the true mark of development: It is a change, yet it remains 'conservative over its past.' Proper development, Newman thought, could be seen in the very structure of the Scriptural canon itself: prophecy and fulfillment. The LORD gives a Word to the prophets; it is carried out, but always with a surprising, refreshing and deepening, imaginative novelty. The Ways of Israel's God with His people are not algorithmic: we are not generating a formula that is then realized in strict conformity to its origin. No, the pattern of God's' Self-disclosure, rather, is plastic, vibrant, breath-takingly alive. Indeed, just this is what we mean, in part, by affirming that Almighty God is the Living LORD.

For the people of Israel's Book, then, history has purpose and meaning; it has a telos, a goal. In truth—and this is what we learn, I say, from the proper Doctrine of Development—human history has a drive, an impulse, and movement toward an End, toward a purpose and goal which is the sustained and clear knowledge of Reality Itself, a Benevolent and Living Reality. Now, to some of you, this affirmation may sound like a truism; to others, a piece of pious fiction or wish-fulfillment. Let me stay a moment with those who see in human history little more than chaos, a few shining hours, surrounded by a far greater season of descent, decay and brutalism. All this may sound more cynical, more calloused and desperate than any thoughtful and sensitive person would be; but in truth, it is hard to look deep into the eyes of suffering in this century and the last, and not give way to cynicism or despair. And it is the intellectual counsel of our age. Nearly bottomless is the measure of resignation and bleak despair that is considered 'mature' and 'realistic' for educated adults these days. We are advised by many such bleak ironists these days to understand that human culture, human hopes and ideals, the growth of great ethical systems and expectations are little more than chimera, a large-scale self-deception, clothed in the glitter of high ideals and aims. This is bracing fare, of course, a cauterizing iron against all cheery blindness to evil and pain, and we can see such lacerating self-criticism within Holy Scripture itself. 'All is vanity,' the Preacher says, 'and a striving after wind;' truly 'there is nothing new under the sun.' But such resignation, for Israel and the Church, can never be the last word. It can never be considered the full definition of 'realism,' 'maturity' and 'clear-eyed sight.' Indeed, Christians and Jews, and I believe, Muslims too, have every reason to consider an undiluted and unconstrained irony or anomie to be itself a fundamental self-deception. To come to a deeper and fuller knowledge of Reality Itself is the purpose of human history, indeed of the whole cosmos, and it is this telos that makes human history purposeful and not chaotic or meaningless or sterile. This, in part, is just what we mean when we say, the knowledge of God is the beginning of wisdom. The Biblical idiom for this profound affirmation of human history is the movement from 'Exile to Return,' the fundamental pattern of the Covenant People.

It is worth lingering for a moment on this pattern, from Exile to Return, to fix in our minds more firmly the relation between the metaphysical claim, that God is One, and the moral claim, that God is Good, indeed, Goodness Itself. [Those of you who spend your lives thinking about theology will notice that I have quietly moved from the Doctrine of Revelation, and Divine Self-disclosure to the Doctrine of God proper, here, the Doctrine of Divine Aseity. Indeed this is my fundamental axiom in theological work, a form of metaphysical 'compatibilism,' in which God own Being, His Aseity, is disclosed in the words and concepts of His creatures.] Pardon that side-road into 'theology-speak!' To return to the main pathway: human destiny with the Real and the True follows a moral pattern, from brokenness to health, from sorrow to joy, from death to life, from loss and being lost to welcome, home-coming, return. This is the moral shape and impulse of human life and human history. For Christians, it is the conformation of all the living to the death and rising of the One Son of Man, Jesus Christ. Because God is the Good, the Living Good, human history has a movement toward the Real that breaks through the dead and deadly cycles of suffering, meaninglessness and cruelty, to a unified development, from exile in sin and misery, to return in life, in fruitfulness, in joy. Just this is Christian hope. It does not ignore cruelty or loss or evil; indeed it cannot. Yet it must not remain there, but journey on, down into the valley where lie the dry bones of our kind, and out and upward, to where the LORD is One, and His people one. All human history is one, the Liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez tells us, and we see how that is so, even in the farthest reaches of Doctrine, for the LORD is One, and His Unity spreads over all His works.

So now we see how we might respond to those critics who ask, Have you not noticed that there are two Testaments in the Christian Bible? Is there really nothing, they ask, that is revealed when the Son of God descends from His Glory to take on our flesh and dwell among us? Is not Christology central to the Doctrine of God? Here we must take up our starting-point again, that God is One, and place it within this larger pattern of a proper Doctrine of Development, a proper theological vision of human history. The relation between the LORD God of Israel and His creation is immeasurably rich, unique, and free; not all will be expressed or caught up in Incarnation or Christology. This Unique Relation between God and the world I have called, the Transcendental Relation: It is

the Out-Pouring and Communication of God's own Infinite Life into the cosmos. God is Hidden in His world, Invisibly Present as the LORD and source of all; God is Omnipresent to His creation, shockingly and generously Unseen. God is the Humble One; He is content to hold the whole cosmos in being, to guide it in all Truth, to be Goodness of every good thing, whether acknowledged, or worshipped or obeyed; He is that Lowly. Our God is Wisdom Herself, Dame Wisdom, Scripture says; and that One Wisdom pours forth into our world the truth of all arts, of all sciences and makings, the knowledge of all depths, all sorrows and exiles, the knowledge of life itself, the Fiery Wisdom that burns at the edge of all our knowing. God is Love, the Out-Pouring Generosity that is Living Goodness, the heart of each life, the one hope we cannot put away or put down. God is in His own Being these Good Things, and He gives them in rich measure to the world He has made, and the people He has called.

Now, Jesus Christ, we Christians say, is the Goal, the Telos of the Law; He is the fulfillment of the prophecy to Israel, He is the Prophet like Moses, the Moses Perfected, Exalted, and made Whole. No Christian theology can do without a full and rich Christology, nor without a Doctrine of Trinity that reflects the matchless significance of the Incarnate One in the very Doctrine of God. But we need not say that Jesus Christ is honored only by making His Life and Person the controlling center of dogmatics. He can be honored too as the full, true affirmation of the Divine Oneness, taught and demonstrated and enacted in the history of Israel. Jesus Christ, we can say in this theology of Divine Unicity, sets forth in purity and power the Radical Oneness of Almighty God. There are many ways, to be sure, in which the Lord Christ sets this out; as very God, He too is Infinite, and Good and Humble and Wise in all His Ways. But let me touch on one example.

We can say that Jesus Christ in His Individual and Unsurpassed Person exemplifies and demonstrates the significance of the personal, the unique, and the one. He in His Person, that is, bodies forth the Divine Uniqueness. And because Jesus Christ is God-with-us, Emmanuel, this Divine Uniqueness communicates and spreads abroad in the creation that very goodness of the one and the unique. So vital and true is this Unsurpassed Uniqueness of Christ that we can readily say that were Jesus Christ the only human being to live on this earth, the design and goal and fulfillment of our kind would be realized and satisfied in Him. The Doctrine of Creation, that is, can be satisfied through the existence of One, this very One, the man Jesus Christ. In light of His Singularity, we can say that the single human being, the individual, can never be eclipsed or dismissed in Christian theology.

Individualism, or autonomy has come in for some severe blows in modern political and theological writings these days. Something called the 'Enlightenment project' is thought to usher in the evils of the modern age, at least in the Western hemisphere. (You can see that I am someone who thinks the Enlightenment is more complex than a 'project,' and that it has much more to be defended than decried. But that's a topic for another day!) The architects of 18th century philosophy and political theory have been charged with advocating individual rights, individual independence and autonomy, individual self-determination and liberty in such full-throated fashion that nothing of the collective, the holistic or the communal was left to order society and to enfold the human person in the larger fabric of tradition and community. It may be that our intellectual culture is seized once again by what the historian Peter Gay has called the 'hunger for wholeness,' a gnawing emptiness that haunted European elites in the years between the world wars. It may be that sociologists, feminist theorists, ethicists and theologians are alive once again to such hungers, such longings for the whole and the partisan and the group. But whatever its roots—and they are bound to be tangled—Christian theology these days has come to express strong reservations and wariness about the human individual and her self-assertion and independence. So strong is this wariness that the Dogma of Trinity itself has been conscripted into service against unfettered individualism. The Persons of the Trinity, that is, are considered by these theologians to stand as bulwarks against autonomous individualism as these Persons are thought to be inherently and mutually intwined—'relational' as this Property is called—and to contain nothing separate or atomized but are rather wholly and entirely alive to the Other, and extending out to Each Other. Now you would be right to suspect that I am wary, in turn, of such expansive doctrines of Personal relatedness and mutuality in the Doctrine of God. Not so do we defend the Divine Oneness, I say, or in truth, the distinctiveness of the Persons. Such fundamental moves in the Doctrine of Trinity, I believe, can only reflect and properly rest upon a defense of Oneness, and in its wake, a proper form of individualism.

Each of us human beings are created and sustained as unique, matchless, and distinctive individuals. We belong to a kind, to be sure; each of us is human, a member of the genus-species, homo sapiens. And each of us lives in a world marked out by human groupings: families, partnerships, tribes and nations, clubs and Churches and Brownie troops, languages and social conventions, friendships of every kind. We need not deny but rather celebrate the social and linguistic shaping of human life. But the Doctrine of Divine Oneness, and the Unique Personal Life of the Incarnate Word, shows us that the fundament of all that collective life is the unsurpassed glory of an individual life, fashioned and led to be this very one. The matchless concreteness of individual human life, its particularity and unshakeable distinctiveness, is the very gift and aim of Almighty God. To live, to recognize, and to gratefully fulfill one's own uniqueness: that is the task and reach of Oneness in the Doctrine of the Christian life. We may borrow here a term fashioned by the medieval scholastic theologian, Duns Scotus, to capture this hallmark of the individual: 'haecceitas,' 'thisness' or radical particularity; that is our life as individuals. Scotus seemed to have taught—his thought is nothing if not controvered!—that living beings were individuated not by their matter, their bodies, or visible characteristics, but rather by a property, a marker, that set us out, each one of us, as the very one we are.

Now, this is a very interesting idea! It implies that our fundamental identity does not rest on our membership in a kind. We are not principally homo sapiens, say, picked out from others by our distinctive bodies and genes and facial expressions. No, we rather are fundamentally our haecceity, our concrete I or this, and our bodies and genes and faces are bearers and markers of this inalienable singularity. It is of course no easy thing to say how such a property could be known by us. Traditionally, western philosophers have said that we know only ideas and objects that belong to groups, to classes or types or concepts. Scholastic theologians called these 'universals,' 'real universals.' We might experience a particular tree standing out in our yard, but we know it only as a tree, a member of a kind, Maple or Oak or Magnolia. Such reasoning made the knowledge of particulars vexed indeed, and it was no easy work of scholastic distinction to show how even an Omniscient God could know singulars among His creatures. Scotus, I think, had wonderfully interesting things to say about all this. He seems to have thought that God alone can know the haecceity, the particularity of each one of us. And it seems to me to follow that we do not know God in His own Uniqueness, His Singular and Unsurpassed Haecceity through any general class or kind, even the set, Deity, with only One member. There is, among us human beings, and immeasurably more so, between us and our God, a Mystery of Uniqueness, that is known in the end by God alone, and by each us only by grace, by prayer and reflection, by seeking and searching and by self-disclosure to another. The indefinable thisness of each one of us is the stamp of our Creator on us—the Imago Dei—and the golden crown of all deep and humane intimacies. To seek after, to listen for, to receive and give our own uniqueness: that is the telos , the aim of human life together.

We cannot over-estimate the centrality of the individual to human and humane culture and community. In an irony that cannot be missed by our neighbors who emerge from the dark winter of Stalinism, we liberals—yes, I am one of those!—have closed out eyes to evils done in the name of the collective, the group, the blood and the soil of central Europe. What takes the measure of the humane in human relations is the dedication to the particularity and singularity of each human life. It 'takes the measure,' I say, not guarantees or ensures; for sadly in this fallen world of ours, nothing will ensure against inhumanity in human relations but the very grace and deliverance of Almighty God. But human individualism is its measure. My love for a neighbor, a friend, a student or colleague, can have as its aim only my deepening knowledge of who each one is, their very inner life and stamp, their very own tang and tone: I am to know each one as this very one and not another, and to prize and rejoice and defend that concrete gift, their individual life. We are to nourish the self-knowledge, the self-determination and proper autonomy—the maturity and full stature in Christ—of each person in our care. Their way through life's journey, their cross they must

bear, their dying and their own rising in Christ: this is the pattern of the Christian life, read through the Oneness of a Provident and Merciful God. Just so in Jesus Christ Himself One and no other, particular, unsurpassed, Unique.

In some such way must we also reflect upon and receive the Mystery of Trinity, the Christian Doctrine of the One God. We must begin to think about the Self-disclosure of the One God as Triune, 3 Modes of the One God, Each of Whom and All of Whom are in all Eternity One, the One God. Our proper Doctrine of Development, that is, must not lead us to a position in which we say that a thin, or inferior, or static Doctrine of Oneness has now been, at long last, supplanted by a Living, Vital, Triune Mystery. No! Monotheism cannot be a shame word, nor can it be set aside as some early mistake to be improved and deepened now by Trinity. Rather, we Christians must say that the gift and Mystery of Trinity is the Self-disclosure by the One God of His own Life, His Triune Presence. In my view, Christian theology is not well served by beginning Trinitarian Doctrine with the Modes or Persons—the 3, Father, Son, Holy Spirit—then hoping through some careful analysis and reflection to show how these 3 are One. Not so should Christians think of the Ways of God with us, the Divine Economy. Often, Christians have turned to the history of the Covenant or to the history of salvation to clarify and determine the Identity of the Three. Pouring over the Book of Genesis or Ezekiel, say, Christians have seen signs of the Holy Spirit, the One who broods over the waters at Creation or who breathes life and sinews upon a lost and lifeless Israel. Or Christians have turned to the special calling of the People Israel from among its neighbors, the descent and sojourn and enslavement of this People within the House of Pharaoh, its liberation and planting in a Land of Promise, and have seen in all these Providential paths, the Sonship of Israel, the foreshadowing and preparation for the Incarnation of the Son among us, full of Grace and Truth. These then are understood to be the Missions of the Persons, sent from the Father of Lights, into a world that is perishing. Such is a reading of the Economy, the history of salvation, that places the Persons in the center of the Dogma of Trinity. But it will never be easy to throw off the suspicion, in such a reading, that we have been introduced to 3 distinct and separate members or worse, 3 distinct and autonomous parts of God who in some fashion must make up One whole God—perhaps by the exalted and out-pouring Love of these 3 for One Another. Not so do I think theology should read the history of God's Mighty Ways with us.

Rather, I believe the Economy will teach and hallow and disclose to us the Inner and Transcendent Reality of the God as a Life that is at once Infinite and Determined. What the Economy discloses to us, I say, is the Processions of God, the Ways of the One with His creation. (Students of the Doctrine of Trinity will note here that I have placed the Relations of Opposition within the Processions, and the taxis or ordering of the Persons within a Divine Procession and Life that has direction, order and End.) All the Ways of the LORD, Proverbs teaches us, are Peace; Wisdom and Peace. The very Life of God as Fruitfulness and Gift, as the Shower of Peace upon the troubled world, as the Light descending down through the columns of Majesty to the darkened world below: these are the Paths, the Processions of the One God. The One Life of God is Dynamic and Good, Vital and Generous, True and Merciful. This is the Way of Peace. The Life of God, we learn from Holy Scripture, is not shapeless, though it is Infinite; not indeterminate, though it is Boundless; not indefinite, though Utterly Unique. The Peace which is God is Alive, Moving, Radiant as It surges and drives from exile to return, from sorrow to joy, from death to life. It catches up all creation in its Vitality and Rich Goodness. These Determinate Ends, these Goals and Aims of Almighty God, are the Living Modes of this One Unique LORD, and they are Personal, Conscious and Intentional, through and through. Perhaps we might sum this all up with an abstract and compressed phrase, but one I hope might forecast the work that lies ahead: the One God is Infinite; but a Structured Infinity. There is in God not only Light, but also Height and Depth, not only Life, but Alpha and Omega. Or to speak more properly, more Scripturally: All the Ways of the LORD are steadfast Love and Faithfulness; Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.

I have touched in a very few places today the Immeasurable Richness that is the Doctrine of the One God. I suppose, at the end of this talk, and at the end of the Doctrine of the Divine Perfections, I have learned, more truly and inwardly, that there is in fact no end to the Oneness of God, no end to the Light this Uniqueness sheds abroad in our hearts. I have felt accompanied and directed by this Gracious Oneness in all the pathways I have taken thus far, and I pray that in the roadway ahead, I may come to hold fast, ever more deeply, to the One God who is the Life of all who live, the Hope of all the faithful, the Rest, Repose and Refuge of all the dead. Thank you for being my companions, dearly beloved, on this pilgrim's way. ✠

Collective Trauma and Pastoral Care: Global Insights for Local Ministries

By The Rev. Joyce Mercer, Ph.D.

Occasioned by the Arthur Lee Kinsolving Chair in Pastoral Theology Lecture

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My topic "Collective Trauma & Pastoral Care" focuses on an admittedly heavy subject for such a nice spring afternoon, but it is one that merits our attention. Many of you know I've been working on this topic, trauma and its relationship to practical theology and pastoral care, for many years. Initially I did so as a clinician working in an adolescent drug treatment facility where many kids were victims of traumas such as sexual assault or abuse; or they were perpetrators of violence that traumatized others; or both. More recently I've focused on trauma theory in practical theological research on conflict, especially in Indonesia. My recent study of peacebuilding in the aftermath of religious conflict there comprises the basis for my remarks today.

So let me begin by offering a roadmap for this talk. First, I will provide a much-abbreviated sketch of the religious and political situation of Indonesia as the context for sharing some ethnographic research I conducted in the city of Ambon last year. Second, I will explore a few contemporary perspectives on trauma that can help us understand this post-conflict Indonesian situation, drawing especially from recent developments in the neuroscience of trauma. Third, I will think with you briefly about theological perspectives arising out of practice in Ambon, with particular attention to insights for pastoral care, as we explore what might be learned from such global situations having implications for local ministries here in North America.

The Research Background

Last year, a sabbatical project focusing on women peacebuilders in situations of religious violence and conflict took me to Indonesia, where I had the opportunity to spend several months engaging in ethnographic research. For those of you who are not so familiar with this research terminology, ethnography is a type of inquiry used by anthropologists, sociologists, and practical theologians to study people, their contexts, and their practices, by research methods such as interviews and participant-observation through immersion in the contexts of people's everyday lives.

People often ask me, "Why seek out *women* peacebuilders?" Along with other scholars interested in religious conflict and peacebuilding work, I have observed that women, while frequently absent or excluded from formal peace negotiations, nevertheless may play key roles in their communities as peacebuilders (Kuehnast, Oudratt, and Hernes, 2011; Kaufman and Williams, 2010). International recognition of the significance of women's experiences and perspectives in spite of their exclusion from formal peace processes, and their invisibility in publically acknowledged work of peacebuilding, led to the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000. This United Nations resolution calls for increased participation of women in conflict transformation and in post-conflict peace work. The UN resolution also recognizes that women in conflict areas experience multiple levels of risk related to gender, including the added possibility of sexual assault which often becomes a weapon of war. Resolution 1325 calls for greater protection of women from sexual violence during and in the aftermath of conflict alongside its general advocacy for women's greater role in addressing conflict.

In spite of this international consensus of the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding, however, many of their contributions remain undervalued and unseen. In the aftermath of conflict, for example, women are often the ones sorting out how to engage the "other," those groups or persons formerly defined as the enemy, now encountered daily in marketplaces and other shared spaces. Women occupy a primary role in teaching children how to regard religiously- and ethnically different people who are still their neighbors after the fighting ends. And it is often women who do the unseen yet vital work of rebuilding communal sources of support and care that invite resilience in the face of conflict's difficult aftermath, when sources of food may have been destroyed along with access to shelter. Women thus have important "local wisdom"[1] about healing the wounds of violent conflict. But they remain largely invisible in official proceedings and histories because they are not seated at the negotiating tables or parlaying with military figures about how to bring peace. Ethnographic research becomes a way to hear their contributions since they often do not show up in official accounts of the conflict or peacebuilding work.

1 This is a term often used by Indonesian people to distinguish the kinds of indigenous "on-the-ground" knowledge existing among people in their local settings, and the kinds of knowledge brought in by outsiders. The latter often comes in the form of externally generated programs that fail to acknowledge the resources and leadership already extant in local communities. Postcolonial frameworks (see, for example Bhabha 1994; Sugirtharajah 2003) offer strong critiques of such practices for their colonialist agendas and unexamined, embedded assumptions about who gives help and who receives it; the superiority or inferiority of indigenous cultural practices; and the types of knowledge valued or devalued.

Indonesia's Religious and Political Context

Given the brevity of time for today's lecture, I must bracket some significant elements into background of this conversation. Chief among these is discussion of the research methodology I used in my study (i.e., feminist/postcolonial ethnography). While my project of ethnographic research is extensive, today I will offer you only one person's voice and story as a glimpse into it. And last, given our time limitations, I also must forego extensive provision of information about the wider context of Indonesia's religious conflicts within the region and globally that would normally be part of "thick description" in the background of such an ethnography.

So here is the short version:

Indonesia is a relatively young nation-state, born only in 1945 after successfully fighting off the Netherland's efforts at keeping Indonesia a Dutch colony, as well as enduring a brief period of Japanese occupation. The nation of Indonesia was founded on philosophy of embrace of religious pluralism. In recent years its government has been authoritarian with high military involvement. Indonesia's late twentieth-century political shifts from authoritarian government to democratization were accompanied by civil unrest, manifested in rioting and violence that came to head in May 1998. At that time, Jakarta and elsewhere experienced massive rioting, and the burning of homes, businesses, and places of worship. The military played a significant role in fanning the flames that fueled the violence. Another aspect of these upheavals involved the targeting of Indonesian women of Chinese descent for sexual violence.[2]

As violence spread throughout the country, these conflicts became defined as fights between Muslim and Christian identity groups. The specific geographical area of interest today is the part of Indonesia known as the Moluccas, better known to many outside Indonesia by their designation as the "Spice Islands" by merchants and colonizers of earlier times. Current patterns of ethnic and religious segregation have their legacy in Dutch colonial policies of some four hundred years ago that spread Protestant Christianity in an area into which Islam long before had been introduced (in the 1500's). These policies divided communities into racially and religiously stratified groups. In 1999, the Moluccan conflicts, although they were not about religion as such, became clashes between distinct religious groups who then theologized their participation in the fighting, as persons found provocation to act on long-smoldering grievances and attached religious symbols and identities to the divisions. From 1999 until 2002 most of the islands, towns, and cities making up the Moluccas were wracked with violent religious conflict in which thousands of people died, suffered injury, and were displaced from their homes. Worship spaces and other significant public buildings suffered destruction from intentional burning. Photographs of Ambon city during the years of active conflict display a devastated war zone.

Pastor Jerda's[3] ministry is situated in a Protestant Christian congregation on the island of Halmahera in the predominantly Muslim province of North Moluccu. Halmahera became the site of some of the nation's most intense and violent conflict between 1999 and 2002 as Muslims and Christians got into a cycle of violent clashes, followed by retaliatory violence, that continued on and on. As with most reportedly religious conflict, the fighting was not about doctrinal disputes or theological differences, but "collective physical attacks on persons or property launched in avowed defense or promotion of religious beliefs, boundaries, institutions, traditions, or values, and behind religious symbols and slogans." (Sidel 2006, p. 7). By organizing around religious identity, tensions of a historical, economic, and ethnic nature effectively turned into religious conflict. The result of the

2 The actual number Indonesian women of Chinese descent reported as victims of sexual assault in the 1998 riots remains contested but many estimates place this figure around 150. The background and history of anti-Chinese bias in Indonesia is long and complex. It intersects with issues of religious pluralism and recent violence between Muslims and Christians because Indonesians of Chinese descent tend to be Christian. See Coppel (2008) for a helpful treatment of this subject.

3 This and other interviews took place using a combination of *Bahasa Indonesia* and English, assisted by an interpreter. Each interview was digitally recorded with the permission of the narrator. In accordance with Virginia Theological Seminary's institutional review policies for research ethics, each participant also had the opportunity to state whether she preferred to have her identity disguised and/or be identified with a pseudonym in my use of the interviews for the research. Interestingly, all participants in the interviews said they preferred that their actual names be used, many of them adding something like, "Because I am telling you a true story, so of course you can use my name with it." In my spoken address, which was one of the first opportunities to share this research, I used pseudonyms for my research partners primarily out of feelings of cautious sensitivity about what is for me as a researcher a somewhat unusual practice of being able to use a research partner's actual name. In preparing this written text of the lecture, however, I decided to honor the invitations of interviewees for me to use their actual names.

violence in Halmahera was severe: more than 200,000 people were displaced from their homes, with thousands of others loosing their lives in the fighting.

From 1999 to 2002, Pastor Jerda and her congregation lived in the midst of this war zone that was Halmahera: "I was with them [my congregation], I was there. I looked with them (she pauses, crying). I looked with my eyes [at the destruction all around us] as our houses and our churches burned; I felt in my heart what my people saw and felt … And of course I knew that the Muslims also had this same experience. They hid from the Christian fighters, they also were afraid. Why, I asked, why we are fighting? We lived together before. Why we are fighting now?" As she spoke, her voice grew thinner and fainter, and her eyes stared off into the horizon, as if she was in another time and place. "Sometimes, I am not remembering a story about that time, but I feel as if I am back there again anyway."

I asked Jerda if she has particular memories of the conflict that stand out. "My church and I, we ran together, we hid together in ditches during the fighting. Our houses, our church was burned down. My people and I, we would sleep in the day and we stayed awake at night because we had to. In war, we had to worry that someone might attack us at any time. Someone would stay awake to watch. We always had to watch. Even now, I find myself watching around myself all the time, as if I must worry about an attack, even though we are no longer in a war."

Families in Halmahera became desperate for food and security amid the conflict. Pastor Jerda described in an anguished voice how some even gave their daughters to soldiers in the military in exchange for rice and promises of protection: "Halmahera is very fertile land, and [ordinarily] it's not hard to get some food. You can go to the forest and find food, and also you can go to the sea and you can find some fish. Something like that. But during the conflict you cannot go to sea, you cannot go to the forest. It is too dangerous and the land is destroyed." Her speaking became rapid and her voice sounded extremely distressed as she continued: "So we have to buy everything. For that we need money. And if we have no money… if there is no money…(her voice dropped off).

After a pause I asked gently, "Then you cannot survive because you have nothing?" "That's right," she replied, "Nothing but our daughters … so some of the families gave their daughters to the soldiers to survive." To compound this tragedy, Pastor Jerda says, it is difficult if not impossible, given local moral norms, for these families to take their daughters back into the family when the liaisons with soldiers end, or to embrace the children born to their daughters out of such circumstances.

"Sometimes I try to think 'what happened to us, how could this happen, but I can't remember what was going on, or I can't find a way to say what we experienced, like I am forgetting. Then suddenly on another day, I feel myself afraid for no reason at all, as if we are back in the fighting again. Then I can't *stop* remembering! I think to myself, 'Jerda, you are going crazy!'"

Later in a separate conversation Pastor Jerda suggested to me that the problem her congregation now faces is that although they no longer live in an active conflict zone, they nevertheless operate with the constant expectation that danger lurks just around the corner: "We hear a noise, it makes us jump, even though much time has passed. We always think the next bad thing will happen. My church, they want to make a good relationship with other people, but they are still afraid—maybe talk and smile when we see each other in the market but inside, we are still not letting our 'armor' down. How can we get past that to forgive and to live together in peace? Maybe never. And it is the same for the Muslims, I think."

Trauma theory: What the Body Knows

There are two perspectives on trauma I would like to explore in Jerda's story: her individual, embodied response to trauma exposure; and the phenomenon of collective trauma of Indonesian people in the aftermath of the nation's religious violence and conflict.

It is evident, perhaps even to someone only slightly familiar with the clinical symptomatology of trauma exposure, to recognize Pastor Jerda as suffering from traumatic stress in the aftermath of conflict. In her everyday experience, the sense of danger and anxiety from past events intrudes into the present, unbidden, and generally unattached from any specific narrative reference to any particular event. It is not as if Jerda consciously recalls and thinks of various moments in the conflict on a continual basis. Instead, what happens is that some cue either in the environment or internally—a scent or sound, the fragment of a memory—triggers her body into responding as if she is in danger now. This is the insidious power of trauma: trauma's past haunts its sufferers' bodies in the present, because the past refuses to stay in the past. The *body* responds as if the traumatic event that actually occurred in the past is taking place in the here and now.

What is trauma? From the Greek word meaning wound, 'trauma' refers not only to wounds of the body, but also to deep psychological, social and spiritual wounds that come as a result of experiences in which the sense of threat overpowers the resources one has to cope with that threat. Traumatic events also unsettle fundamental assumptions about how the world works, forcing people to reassess their underlying assumptions that the world is safe, for example, or that harm will not come to those who closely follow the requirements of their religion.

Experiences of trauma are rooted in an originary event—an earthquake, violent conflict, assault, the shock of loss—generating a sense of threat to a person or group's well-being and/or existence, that overwhelms their ability to cope, and undermines their internal frameworks for making sense out of what is happening. As Judith Herman (1997, p. 33) puts it so clearly,

Psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning … The common denominator of psychological trauma is a feeling of 'intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation.

Psychologist Ronnie Janoff-Bulman's (2002) "assumptive worlds" theory helps to explain why trauma hits so hard. She holds that the psychological damage incurred in trauma happens because of a radical disruption in three basic assumptions people hold prior to trauma exposure: belief in the goodness of the world; belief that the world is meaningful; and belief in one's own worth and value. Trauma marks all three as questionable assumptions. When these basic assumptions are upended, the very frameworks by which persons make sense of the world and their place in it are undermined.

Janoff-Bulman along with an earlier generation of theorists including Collin Murray-Parkes, John Bowlby, Erik Erikson, and others, speaks of the development of a worldview founded on a basic sense of trust—a conceptual system developed over time that provides us with expectations about the world and ourselves (Janoff-Bulman 2002, p. 13). Trauma shatters such expectations, setting in place an overarching worldview based on "traumatic expectation." In effect, traumatized people and communities come to make meaning out of their experiences through the lens of the expectation of traumatic threat (Pynoos et al. 2007). On a deep level, the work of trauma healing involves finding some new way to make meaning when the formerly held assumptive worldviews—that life is meaningful, that the universe is a morally coherent place, and that one is of worth and value—have been destroyed.

In traumatic stress, a person continually experiences a past trauma's re-occurrence in the present, through intrusive memories of the event, the unbidden triggering of emotional and physical feelings of endangerment in the present, nightmares, and disrupted relationships. Jerda's narrative reflected most of these features: memories of attacks by opposing groups intruded unbidden and inexplicably into her present, along with emotional cues that created a state of arousal in response to perceived danger.

What is responsible for these reactions, in which the trauma memory seems to take on a life of its own and present itself through the body over and over again? On the one hand, Jerda appears to be functioning well in her everyday life: she has a family and a job, she communicates well and warmly with people in everyday interactions. On the other hand, her body continues its efforts to speak the narrative of the trauma she experienced in violent conflict. To understand these aspects of trauma we must turn to neuroscience.

How the Brain Responds to Trauma

Human bodies possess a finely tuned mechanism for dealing with threats to the self, which biologists say has been

honed through many millennia of evolutionary experience in order to ensure species survival. Colloquially known as the "fight or flight" mechanism, this survival oriented, brain-chemistry-based autonomic system kicks in when a person experiences a sense of danger or threat. Persons ordinarily function within a "zone of arousal," a kind of window of tolerance between high arousal under the control of the sympathetic nervous system, and low arousal under control of the parasympathetic nervous system. Under normal stress conditions, we move between the upper and lower boundaries of this window, oscillating between hypo- and hyper- arousal in ways that we can regulate. Within this zone, persons continue to function effectively communicating and relating with others, and adequately managing the feelings of distress caused by such everyday situations (Marich 2014; Van der Kolk 1996).

Meeting with an interfaith group of women peace builders in Ambon City known as the Maluku Ambassadors for Peace

But in trauma, neurochemical activity in the brain causes persons to move outside the window of normal oscillation between hyper- and hypo-arousal, into its extremes. Suppose, for instance, that a man walking in the forest disturbs a sleeping tiger. Within his brain, the release of chemicals such as epinephrine, norepinephrine, and adrenaline send the body into a state of high arousal, primed either to fight off an attack by the tiger or escape from danger by fleeing it, whichever the rational mind assesses as the best response under the circumstances. Trauma researchers maintain that in the brain of a person suffering from traumatic stress, especially from repeated trauma, it is as if the switch regulating the flow of these neurochemicals becomes permanently stuck in the "on" position, continually flooding that person with arousal-inducing brain chemicals that keep the person in a continual state of high alert and hyper vigilance (Marich 2014; Van der Kolk 2007a).

Such a person is likely therefore to respond to some minor yet startling event, such as unwittingly disturbing a tabby cat, with the same internal mechanism through which the body gears up to flee serious danger, as if she or he has just awakened not a house cat but a tiger in the forest. One can easily imagine how this would be a problem for an individual trauma sufferer—constant hyper vigilance, scanning for danger, organizing life around the expectancy of threat, responding to everyday "house cat"-level problems with defenses and actions designed to deal with tigers, always ready for fight or flight. It is not difficult to extrapolate beyond the individual to the level of society, imagining the problems created when large portions of a population live in such a state of hyper arousal everyday.

The brain also provides an additional survival scheme for the brain beyond flight or flight. In this response, the brain sends the body into a state of *hypo*-arousal or "freeze," transmitted neurochemically when the release of endorphins flood the body to create conditions of calm or even numbness. Our brain's "freeze" response works in at least two ways as a survival strategy. First, the freeze response puts persons in the situation like that of the mouse who "freezes" or plays dead when captured in the mouth of the cat. Eventually the cat, bored with a seemingly inanimate play object, releases the supposedly dead mouse only to watch it rise up and scamper off, surviving by its ability to seem dead. Sometimes people do a parallel maneuver in the form of detaching from their own emotions in order to "walk on eggshells" around what seems dangerous, or psychologically "zoning out" when trauma responses are triggered.

Second, the freeze response functions by shutting down fear and pain, such that a person in such as state of "tonic immobility" has a reduced capacity to sense and to feel, which can function to prevent them from becoming psychologically incapacitated by their anxiety in the face of triggered trauma reactions. Thus hypo-arousal and the "freeze" response to danger are part of the brain's survival repertoire. As was the case with hyper-arousal, people can get stuck in hypo-arousal too, going through their everyday lives numb to feelings, detached from their surroundings, and in a continuous state of being emotionally "shut down." In essence a person dissociates feelings, thoughts, actions, and other parts of their experience from conscious awareness (Van der Kolk 2007, p. 192).

Such dissociation as a temporary mental defense mechanism in trauma can function positively to help persons get through their experience without being overwhelmed. Persons who get "stuck" in it, however, have difficulty forming relationships and functioning in everyday life. Jerda's description of some members of her faith community, particularly families who pushed their daughters in to liaisons with soldiers as a way of survival, suggests that this response has come to characterize them long after the events of the conflict have ceased. Jerda's own responses in the aftermath of conflict suggest that she lives in a state of more or less continual arousal, a situation that can cause her to hear and respond to an ordinary and friendly inquiry from a neighbor—"Are you going out now?"—as a potential threat to be guarded against.

Some trauma theorists believe that when our brains respond to trauma with the release of large amounts of cortical steroids and other neurochemicals, our brains actually form new neural pathways and undergo other neuroanatomical effects that cause trauma responses to become the body's preferred response to stress of all varieties, traumatic or not (Van der Kolk 2007). The implication of such a view is that (1) trauma changes our biological makeup and responses, perhaps permanently; and (2) once the trauma response of hyper- or hypo- arousal gets activated in the brain, it becomes more difficult for persons to make other, "non-emergency" types of responses to the stresses they encounter in everyday life. This suggests that contexts such as present and post-conflict areas of Indonesia are locations in which collective trauma renders entire populations in a state either of continual alertness or non-arousal, ready to respond to all sorts of stimuli as if the threat of annihilation is present. This obviously has huge implications for peacebuilding, as it becomes extremely difficult to 'ratchet down' the level of anxiety around encounters with the "other" who has come to be associated with trauma.

Collective Trauma

Collective trauma is the name given to trauma experienced at the level of an entire society or group within a society. September 11, 2001 … genocide in Rwanda … Hurricane Katrina … the school shootings at Sandyhook Elementary School in Connecticut: All these refer to situations in which an entire society, ethnic group, or other collectivity suffer from the experience of a traumatic event. Two Dutch practical theologians, Alexander Veerman and Ruard Ganzevoort (2001) note that particularly in political forms of collective trauma, it may be the case that only a few people are individually traumatized, and yet a wider community or group suffers the consequences of that traumatic event. Think for example of the assassination of President Kennedy: while only a few people were directly victimized by physical violence in that event, the entire nation was traumatized by it.

Collective trauma is a kind of "trauma to the *social* body," in which the sense of helplessness, loss of control, and erasure of meaning occur for those who belong to the affected group whether or not they personally experienced the traumatizing event. Veerman and Ganzevoort (2001, p. 5) contend that "as individual trauma damages the inner structure of a person, collective trauma damages the structures of a community … Collective trauma ruptures social ties, undermines community, and destroys previous sources of support."

Much of our contemporary understanding of collective trauma comes from scholars of the Holocaust and their work to make sense of the trans-generational transmission of trauma. How is it that in many instances the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors—those who were not even born at the time of the atrocities of the Holocaust—show evidence of the same kinds of trauma symptamotology one might expect from first hand trauma exposure. Eva Hoffman (2004, p. 198), speaking about the Holocaust, claims that "the generation after atrocity is the hinge generation—the point at which the past is transmuted into history or myth." Some researchers contend that this transmission takes place in families, where silence rather than explicit story telling becomes the primary vehicle for trauma's move across generations. Put differently, in collective trauma, the wellbeing of the social body across generations of communal life feels the effects of the damage.

What can help to transform experiences of collective and individual trauma for Pastor Jerda, her congregation, and indeed her larger, interfaith community in Halmahera? Trauma theory points to any number of pathways for healing that address the issues that frameworks such as neuroscience and assumptive world theory help us to understand. Principle among these is the creation of safe spaces to tell the story of what has happened and to have one's painful story acknowledged and heard by others. This helps with what therapists refer to as 'retemporalizing' (Caruth 2014, p. 37; Hess 2009, p. 91) or putting the traumatic events in their proper time zone, such that they no longer continue to intrude in the present. Healing requires opportunities to reconnect with one's own

bodily experiences and to reconnect with a community or social body of support. The ability to be resilient in the face of trauma depends upon finding new meaning and restoring a sense of one's own worth in the world when both of these grounding elements have been disrupted by trauma.

We can point to resources from Christian faith tradition that intersect with these elements. Theologian Cynthia Hess (2009) names three ways the church engages in trauma-healing work. First, churches are about the business of constructing voluntary and egalitarian communities in which people hear each other's stories. Second, churches involve people in performing the narrative of Jesus through communal practices in ways that restore meaning and a sense of worth. Third, churches embody an alternative vision of the future to the one offered by trauma in which suffering continually intrudes into the present and hope seems to be erased.

Hess writes, "Many resources that trauma theorists identify as integral to healing—narratives, rituals, caring listeners—are resources [faith communities] have … The church as an eschatological community contributes to the retemporalization of trauma survivors by offering them an opportunity to claim (and be claimed by) a communal future that differs from their traumatic past." (2009, p. 143)

Shelly Rambo, a theologian at Boston University who has written extensively on trauma and Christian theology, notes that while our faith tradition ideally participates in trauma healing, Christianity can also contribute to the problem of failing to acknowledge the depths of suffering involved. This occurs in theology when Christians attempt to move quickly over the pain of trauma even in the tradition's own central narrative of the passion story: there, Rambo notes, all too often a triumphalist version of the passion narrative leap directly (and as quickly as possible) from Good Friday to Easter Sunday's resurrection in a linear fashion. This movement aims at putting death behind and life ahead, such that life emerges victoriously from death (2010, p. 165). Such a version of the story certainly can provide hope, she contends, but it does not express the reality of those suffering from exposure to trauma.

For trauma sufferers, although life continues, it remains haunted by suffering and death in the form of continual intrusive memories and triggers. Rambo asserts that the glide from Good Friday to Easter that skips over the in-between space of Holy Saturday "can also gloss over the realities of pain and loss, glorify suffering, and justify violence" (2010, p. 143) in ways that are not helpful to trauma sufferers. Rambo speaks of trauma as an experience of "remaining" and points the Christian narrative of the "harrowing of hell" or Christ's descent into that abyss between death and life on Holy Saturday, as the evidence that even in middle spaces of trauma wounds where one is alive but often seems as if dead, *Christ is there too.*

Rambo is not calling for Christians seek suffering! But her interest is in a "theology of remaining" that is gutsy enough to "witness suffering in its persistence, its ongoingness… redemption is about the capacity to witness to what exceeds death but cannot be clearly identified as life" (Rambo 2010, p. 144). Or, as Serene Jones (2009, p. 149) puts it, suffering itself is not the source of redemption; redemption comes through the persistence of love in the midst of suffering. From the perspective of pastoral care, the kind of theology arising out of such experiences of trauma suffering ask those who would minister in the name of Christ to be willing to risk witnessing suffering, perhaps even over the long haul, instead of rushing to quick fixes or false comforts. Pastoral care in trauma involves walking with traumatized persons, willing to be present in the space in-between suffering and healing, as a simultaneous witness to the realities of both pain and hope.

Trauma in Post-Conflict Indonesia: Toward Intercultural Pastoral Care

What do the above perspectives on neuroscience, assumptive worldviews, collective trauma, and a "theology of remaining" mean for Pastor Jerda and her congregation? Although her condition and that of many individuals in her congregation may be helpfully understood through the lens of the neuroscience of trauma, her main concern is less about the fragmented memories of trauma wounds in individuals, and more about the fragmented social arrangements that keep alive the enemy status of two groups, Christian and Muslim. One of the primary issues in Halmahera in the aftermath of conflict is that communities now are separated—exclusively Christian or Muslim— that formerly were "mixed". This creates isolation and reinforces essentialist understandings of the boundaries between religious groups, undermining relational connections between groups that could support peace. Pastor Jerda's strategy for intercultural pastoral care involves seeking to overcome isolation of women in aftermath of conflict, by establishing a *taman baca* or "house for reading," in Halmahera.

Pastor Jerda lives in what she calls a "slightly mixed" housing development, populated by both Muslim and Christian families, situated between exclusively Christian and exclusively Muslim housing areas. She purchased a small house there, to use as a space where women and children in that area could come together. "It is a 'reading zone'. There, they can come to read any kind of book we have, and we will have story reading times with the children, and they will get used to being around each other because they will come for the joy of the books. It is a simple thing to do, faithful for us [Christians] and for them [Muslims] to come together in harmony. So maybe it can help when tensions go up again, that we have been together in this way."

Pastor Jerda established this book-space out of her initial concern to encourage connections among women so that they might be less isolated, as one way to address the rampant violence against women that exists in the aftermath of the conflicts there. (Research underscores that in every place on the globe where there is violence conflict, violence against women increases in the aftermath of war. See Kuehnast, Oudraat, and Hernes 2011, pp. 102-103.) Pastor Jerda, like nearly all the women clergy and theologians I interviewed during

One woman's peacebuilding strategy involves taking her children to the market where they end up encountering and playing with vendors from a different faith group.

my research in Indonesia, place domestic violence at the top of their concern for women. The taman baca is a way to invite solidary among women. Pastor Jerda's work is an example of what Y. Tri Subagya (2009) refers to in a discussion of utilizing women's roles to create a process of social reconciliation that can more easily gain traction in multi-religious communities:

> Social reconciliation refers to the creation of a space for the restoration of order and harmony in a community following an extended phase of distrust, prejudice, and vengeance due to communal conflict…different from theological notions of reconciliation that assert the importance of atonement and forgiveness on the road to peace. (2009, p. 156)

That difference is significant in intercultural pastoral care, because it means Jerda can engage in this practice in her interreligious context, without tacitly requiring anyone to buy into a Christian understanding of reconciliation in order to take a small step toward peaceful relations. She and her community, of course, can take actions toward reconciliation out of their own sense of its groundedness in Christ's work of grace.

What Jerda is doing also addresses collective trauma in a way that implicitly takes the neuroscience of trauma responses into account. Bringing both Muslim and Christian women and their children together in the taman baca is a low stress, low risk form of social contact that may accomplish the social equivalent of "exposure therapy" with individual trauma sufferers. Exposure therapy gradually and gently, under conditions of safety, exposes sufferers to their trauma triggers, working through a process of gradual desensitization to alter the body's responses and eventually to reconnect the narrative of the trauma event to the body's reactions.

Pastor Jerda is also working to help families of women "*Koramil*" (literally, 'victims of military infatuation') to re-story their experience, to invite families to see their daughters as fitting within heroic notions of sacrifice congruent with culturally expected roles for women in the family, that shift the narrative from a story of moral dishonor to one of moral honor. She does this by guiding pastoral conversation with the families, toward a gradually changing narrative about the meaning of the daughters who left their families to partner with the soldiers that is positive about the daughters (and negative about the soldiers).

The process of re-storying an experience is well known in narrative therapy. African American pastoral theologian

Ed Wimberly (2006) suggests that it is necessary for communities and persons who internalize oppression to re-story their experiences, effectively to replace shaming, destructive narratives with stories that are life-giving and/or empower agency. In this way pastoral caregivers help persons re-author those personal and communal stories that keep them from full participation in community, offering alternative visions of human worth and value. Such practices of pastoral care will remain important in places like Halmahera in Indonesia, where old stories about sexual ethics and gender are no longer adequate for the new, post-conflict reality.

Trauma, Peacebuilding, and Pastoral Care

In case some of you still may be wondering what could possibly be the connection between pastoral care here in our local ministries, and the situation I have been describing about Indonesian peacebuilding amid the wounds of trauma, I want to close by quickly suggesting four implications for the work of pastoral care in North American contexts. I see these emerging from the close examination and deeper understanding of trauma, as well as from learning about how pastors like Jerda practice the ministry of care in the aftermath of conflict.

First: *Pastoral care involves more than conversations with individuals who are already a part of the faith communities in which we are at home. Pastoral care also involves engagement with others. For churches, this means work toward structural transformations and creative organizational forms that can support people's healing and equip them to serve their neighbors.* Jerda's example is one in which creative attention to common needs by creating a new organization, the taman baca, becomes a way to address wounds through building community. A guiding question in pastoral care is always, "what constitutes care in this situation or context?" In Jerda's community, care not only involves the healing of individual wounds. It also involves the healing of the social brokenness that separates neighbors from living together amid their differences.

What does care mean in the context of North America's increasing awareness of religious and cultural plurality? It used to be the case that pastoral care referred to conversations between a pastor and a church member taking place inside the church building. The current context for the field of pastoral care in North America redefines care to be about the care of faith communities; the equipping of disciples to care for others, both within and beyond Christian communities; and care through engagement with the wider social ecologies in which faith communities are situated. In North America today, *pastoral caregivers are not working within homogenous communities but in public contexts for ministry increasingly marked by difference and multiplicity, including religious difference.* Indonesian pastoral caregivers know that engaging differences at a deeper-than-surface level can entail risk. Deep encounters across differences, while not always involving trauma, often do involve missteps, struggle, and even wounds. They recognize these encounters as points of shared vulnerability.

In this situation of acknowledged shared vulnerability, care not only refers to classic pastoral functions in single faith community (shepherding, guiding, healing, reconciling, sustaining, nurturing, alongside more recent additions of advocacy and liberation), but is something that takes place as churches and caregivers engage the world. Jerda's pastoral care extends beyond her church into her community—Pastoral care is public theology. It is, therefore, critical for caregivers to learn ways to care interculturally and interreligiously. Indonesia a good place to look for clues about how to do that, because this vast nation includes 7,000 ethnic groups and the national philosophy on which it is founded, pancasila, is an explicit embrace of religious diversity.

Second: At the same time that it is public theology, pastoral care is also about personal and communal healing at the level of the body. What Pastor Jerda's work suggests, however, is that not all healing work is medical or mental health treatment: There is a tendency in the West for us to medicalize ordinary experiences of distress and suffering. Certainly there is a place for therapeutic interventions, and I have suggested throughout this lecture the value of certain kinds of therapeutic practices important for addressing trauma. But in addition to therapeutic interventions, trauma healing also finds support in the ordinary encounters that happen when the church acts like the church, a community of authentic storytelling that blesses people to risk going out into an uncertain world to affirm the goodness of God and that our lives have purpose and meaning, even in the face of suffering, where we work to transform pain into hope.

Third: *While not all conflict involves violence or trauma, conflict is a common dimension of human encounter, and the ability to understand, analyze, and work constructively in situations of conflict is a crucial pastoral care skill in our time toward the prevention of violence.* Pamela Cooper White claims that "Suffering is the starting point for all pastoral and practical theology" (2012, p. 23). Violent conflict is a huge source of suffering, and pastoral leaders today must have some ability to engage it theologically and in pastoral practice— whether in interpersonal forms (e.g., domestic violence) or in communal forms (e.g., global religious conflicts such as Indonesia's). Conflict and peace skills are necessary capacities for pastoral leadership today. We can learn from people engaged in this work on the ground in Indonesia, as we look at the ways women peacebuilders like Jerda use ordinary practices such as gathering children to read books as one small means of re-knitting the fragile fabric of peace among her neighbors.

Last, while trauma is not necessarily ordinary in our everyday experience, its occurrence is far more common that one might wish to believe. We may not experience the trauma of living in a war zone, but even here, we have our "everyday" traumas: a spouse's precipitous death; the ravages of addictions; the shock of being laid off from a job one loves; the ordinary but traumatic adjustment of an older adult to the move into a care facility. We have our everyday traumas and difficulties.

Disciples of Jesus, lay and ordained, who seek to walk in the way of Jesus by participating in his practices of accompanying, blessing and healing those persons whose lives have been broken open by trauma, must begin to pay attention to how little immunity we ourselves have to that kind of vulnerability; we must stop insulating ourselves from those who are wounded by it; we must be signs of God's hope not by denying human pain but by seeking to transform it into the abundant life of God's dream for human flourishing. ✠

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The Commemoration of the Martydom of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership: On Violence and the Dream

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When I was thinking about what I could say to you all in light of the challenges and possibilities of our historical present, I found myself remembering the words that the black feminist activist and poet June Jordan used to describe her understanding of the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the responsibility we all bear with respect to that legacy: "Our need for Dr. King's Beloved Community—right here—becomes with every month, an imperative, collective shelter we must build and defend."[1] A collective shelter we must build and defend: against hopelessness, against poverty, and perhaps now most of all against crude violence. What's been on my mind these past months, and I'm sure I'm not alone in this, is the alarming frequency at which we receive news about the violent deaths of black people. It seems like since the deaths of Renisha McBride, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner, and most recently Walter Scott, I've spent so many days frozen in front of CNN, paralyzed by my outrage by the police violence that has both disappeared my brothers and sisters and tried to disappear collective resistance to the systematic devaluation of black lives. But of course I've also been deeply inspired and moved into action by that very collective resistance: by people who have risked everything to insist that "black lives matter," for example, and by organizations who have struggled to expose the police force as an occupying army rather than an ally to of communities of color, and by dreamers who are still bold enough to imagine that the forces of freedom shall overcome the forces of death. If the modern civil rights movement was a kind of second Reconstruction, which was intent upon cashing in on what Dr. King called the promissory note of American democracy, we might see the vibrant movements springing up all around us as a third Reconstruction, another advance in the long history of black liberation. So as someone who has devoted much of my scholarly career to analyzing the stories we tell ourselves about black freedom struggles, I am approaching these King memorial lectures as an opportunity to think with you about how we might continue our work of building and defending that collective shelter that is Dr. King's vision of beloved community.

1 Jordan, June. "Remembering Dr. King." Some of Us Did Not Die: New and Selected Essays, 45.

I believe that one curious aspect of the current upsurge in black activism that will stand out to historians of this era is that it's been difficult for the news media and blogosphere to funnel the work of freedom-making into a narrative of charismatic leadership. Likely because the organizers of #blacklivesmatter, the Black Youth Project, and other activists organizations move differently, think differently, look differently and sing and dance differently than those of earlier eras, and also because these organizations center feminist and queer and trans analyses of power in their movements toward justice, it appears unlikely that the stories of their successes and failures will be narrated along the lines of charismatic spectacle that we have come to know from Eyes on the Prize and other Black History Month staples. This is a surprising turn given how throughout the history of Black American movements for social and political change, dominant stories in black culture and in American culture more generally have often used charismatic leadership as a frame to dramatize and explain the work of heterogeneous collectivities to topple the hierarchies embedded in racial capitalism. Indeed, the story of the African American freedom struggle most often invoked in contemporary popular, mass-mediated accounts of the civil rights movement, for example, features a series of charismatic shows of power in which extraordinary and divinely ordained ministers and political spokesmen deliver rousing orations that inspire marchers to march and singers to sing, as well as moral, social, and political transformation to happen. I wrote my book, Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership, to intervene in stories such as these, trying to pursue one single question: Why is it that despite overwhelming historical evidence to the contrary, we continue to believe that social and political change is impossible in the absence of a single, usually male, usually straight, leadership? In these two lectures, I would like to return to that question as we sit with the urgencies of our historical present. And one of the things that literary critics share with theologians and ministers, I think, is some basic faith that words on pages can act as mystical conduits, transporting us to places we don't yet know inside ourselves and outside in the world. So this evening I want to use a little known text to talk about some of the problems of charisma and explain where I think African American literature gets us in our attempts to reimagine the world. Tomorrow morning, I'll talk about some of the promises of charisma in the world we have inherited. Along the way we'll meet an aging Frederick Douglass doing what we would call acting out in the crucible of Reconstruction, a young girl dreamer who takes over the Biblical Moses's dream of liberation, a raucous bunch of women who take us on a mystical journey toward another world, and a visionary preacher not unlike Dr. King who asks us if we can see this other world emerging right out of the disaster before our eyes.

I. Charisma

On August 1, 1926, The Negro World, the print organ of the United Negro Improvement Association, reported on the proceedings of Garvey Day, a celebration that took place in Harlem while Marcus Garvey, president-general of the UNIA, was detained in Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. At the celebration, a missionary from San Domingo encouraged the assembly to keep their eyes on Garvey, his physical absence notwithstanding: "He was convinced that the moment one kept his eyes fixed on Garvey, from that moment he prospered, but the moment one turned one's back on the great leader, that moment he perished."[2]

The culture of the UNIA during Garvey's detention was suspended in a messianic temporality in which the memory of the leader's past triumph and the hope for his reappearance determined how the image of the leader was invoked in both spectacle and sundry. When the Convention of Negro Peoples opened two weeks later on August 15, a tribute to Garvey "took on added significance because of the fact that the object of the adoration and adulation of the populace was not present in person, but languishing in a white man's prison."[3] As the acting president-general addressed the assembly, "several persons began to sob" as he expressed regret for Garvey's absence.[4] And when a North Carolina preacher offered the assembly an allegory of divine substitution--the story of God providing Abraham a ram in the bush--he gazed on Garvey's robe, paying honor to "the absent one." "When I

2 "Fine Tributes to Marcus Garvey as Anniversary of the First World Convention Is Observed," *Negro World*, Aug 7, 1926, 2.
3 "Epochal Day's Events Will Go Down in History Reviewed from the Sidelines," Negro World, August 21, 1926,2.
4 "Impressive Divine Service Marks Eloquent Opening of Convention; Eloquent Sermon by Rev. Dr. J. H. Chase," Negro World, August 21, 1926, 2.

cast my eye upon his robe," he said, "it carries my mind back to the beginning of this great organization, to the great master mind." [5] The empty robe so conjured the leader's body, even and perhaps especially in its absence, and invited a messianic identification that began with the visual index of suspension in space and time.

In the parade that followed the opening of the Convention of Negro Peoples, the impulse to keep the eye fixed on the leader, even and especially in his absence, was reinforced by the portrait and the now-mobile empty robe, two essential props in the staging of the event. As the parade made its way toward 135th Street in Harlem, the procession called up Garvey's presence for climactic effect. Again, according to The Negro World:They went wild over his name on banners... and close behind his leading band, surrounded by gaudy ranks of soldiers . . . crawled his big black car in which two gold-braided lieutenants held up a life-sized oil portrait on an ebony standard. The leader was painted in full dress, just as he appeared before officers whisked him away to the penitentiary in February, 1925. [6]

Garvey's regalia, now literally an empty fetish, took the place that his live body would otherwise occupy; and the life-size portrait linked the leader's presence to his absence in a way that only heightened the anticipation from the sidewalks. The portrait, face without body, and the empty robe, body without face, drew a mutable triangle between aesthetic object, erotic longing, and political exigency in a way that is exemplary of the conjurational work of the twentieth-century black charismatic scenario.

I begin our inquiry into the nature of charisma here, with Garvey and the UNIA, because a sustained engagement with the multifarious experiences, perspectives, movements, stories, and players that make up the contemporary history of black American movements for social change and political progress requires both historicizing and disposing of the fiction that social transformation is impossible in the absence of singular charismatic leadership. How did we come to believe so profoundly in the absolute necessity of charismatic leadership, and what modes of being, belonging, and creating could we imagine for ourselves if charisma were not at the center of our political longings? Charisma is a political fiction or ideal, a set of assumptions about authority and identity that works to structure how political mobilization is conceived and enacted.

5 Ibid.
6 "Harlem's Homage to Garvey as Seen by the White Press," *Negro World*, August 21, 1926, 2.

This fiction is staged in real time and in media playback: its narrative thread is woven into the fabric of what I have called the charismatic scenario, which has throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries taken forms as diverse as UNIA parades, the Million Man March, and the various scenes that make up the historical imaginary of the civil rights and Black Power movements.

In African American political culture since Reconstruction, charismatic leadership has been a fraught discursive compact—a narrative and performative regime—that has had to contend repeatedly with the contestations of performing artists, writers, social critics, and activists, such that while the presumption that charismatic leadership is the beginning of black politics might be conceived as the macrofiction of twentieth-century African American culture, the microfictions that have restaged the movements toward black citizenship and radical social transformation make up an essential repository for the imaginings and counterimaginings of contemporary black politics. More fully understanding contemporary African American culture—the culture we find in books and films, in songs and plays—means considering how it has functioned as such a repository. For this reason, I want to briefly sketch how the twentieth-century cultural complex of black charismatic leadership corresponded with the making of post-Reconstruction black political culture; to analyze how the charismatic scenario, as a challenge to and compromise with the post-Reconstruction containments of black mobility and political expression, is structured in specific forms of ideological and material violence; and to begin a discussion of how African American literature throughout the twentieth century served as an archive of contestation where these forms of intraracial violence would be reimagined and redressed.

By the time the UNIA burst onto the stage of history conjuring Garvey as the messianic fulfillment of black political longing, charisma had already come to structure black expectations for social change. During the struggle to make black political modernity between the end of slavery and the New Deal era, the biblical myths and social formations that had become central in blacks' individual and collective self-fashionings during slavery combined with the post-Reconstruction-era politics of respectability to found the twentieth century's ideals of leadership and political community formation in African American culture. Emancipation inaugurated former slaves into a system of the "mimetic enactment of identity and entitlements," a system in which the performance of "possessive individualism" through manly dedication to dutiful, subordinate labor was coerced through ideological forms as seemingly benign as the freedom manual and physical forms as outrightly brutal as convict leasing and peonage.[7] The injunction to former slaves to "show themselves as men" was one way in which the language of freedom "covered the encroaching and invasive forms of social control," as Saidiya Hartman explains in Scenes of Subjection, and these expectations solidified "racial and gender inequality through the guise of social rights." That means that as former captives were nominated citizens, they were inaugurated into the liberal complex of possessive individualism, whereby sovereignty was a gendered function of property and manly self-possession. Given this ideological complex, the brief period of black (male) political enfranchisement between 1865 and 1876 has to be understood as a democratic opening as well as a closure, a tightening that limited how citizenship would be figured and performed, particularly as it related to black masculinity and the precarious rights of citizenship. The depoliticization of black Americans that was hastened by the Hayes Compromise of 1876 catalyzed the turn to patriarchy in the home, the church, and the political assembly as a marker of black fitness for freedom. This turn participated in the process of making black manhood the privileged site of political subjectivity and activism.

The formation of black charismatic leadership as a performative structure that would be the race's bulwark against dehumanization and white supremacist terror after Reconstruction was part of a larger cultural shift toward the politics of respectability, one that many scholars have examined in great detail.[8] Uplift ideology (as it is also referred to) posited leaders as mediators, as exemplary spokesmen who championed and exhibited the marks of the civilized. If, during the 1880s and early 1890s, newspapers, statesmen, and lynch mobs "reconstructed" black people as criminals, monsters, and rapists, the collective efforts to combat the

7 Saidiya Hartman, Scenes of Subjection, 154.
8 Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Jenkins, *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Cathy J. Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black : Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

post-Reconstruction ideological regime were often waged at the site of black political and social leadership.[9] For example, black colleges worked to create a leadership class by enforcing Victorian manners and morals; and black churches expected that clergymen's credentials and performances would correlate to class identity. As Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham explains, middle-class men and women "embraced educated ministers and laypersons who sought to employ intellect and skill," but "the illiterate masses" preferred ministers who "adhered to emotionalism and 'superstition' and exhibited no knowledge or interest in temperance, education, and Victorian morality."[10] As Best Men and Best Women as that talented tenth was called worked toward ideological fixity within black leadership structures by eschewing emotionalism, the middle-class struggle for black leadership was waged at the sites of literacy and gender: black leadership was increasingly expected to transcend the "age of voice" by exhibiting the marks of bourgeois decorum. Elsa Barkley Brown explains, "As formal political gains. . . began to recede. . . the political struggles over relationships between the working-class and the newly emergent middle-class, between men and women, between literate and nonliterate, increasingly became issues."[11]

The 1893 Columbian Exposition—World's Fair—in Chicago exemplified the post-Reconstruction trend of nominating middle-class black leadership to safeguard against white supremacist ideological and physical violence. It might be understood as an inaugural scene for twentieth-century black politics, as it "embodied the definitive failure of the hopes of emancipation and Reconstruction and inaugurated an age that was to be dominated by 'the problem of the color-line.'"[12]

9 Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 31. See also W. E. B. Du Bois and David L. Lewis, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Free Press, 1998); Rayford Whittingham Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro, from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997).
10 Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 43, 130.
11 Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," Public Culture 7, no. 1 (1994): 110.
12 Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.

The World's Fair presented an ethnophilic panoply of colonial others: along the mile-long strip of the Midway Plaisance were a string of anthropological exhibits that presented folk representations of European villages followed by Chinese, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Algerian, and Egyptian villages. "At the very end of the Midway—and scale of civilization," Paula Giddings writes, quoting a New York Times reporter, "was a Dahomeyan village where sixty-nine Africans 'blacker than buried midnight and as degraded as animals capered numbly to the lascivious pleadings of an unseen tom-tom pounding within.'"[13] Representations of black identity after slavery conformed to late nineteenth-century stereotypes of undomesticated black savagery as well as to notions of domesticated black servility as entrepreneurs at the fair debuted a twentieth-century breakfast icon: Aunt Jemima.

The fair was a definitive event in the making of black political modernity vis-à-vis emerging ideals of leadership in at least two ways. First, it witnessed the display of middle-class decorum as the antidote to representations of black savagery: the formal tone of black religious ceremony along the Dearborn Street Corridor just outside of the fair contrasted the raucous representations of black savages in the Dahomeyan Village inside the fair. Here, the Exposition registered the growing class rifts in post-Reconstruction black communities and the secularism taking over middle-class black religious expression. According to Christopher Reed:

Parallel activities ran continuously in Chicago's African American churches throughout the duration of the fair in contradistinction to the usual Sunday ceremonies that marked so much of the rural and small-town southern experience. Emotive expression yielded to the cerebral serenity of northern, cosmopolitan African American church life.[14]

Interestingly, charismatic performance ameliorated this class schism in communal modes of expression by embodying at once erudition and emotion, frenzy and decorum.[15] The preacher was to be both instructed by sacred scripture and by the spirit; he alone was allowed and able to achieve the proper mix of emotionality and literate, secularist poise. The charismatic figure might be seen in this context as both the embodiment of and the excess of racial uplift ideology and decorum.

To this point, Frederick Douglass's address at the Haytian pavilion on August 25, 1893 quieted blacks' anger resulting from the fair's racist exoticism as well as many of the intraracial political disagreements circulating around what was called Colored Day at the fair, even the disagreement between Ida Wells-Barnett and Douglass himself. Paula Giddings describes Douglass's speech in her biography of Wells-Barnett:

Reports about the seventy-five-year-old Douglass's speech remarked how he, seemingly overcome by the moment or the heat of the occasion, began his own oration with a trembling voice, and that he had to cling to the podium with his hands in order to steady them. Encouraged by his apparent fragility, some of the whites in the audience began to heckle him, which, it appeared, was exactly what was needed. Douglass steadied himself, flung his notes aside, and found the sonorous voice that had inspired generations before him.[16]

Here, the miracle of speech both quells white supremacist heckling and forges intraracial unity while tying black energies for freedom to the post-Reconstruction secularization of black religion. Douglass punctuated his speech with an exclamation of black American respectability and progress: "Look at the progress the Negro has made in thirty years! We have come up out of Dahomey unto this. Measure the Negro. But not by the standard of the splendid civilization of the Caucasian. Bend down and measure him—measure him from the depths out of which he has risen."[17] Douglass's rhetoric drew a protracted distance between savage Africans and emerging black American political moderns in a move that prefigured black leadership performance in the decades to come. Douglass's performance at the fair dramatized how he was now, as Henry Louis Gates writes, "the representative colored man in the United States because he was the most presentable. And he was most presentable because of the presence he had established as a master of voice."[18]

By the arrival of the twentieth century, black peoples' desires for political self-determination had combined with messianic imagery of savior-led emancipation to instantiate charismatic authority as the principal structuring idea for black political organization. By midcentury, "Negro leadership" had become a sociological and journalistic category of its own. Later, through the mediatization of post–World War II scenes of protest and the growing body of social scientific discourse of black politics, the very concept of Negro leadership had solidified as a classed and gendered concept. The many women's and local histories of civil rights, which have, since the turn to social histories of black activism after the 1960s, invented new historiographies to discover important ways that "women organized while men led," may have enlarged the historical record while failing to fully apprehend how charismatic black leadership was produced as a disciplining social fiction decades before the televisual spectacle of the civil rights struggle of the late 1950s and early 1960s and continues to be produced, in new and even more spectacular ways, in the twenty-first century.[19]

II. Hurston's Dream

In 1939 as the Harlem Renaissance was winding down, Zora Neale Hurston published Moses, Man of the Mountain, a rewriting of the biblical exodus myth that unravels the paradigmatic freedom story at its seams.[20] The most innovative twist in Hurston's revision of exodus is its positioning of Moses's older sister, Miriam, as a queer proto-blackfeminist foil to Moses's leadership. Early in the novel Miriam's mother charges her with placing her newborn brother, Moses, in a basket on the Nile River so that he may escape the pharaoh's decree of murder. Miriam, charged with the responsibility of watching her younger brother, fails at the task when she falls asleep on the banks of the Nile. While we learn that Miriam "woke up with a guilty start and looked for the little ark on the river which contained her baby brother," we actually catch a glimpse of her at dreamwork: mourning the missing basket containing her brother for only a moment, Miriam is suddenly drawn to "a glorious sight," a "large party of young women dressed in rich clothing" (27). Miriam, forgetting Moses and now caught guilty of homoerotic looking, watches the "marvelous scene" of women bathing and is "uplifted from gazing on it" (27). So Moses's life as a member of the Egyptian court begins here, with his sister's gazing on the princess and her lady-servants as they bathe, dress, and dance.

When Miriam returns home quite satisfied and without a single thought of the baby brother she was supposed to watch, she weaves together a story of Moses's fate to appease her parents. Her father hears her outside the family's hut "telling and retelling her story" (33). And as the people of Goshen pass the story on, they increase Miriam's storytelling pleasure and the mythological lore surrounding the future Prince of Egypt:

Miriam told her story again and again to more believing ears. It grew with being handled until it was a history of the Hebrew in the palace, no less. Men claimed to have seen signs at the birth of the child, and Miriam came to believe every detail of it as she added them and retold them time and time again. Others conceived and added details at their pleasure and the legends grew like grass. (35)

Hurston's novel makes a space for Miriam to dream and even to author the story of Moses's rise before burying her underneath that very story. The text silences Miriam's first person with its third-person omniscient: "Inside the royal palace affairs went on unconscious of the legends of Goshen. The Pharaoh had his programs" (36). Hurston's novel, in the chapters following Miriam's brief term as protagonist-narrator, buries her under its surprisingly gory stories of Moses's coming of age in the palace, his military feats, his flight to

13 Paula Giddings, Ida: *A Sword among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Amistad, 2008), 273.

14 Christopher Robert Reed, *All the World Is Here!: The Black Presence at the White City* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 107.

15 As C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya explain, "While middle-class black churches have been more careful in keeping better records and in adopting more efficient organizational forms, their pastors must not only possess the proper educational credentials but also a charismatic preaching ability." Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), 14.

16 Giddings, *Ida*, 276–77

17 Reed, *All the World Is Here*, 194

18 As Henry Louis Gates Jr. suggests, Reconstruction was for blacks a project of representation in both senses: to speak for (Vertretung) and to depict (Darstellung). Douglass was a representative because "he represented black people most eloquently and elegantly, and because he was the race's great opportunity to re-present itself in the court of racist public opinion." Gates, "The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black," *Representations* 24 (1988): 129.

19 Kathryn L. Nasstrom, "Down to Now: Memory, Narrative, and Women's Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia," *Gender and History* 11, no. 1 (1999): 113; Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

20 Zora Neale Hurston, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (New York: HarperPerennial). Subsequent citations of this text appear parenthetically.

Midian, his return to Egypt as emancipator, and his bloody authoritarian rule over the Israelites.

Throughout my work, I turn to literature as an important site for political intervention. This is particularly important when we're analyzing the fictions of black leadership because novels like Hurston's, filled with dreams and visions, and the violence that they contend with, have comprised an archive of contestation that restages the charismatic scenario to call attention to the potential violences of charisma. The charismatic scenario is the terminology I use to describe how we come to know what we know about black leadership. Charisma, literally meaning "gift of grace," might be conceptualized in three ways: as phenomenon, as formation of authority, and as the discursive material for the elaboration of black social and political identities, relationships, and movements. Where studies of charismatic social formations in religious studies, sociology, and political science have either focused on charisma as phenomenology (as prophetic, embodied collectivity—as in studies of charismatic churches) or as structure of authority (following the sociologist Max Weber), for me charisma is a storytelling regime (a set of fictions) and a set of performative prescriptions, a compact of mythologies that covers liberatory and disciplinary impulses that both compel and contain black movements for social change.

Diana Taylor's formulation of the scenario is for me the most useful concept for explaining how black politics has been deployed as a cultural complex throughout the twentieth century. The scenario as a mode of formal theater emerged in the mid-sixteenth-century Italian genre of commedia dell'arte, in which players followed not a script but rather an outline. The room to improvise, according to Taylor, "allowed for variations and surprises. Contemporary events could be easily folded into the loosely structured plot, allowing actors to adapt to audience responses, which in turn helped shape the drama."[21] A scenario thus "grab[s] the body" while leaving it "space to maneuver."[22] It provides the basis for a kind of physical theater that is open to variation and surprise even as it is rooted in convention.

The charismatic scenario in twentieth-century African American culture is such a portable sketch, a movable set of prescriptions for body and affect. Charismatic events and narratives articulate a range of performative and narrative gestures within a single pattern that determines, in broad outlines, both the single event—march, rally, convention speech—and the historical circumstance that necessitates it—scarcity, suffering, lack, violence. So it goes: a people cry out for liberation from a brutal and foreign regime while a leader is instructed in the spirit. The leader struggles against self-doubt and convention to rise to the promise of his calling. Passage through the burning bush experience, the kitchen conversation with God, the jailhouse conversion, or the wilderness flight builds toward the leader's swift entry onto the stage of history. Tables are tossed, thieves expelled, frauds exposed, and, most importantly, collective desires and destinies articulated. The leader's charisma is now evidenced by some form of miraculous proof: death-defying stunt, the conversion of water into wine. In black culture, of course, the gift of grace has been most indelibly linked to the miracle of prophetic speech: the gracious acknowledgments; the methodical gripping of the podium; the measured wiping of the brow; the soulful cadence; the slow, steady wading into the subject matter at hand; the libidinous cries borne of charismatic hearing among the congregation or audience; the eventual digression from the script; the casting aside of the manuscript and the journey into improvised speech; the anaphora and the anecdote; the working up into crescendo and acceleration to achieve rhetorical climax; the precipitous exit; and the breathless wonder of a crowd left wanting more.

The charismatic scenario, reproduced over and again in private and public accounts of the black freedom struggle over the last century and a half, is structured in three forms of violence.

First, there is historical silencing (or historiographical violence), which involves an obscuring of the role of so-called "ordinary" people in the historical process. The glorification of the charismatic model contributes to a top-down historical viewpoint that situates historical agency in the hands of a "great" few. Following Michel-Rolph Trouillot, I want to insist that the silences in historical production are active, even aggressive, not passive or innocent. "One silences a fact or an individual," Trouillot writes, "as a silencer silences a gun."[23] A history of the black freedom struggle that relates historical transformation as a story of great-man leadership effectively silences masses of historical agents and cuts against a historical materialist notion of history as the product of class struggle.

The second problem or violence of charisma that I want to highlight is a social violence: the undemocratic relational structure that this form of authority potentially generates. Adorno explained that the idea of the leader is coterminous with modern democracy—the leader is supposed to be a representative who speaks for and to the people, a necessary rhetorical presence in a representative democratic society. But, in 1950, he writes, "the truly democratic functioning of leadership…has vanished…and become increasingly rigid and autonomous" . For Adorno, "inflated leader figures" are a product of the modern culture industry, a controlling mass media in which "the idea of people becoming self-determining subjects …seems rather utopian" (420). Charismatic leadership, rule without rules, represents a fall from a truly democratic social ideal for Adorno and others. Cedric Robinson later argues that charismatic political leadership in modernity "tend[s] increasingly to subvert the capacity of the individual to respond to his or her environment creatively, intelligently, and ingeniously."[24] This will to power over is essentially antithetical—or at least, troublesome—to a radical democratic concept of power with.

The third of charisma's problems that I want to highlight is a conceptual violence: the reinscription of traditionally oppressive gender norms. Charisma is a gendered and gendering episteme structure of knowledge that is coded, at least in the American context, as a masculine phenomenon. I don't mean to suggest that women cannot or have not become charismatic; I mean, rather, to emphasize that charisma participates in a gendered economy of political authority in which the attributes of the ideal leader are the traits the West usually conceives as rightly belonging to men, or at least, to the manly: traits like ambition, courage, and, above all, divine calling. The failure to disentangle charisma and manliness is a failure that I call epistemological. Put simply, we ought to know better.

If charisma is a structure of political affect and effect with clear limitations, contemporary African American literature is a staging area for new considerations of black politics, a space where a plurality of voices challenge charisma's singular source of authority and where the hierarchies inscribed within the charismatic paradigm of political leadership are called into question. African American fiction and film provide sites of engagement, restaging the leadership scenario and allowing for fuller understandings of both the workings of political ideal making and the possibilities of literary intervention in those very processes of political narrative formation. For the remainder of my time, I want to mediate on these possibilities by returning to Hurston's version of Exodus.

The textual burial of Miriam in Moses, Man of the Mountain underscores the narrative draw of male-centered charismatic heroism. Charismatic authority works culturally as a romantic fiction precisely because of its ability to seduce readers toward an emancipatory telos. The linear progression of the narrative is irresistible. The seduction of linearity, for Eddie Glaude, accounts in part for the power of Exodus as a narrative base for ideas of freedom and nationhood: "The journey forward," he writes, "the promise that where we are going is radically different from where we are—marks the transformative aspect of the narrative. The narrative structure of Exodus describes a progression, the transformation of people as they journey forward to a promised land. . . . Once the Israelites leave, there is no turning back."[25] Miriam's textual returns in the margins of the novel after she disappears from the story's foreground illustrate the way that the failure her obey the charismatic leader is punished by atrocious force. Miriam is the object lesson in democracy in Hurston's novel: she shows us that we should approach charismatic leadership with suspicion and great wariness. Miriam makes her first return to the narrative as a "two-headed woman of power" (135). Whereas before Moses's usurping of the story Miriam possesses the freedom to tell and retell her story, she is now muted; her only vehicle for self-expression is ventriloquism. She now has to speak through her brother Aaron, and for this reason, her power has two heads—one that reasons, thinks, and feels, and another that speaks. In the charismatic schema, authority requires a single source of logos. Reason and judgment are passed from a single divine entity through a single bearer along to a social body. Moses therefore has to silence any voices clamoring to be heard alongside his own. Thus when Moses returns to Goshen from Midian and calls a meeting with the Hebrew elders, he is angered by the presence of his sister, by now a known prophet in Goshen. Aaron, Miriam's brother and alter ego, presents Miriam as a person of "influence" who should introduce Moses to the Hebrews,

21 Diana Taylor, "Afterword: War Play," *PMLA* 124, no. 3 (2010): 1888.

22 Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire : Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press), 55.

23 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

24 Cedric J. Robinson, *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1980), 283.

25 Eddie S. Glaude, *Exodus! Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5.

introducing her as "a great prophetess" and encouraging Moses to "let her speak before everybody" for him (135). Moses dismisses the notion, telling Aaron, "This is not the time I have appointed for speech-making," and asking, "What makes you so sure she could do all this speaking and influencing if you have never seen her do it?" (135). Moses's refusal to allow Miriam to speak and his later appointing of Aaron as a legitimate actor in the divine–human verbal relay solidifies Miriam's role as silenced ventriloquist and confines her to using Aaron's mouth to speak.

Miriam's hushed voice haunts the narrative throughout the text, returning to express a progressively expanding notion of freedom. In a later scene of return, Miriam becomes frustrated with Aaron's political performance and takes her own voice back, criticizing Moses and his new wife Zipporah:

"Don't let him holler you down, Aaron," Miriam jumped in. "The Lord did call us just as much as He did Moses and it's about time we took our stand in front of the people. I was a prophetess in Israel while he was herding sheep in Midian. And that woman he done brought here to lord it over us, that black Mrs. Pharaoh got to leave here right now." (245)

Moses's response attempts to mark Miriam as a subhuman monstrous woman, telling her, "The trouble with you is that nobody ever married you. And when a woman ain't got no man to look after her, she takes on the world in place of the man she missed" (245). In her venomous anger, Miriam "lifted up her voice so all the women on the outside" of Moses's tent "could hear what she said" (245). "Who you talking to Moses?" she shouts. "The Lord don't speak through your mouth alone. He speaks through my mouth and Aaron's mouth just as much as He speaks through yours" (246). This outburst ends Miriam's final attempt to reinsert herself in the nation's story as a heroic character and as a speaking agent in the charismatic relay of authority. Moses challenges Aaron and Miriam to follow him to the Tent of Testimony, where he will prove the divine sanction for his authority once and for all. In the tent, "the Voice spoke out of the cloud and was angry with Miriam and Aaron. Then the cloud lifted and everybody saw that Miriam was a leper. . . . Miriam was a horrible sight in her leprous whiteness! Everybody shrank away from her in terror and disgust. So Moses put her outside of the camp as unclean for seven days" (246). Punished for her transgressions of gendered notions of propriety and her violations of the structure of charismatic authority in which one male voice speaks for the Voice, Miriam is sentenced to a life covered by "a veil between her and the world which never lifted" (246). Hurston's novel, uncovering the hidden horrors in the Moses myth, portrays the charismatic leader as a monster that scares desiring, thinking, speaking women away from power. Moses's rod of God has abundant power to free; but it also buries nonrational political knowledge that refuses to conform to normative gender hierarchy and normative modes of political expression.

Miriam's returns in Hurston's Exodus narrative disrupt a romantic reading of Exodus's structure of charismatic authority or what Robert Patterson calls "Exodus politics." Miriam's story in Moses, Man of the Mountain is a story of a martyr whose exposure of the masculinist bias of the charismatic model of leadership is punished by death. Miriam's death marks a turning point for Hurston's exodus. Thinking about his sister, Moses wonders "if the Exodus would have taken place at all" without her (265). Without a woman's silenced power present to legitimate his own speaking power, Moses's idea of himself as leader begins to unravel. The Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt decides at the end of the novel that "he didn't want to rule that way. He wanted freedom" (285). Instead of instructing or giving laws, Moses "wanted to ask God and nature questions" (285). Miriam's voice, muted during her life, haunts Moses, whose questioning of freedom expresses an ironic suspicion of the charismatic paradigm that persists even after the primary source of that suspicion exits the text. Moses, now facing violent murder by a people who have come to see him as an obstacle to their total freedom, relinquishes leadership over them. Withdrawing his voice and his powerful rod from the nation he has led, Moses allows Israel's voices, rather than God's, to determine their future. He "give[s] Israel back the notes to songs. The words would be according to their own dreams, but they would sing. They had songs and singers" (283). In this final textual nod to the biblical Miriam, who plays the tambourine for dancing, worshiping women and who leads the people of Israel in song, the novel disappears Moses, leaving the Israelites to their songs and dreams. [26] Moses vanishes in a cacophony of thunder, leaving "Israel at the Jordan in every way" (284).

III. The Dream is Real

So, what does Hurston's Moses story teach us about ourselves, about what we want leadership to do for us and about what an uncritical investment in a heavily prescribed notion of charismatic leadership can do to us?

26 See Exodus 15.

Dr. King delivered his "Beyond Vietnam" speech at New York's Riverside Church, 48 years ago, tying black energies for social change in the wake of the landmark civil rights legislation to an abiding critique of U.S. imperialism and counterinsurgency. To oppose war, he said, is the "privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions."[27] In a historical era that has so thoroughly incorporated King's passionate movements against violence into its own rationale for imperial domination, we would do well to recall both King's philosophies of nonviolence and Hurston's cautionary tale. Remember that when Barack Obama traveled to Selma not earlier this year but while he was campaigning for the presidency, then Senator Obama pronounced, in a call-and-response sermonette laced with the dulcet tones of a Southern accent, "[We] are in the presence today of a lot of Moseses. We're in the presence today of giants whose shoulders we stand on, people who battled, not just on behalf of African Americans but on behalf of all of America; that battled for America's soul, that shed blood." In moments like these, moments that call Dr. King's memory to the stage to justify or excuse American exceptionalism, the dominant image of charismatic black leadership so readily equated with the 1960s is conjured to keep black radical protest in motion and to domesticate that very history, to pay homage to black protest and to absolve the nation of its history of racialized terror, to raise the specter of 1960s rupture only to lay it to rest once and for all.

27 King, "Beyond Vietnam." 4 Apr. 1967. New York, NY.

If we are going to remain, as King advised, "bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism,"[28] and continue the work of building the collective shelter of beloved community, we might remind ourselves that we do our work in the presence of a few Moseses whole lot of Miriams: bold womanish dreamers with stories to tell and worlds to build. And we might follow the words of one street corner preacher Toni Cade Bambara's 1980 novel, The Salt Eaters. When a woman on the street dismisses Bambara's Rev. Meadows, telling him, "You a dreamer, mistuh," he responds: "History is calling us to rule again and you lost dead souls are standing around doing the freakie dickie… never recognizing the teachers come among you to prepare you for the transformation, never recognizing the synthesizers come to forge the new alliances, or the guides who throw open the new footpaths, or the messengers come to end all excuses. Dreamer? The dream is real, my friends. The failure to make it work is the unreality."[29]

28 King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Beyond Vietnam." 4 Apr. 1967. New York, NY.
29 Toni Cade Bambara, *The Salt Eaters*, 1st Vintage contemporaries ed., Vintage Contemporaries (New York, NY: Vintage Books).

Part two of Dr. Edward's MLK Remembrance presentation is available in full in the electronic edition of the VTS Journal or can be listened to from the Seminary's website.

Donyelle McCray, director of the Office of Multicultural Ministries, and Erica Edwards on the evening of the lecture.

Left to right, 1st row: The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., VTS dean and president; Lady Eileen Carey, The Most Rev. and Right Honorable Dr. George L. Carey, 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury; Neil Bush, President George H. W. Bush, First Lady Barbara Pierce Bush; Bishop Bud Shand, chair VTS board of trustees and retired bishop of the Diocese of Easton, Md.; Laura Levenson, The Rev. Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr., rector of St. Martin's Church ('92): *Left to right, 2nd row*: The Rev. Martin J. Bastian, vice rector of St. Martin's Church ('96); The Rev. Chad T. Martin ('09); Pat Wareing, The Rev. Robert Wareing ('81), Patty Agnew, The Very Rev. M. L. Agnew ('67); Pam Bentley, The Rev. John R. Bentley ('95); and The Rev. Mary E. Wilson ('97).

Barbara Bush

Recipient of the Dean's Cross for Servant Leadership in Church and Society Award

By The Rt. Rev. James Shand ('99)
Chair, VTS Board of Trustees

In a biography written by George W. Bush entitled, 41: *A Portrait of My Father*, he writes about his mother, Barbara Bush.

"My mother influenced me as much as my father did. Every day of my life, I have been grateful for her devotion, her humor and her love."

On Mother's Day, Dean Markham and I had the opportunity to present Mrs. Barbara Bush with The Dean's Cross for Servant Leadership in Church and Society Award. The presentation was held at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston at the 11:15 service. The rector, Russell Levenson, is a VTS alumnus. It was Mothering Sunday and Levenson had put together an imaginative liturgy. Lord Carey, the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury preached; and the large number of VTS alums were all involved in the liturgy. It was a remarkable service.

In the few minutes that The Dean and I had to speak with the President and Mrs. Bush, I could see why her son used words like devotion, humor, and love to describe his mother.

Mrs. Bush's devotion to St. Martin's spans over fifty years. The Bush family's faithfulness was honored when the parish raised $25 million dollars to expand the facilities of the congregation and its ministries that support youth, young adults, the Boy Scouts, outreach, and the mission and work of the new Hope and Healing Center and Institute. Mrs. Bush shared with me her devotion to the work of the Needlepoint Guild and the Saintly Stitcher's and how proud she was to be a member of these two groups.

Mrs. Bush's humor is contagious as she shared with me a few remarks during the photo shoot before the service. Afterward, she pulled me aside to share something else. It is obvious to me that her love of life was genuine and a real gift.

Mrs. Bush's love was evident as she engaged with her friends in the pews, lovingly shared the award with the President, and accepted the Dean's Cross with sincerity and gratefulness. She accepted the award with thanksgiving for the ministry of the clergy of her parish and for the ministry of VTS.

I came away from that service affirming what I read from the Dean's Cross citation:

"Barbara Bush is a person who has represented the best of the vision of America as a land of opportunity, hope, and faithfulness." ✠

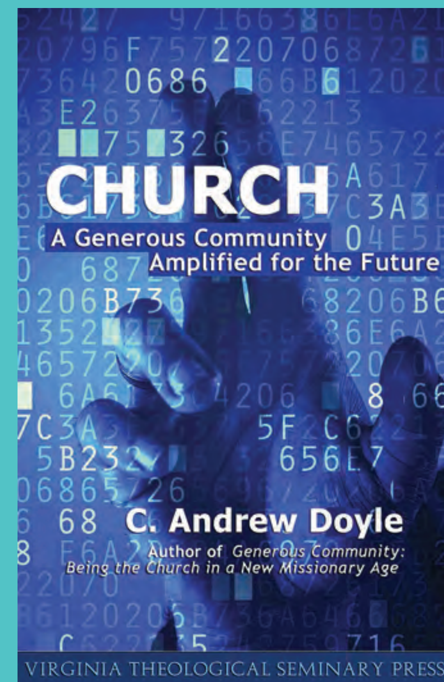
Changing the way we do things

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President

Virginia Theological Seminary is proud to announce the publication of *Church: A Generous Community Amplified for the Future*. The author is the Bishop of Texas, The Rt. Rev. Andrew Doyle. When Bishop Doyle has a sabbatical he spends his time reading, thinking, and writing. And the result is spectacular. *Church: A Generous Community Amplified for the Future* is a substantial book; it runs to over 500 pages; and the argument is innovative, striking, and perceptive.

Although others have been making some of the key arguments, Bishop Doyle does not simply bring them together, but he also outlines a program for delivery. So it is often suggested that we need to focus on the creation of community for men and women, but precisely what that looks like is utterly opaque. Bishop Doyle starts by providing an acutely perceptive reading of our time. Traditional institutions lack flexibility, innovate slowly, and cannot make imaginative use of technology. So page after page, chapter after chapter, the program emerges. The Church of the future, explains Bishop Doyle, needs to learn flexibility, create networks, and use technology. Everything, including seminaries, need to be remodeled. The result is a hopeful, innovative text that promises a future for the Episcopal Church. Throughout the book, the argument is grounded in Scripture. Bishop Doyle writes, "The church must re-purpose, re-make, and make itself into a new creation— so that God may once again be accessed through its ministry."

Anyone who cares about the future of the Episcopal church must study this book. It is a tour de force. And it must not simply be studied, but let us all start to implement the vision. ✠



Commencement 2015

Graduation memories! Page 102—(*top photo*); Graduates of the Class of 2015 wait to process into Immanuel Chapel for Commencement. (*bottom photo*); The Class of 2015 gathers for their Class portrait in the Chapel Parlor.

Page 103— (*top row, left to right*); Professor Timothy Sedgwick with Jennifer Southall and Kristin Saylor of the Class of 2015; Amanda "Amy" Molina-Moore ('15) with a festive headpiece; Douglas Barnes and Fares Naoum, both 2015 graduates: (*Middle photo*); members of the Class of 2015: Zac Harmon, Jose Reyes, Ernesto "Jar" Pasalo, Morris Thompson, Shannon Preston: (*Bottom row*); Graduate Chandler Whitman holds the ad in *The Washington Post* congratulating the Class of 2015: Faculty members, the Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D., Dr. Donyelle McCray, Ph.D., the Rev. Kate Sonderegger, Ph.D., Dr. Kathleen Staudt, Ph.D. (partially hidden), the Rev. Robert Prichard, Ph.D., Dr. Amy Dyer, Ph.D.

Service for the Mission of the Church

By Mrs. Linda A. Chisholm, Ph.D.

Founder and First General Secretary of the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion and Founder and President of the International Partnership for Service-Learning

Occasioned by the 192nd Commencement at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia May 19, 2015

Dean Markham, Bishop Shand, members of the Board of Trustees, honorary degree recipients, and all in the Virginia Seminary Community—grace and peace.

How precious to be here celebrating your service of mission for the first time in this glorious chapel. What a journey you have had since the fire. (Now I confess that in my many years of church going, I have occasionally allowed my mind to wander from the sermon to contemplate the architecture, glass, and sculpture where I was worshipping. If that happens to any of you in the next few minutes, I declare you forgiven!)

To the faculty. I was glad to accept your invitation to speak. It affords me the chance to express my admiration for VTS publicly as I have privately so many times. Although I am called to the laity, I nonetheless know that had I studied with the faculty here I would have learned so very much and enjoyed it.

I am pleased to speak tonight also because most speaking I have done over the years has been to secular audiences. We all know you can say things within a family that you might not say elsewhere and tonight I seize that opportunity.

Now to you, soon-to-be graduates. Most of you will be leaving here in the next days, returning to your home diocese to become deacons and then priests, beginning your ordained ministry.

The lessons this evening set for you a goal, an intention, a direction. Their theme is peace. God knows we need it, whether as far away as Syria or as close as Baltimore. You are to be the blessed peacemakers.

The lessons and psalms also refer to your duties: leading worship, preaching, giving pastoral care, and teaching. It is teaching about which I, myself a teacher, want to reflect with you this evening.

Your dean asked me to say something about my own work. I will do that by sharing with you a few experiences I have had learning from the church, the Episcopal church in particular. The church has taught me so very much. Some ancient truths have, in the words of the hymn, been made uncouth by time. But others, the ones I will talk about, continue to be true and needed more than ever. However imperfectly I absorbed them, these concepts shaped my thoughts, gave me a mindset,—an epistemology—and formed habits of mind.

My earliest church memory was being handed a pair of snubbed nose scissors, the kind all five year olds hate, believing as they do that they are quite old enough for the pointy kind. As I struggled to cut my green construction paper into a shamrock, the Sunday school teacher was explaining the Trinity. The Father, Son and especially the Holy Ghost were mystifying. But looking at my shamrock, I did understand the three-in-one idea.

Later I was to learn there are four gospellers, each with his own "take" on the life of Jesus. And two stories of creation in the book of Genesis. My church was teaching me that God shows himself in a variety of ways, that one person alone can never capture the entirety of God, that we benefit when we listen and learn about the vision of God held by others. That we understand God more fully when we are in communion. And it is best when we are not too sure of our beliefs about God's properties. (This was remarkable teaching in the Bible belt of the 1940s and 1950s.)

Simultaneously, I was learning about paradox. Now of course, I would not have been able to call it that as child, but when I was told that the baby in the feeding stall was a king, I accepted that contradiction of the usual order. As an eight year old I sang in the children's choir of my parish church. Oh, how smug I felt as an Episcopalian for none of my Baptist or Catholic friends knew or got to sing my favorite Christmas hymn, "In the Bleak Midwinter." My favorite verse was the second,

Angels and Archangels may have hovered there,
Seraphim and Cherubim thronged the air,
But to his mother only, a stable place sufficed
Our Lord God Incarnate, Jesus Christ.

And soon enough I was told about the cross that in the Roman Empire was the ultimate in pain and humiliation. But, I learned that for Christians it is the symbol of victory. Power made perfect in weakness. The Great Paradox.

The message that was being taught is that we are well advised to look twice, for things are not always what they seem on the surface, that at any time there may be a deeper reality lurking. The creed reinforced this way of thinking as I learned and weekly repeated that I believe in things seen and unseen.

This idea was given another dimension when, as a 5th grader, I acted in a church play. It was based on a short story by Leo Tolstoy, *Where Love is,There is God.* It is about an old Russian shoemaker who in a dream is told that before Christmas Day dawns, the Christ Child will have visited him.

Oh, how I wanted to be the Christ Child, but that part went instead to a delicate, blue-eyed, curled-haired blond. I was a beggar at the shoemaker's door. Although disappointed it was me, he nonetheless gave to me the food he had prepared for the Christ child.

You know the rest of the plot. "Whatsoever you have done to the least of these my brethren you have done to me." My church was teaching me that serving others is not just an act of kindness or justice or part of the liberal agenda though it may be and indeed should be all of those things. The church was saying that in service to those in need we encounter the holy.

Many years later I became president of the Association of Episcopal Colleges. We created and sponsored programs of service-learning in which first dozens, then hundreds, and finally thousands of college students of any college or university, any religion or none were engaged in serious, substantive and long term service, some in the United States, others in locations around the world. As they returned from the Holy Cross Mission at Bolahun in Liberia, Mother Teresa's Home for the Destitute and Dying in Calcutta, the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation in South Dakota, from inner city Glasgow or Guadalajara or another of the dozens of locations, they told stories that came to the same points; that they were the ones served, that they learned things that they could have learned no other way, that they understood truths hitherto not-perceived. One student, the daughter of a priest, told of her fear as she anticipated her service at a hospital for people with severe physical disabilities. "But they, she reported, were focused on me and my needs, 'Did I like the food? Was I lonely so far away from family?'" Today she heads a residential treatment center in Pittsburgh. Another learned that the man who followed her each day from the bus stop to the school in Kingston, Jamaica where she was teaching was not the stalker she imagined, but had volunteered to see that she was safe. From then on they walked side by side. Both students encountered the holy.

And then the work of the Association of Episcopal Colleges was extended at the founding and development of a new organization Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion. Everywhere the British set their flag they also set their church and their academic institutions, making opportunity available to women, and for example, to the untouchables in India, and to political refugees in the Philippines. Canon Jamie Calloway, who heads the now twenty-year-old organization is here with us this evening and tomorrow. I hope you will meet him. Under his leadership the organization has grown to 131 institutions on six continents.

College heads, chaplains, faculty, and students from these institutions of higher education share in study and service. At their college or university, each with foundations and present ties to a branch of the Anglican Communion, they are Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist or Jew. Through CUAC, they share with each other how they see the face of God. More than once, they, gathered from the corners of the earth, have shown each other things previously unseen. In their service, they have encountered the holy.

I know that you who will receive your degrees tomorrow and who will soon be ordained, will think about what you want to teach, what habits of mind you will seek to instill in the children and adults in your care, habits that will inform their thoughts and shape their lives. I hope that as you share with them your way of understanding God, you will hear and learn from them and together deepen your vision by engaging with the community and world, so that you see dimensions at first unseen, and encounter the holy as you seek to serve others.

The former rector of my parish ended the Eucharist by saying, "Walk in Love, Strive for Peace, Work for Justice, you will find God there."

So be it. Amen. ✠

Top row: Dean Ian Markham, Hakan Gulerce ('15), and Bishop Shand; Board of Trustee member, the Rev. Catherine Campbell ('88) with Bryan Spoon ('15).

Second row: Graduates Emily Guffey and Benjamin Maddison singing in the choir; 2015 graduates Cortney Dale and Maxine Barnett; Tim Myers ('16) keeping dry! Middle row: Lawrence Campbell, the Rev. Joyce Mercer, Ph.D., Bernard Anderson ('15)

Bottom row: Sacristan Wadie Far ('17); Jennifer Southall ('15)

Getting to the heart of the matter

Address by The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee
12th Bishop of Chicago

Occasioned by the 192nd Commencement at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia

May 21, 2015

Jeff: Picture a scene with me: Two friends are working side by side helping to get things ready for a thanksgiving meal at a local soup kitchen. One of them is a long time member of his local parish … the other, well, not so much.

Emily: What's an Episcopalian?

Jeff: How did you know I'm an Episcopalian?

Emily: Your apron. It says, "Hug me, I'm an Episcopalian."

Jeff: Oh. Yes, I go to St. Paul's Church, just down the street. We've been on the same corner for 150 years and just completed a million-dollar renovation of our organ.

Emily: I think I know the building you're talking about. It has red doors. I thought it might be closed, but if you're there Sunday mornings, I guess that's why I never saw the doors open. So tell me again: what's an Episcopalian?

Jeff: Well, we're a liturgical church, maintaining catholic traditions, but we're not the Roman Catholic Church. We're part of the Anglican Communion, a whole family of churches that stem from the Church of England. The Episcopal Church is the branch rooted here in America, founded just as the Revolutionary War finished.

Emily: (silence) No offense, but I'm not sure what a lot of what you said means. Liturgical? Catholic but not Catholic? Anglican?

Jeff: Maybe you heard about us on the news several years ago? The gay bishop?

Emily: Right! You're the ones who split over homosexuality.

Jeff: We didn't actually split. Some folks did leave, but Episcopalians describe ourselves as following the Via Media, and that means we can hold many theological perspectives in tension, but still gather at the same Eucharistic table.

Emily: (silence)

Jeff: Did I lose you again?

Emily: It's okay. How about we get started? I think the guests are coming in now.

That little dialogue (adapted) opens volume one of the church's newest teaching series. The series is called "The Episcopal Way." It's the beginning of the first book in the series and it's written by friends to many of us, Eric Law and Stephanie Spellers. I wonder if it was at all recognizable to you? I wonder if it might even have made you wince a little. I'm pretty sure Eric and Stephanie meant it to. It certainly worked on me.

So much of our time and energy as church, so much of our attention, our blood, sweat, and tears seems to me to be focused on, well, us. The most read news source in the Episcopal Church is that remarkable website called The Episcopal Cafe. News items and commentary are contributed from across the church. The Cafe was created by and until recently curated by Jim Naughton who works with us regularly in the Diocese of Chicago. It's full of news and opinion pieces on many topics of concern in both the church and the wider world. It is interesting though to me to see just what news items are most read and that gather the most comments. You might find that kind of thing interesting too. Over the last year can you guess which stories might be at the top of the heap? Ebola? Ferguson? Climate change? Gun violence? Nope. Over the last year the largest number of hits any story received (by a landslide) is one on the internal conflicts at the General Seminary in New York. I won't even go into the quality of the commentary on that topic in both the Cafe and elsewhere in social media, except to quote one memorable Facebook posting that likened that conflict to "Jesus being crucified all over again." Jim Naughton likes to joke that on slow news days he always said they could just put up a headline that says, "Let's argue about church music" and sign off for the day.

All this reminds me of a sermon I heard preached by Lillian Daniel in St. James Cathedral in Chicago not long ago. As you may know Lillian is an author whose books and articles on the spiritual but not religious seem to have contributed significantly to catapulting that phrase into our consciousness. She's also the senior pastor of a Congregational Church in suburban Chicago. In her sermon, preached at an ecumenical gathering of church communicators we were hosting, Lillian told us about attending a conference in Amsterdam, a preaching conference if you can imagine. It was her first visit there and she wanted very much to take in some of the sights. It was hard though she said to find any

local folks who seemed to share her excitement very much. Maybe the Dutch are just kinda staid, she thought. "Where's your favorite place to go?" she'd ask again and again. The answers came back, "Well, some people like the art museum" or "I had a cousin who enjoyed biking the river." That kind of fairly lackluster thing. Finally, though, she found a local guy who perked right up when she asked. "Oh," he said, "we have a festival that everyone should see. It has dancing and music and all kinds of wonderful food," he enthused. Great! Lillian thought. At last. "Yes," he said, "This festival is the greatest thing … but … it is over."

In her sermon to a room full of professional church communicators, Lillian held out that story as an image for how we behave too much as church. We're too often spending time, energy and considerable resources answering questions that no one is asking. Or at least not asking much anymore. The latest data from the Pew Research Center's study on the Changing Religious Landscape in the US may be taken as evidence of that claim. Although I think we have to be careful about a certain morbid fascination with the declining numbers reported for churches like ours—it can lead to misinterpreting them … and a whole new publishing boom. What one commentator last week called the "Christian sky is falling industrial complex." As my friend Diana says, "We become the stories we tell ourselves." The landscape is changing, no denying it, but I suspect the rumors of the church's demise are much exaggerated. I think your Dean is on to something really important when he says that it is quite possible we're counting the wrong things.

In the Diocese I serve I am thankful to say we have more than a few congregations that are bucking the decline trend, that are in fact thriving by several different measures. Contrary to what our name might suggest, the boundaries of the Diocese of Chicago extend far beyond the metropolitan area—we are hugely diverse, geographically and in many other ways. And I have to tell you, in Chicago congregational vitality seems to defy easy categories. I can point to a parish in the city awash in incense whose principal Mass every Sunday ends with congregational singing of Hail Holy Queen Enthroned Above that threatens to take the roof off (this is the Diocese of Chicago, after all)—the place is packed with all sorts and conditions of people, who besides singing over-the-top Marian hymns band together to meet the needs of folks in prison and on the streets. I think of a congregation in a neighborhood not too far away whose Sunday eucharist involves popping champaign corks at the Offertory under

fluttering Tibetan prayer flags. The leadership of this parish is dominated by frighteningly young adults, its feeding ministry welcomes over 300 guests a week, and at my last visitation a young lesbian couple came to me to say that they we're staying after only their second visit because, they said, "No one ever told us you could be Christian like *this*!" There's another place where the rector presides at the Sunday Eucharist in a fiddleback chasuble with his back to the people, a place that wouldn't be caught dead with champaign corks or Tibetan prayer flags anywhere near the Lord's Table and will likely never celebrate the union of a same sex couple. This is also a place with incredibly lively and substantially growing Sudanese and Burmese congregations. The rector knows every single name. One more example is a group of folks whose congregation was part of the Diocese of Quincy now in what we call our Peoria Deanery. There was an acrimonious split there and faithful Episcopalians we're told to get out of their historic downtown building. They are now in a rented facility on the college campus in their town and have a thriving ministry with students. At my last visit there, a woman, a life-long member of the congregation in her 80s came up to me and said "You know, Bishop, we are so much healthier today than when we were saddled with that damn building." I could go on.

These congregations are not alone. And what I can't give you is some kind of formula that has been the magic key to their vitality. They are all radically different. I've puzzled over it with my staff. What do they have in common? The best we've been able to come up with is this. Three things stand out. Each one of these churches is crystal clear about its identity. Within about five minutes of being with them—on a Sunday morning, at a vestry meeting, feeding homeless guests, praying with teenagers, organizing for gun safety legislation—very quickly you pretty much know what they're about, what they focus on. The second thing is that these are places where people are having conversations about things that matter—they're churches that value and foster conversations about life and death, serving and challenging injustice, what it might mean to follow Christ in the office on Tuesday morning. The third thing—and I don't know how to measure this—the third (and probably most important) thing is that these places have *heart.* Leaders—clerical and lay—leaders at every level are all in. There is engagement. There is confidence in God. There is obvious joy. There is the unmistakeable whiff of the gospel. The proclamation at the heart of each of these churches is the death-defeating love of God in Jesus. These communities do seem to be answering questions that people are really asking.

I believe these congregations have made their priority the work that Jesus gives to his first friends there on the mountain. They're making disciples. They're helping people to make the worship of God real in their lives, helping one another to follow Christ in transforming this world just a little more into the world that God surely wants to see, the kind of world the prophets sing about. What they're not doing is inviting people into an obsessive little religious subculture, as if fascinating tidbits about Henry VIII and the colors of the church year were ever going to change anyone's life. They're not preaching church. They're preaching Jesus. They understand that the good news *of* Jesus, the life-changing, world-changing good news Jesus lived and taught becomes a pale shadow when it is reduced to some reports *about* Jesus, and even more pallid when it morphs into an instruction manual on how to perform the institution's secret handshakes.

Over the last year I have asked vestries to invite unchurched friends to come and meet with the bishop on parish visitations. The conversations happen in local coffee shops or (less successfully I have to say) in the parish hall or library (we forget how intimidating it can be for non-church folks even to enter a church building). The invitation to unchurched friends includes the promise that there will be no sales pitch, this is not a trick to get them to come to church. The truth is that I want to hear what they have to say and I want clergy and members of vestries to hear what they have to say. What's important in their lives? What do they think when they hear the word "church?" What do they make of God, if anything? The conversations have been fascinating and deeply instructive—there's a lot of wounded-ness out there (too often

having been inflicted by the church itself), there's a lot of suspicion about us, a lot of assumption about our irrelevance, *and* there's a whole bunch of longing for meaning, for purpose, for transcendence, for God. There are a lot of people for whom a character in Julian Barnes' novel, *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* speaks when he says: "I don't believe in God, but I miss him."

Just this week I had an email from a neighbor of a Senior Warden who'd been part of one of these conversations with a group of unchurched or de-churched folk— I want to share a little of it with you:

Thank you Bishop for our conversation. I really appreciated everybody's openness in sharing their thoughts. I also appreciated that everyone felt so comfortable sharing some pretty raw feelings about their faith and their theological interpretations. I think that maybe it would bring more people to explore their faith rather than to chase them away from it if more churches had such open discussions instead of debates.

He goes on*: "The Church" could be something that builds hope and binds everything with love or it could be the polar opposite of that - it can destroy hope and promote intolerance which is the seed of hatred. And while I believe in God the church seems to be having a hard time keeping up with the changes in our world, our society, with technology or with our expanding knowledge about the universe. Dare I say, it's having a hard time keeping up with God.*

So what's all this got to do with us? Well, here we are, ready to get out of here to go love and serve Christ by leading the church in all kinds of ways. As you go, I ask you to join me in listening to the needs and hopes and heartaches and longings of the world we live in. Listen to those who suspect that God has left the church behind. Listen. Listen and lead.

Here are three things I am learning from listening to people in and outside of the church in my diocese. I'm trying to practice them. I commend them to you.

Help the communities you serve get clear, focused on what it is you can do more effectively than anyone else to make the Good News of Jesus real.

Lead in ways that will foster among people conversations about things that matter. Redirect them with love and patience from inconsequential church chat. Let there be real conversations that lead to real actions that will change the real world.

Give your heart. Remember what it is you fell in love with in the first place that led you to today and beyond. Or rather remember Who it is who loved you and chose you first. Nurture your relationship with the Risen Jesus who is with us always.

Then go and make disciples of everyone. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠

Above: Commencement preacher Bishop Jeffrey Lee of the Diocese of Chicago with 2015 graduate Steven Balke.

Right: Bishop Lee with Emily Guffey ('15) and Andrew Guffey ('14).

The Doctor of Ministry Program

The Doctor of Ministry students gather for a group photo before commencement— Front row, *(left to right)*: Kathy Brown, associate director of the D.Min. program; Cynthia Rogers, WTU; Kit Carlson, and Jenny Montgomery. *Back row, (left to right)*: Tom Schmidt, WTU; Tracy Sadd, Asa Lee, Robert Harvey, Rachel Nyback, and David Gortner, director of the Doctor of Ministry Program; *not pictured*: Robert Laws, WTU.

Honorary Degrees

This year, VTS conferred six honorary degrees upon six distinguished recipients. The Doctors of Humane Letters, honoris causa, was awarded to Ms. Auguste Johns Bannard, Professor Herman Franklin Bostick, and Ms. Linda Armstrong Chisholm. The Seminary also conferred a Doctor in Divinity, honoris causa to the Rt. Rev. James Barnabas Almasi, the Very Rev. Canon Patrick Pervvez Augustine, and the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee, the 12th bishop of Chicago. *From left to right*: Auguste Johns Bannard, The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee, Linda A. Chisholm, Ph.D., Prof. Herman F. Bostick, Ph.D., The Rt. Rev. James B. Almasi, and The Very Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min.

Ms. Auguste Johns Bannard, has given her life to family, her church and to Episcopal schools. She was the Head at St. Catherine's School in Richmond, Va. from 1989-2007. She has also served on the VTS Board of Trustees.

The Rt. Rev. James Barnabas Almasi was ordained as the 9th bishop of the Diocese of Masas, Tanzania Sept. 21, 2014. He was director of Youth Work and Evangelism for the Diocese of Masasi, and a tutor at St. Cyprian's Theological College, Rondo.

Professor Herman Franklin Bostick, Ph.D., is a graduate of the VTS Lay School of Theology. He has served on the board of the Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys, and has taught at Grambling State, Texas Southern, and Howard Universities.

The Very Rev. Canon Patrick Pervvez Augustine is rector of Christ Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin. He has been involved in ecumenism efforts since the 1970s, as well as reconciliation between people of the Middle East, Kashmir, India and Pakistan.

Mrs. Linda Armstrong Chisholm, Ph.D. is founder and first General Secretary of the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion and the founder and president of the International Partnership for Service-Learning.

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee was ordained as a priest in 1985, and then served in a variety of roles—curate, canon to the ordinary and church developer before being called to serve as 12th bishop in the Diocese of Chicago.

First Eucharist Celebration—the new Immanuel Chapel

The sense of gratitude for our new Immanuel Chapel is overwhelming. So in this short article, we wanted to share with you a sense of the space. Upon entry into the Chapel, you will not be able to avoid noticing the rather large chandelier. This is the remarkable work of Crenshaw Lighting (they are inheriting the mantle from Rambush, long the go-to firm for lighting in Episcopal Churches). It is made out of Swedish iron and aluminum—and has lights and speakers.

The ambo, where the Word is read and proclaimed, was made by Woodpecker Enterprises in Apex, North Carolina. And the tracker-action organ was constructed by Taylor and Boody in Staunton Va. The words "Go Ye Into All The World and Preach the Gospel" are inscribed over the west transept. At the end of a liturgy, you might be lucky enough to hear the extraordinary Whitechapel Bells (a firm established in 1570 and the maker of the Liberty Bell).

The general contractor on the project was Whiting and Turner—a company that has been going for over a hundred years and has worked in the U.S. and around the world. We are deeply grateful to Eric Hartlove, the project manager and Steve Walker, the superintendent. Our liturgical design consultant was Terry Byrd Eason, who has worked on the Washington National Cathedral. Our acoustician and sound consultant was Jaffe Holden. Our lighting consultants were Fisher Marantz Stone. Our landscape architect was the remarkable Michael Vergason, who adds Virginia Theological Seminary to the list of venues he has worked on, which includes Monticello and Normandy in France. Advanced Project Management represented the Seminary on a daily basis as the project moved along.

Robert A.M. Stern Architects designed this chapel. Robert Stern is the dean of the school of architecture at Yale University. His achievements are many, including the transformation of 42nd street in New York, and most recently the George W. Bush Library in Dallas. They are deeply gratified that this building fits into the village of buildings on this campus which existed before the chapel fire in 2010. As you arrive at the Worship and Welcome Quad, you are aware of the many features that have been picked up from the other buildings on the campus—Key Hall and Aspinwall Hall. The classic colonial features of the campus are all captured on the exterior. The Old Virginia Brick Company was responsible for the brickwork. Much care was taken in designing the brick patterns: for example, the herringbone pattern around the Oratory windows, recalls the 1881 Chapel, as well as many discreet brick details borrowed from local Georgian architecture.

Once inside the chapel, one steps into the future. Suddenly, there is a powerful simplicity in a worship space designed around the 1979 Prayer Book and its emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist. One of the most important aspects of the design of the interior Chapel space is the subtle modulation of light. Light washes in through the thermal windows and over the tops of the Ambulatory walls and through the oculi. The intent was to draw in a soft, glow of light that would create the sense of a sacred space.

Looking up you will see the coffers, which were carefully designed (with the help of the acoustician, Jaffe Holden), to perfect the acoustics of the space. The coffers, which are precast plaster, also add a layer of detailing to the space and help draw the eye upward. The floor is honed blue-stone from the state of New York. The chairs are oak designed for this space by New Holland Church Furniture Company in Pennsylvania. The altar and its platform were made by Woodpecker in Apex, NC.

The brief given for the architect was to create a space that works both for hundreds (the capacity is 480) and for a Morning Prayer of 30 or a Eucharist of 50. This is achieved by the ambulatory and the chandelier. The ambulatory means that no one is more than seven rows from the action (always a problem for Episcopalians who want to sit at the back); yet for those Episcopalians who arrive late, the ambulatory wall enables folks to slip discreetly around to the transept with available space. While the ambulatory frames the worship space, it also affords seating at the wall of the ambulatory thereby significantly adding to capacity. And the chandelier provides a framing from above that makes the space feel more intimate.

This is also a quiet space. We are near Seminary Road; we have a choir which will practice in the choir room. We have worked hard to keep noise from the outside to a minimum. We want this to be a space where folks can listen and be heard.

Celebrating the opening Eucharist in Immanuel Chapel on February 12, 2015; from *(left to right)*: The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.; The Rt. Rev. James J. Shand; The Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D.; and the Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, rector of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill.

The font is made, as is this lectern, by Lucas House, a North Carolina iron artisan. The bowl on the font is hand-blown glass by an artisan at the Penland School in North Carolina. The lectern in the 1881 chapel, as many did of that era, had an eagle (representing John's Gospel). The eagle has been reprised by embedding it in the iron (some of which was salvaged in the 1881 chapel) combining it with the initials for VTS.

The pine floor in the parlor was milled from the floor joists that were salvaged from the 1881 chapel. Trees that were felled for this project were shipped to Staunton VA for use in organ building. The Oratory will have the Rowan LaCompte windows, salvaged from the 1881 Chapel, along with the pew where President Ford sat the Sunday after he became President of the United States.

The altar is quarter-sawn oak and in each corner is a Greek cross, the shape of this worship space. And a piece of marbeck marble from Canterbury Cathedral is at the heart of the altar, reminding us of our deep connection to the mother church.

Tonight we are celebrating our relationship with Immanuel Church on the Hill. Born in the 1881 Immanuel Chapel, the congregation is coming back home. While still having that delightful Zabriskie Chapel across the road, the congregation has all the opportunities of this space. The Seminary is in the business of creating healthy leaders of congregations. To be in partnership with a strong and healthy congregation is so appropriate. So today, after a vote of the Board, I am pleased to sign this covenant with the Rector of Immanuel Church on the Hill. ✠

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304

Save the Date

Consecration of the new Immanuel Chapel

Tues., Oct. 13, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

The Most Reverend
Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding

The Most Reverend
Justin Welby
Preaching

For updated information, including hotels, schedules, and class reunions, please visit www.vts.edu/chapel