



Religious Studies in Kansas

Department of Religious Studies ❖ The University of Kansas ❖ Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 1994

Lectures Sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas

Both scholars and the general public hotly debate the value, content, and direction of higher education in the United States. Has our educational system lost its sense of purpose, forgotten its role in cultivating civility and virtue, become trivialized by fads and passing fancies? Of the various disciplines of the university, none are more relevant to answering these questions than the liberal arts. Within the liberal arts, Religious Studies has a special perspective and advantage in addressing these pressing issues.

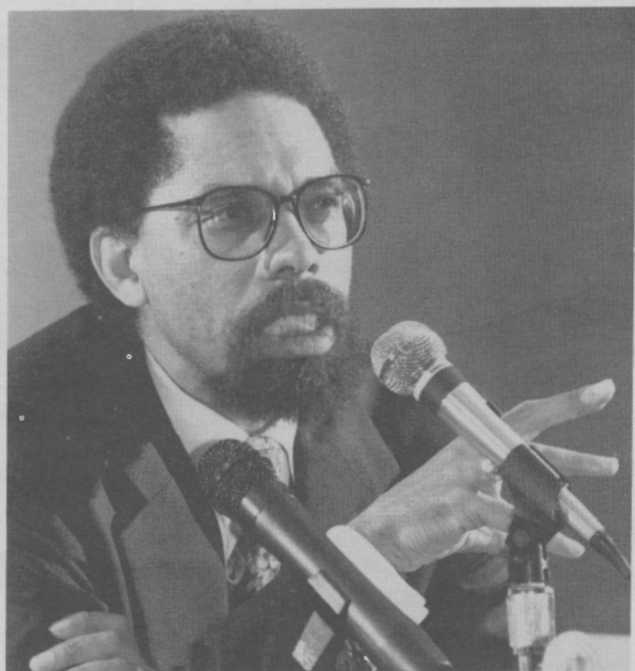
The early post-World War II years saw an expansion of the liberal arts curriculum throughout North American institutions of advanced study. Among the first of the "new disciplines" integrated into that expansion was Religious Studies. No longer would Christianity and Christian theology be the lone articulation of human religiousness in the university curriculum. First Jewish religiousness, then the religions of the East, and then alternative religions more generally were integrated into an academic study of humanity, into "the humanities." These "new humanities" raised crucial questions about human nature, human responsiveness, and human social behavior. As American

society opened itself to pluralism and diversity, the new humanities helped chart the pathways in this newly opened social world. As the labyrinth of this map became more complex, the new humanities, Religious Studies among them, became more indispensable for social and personal self-understanding in the contemporary social world.

Not surprisingly, then, when the university has undergone criticism and scrutiny, those in Religious Studies have been foremost in responding. During the Spring Semester of 1994, the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, either in conjunction with the Kansas School of Religion or with other units of the University, sponsored three nationally recognized thinkers who addressed the problem of the meaning of the modern university. This issue of *Religious Studies in Kansas* offers reviews of the work of these three thinkers. Their contribution to the campus community here at the University of Kansas, however, has particular relevance.

Professor Cornel West, author of the best-selling book *Race Matters*, presented a lecture "Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism" to about 1300 people at the Kansas Union Ballroom on 14 April 1994. Professor West's rich style of delivery enhanced his message and captured his audience's attention. He spoke in rhythmic cadences and scattered in his talk citations from important African American thinkers such as Frederick Douglass. Douglass' autobiography shows how "Western Civilization" can be appropriated by all people no matter what their background or religion. Like Douglass, Professor West displayed a comprehensive grasp of the classic sources of western thought, including the major religious thinkers and philosophical thinkers embracing both Plato and Nietzsche.

Professor West's message was profound and simple: America is "full of rage" and "feelings of powerlessness and cynicism." In the face of "an erosion of a nurturing,



Professor Cornel West

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caring system for young people" higher education has the potential for improving our social and intellectual awareness. He claimed that such an education cultivates an essential sense of relatedness, of a common heritage and task, without which survival in contemporary life is impossible. Mentioning both Jewish and Christian partners with African Americans in their struggle for rights and freedom, Professor West reminded the audience of the truth that every individual's freedom depends on the liberty accorded to everyone else. He also claimed that education inculcates a self-critical awareness essential for modern women and men. Higher education forces us to reexamine our presuppositions, to question our motives, our logic, and our honesty. Such a teaching, however, might well lead to despair and a debilitating fear of failure. Self-criticism can turn into self-doubt.

West concluded his address by emphasizing the importance of hope. A university is more than the sum of its parts; a pessimistic analysis of society need not entail a defeatist attitude toward the future. Hope, nourished by many sources not the least of which is religion, animates those who learn and study. Pessimism betrays the hopeful ideal of higher education itself. On this final note, West commissioned the university community for its role in preserving and improving American social life. Professor West called on his audience to learn that lesson well and to "never let misery get the last word, even if you have to sing a song."

Challenges can breed fortitude rather than misery. On April 12-13 the Department of Religious Studies and the Kansas School of Religion brought to campus a woman whose courageous example of how the university can fulfill its task articulates a fortitude worthy of emulation. Dr. Sandra Lubarsky, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the Department of Humanities and Religious Studies at Northern Arizona University and author of the books *Jewish Theology and Process Thought* and *Tolerance and Transformation: Jewish Approaches to Religious Pluralism*, exemplifies the best potential of university educators. Professor Lubarsky has contributed to several different fields within Religious Studies. Her application of process theology to Jewish religion represents an exciting and innovative approach to modern Jewish thinking. She recognizes and takes seriously the variety of modern Jewish expressions emerging in the contemporary pluralistic context. Her work takes more practical forms as well—she teaches in a classroom designed to minimize the authoritarian structure of education and equalize the contribution of students to that of the professor. This technique reveals through example as well as through writing how openness to others need not compromise the integrity of one's own tradition.

Dr. Lubarsky came to the University of Kansas to deliver the Kansas School of Religion lecture in conjunction with the annual KSR/Department of Religious Studies banquet on 12 April 1994. Her provocative talk, "Transformative Dialogue: Encountering Other Traditions," demanded that all participants in dialogue be prepared to change. They should be willing to allow the views of the

other participants to shape their own thinking and belief. Participants in a dialogue should not only share their own traditions, but seek to incorporate the traditions they encounter into their own growing and maturing positions.

Dr. Lubarsky also met with several campus groups. She dialogued with the student association of Jewish feminists. She explained to Professor Breslauer's students in Rel 320: History of Judaism how the general problem of evil is heightened by the Jewish experience in Hitler's Holocaust and how a pluralistic approach can help solve the theological dilemma involved. Professor Lubarsky shared more personal and intimate reflections with Professor Sandra Zimdars-Swartz' seminar Rel 801: Theories of Religion. She addressed a luncheon hosted by Ecumenical Christian Ministries on "Religious Pluralism in the Classroom," where she traced her changing approach to interfaith marriages and her view of how to train children of such marriages. She also confessed how she felt constrained to conceal her Jewish commitment from students she taught. She reached that decision after discovering that students often refuse to take her views seriously when they learn that she is a Jew. Her experiments in creating a more pluralistic classroom help students move beyond such closed mindedness toward a more willing attention to others.

Professor Jacob Neusner, a world famous scholar of early Judaism, also addressed the KU community last year. He professed his belief that the American public university, more than any other contemporary setting, cultivates such an open regard for ideas among its students and faculty. Professor Neusner, whose visit to the University of Kansas was co-sponsored by the Western Civilization Program, the Western Civilization Program Graduate Student Organization, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Fund—drawing specifically on the Dorothy Stein Ernest Bequest for Jewish Studies, and the KU Hillel Foundation as well as the Department of Religious Studies, only rarely alluded to specifically religious issues. His presentations and responses to questions, however, clearly drew on the precedents and agenda of Religious Studies. Professor Neusner met Religious Studies faculty and students at an invitation only reception and at a dinner for graduate students. He also addressed Professor Breslauer's students in "History of Judaism," explaining how the field of Religious Studies developed among the new humanities and describing the place of Jewish Studies within that field.

Professor Neusner's major lecture on April 27 was both controversial and stimulating. While criticizing some aspects of the modern university, he offered a generally positive description of education at state supported institutions. Such places of learning, he insisted, prepare students better for critical thinking, pluralistic living, and intellectual rigor than either prestigious private schools or European universities. In a lively exchange with questioners, Professor Neusner defended the American university against claims that it had become impersonal, had lowered standards, and lacked the rigor of its European counterparts. He also explored the potential for using technology as an aid in the educational process.

Taken together, the three speakers propose a bright future for the American university generally and Religious Studies in particular. From Cornel West the university and Religious Studies discover their agenda: that of remembering the past and creating a common identity out of it, of learning the art of self-criticism without falling into self-doubt, and of drawing on those resources for hope that alone make a future possible. From Sandra Lubarsky comes a commitment to pluralism as an ideal and as an instrument of the classroom and campus community. She shows how the university can structure itself as a means to further an open meeting between people. From Jacob Neusner the American university learns to assess its strengths realistically. He shows not only how defeatism undermines the ability of the university to fulfill its mission but also why it is unnecessary and inappropriate. With a renewed commitment to its agenda, a restructured environment, and with restored self-confidence, the American university can advance into the future. ❖

By S. Daniel Breslauer,
Professor of Religious Studies,
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NEWS

Symposium on Chinese Buddhist Culture: 850-1850

An interdisciplinary symposium on Chinese Buddhist culture was held at the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas on October 1 and 2. The symposium was organized in conjunction with the *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, an exhibition of later Chinese Buddhist painting then showing at the Spencer Museum. Participating scholars were from the fields of religious studies, art history, history, and literature. The conference included presentations by nine scholars (including Professor Stevenson of the KU Department of Religious Studies) and a concluding round table discussion of interdisciplinary perspectives on Chinese Buddhist art and the contexts within which it is produced and engaged. The symposium was jointly sponsored by the Departments of Art History and Religious Studies, with additional funding from the National Endowment of the Humanities and Metropolitan Center for Far Eastern Art Studies (Kyoto). ❖

The Bodhisattva Kuan-yin in China

On September 30 the Religious Studies Department offered a faculty and graduate student workshop on the cult of the Chinese Buddhist deity, Kuan-yin. The workshop was led by Professor Chün-fang Yü of Rutgers University,

one of the leading specialists in the field of Kuan-yin studies. Its chief objective was to introduce the topic of Kuan-yin to Religious Studies curricula, with the idea of using the Kuan-yin cult as a basis for multidisciplinary enquiry and dialogue in the study of religion.

As the personification of loving-kindness and compassion, as well as a key figure associated with the quest for rebirth in the Western Pure Land of the Buddha Amitabha, Kuan-yin is by far the most popular Buddhist deity in East Asia. Known as Avaloktesvara in India, the deity was a male figure when first introduced to China from India in the early centuries of the common era. Over the succeeding millennia, the Chinese Kuan-yin became a female figure, taking on numerous iconographic, mythic, and cultic aspects previously unseen in India and Central Asia. In addition to her more well-known roles as a healer of illness and averter of calamities, she has come to be seen as a mediator of family strife and misfortune, giver of children (mainly sons), refuge of the dispossessed, and a special patron of women of strong religious calling, whose desire for a life dedicated exclusively to religious practice places them in tension with the familial and marital expectations of normative Chinese culture.

Under the guidance of Professor Yü, members of the Religious Studies faculty and select guests reviewed and discussed primary sources connected with the study of Kuan-yin. ❖

New Course on Islam Offered

The Department of Religious Studies is pleased to be offering a new course on Islam this semester. The History of Islam in Africa is taught by Professor Ousman Kane of the Université de St. Louis in Senegal, West Africa. He is visiting KU on a one semester Title VI funded exchange, co-sponsored with the Department of African and African-American Studies. Dr. Kane holds advanced degrees in Political Sociology, Islamic Studies, Classical Arabic, and Translation. He specializes in Islam in Africa and contemporary Islamic movements in Northern Nigeria.

Although one in three Africans living south of the Sahara is a Muslim, both scholars of Islam and of Africa have tended to devote little attention to African Muslims. This course is designed to acquaint students interested in either Africa or Islam with the history, practices, and beliefs of the Muslim peoples of Africa, and to explore Islam's impact on major trends and social movements in the region.

It is hoped that this course will lead to more exchanges with West African universities, and also encourage an increased selection of courses on Islam in the department. ❖

KSR Offers Workshop on Grieving

Nurses, social workers, clergy, and others in the helping professions are attending a one day workshop co-sponsored by the Kansas School of Religion. The seminar, "Acquainted

with Grief," is being presented in Hutchinson, Salina, Parsons, and Topeka on November 3, 4, 18, and 19, respectively.

Luanne Haddaway, Pastoral Care Coordinator at Hutchinson Hospital, is the workshop presenter. She specializes in the field of death education and counseling and has presented seminars in several states. This seminar is designed to acquaint helping professionals with the various stages of the grief cycle in order to help them provide appropriate forms of emotional and spiritual support to grieving individuals and families.

This is the sixteenth annual conference fielded by the Kansas School of Religion in conjunction with the Washburn University School of Nursing. These interdisciplinary workshops help nursing and social work professionals think ethically and spiritually about their work, while helping clergy and religious professionals think clinically about theirs. The Kansas School of Religion is an ecumenical nonprofit agency with offices on the University of Kansas campus. ♦

BOOK REVIEWS

***Tolerance and Transformation: Jewish Approaches to Religious Pluralism.* By Sandra B. Lubarsky. Hebrew Union College Press, 1990.**

Several recent books on Jewish theology take seriously the presence of the "Other" as the defining principle. Although thinkers often see the deity as the definitive "Other," many recent theologies stress the concrete person whom one addresses face to face as the most forceful incarnation of otherness. These writings draw on the insights of the contemporary French philosopher and interpreter of Judaism, Emmanuel Levinas, whose work grows out of Structuralism and lays the foundation for Deconstructionism in continental philosophy. They view the story of modern Jewish thought as a quest for what many thinkers call "presence." The presentation of this story takes several shapes. Michael Oppenheim, in his *Mutual Upholding: Fashioning Jewish Philosophy Through Letters* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), uses the technique of epistolary correspondence to introduce the Other into his writing. David Blumenthal's recent *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) uses a more ambitious approach: he integrates a confrontation with modern literature, biblical writings, interviews with victims of child abuse, and letters to and from colleagues in the healing professions to offer a challenging theology of protest. In his *Rethinking Jewish Faith: The Child of A Survivor Responds* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs uses his perspective as the child of a Holocaust survivor to reinvent Judaism. Believing strongly "in the concept of covenants of dialogue" he offers provocative revisions of Jewish faith, ritual practice, and Zionism.

Sandra Lubarsky's pioneering study anticipates the techniques and concerns of these thinkers. Her book, *Tolerance and Transformation: Jewish Approaches to Religious Pluralism*, is structured as a conventional survey of modern Jewish thought, analyzing the major twentieth-century exponents of Judaic theology such as Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Mordecai Kaplan, and Franz Rosenzweig. She sets her agenda early in the work, however, declaring that as members of a minority community Jews have a special concern for tolerance. Tolerance, she suggests, takes different forms. Surveying differing models including inclusivism, relativism, and syncretism, she concludes that "veridical pluralism" offers the most successful approach. In that approach members of one religious community encounter those of other communities with an open willingness to discover truths that for historical and contextual reasons may have eluded their own tradition. Dialogue progresses on the premise that all participants expect to grow and change through their meeting with others.

Each chapter of the book evaluates a major Jewish thinker using veridical pluralism as the basic criterion for that evaluation. On this reading Leo Baeck's "lack of appreciation for the role of community for the non-Jew" undermines his efforts to establish a relationship with non-Jewish religion (47). Martin Buber fails because he "does not directly engage in transforming Judaism in response to his encounter with other traditions" (97). Even Franz Rosenzweig is "disappointing" since his construction of Judaism as the "star" of redemption and of Christianity as the "rays" of light emanating from the star "is destructive of a truly complementary relationship" (71).

In contrast to these inadequate models, Professor Lubarsky offers the example of an encounter with Buddhism. She finds in this meeting a transformative dialogue in which both partners issue "a call to internalize the self-



Professor Sandra B. Lubarsky

understanding of other-traditions—as well as one can—so that they become a part of one's own self-understanding" (128). Taking the Other seriously means being willing to change oneself, to become different, to alter one's basic orientation to life and reality.

Such a call represents a peculiarly contemporary acknowledgement of the absence of a static "self." To be as a human person is to change and develop. This recognition so clearly stated in the final chapter challenges Professor Lubarsky's earlier assumption of a single "Judaism" which has maintained "a balance between continuity and change" (11). While she seems to advocate the model of "self-continuity" as the paradigm for religious self-understanding, her call for transformative dialogue points beyond that. A more persuasive model might be that of the creative self in which the individual avoids constructing a static self but rather embraces constant change. On that model the search for an essential self inevitably undermines the ability to interact honestly with others. While a powerful call for religious openness, Professor Lubarsky's laudable beginnings in this book demand continuation in an even more radical reexamination of human self-understanding. Works such as those by Oppenheim and Blumenthal pursue this path and go beyond an essentialist view of "self" to understand that Judaism constantly recreates itself in relationship to others.

Reviewed by: S. Daniel Breslauer
The University of Kansas

***Lectures on Judaism in the Academy and in the Humanities.* By Jacob Neusner. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1990. 270 pages.**

Jacob Neusner, author of over four hundred books on ancient Judaism, Mishnah, and other assorted topics either has a supernatural gift for writing, or a psychopathic addiction to the published word. In an editorial in the *Kansas City Jewish Chronicle* last May following Neusner's visit to the area, local rabbi and scholar Morris B. Margolies accused him of a "lifetime output of chutzpah," and of generating a "mass production line" of "half-baked ideās" (May 13, 1994). Does Neusner's recent book *Lectures on Judaism in the Academy and in the Humanities* merit such stinging critique, or not? Incubated and refined over the course of a thirty-five year career, Neusner's ideas on religious studies in a secular context can hardly be considered undercooked. Several of the lectures in Part One, in particular, prove interesting and provocative reading for anyone involved in religious studies or seeking to better understand the role of this developing discipline. The anthology reveals careful selection and organization; clearly articulated ideas flow logically from one lecture to the next. A sense of Neusner's genius and of his passion for his field comes through this compilation of lectures. His arrogance, on the other hand, also surfaces unabashedly.

Part One of *Lectures in Judaism* presents Neusner's philosophy on the function of religious studies in the secular academy. The first lecture defines the place of the liberal arts in general, and explores Judaism as a subject for shared inquiry. The second lecture, originally delivered as the inaugural address for the Department of Religious Studies at Arizona State University in 1979, sets out to answer the fundamental question, why should there be a department of religious studies in the university? Though the strong cultural bias against religion which still prevailed in the seventies may have waned somewhat, the answers to this question are relevant to us in the 1990's, as our fledgling discipline remains misunderstood by many outside the field. Neusner discusses the cross cultural and interdisciplinary nature of religious studies, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses inherent in such a broad reaching field of inquiry. He discusses the so-called "sins" of religious studies, including issues of superficiality and incompleteness, "faddism," or an excess of contemporaneity, and the disintegration of foreign language studies. Much attention is given to the lingering problem of a "myopic" Western world view.

The third lecture discusses the role of creative reflection in the academic study of religion. Neusner suggests that the scholar can go beyond the task of description, analysis and interpretation, and to "do religion" in such a way that it illuminates the "search for faith" (36-37). This idea sets the foundation for the fourth lecture, "A New Setting for Jewish Learning," which explains Neusner's conception of religious studies as an integral part of the "new humanities."

This particularly provocative lecture illuminates the core of Neusner's agenda, which is to fashion a new understanding of Judaism that will fit into the modern world with its demands for universality. He argues that "commitment to the Jewish community as we now know it should be replaced by commitment to the values of the academic community, so that in time, the Jewish community will be reshaped by the values of learning, gain renewed access to its own intellect"(58). In contrast to the "fossilized" separatist approaches of Jewish theologians and seminarians, Neusner believes that "great events in the life of the Jewish people in modern times begin on the campus, among students and professors"(59). Using religious terminology with a non-traditional twist, Neusner speaks of a "soteric and salvific meaning" available to those who "give [their] lives" (57) to the study of Judaism in the secular academy. He seems to elevate his own approach to the level of holiness, and thus mythically, the professor replaces the rabbi as the rabbi earlier replaced the high priest.

While Neusner affirms all kinds of Jewish learning, saying that each has its important and distinctive task(103), in the sixth and seventh lectures his less than flattering criticisms of rabbinical scholars and Hebrew teachers stand out much more clearly than his words of conciliation. He says they lack vision and understanding, and are "bored and boring" (112), and he accuses them of "intellectual lethargy" (98). The distinguished professor and his colleagues

in the university, on the other hand, "enjoy the stimulation of constant challenge" (105). Such unnecessary comparisons are unlikely to stimulate anything but animosity.

The lectures of Part Two abandon the task of comparing scholars and instead demonstrate Neusner's approach to the study of religion in the humanities by concrete application. Aspects of ancient Judaism are used to illustrate issues in philosophy, history and literature, with the ultimate purpose of finding what is universal and general out of what is particular. Lectures Ten through Thirteen might appeal to a select readership who possess the patience to plow through them. Lecture Fourteen on the inductive method of category formation was reminiscent of Baird's discussion of inadequate categories (*Category Formation and the History of Religion*, 1971, 1991), but more entertaining, since Neusner's Ukranian *bubbee* (grandma), and her category of Torah were invoked to illuminate the argument.

Reading through *Lectures on Judaism in the Academy and in the Humanities* was laborious, but helpful in putting the scholar and his work in perspective. Neusner's thoughts on religious studies in the academy and his teachings on Judaism in the humanities are worthy of reflection. But the self-absorbed packaging unnecessarily obscures the ideas and detracts from their scholarly value. While the lecture format worked, it became redundant, leaving one to wonder whether it was chosen because of its dual function as a sort of literary trophy case where Neusner could display a sampling of his impressive worldwide array of academic honors. An article on Neusner's conduct in the scholarly community in the recent *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Sept/Oct 1994, pp. 12-14) suggests the heated emotions aroused by this scholar. The present review strives for a more balanced perspective. *Lectures on Judaism*, depending on the reader's response, may or may not be considered as yet another contribution to the "lifelong output of chutzpah," noted by Rabbi/Professor Margolies. The author's attitude doesn't invalidate the ideas, though it does prove distracting.

Reviewed by: Jean Gelbart
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***Race Matters* by Cornell West
New York, Vintage Books, 1993, 1994, 159
pages. \$9.00**
***Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in
America* by Cornell West
New York, Routledge, 1993, 319 pages. \$23.00**

In *Race Matters* and *Keeping Faith* Cornell West has firmly established himself on the front lines of intellectual criticism of contemporary American society. In *Race Matters*, West describes America wallowing in a disease of

the soul. He identifies that disease as nihilism, "the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness" (22-23). This emptiness, according to West, is the daily experience of the marginalized people of America. West offers "a politics of conversion" as a cure for America's nihilism, the core of which must be "a love ethic" (29). Focusing most of his discussion on the travails of African-Americans, West calls for an "undermining and dismantling of the framework of racial reasoning—especially the basic notions of black authenticity, closed-ranks mentality, and black cultural conservatism" being preached by leaders in the African-American community (42-43). The "new framework" West wants to see championed by African-American leaders is "a prophetic one of moral reasoning with its fundamental ideas of a mature black identity, coalition strategy, and black cultural democracy" (43). Such a "race-transcending prophetic leader [is] rare in contemporary black America" (61). Indeed, not since Chicago's late mayor, Harold Washington, has West claimed to have encountered such a leader.

While much of West's tone in the preface, introduction, and eight essays which compose the original Beacon Press printing of *Race Matters* is pessimistic, the epilogue of the new Vintage Books edition expresses a hopefulness for a coalition strategy which will transform an America of bitter divisiveness into a nation that courageously confronts the "poverty and paranoia" that seeks to divide us.

West's requirement of a "prophetic framework" reminds me of modern Christian theologian H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*. Niebuhr classifies the interaction of religion with the social structures of a culture as "Christ the Transformer of Culture." West's recognition of the systemic nature of America's social problems correctly rejects blaming people for their racism. It also does not relieve people of the responsibility for changing the racist system which permeates America. There is hope in West's epilogue that the "racial hierarchy and the maldistribution of wealth and power" (157) can be transformed if enough of us have the "intelligence, humor, imagination, courage, tolerance, love, respect, and will to meet the challenge" (159).

My main critique of *Race Matters* is that West doesn't do enough with what he calls the "love ethic." Having studied and taught loving as a way of thinking about and interacting with the world around us, I am aware that the word "love" has different meanings to different people. While to be loving means to be primarily giving from the self, it does not mean giving up the self. This view of loving is both personal and social, and is transformative and uplifting without being destructive to the self. West understands this, I think, but he doesn't describe his love ethic in a definitive manner. His description is scattered throughout his discussion, and this leaves him open to criticism from those who define love in more narrow terms.

In *Keeping Faith*, West offers an analysis of cultural, philosophical, legal, and political issues. Organized into four sections, with a preface and notes, the seventeen chapters of *Keeping Faith* begin with a discussion of

"Cultural Criticism and Race." Noting the white racist view which denies that African-Americans can originate or be a store of any value, West writes of the difficulties blacks face in keeping "self-doubt, self-contempt and self-hatred at bay" in the face of "degrading stereotypes put forward by white-supremacist ideologies" (16). African-Americans are born, according to West, with what Marxist theorist Orlando Patterson, calls "natal alienation" (16).

In the section "Philosophy and Political Engagement," West offers a discussion of the ways in which white intellectuals form categories of discourse, showing them to be politically motivated by the very vocation of being in the academy. Agreeing with controversial literary critic Edward Said, whom West calls "the towering figure among left humanistic intellectuals," he writes that "intellectuals are always already implicated in incessant battles in their own local academic contexts" (100). The local academic contexts are slaves to "a larger process of mobilizing and manufacturing a dynamic 'consent' of subaltern peoples to their [own] subordination" (100). West calls for a "prophetic pragmatism" composed of a "critical temper and democratic faith" (140). This prophetic pragmatism must be "guided by the value of *love*—a risk-ridden affirmation of the distinct humanity of others that, at its best, holds despair at bay" (140).

In the final segment, "Explaining Race," West focuses on oppression of African-Americans in the face of "the prevailing modern secular mythologies of nationalism, professionalism, scientism, consumerism, and sexual hedonism that guide everyday practices around the world" (251). West describes his understanding of Conservative, Liberal, and Marxist views of African-American oppression. Then he offers his own analysis, which he calls "genealogical materialist" (265). This title, reflecting *The Genealogy of Morals* by Friedrich Nietzsche, show West's indebtedness to contemporary philosophers. He shares with them a skeptical view of "history" and replaces it "deep historical consciousness...[which] reject[s] prevailing ideas of history in the name of genealogy" (266).

Keeping Faith is a much more hopeful book, as the name implies, than *Race Matters* (without the Vintage epilogue), but this might reflect its projected audience. The book is certainly aimed at intellectuals and academic professionals. West closes *Keeping Faith* with a directive toward black intellectuals to stay connected with grass-roots black organizations. West acknowledges "that African Americans cannot fundamentally transform capitalist, patriarchal, racist America by themselves," but his argument is, by the very nature of its language, not aimed at most African Americans—or most Americans (290). *Keeping Faith* is a sort of primer for intellectuals as they formulate their pedagogy. In light of the West's arguments against the elitism of the academy, this is a curious choice of style—a style that is impenetrable for the very people West would see helped by his instructions. ❖

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DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

KANSAS SCHOOL OF RELIGION/DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES BANQUET AND LECTURE 1995

Date: Tuesday, April 18

Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Place: Summerfield Room, Adams Alumni Center,
University of Kansas

Speaker: Robert Anthony Orsi, Associate Professor of
Religious Studies at Indiana University

Lecture: "Hopeless Cases: The Women Who Prayed to
St. Jude, 1929-1965."

About the Speaker: Professor Orsi teaches in the areas of religion in American society and popular religion. His critically acclaimed book, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem*, won the 1985 Alpha Sigma Nu National Book Prize for outstanding book in the humanities presented by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, and the 1986 John Gilmory Shea Prize awarded by the American Catholica Historical Association. His recent research has focused on American Catholic devotion to St. Jude. In his forthcoming book, Professor Orsi presents a social history of praying and examines the relationship between gender and piety in the context of this devotion.

For more information, call Ms. Karen Hummel, Department of Religious Studies (913) 864-4663

KSR Scholarships Awarded

The recipients of the 1994-1995 Kansas School of Religion Scholarships are Amara Simons, William Jensen, Jr., and Denise Tyler. They are full-time graduate students working towards their Masters of Arts degree in the Department of Religious Studies.

Each year the Kansas School of Religion awards outstanding students by offering these generous scholarships. This year alone, the Kansas School of Religion offered a total of \$15,000 in scholarships. *Religious Studies in Kansas* extends its congratulations of these scholars, and wishes them luck this year. ❖

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES
SPRING SEMESTER 1995**

REL 106 Living Religions of the East	Robert Minor Daniel Stevenson
REL 107 Living Religions of the West	S. Daniel Breslauer
REL 124 Understanding the Bible	Paul Allan Mirecki
REL 315 History and Literature of Early Christianity	Paul Allan Mirecki
REL 320 History of Judaism in the West	S. Daniel Breslauer
REL 373 The Supreme Court and Religious Issues in the United States	John Macauley
REL 475 Loving Relationships	Will Ingram
REL 495 Senior Seminar	S. Daniel Breslauer
REL 507 Religion in India	Robert Minor
REL 508 Religion in China	Daniel Stevenson
REL 602 Special Topics in Religion: Ancient Egyptian Religions	Paul Allen Mirecki
REL 602 Special Topics in Religion: Religion and Modern Social Criticism	Paul Zimdars-Swartz
REL 733 Topics in Eastern Religious Texts: The Lotus Sutra	Daniel Stevenson
REL 801 Seminar in Theories of Religion	Paul Zimdars-Swartz
REL 875 Seminar in Religion and Society: Supreme Court and Religious Issues in the United States	John Macauley

Religious Studies in Kansas

Religious Studies in Kansas is the Newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, and continues the tradition of the former newsletter *Religion: The Journal of the Kansas School of Religion* which published its final number in the Spring of 1992. This newsletter is published twice annually in the Fall and Spring and is edited by Professor S. Daniel Breslauer and Jean Gelbart (M.A. Candidate in Religious Studies). Please send inquiries, change of address information, and notes for inclusion for the Spring issue to:

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MEET THE FACULTY

Dr. S. Daniel Breslauer

Professor Breslauer holds degrees in Near Eastern Languages from the University of California, Berkeley, and in Near Eastern Languages and Judaic Studies from Brandeis University. He is also an ordained Rabbi from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Breslauer teaches courses in Judaism, Islam, and the Jewish and Christian Bible. He has published studies on the history of Jewish thought. His most recent book is *Mordecai Kaplan's Thought in a Post Modern Age* (1994). He is currently editing the papers presented at the Spring 1993 conference on Myth in the Biblical and the Jewish Traditions for a collection *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response?* to be published by the State University of New York Press. He is also preparing a survey article on books concerning Jewish ethics and morality published since 1984 (the period since his *Contemporary Jewish Ethics*).

Dr. Timothy Miller

Timothy Miller studies and teaches about American religion. This semester he is teaching Rel 171: Religion in American Society, Rel 485: New Religious Movements (Western), and Rel 771: Religious Movements and Social Change. He is also completing work on an edited book, *America's Alternative Religions*, to be published early in 1995 by State University of New York Press. He will be a visiting professor at Dartmouth College for the Spring 1995 semester. During the 1995-96 school year he will be doing grant sponsored research on American communes active between 1965 and 1975.

Dr. Robert N. Minor

Professor Minor's special interests are religion in South Asia, history of religions methodology, and gender issues in religions. His current research is in issues of religion and the secular state of India, on gender roles in South Asia, and in modern Indian religious thought. He teaches the popular Rel 106: Living Religions of the East, as well as Rel 601: Approaches to the Study of Religion, Rel 507: Religion in India, Rel 341: Mysticism, upper level seminars, and a new course, Rel 374: Religious Perspectives on Selfhood and Sexuality.

Besides teaching his regular courses, Robert Minor was the author of "Perennial Issues in Radhakrishnan Scholarship at His Birth Centennial" in a collection of essays published in New Delhi. He also presented two invited papers at the Fifth International Congress on Vedanta at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio: a plenary paper "A Hundred Years of Vedanta in America," and a paper on modern Indian religious thinker Radhakrishnan's arguments for the caste system. He is currently a member of a "values panel" for the *Kansas City Star*, which is working to identify values that we wish to teach the next generation. On July 1 Professor Minor stepped down as Department Chairperson after serving six years.

Dr. Paul Allan Mirecki

Professor Mirecki, Th.D., Harvard (1986), is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies in ancient Mediterranean religious thought and literature. Research projects include the study and publication of ancient Greek and Coptic papyrus manuscripts in several European and North American museums. He convenes in November 1994 a three-session conference on fourth-century Coptic monasticism (AAR/SBL; Chicago), with papers by seven American and nine European and Australian scholars. His recent studies of ancient Coptic manuscripts are published by Harper & Row (New York), E.J. Brill (Leiden, Holland), CIM (Rome), and IAMS (Belgium).

Dr. Robert Shelton

Professor Shelton, Ph.D., Boston University (1970), has been University Ombudsman since 1985. Recent research interests include ethical issues in health care and justice issues in dispute management. He is the author of *Loving Relationships* (1987) and "Biomedical Ethics in Methodist Traditions" in *Theological Developments in Bioethics: 1990-1992*, (Center for Ethics, Medicine and Public Issues, Houston).

Dr. Daniel Stevenson

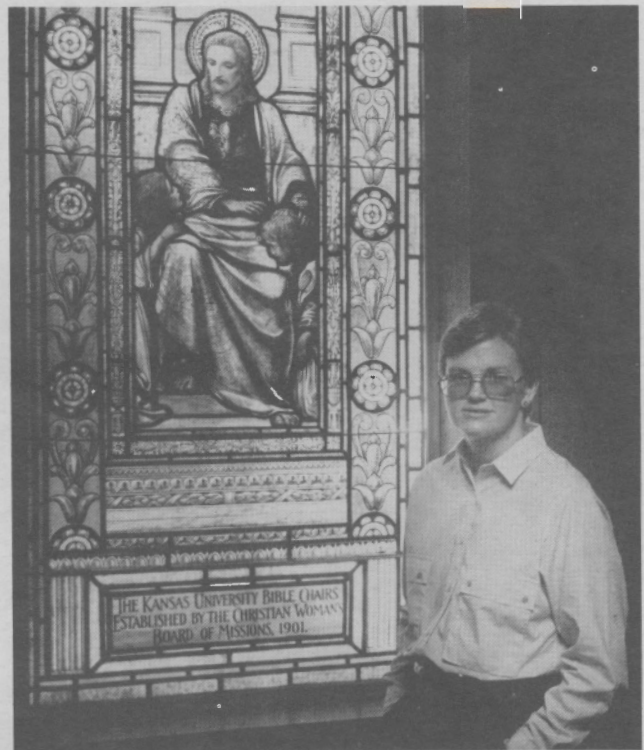
Professor Stevenson, Ph.D., Columbia (1987), joined the Religious Studies faculty in fall of 1992. His specialty is Chinese and Japanese religions with a concentration in Chinese Buddhism and its ritual culture. Stevenson is co-author of *The Great Calming and Contemplation: An Annotated Translation and Study of Chih-i's, Mo-ho chih-kuan* (1993). He has recently been involved in the revision of W. T. de Bary ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (Columbia University Press), as well as the development of a new sourcebook on East Asian Buddhism from Princeton University Press. He is nearing completion of a book on the T'ien-t'ai Buddhist ritual tradition and its contribution to Chinese Buddhist ritual practice and discourse.

Dr. Paul Zimdars-Swartz

Paul Zimdars-Swartz is teaching three courses this year. In the Fall, he is teaching Rel 104: Introduction to Religion, and in the Spring he will be teaching Rel 801: Theories of Religion and Rel 602: Religion and Modern Social Criticism. He is also coordinator of the new ad hoc media committee which will oversee department computers and audio-visual equipment.

Dr. Sandra Zimdars-Swartz

Professor Zimdars-Swartz joined the faculty in 1979 from Claremont Graduate School, where she received her Ph.D. and was a visiting lecturer in church history. Her field is the history of western religious thought and symbol, with concentration in women and religion, religious symbolism, and popular religion, particularly devotion to the Virgin Mary. She is currently chairperson of the department. Dr. Zimdars-Swartz is the author of the critically acclaimed *Encountering Mary: From LaSalette to Medjugorge* (Princeton, 1991).



Professor Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, New Chair of the Department of Religious Studies

A Notice from the Editors of *Religious Studies in Kansas*

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