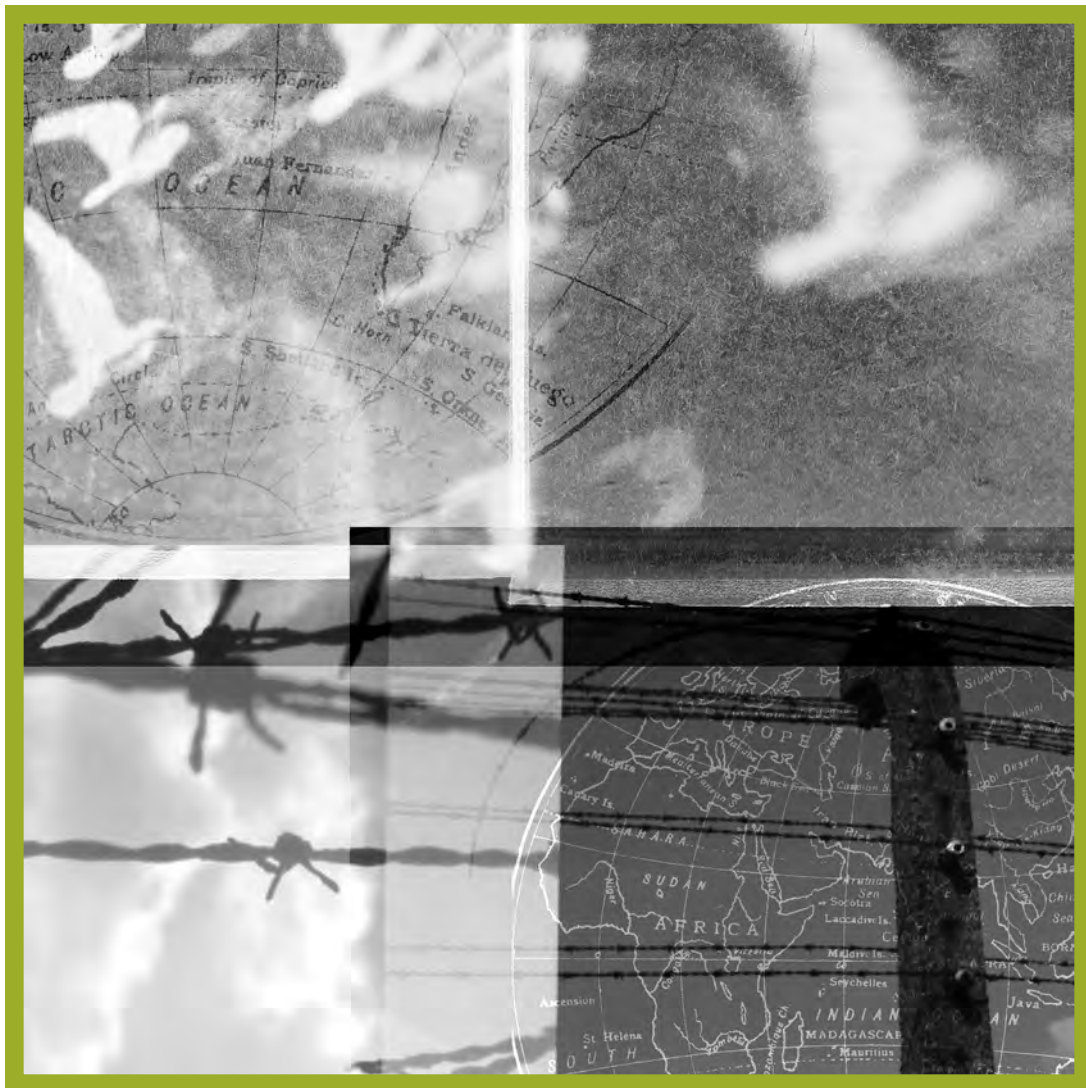


CRITERION

A Publication of the University of Chicago Divinity School



Dear Alumni and Friends —

W

e open the Spring 2010 issue of *Criterion* with “Religious Identity, Justice, and Hope: The Case of Peacebuilding,” by Lisa Sowle Cahill. This paper was presented

in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the 500th Convocation of The University of Chicago, held on October 9, 2009. Her public address aimed to identify key questions in the field of religious ethics and to speak as a “teacher of teachers.”

Following is an essay by Professor Paul Mendes-Flohr, “Reflections on the Ethical and Political Dialectics of Commitment,” a discussion of the individual’s ability to act in accord with ethical ideals. This paper was delivered at a conference—sponsored by the Karman Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, The Philosophical-Historical Faculty, The University of Bern—titled “On Commitment and Becoming Committed: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue.” The conference took place June 1–3, 2009.

Next is the 2009–2010 James Luther Adams Lecture, presented by Professor Emeritus Don S. Browning. “Religion and Civil Society: In James Adams, Abraham Kuyper, and Catholic Social Teachings” was presented in Swift Hall on October 15, 2009. Sponsored by the James Luther Adams Foundation, the annual lecture commemorates the work of James Luther Adams (Ph.D. 1945), past professor of the Divinity School, its Alumnus of the Year for 1977, and one of the most prominent American Christian social ethicists of his generation.

The issue concludes with Professor Emeritus Martin E. Marty’s lecture, “On Laying Siege to Problems,” also given as a 500th Convocation Address. Here, Professor Marty speaks on the pursuit of discovery across all disciplines in the University.

As always, my thanks to Susan Zakin, editorial assistant, and Robin Winge, designer.

I hope you enjoy this issue,

Terren Ilana Wein, *Editor*

CRITERION

VOLUME 47 | NUMBER 3



Don S. Browning is the Alexander Campbell Professor Emeritus of Ethics and the Social Sciences at the Divinity School.



Paul Mendes-Flohr is Professor of Modern Jewish Thought in the Divinity School.

I Contents & List of Contributors

2 Religious Identity, Justice, and Hope

The Case of Peacebuilding

Lisa Sowle Cahill

II Reflections on the Ethical and Political Dialectics of Commitment

Paul Mendes-Flohr

14 Religion and Civil Society

In James Luther Adams, Abraham Kuyper, and Catholic Social Teachings

Don S. Browning

27 On Laying Siege to Problems

Martin E. Marty

31 Alumni News



Lisa Sowle Cahill (M.A. 1973, Ph.D. 1976) is the J. Donald Monan Professor in the Department of Theology at Boston College. She was the Divinity School's alumnus of the year for 1999.



Martin E. Marty is the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of the History of Modern Christianity in the Divinity School.

LISA SOWLE CAHILL

Religious Identity, Justice, and Hope

The Case of Peacebuilding

When Dean Rosengarten offered me this wonderful opportunity to participate in the University's 500th convocation, he suggested that my remarks might aim to accomplish two things. The first was to identify key questions for the field of religious ethics (aka theological ethics¹), understood as a field of research and scholarship. The second was to speak as a "teacher of teachers." The classroom is a place where theoretical analysis of religion and theology meet existential needs and concerns.

I hope that my focus on peacebuilding will help me address both of these issues: existential concerns and theoretical analysis. At the existential level, the question of relevance is key. Theology is not just "academic," or at least not if it is to be interesting. Students are frequently engaged in their own quests for transcendent reality, through exploring the meaning and truth of the religious traditions in which they have been raised. Especially today they are interested in the potential of religion to create or undermine solidarity with those who suffer burdens such as global poverty, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and sex trafficking, ethnic conflict and civil war, or environmental degradation. What we do in the university classroom is not catechetics, spiritual formation, or social activism. However students of religion and theology, both undergraduate and graduate, want to know at the perimeters or in the background of the theoretical,

what *difference* theology makes, what relevance it has, to the real world and its dilemmas—and what difference these dilemmas make to theology.

The major questions for the field are similar. Like those students, we religious ethicists strive to combine rigorous analysis of particular thinkers, theories, and doctrines, with accountability to the fact of global injustice. And not only that. We have to account theoretically for the very possibility of being able to name injustice when we see it, to name it in a way that others will recognize, and to work on a religious or theological base to combat it, and combat it successfully.

I will break this set of questions down into four smaller pieces, which I will quickly outline. Then I will share some experiences of religious peacebuilding. Finally, I will suggest lessons peacebuilding brings to the four challenges facing



“Students of religion in the academy must show accurately what religion is
and what is the real character of its influence.”

our field. What I want to say echoes remarks Dean Rosen-
garten offered at the installation of Elizabeth Davenport as
Dean of Rockefeller Chapel. Students of religion in the
academy must show accurately what religion is and what is
the real character of its influence. They must also promote
forms of religion that contribute to human wellbeing. And
they must remember that though religion and theology are
always engaged, as students they must strive for fairness and
objectivity.²

So first, the challenges we face: 1. to bridge particularity
and universality, i.e., to bridge the gap between particularity
of standpoint and the necessarily universal character of justice
claims that aim at a global audience; 2. to give content or
substance to the idea and norm of “justice” (in other words,
to decide what counts as just or unjust); 3. to resolve the
historical record of religious violence in favor of a mandate
for religious peacebuilding; and 4. to give reasons to believe
that work for global justice can actually be successful. These
four challenges are captured in the first three terms of my
title: “Religious identity” projects the problem of particu-
larity, and also connotes the reality of violent religious ide-
ologies. “Justice” carries forward the need for common
agreement and pinpoints the task of concretizing social
goals. “Hope” reminds us that *theories* of justice, human
rights, and social responsibility are useless if we have no
good cause to think that they have the least chance of influ-
encing the real world of politics, or to diminish the world’s
massive suffering.

Let me underline the importance of that final challenge.
“To give an account of the hope that is in us” (to paraphrase
1 Peter 3:15) is religious ethics’ most consequential mandate,
yet one we commonly evade. The biggest threat to Chris-
tian ethics in our era is not otherworldly spirituality, nor
the reduction of faith to liberal justice and progress. It is
a “political realism” that tells us the world runs on self-
interest and power, that it always has done so, that this will
never change, and that the best Christians and their the-
ologies can do is cooperate with the status quo or stay
safe inside “the church.” True, the lasting contribution of
Augustine to Christian ethics is his conviction that evil lies
deep in the human heart, that the lust for domination
perverts all earthly societies, and that human wickedness is

not highly amenable to rational analysis, persuasion, or
control. But, in light of local and global justice concerns, a
new generation of Augustinian social ethicists (e.g., Charles
Mathewes of the University of Virginia, Eric Gregory of
Princeton³) is proposing the need for a new Augustinian
politics of love, as a social force capable of producing
change. This is not the original Augustine, of course, who
described political society at least as much in terms of
“miserable necessities” and “dirty hands” as of “tranquility
of order” and “well-ordered concord.”⁴ But a revision is
demanded by the clear and present danger of moral dere-
liction on the part of elites tempted to view relief of the
oppressed as a utopian mirage.

H. Richard Niebuhr already started down the revision-
ist road when he categorized Augustine as a cultural “trans-
formationist,” despite also noting that Augustine is a dualist
about sin and salvation.⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, known for
the ‘Christian realist’ diagnosis of collective egotism’s
intractable character, is Augustinian in his skepticism that
Christian love can ever directly motivate political organiza-
tion, or change the realities of power and the need for coer-
cive control. Nevertheless, Reinhold Niebuhr still advocates
for justice as a historical possibility. He calls clearly and
repeatedly for the social extension of “larger structures of
brotherhood,”⁶ and even summons “Western civilization”
to “fashion our common life to conform more nearly to the
brotherhood of the Kingdom of God.”⁷

The social gospel, liberation theology, and recent
Catholic social thought are essentially right that the teach-
ing and example of Jesus call Christians to active compas-
sion, solidarity, and a “preferential option for the poor.”
Augustine and Reinhold Niebuhr are also right to identify
sin as a significant obstacle to success and to call for
restraints on Christian optimism. But if the radical other-
ness of God, and of the gospel, mandates abstinence from
processes of political change, it is certainly not for benefi-
ciaries of current social arrangements to make that call. That
includes academic theologians and scholars of religion
working in North American higher education. Christians
and other religious people living and writing from experi-
ences of violence and oppression speak instead of common
humanity, the renewal of creation, “resurrection politics,”⁸

“... concrete meanings of justice are perhaps not as hard to agree upon as postmodern theorists can make it seem.”

and hope of a better future.

Now for examples of peacebuilding. During the past five years I have been fortunate to participate in the Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN), a project of Catholic Relief Services and the University of Notre Dame.⁹ This project links activists and academics from around the world who seek to create and build on the conditions for a just and lasting peace. Peacebuilding requires communication across ethnic, religious, and political allegiances. But the sacred is “ambivalent.” The affirmation of particular identities often obstructs peace, particularly when the identities are linked to transcendent values, divine favor, and revealed knowledge of humanity’s ultimate destiny. Dramatically and frequently, “religious extremism rears its own formidable head, interpreting the sacred as the ultimate legitimator of revenge.”¹⁰ Yet sometimes religious movements have been agents of justice and peace. The CPN has taught me that hope is a practical virtue, that religious communities can be sponsors of solidarity and reconciliation, and that the concrete meanings of justice are perhaps not as hard to agree upon as postmodern theorists can make it seem.

An opening conference of the CPN in 2004 brought together forty specialists from a dozen countries to study peacebuilding initiatives in the Philippines, Rwanda, and Colombia, and to hear of continuing problems in South Africa, Northern Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The CPN constantly engages other religious traditions, secular organizations, local governments, and international organizations, including the U.N. The CPN makes connections among peacebuilders worldwide, so they know they are not alone. Peacebuilders share best practices, assessing and mapping those that are effective. The CPN also provides training, resources, and strategic planning so that churches can be a more effective force for peace. Finally, the CPN has sponsored research into a more developed theology of just peace that matches our longstanding analyses of just war.

This is where I had the opportunity to come into the picture. Over the course of three summers (2005, '06, and '07), the CPN brought theologians and other academics together with practitioners and church leaders at conferences in Mindanao, the Philippines; Bujumbura, Burundi; and Bogota, Colombia. Our assignment was to begin devel-

oping a theology of peace, in conversation with activists and pastoral workers with real experience of the challenges, successes, and failures to which our theologies must be true.¹¹

Each of the regions in which the conferences were held presents special difficulties. In Mindanao, violence has erupted between Christians and Muslims. Religious identity and ethnic identity are conflated, and religion has become a divisive marker of belonging or otherness. Religious teachings and claims of divine favor have fueled rather than healed conflicts, perverting the very meanings of faith and salvation. CPN affiliates have worked hard to create understanding across religious boundaries. Catholics and Muslims have come together to listen to one another’s stories, seek mutual understanding, and put an end to conflict.

In Burundi, as in Rwanda, ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis has led to massive killings and threatened a breakdown of society. Evil has made its mark in the form of religious complicity and even direct cooperation by priests and religious in murder and genocide. The Church has had to confront the fact that, after generations of evangelization in a supposedly Catholic country, so-called good Christians are able to kill their neighbors with their own hands, and priests and nuns have participated. Church leaders have not always been ready to admit institutional or personal involvement, which has impeded the healing process. A huge challenge here, as in Rwanda, has been how to make the church a community of truth and reconciliation in the wake of moral and spiritual failure, and in the midst of a torn society.

In Colombia, different political factions with a complicated history are locked in armed conflict that is larger than the ability of the government to control. Add to this the fact that huge profits from the drug wars (and kidnappings) are now sustaining these factions, and creating disincentives to any kind of resolution. The number of internally displaced persons in Columbia is second only to Sudan, with indigenous peoples bearing the brunt of the violence.¹²

In Colombia, several Catholic bishops are trusted mediators who have had considerable success in bringing armed combatants into negotiations. However, this entails putting their own lives at significant risk. They go unarmed into jungle encampments to meet with guerilla leaders who are

“It is time to go on.”

still very much involved in violence and the drug trade. In Colombia, priests, religious sisters, CRS staff, and other pastoral workers are a major presence among the poor, rural villagers and farmers who have been displaced from their home areas by the violence. The rural poor are now living in huge slums in the cities, still victimized by gangs and forced conscription of their young people into the forces of the illegally armed factions.

In each of these cases, the prospects for success can seem very dim. But the peacebuilders keep working at grassroots levels to create solidarity, work for justice, and sow the seeds of hope.¹³ Hope does not come from an overall analysis that says world conditions are on the upswing. It comes from mutual accompaniment and sharing, from joining together to make a difference in one's bible study circle, women's cooperative, children's feeding center and preschool, or youth group marching for an end to violence. In other words, it comes from the experience of resurrection life (or speaking more broadly, of the divine presence in history) as already making a difference to human suffering.

At a youth center near Bogota, I and other CPN visitors participated in a ceremony in which teenagers robed in black led us in procession around rows of white wooden crosses marked with the names of local people, many of them young, who had been killed in the violence. Their fellowship in grieving the dead was already a way of proclaiming that death is not the last word; that changed relationships can begin even now.

Many CPN participants see the eucharist as the liturgical location par excellence of peacebuilding. The Christian eucharist can bring together the guilty and innocent, the poor and powerful, the perpetrators and victims, into a community where all are renewed in Christ, sins are recognized, and a narrative of atonement and resurrection makes it more possible for people to move forward together.¹⁴ The possibility of redeeming liturgical celebration should not be idealized or romanticized, however. Difficulties remain. I heard bishops in Colombia express the personal difficulty and ambivalence they felt when asked to celebrate mass with members of armed groups who were hiding in the jungles, and who had not yet agreed to lay down arms and cease violence against innocent peasants. Sharing the eucharist in

such circumstances seemed necessary for pastoral reasons, and as a way of strengthening the ties of these men to the larger faith community that is seeking peace. Yet the actual circumstances were far from fulfilling the gifts of love and reconciliation that the eucharist supposedly celebrates. Augustine rears his head.

In East Africa, similar ambiguities arise within the Christian, Catholic community over when, how, and to what degree either public confessions of guilt and repentance by perpetrators, or punishments and reparations, should be conditions for acceptance by the church. In a small face-to-face discussion group, I heard a bishop from Mozambique explain that in his country, public truth-finding processes had been deemed not fruitful, for they simply exacerbated the consequences of crimes for which those responsible were already well known to everyone. Moreover, guilt was pervasive. It was best to simply allow people to offer small, tacit signs of remorse or forgiveness, and then to permit 'normal' relations to resume. The bishop gave the example of a bit of chewing tobacco being offered by one man to another whose family members he had killed. This was an acknowledgment of guilt and a petition for acceptance. When the first man took the tobacco he was agreeing, "It is time to go on."

The most necessary thing for social renewal after violence is to overcome what Robert Schreier calls "the narrative of the lie."¹⁵ What is required is a new or reconstructed narrative in which memories of violence are confronted, the past is truthfully acknowledged, and the violated identities of the victims are reclaimed. This reconstruction can move forward with a personal exchange of tobacco as well as with a public truth commission. Even more than retribution or reparations, social trust requires a new, shared narrative of past and future that includes basic mutual respect.¹⁶ That shared narrative can take hold only through shared *practices* of mutual respect, practices that often begin with very small and tentative steps.

The faith of the local peacebuilders is built on their practices of solidarity. It is not mere 'belief' in propositions about eternal verities, the nature of God or the afterlife, or assent to various teachings as going beyond the evidence of 'reason.' Their faith is a real and practical knowledge of God and God's ways, of the reality of divine presence in history,

“Justice is giving to each his or her due.”

and of the power of love expressed in action. Their hope is not focused on good things that will ‘someday’ be theirs, in ‘heaven,’ or at least not only so. It is a confidence that, no matter how grim one’s situation objectively speaking, solidarity in working for solutions is already changing lives and communities. This was especially visible to me when traveling beyond the conference venues to visit parishes, community initiatives, and local people, usually poor and not well educated, who are joining together to improve conditions and relations in their daily settings, despite gigantic obstacles.

Now let us return to theology. What do the practices of Christian peacebuilding say to our four field-confronting theological problems? (particularity and universality, the content of justice, peaceable religious identity, and hope).

1. Particularity and universality

All knowledge arises at particular social and historical locations, and is perspectival, partial and interested. Yet some identity-crossing norms and goals are essential in order even to speak, in an intercultural environment, of justice as something other than power politics or even ‘empowerment politics’—competition by marginalized groups for a bigger share of the pie. Peacebuilders within war-torn societies do not of course wait for some theoretical justification before they use the rhetoric of justice and common humanity, of essential human goodness, and of the lure of cooperation for peace. What I think this shows us as theologians is that the shared or universal is known inductively and practically, but also on the basis of common human experiences such as embodiment, sociality, personal integrity, and the need for certain basic goods as prerequisites of human happiness and social well-being.

Basic goods, after all, are really not all that hard to identify. The philosopher Martha Nussbaum gives examples in her list of “human capabilities,” including life, health, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, relationships to other people and species, play, and efficacy in one’s environment.¹⁷ Edward Schillebeeckx’s list of “anthropological constants” includes a religious or spiritual dimension that lends a “utopian” edge to quests for meaning amid

the realities of suffering and change.¹⁸ What these things mean in the concrete will vary. But the basic requirements of a satisfying human life are relatively uncontroversial. They include food, clean water, essential medicines, physical safety, freedom from extreme psychological coercion, freedom of movement, and the opportunity to be educated, make a living, and participate in political society.

2. Justice

Justice concerns the goods we have just enumerated, but it concerns them in a special way. Justice is giving to each his or her due. In other words justice is about *access* to goods. Who gets what? How do we prioritize, maximize, and distribute goods when goods conflict or are in short supply? People in violent conflict do not really disagree about the goods that make for a worthwhile life, they disagree about who should get them. Even in times of civil stability, social access systems regard women differently from men, blacks differently from whites, the lower classes differently from the elites. Modern western philosophers, theologians and politicians often take for granted that equality and equal respect in regard to basic goods are philosophically unassailable and culturally undisputed. But this is far from the case at the practical level. The lessons of peacebuilding show that the way forward is not primarily through Kantian arguments about kingdoms of ends, or appeals to the “image of God” as a theory-grounding premise. What creates consensus about equal (or more equal) access is the exchange of stories, the airing of longstanding hurts, the sharing of meals and other rituals, and practical work together toward mutually important goals. Familiarity may sometimes breed contempt, but it can also birth compassion.

3. Religious identity

Religion is a pervasive cultural reality and force and—far from being crowded out in an era of “secularization”—it is alive and well and growing, if in newer and more pluralistic forms.¹⁹ Virtually every major

“...religious peacebuilders can change their environments.”

religion claims as core ideals mercy and compassion, service to the poor, and altruism. Religion can be corrupted and co-opted, just like any other social institution, including government, education and family. This does not invalidate these institutions or the good ends for which, *ideally*, they organize and encourage human behavior.

What we need is not less religion in politics, but more authentic religion²⁰—more religion that holds fast to its highest values, and theology that makes religion accountable. According to Reinhold Niebuhr, the most important contribution of religion to politics is *humility*: “A too confident sense of justice always leads to injustice.”²¹ “Genuine community is established only when the knowledge that we need one another is supplemented by the recognition that ‘the other,’ that other form of life, or that other unique community is the limit beyond which our ambitions must not run and the boundary beyond which our life must not expand.”²² We are no less dependent on the Creator than our neighbor is, and to that neighbor we must relate as the neighbor is related to God.²³

4. Hope

To frame the virtue of hope in terms of Martin Marty’s convocation address, violence is a problem on which scholars converge interdisciplinarily; hope is a mystery we enter with wonder and gratitude.²⁴ Myla Leguro, of Catholic Relief Services, the Philippines, says that building solidarity brings energy to face difficult challenges. “My hope is that we are able to bring the same energy eventually to the communities directly affected by war, violence, and conflict—creating not only a network of peacebuilders but more importantly a network of communities all over our world.”²⁵ Studies from the World Bank and the U.S. Institute of Peace offer confirmation that religious peacebuilders can change their environments. According to a World Bank report on civil society and peacebuilding, one of the most important roles of religious leaders, religiously sponsored NGOs, and academic theologians is to support “peace constituencies” at the middle range of society (between elites and grassroots). This

“middle out” empowerment can influence both the top leadership and the grassroots level, where local religious communities can become active to build peace.²⁶

In conclusion, then: *Hope is a practical virtue*. It is not wishful thinking, or a trust that ‘everything will turn out alright,’ despite all evidence to the contrary. Hope does not require absolute assurances, but finds a guarantee in experiences and memories of practical transformation. One of the most important theological lessons of peacebuilding is that religious narratives and practices teach us truths that exceed our analysis and intellectual grasp. Paradoxically, Augustine was right about sin; but the struggles of the poor tell the truth about hope. ✕

Endnotes

1. Sometimes religious studies is understood as a descriptive discipline; and theology as a normative one, usually occurring within the parameters of a particular religious tradition. Practically speaking, I have found there to be much overlap between the two spheres. The designations are often used interchangeably, and my remarks do not assume a strong differentiation.
2. Richard A. Rosengarten, “Reflection: Religion in the Academy,” *Criterion* (Spring/Summer 2009) 28–30.
3. See Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
4. For the former, see *City of God*, XIX.4 and .6; for the latter, see XIX.13.
5. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951) 207–08.
6. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man, Volume II: Human Destiny* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press) 95.
7. *Ibid.*, 308, n. 10.
8. See Maryann Cusimano Love, “Resurrection Politics,” *America*, October 23, 2006; <http://www.americamagazine.org>; accessed 11/23/09.
9. See the CPN website, <http://cpn.nd.edu/>; accessed 11/23/2009.

10. R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Boston and Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000) 306.
11. See Robert Schreiter, "The Future of Catholic Peacbuilding," *Origins* 38/3 (2008) 33–38; and Lisa Sowle Cahill, "A Theology for Catholic Peacbuilding," *ibid.*, 38–42; and R. Scott Appleby, "The Many Dimensions of Catholic Peacbuilding," *ibid.*, 42–46.
12. See the "Global Statistics" of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (<http://www.internal-displacement.org>; accessed 12/1/2009).
13. See also Mary Ann Cejka and Thomas Bamat, eds., *Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among Christian Communities* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2004).
14. Archbishop Luis Castro Quiroga, "The Table of Peace," *Origins* 38/3 (2008) 47.
15. Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll NY and Cambridge MA: Orbis Books and Boston Theological Institute, 1992) 34–36.
16. *Ibid.*, 36–39.
17. Martha Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 78–80.
18. Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Seabury 1980) 741.
19. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith is Changing the World* (New York: Penguin, 2009).
20. See remarks of Gerard Powers, "Peacbuilding: A Role for Religion," UN Headquarters, New York, NY; October 7, 2008; (<http://cpn.nd.edu/>; accessed 11/26/2009).
21. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History; with a new introduction by Andrew J. Bacevich* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008 [original date of publication 1952]) 138.
22. *Ibid.*, 139.
23. James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective, Volume One: Theology and Ethics* (Chicago and Oxford: University of Chicago and Blackwell, 1980) 306.
24. Martin E. Marty, "On Laying Siege to Problems," University of Chicago 500th Convocation Address, October 9, 2009 (<http://500convocation.uchicago.edu/>; accessed 11/23/09).
25. CPN website, http://cpn.nd.edu/about_us.htm; accessed 8/20/09.
26. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, "Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Peacbuilding," *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, Paper No. 36 (World Bank, October 2006) 23; (http://www.siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCPR/Resources/WP36_web.pdf; accessed 11/23/2009). This report cites John Paul Lederach, *Building Justice: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997) 39.



Reflections on the Ethical and Political Dialectics of Commitment

Commitment makes me nervous. For while commitment can serve noble causes, it can also become the handmaiden of the most ignoble, dastardly deeds. Suicide bombers are profoundly committed individuals, as are fundamentalists of the Left and Right. On the other side of the moral ledger, Albert Schweitzer exemplifies a commitment to the Good. The suicide bombers would protest, however, and explain that they too are committed to the Good. Indeed, one man's freedom fighter is the other's terrorist.

Commitment is a coat of many colors. In and of itself, commitment is a dubious virtue. On the altar of commitment fundamental humane values are all too often sacrificed. Just as love can blind one to the truths and values that may transcend the object of one's affection, so can solidarity, loyalty, patriotism, idealism distort one's moral vision. Accordingly, the political scientist George Kateb entitled his most recent book *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* (Yale, 2006) in which he notes that our commitments to various political and religious ideals all too often result "in terrible brutality and injustices." On the other hand, fear of the consequence of an ethically myopic commitment may lead to an equally intolerable social detachment and indifference, a catatonic paralysis numbing one's primary altruistic impulses to attend to the needs of even of one's immediate neighbours.

How then to navigate between the Scylla of such an

implicitly nihilistic posture and the Charybdis of an apocalyptic fanaticism engendered by an unyielding commitment? Here I believe we must follow Kant and regard commitment as but a *form* of social engagement, whose content must be determined and adjudged by universal rational criteria. But this is easier said than done. For, as Woody Allen once ironically remarked, had he had the opportunity to teach a course on Kant's ethics, he would entitle it, "Introduction to Kant's Categorical Imperative: Six Ways to Make it Work for You." One need only recall Adolf Eichmann's scandalous invocation of Kant's doctrine to justify his complicity in the Final Solution to understand the difficulty.

We must, in the end, reply on more basic moral instincts, what the Stoics called, as Pierre Hadot reminds us, *prosoche*, a vigilant moral consciousness that does not allow us to

“Supererogatory acts are, indeed, above and
beyond the call of duty.”

compromise the dignity of our fellow human beings (*Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 84, 130). The question of commitment, however, goes beyond that of interpersonal morality, Kantian or otherwise. The demand for social commitment broaches what in ethical theory is called “supererogation,” acts which transcend the moral norms a society absolutely requires of all its members. Although these may be esteemed as the most laudable expressions of the Good, a society cannot reasonably expect each and every one of its citizens to act in such a matter. Supererogatory acts are, indeed, above and beyond the call of duty. Not everyone can be a hero, sacrifice one’s personal wealth and career for the sake of the greater good, or give voluntarily of one’s time and resources for this or that cause. The philosophical problem raised by supererogatory acts is, if they are not a universal norm, can they rightly be considered ethical. While philosophers may debate the theoretical status of supererogation, society not only praises those committed to extraordinary ideals that transcend the ordinary norms of ethical conduct and good citizenship, it frequently depends on individuals who will give of themselves to its supererogatory ideals. What seems to have prompted the organizers of this conference is a concern that contemporary Western societies are witnessing a marked decline in social commitment, an ever-diminishing number of individuals willing to give of themselves to the social weal beyond the call of duty. The program announcing the objective of this conference ascribes this perceived eclipse of commitment to the loss of the motivating force generated by messianic, utopian visions—intimations of the promise of an eminently just and decent social reality.

The call to help pave the way to the realization of these visions has, indeed, inspired many to commit themselves to the associated ideals and activities. I myself am of a generation that wed its personal goals to an utopian *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectation). We were inspired to commit ourselves to social and political deeds we deemed would usher in an alternative, more just social reality. In the extreme, our eschatological fantasies led to Manichean politics that ultimately betrayed the very ideals that inspired us. What we are now wont to call post-modernism is in some fundamental way a consequence of the



painful assessment of the metanarratives that informed these quixotic eschatologies.

The question, then, is what can inspire and motivate the denizens of a post-messianic age. This question, in effect, bears a two-fold challenge: To eschew chimerical Utopian visions, while identifying tempered social visions, shorn of any vision of the *eschaton*, that can nonetheless induce supererogatory social commitment. I would venture to say that such a motivational resource may be located in the biblical concept of compassion, of solicitous concern for the disinherited, our neighbors far and near whom Providence—or the existing social and political order—has dealt a raw deal. My Jerusalem colleague Avishai Margalit has elaborated the biblical ethic through the concept of a “decent society.” He defines such a society as one that actively seeks to minimize the humiliation of *all* its members. Hence, Margalit reasons, we are obligated as individuals and as a society to be attentive to the material and

“Moral luck is thus not only a privilege, but also enjoins a responsibility.”

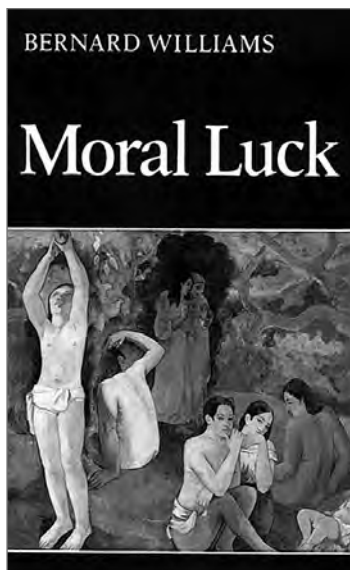
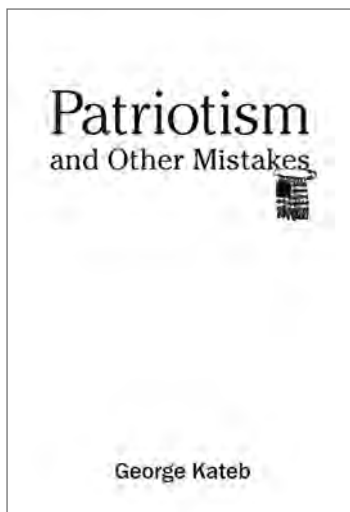
existential humiliation suffered by the poor, the infirm, the emotionally troubled, those stigmatized due to their alternative sexual and spiritual orientations, and, of course — to speak in concert with the Book of Leviticus — to be compassionately alert to the degradation suffered by the strangers who dwell in our midst. The inculcation of such a sensibility falls within the purview of our educational and cultural institutions.

Yet before we ascend the moral high ground, we should also humbly acknowledge that “moral luck” plays a crucial role in determining our social and physical abilities to act in accordance with certain ethical ideals (see Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* [1982]). Can we realistically expect an individual who earns a minimal wage with which to feed and clothe his or her family to assume supererogatory commitments? Is it reasonable to expect the residents of slums to be selfless warriors of social justice? Surely one who is relatively free of material concerns and enjoys comparatively good health is in a better position to assume supererogatory social commitments. Indeed, such commitment may be the *privilege* of the bourgeoisie and youth—of those who have the moral luck to be exceptionally ethical. As the late American literary critic, Irving Howe, once ironically noted, he and others academics who shared his Left-wing politics were “freedom fighters with tenure” (*Freiheitskämpfer mit einer festen Stelle*). But, alas, the average citizen does not have tenure.

The privilege of those who are blessed with moral luck—the social and economic good fortune—to engage in supererogatory acts on behalf of the less fortunate may be said to bear the obligation to assume this social commitment. Moral luck is thus not only a privilege, but also enjoins a

responsibility. An ethical *noblesse oblige* compels one, in the words of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, to become a *homo politicus*, to be attentive to the needs of others and to be actively committed to promoting the social good. But at the same time, Buber teaches, one is to become a *homo problematicus*. While one is politically and socially engaged, one is to fend off the threat of self-righteousness and political arrogance, through a self-reflective scrutiny of one’s motives and an acknowledgment of the complexity of the social reality in which one seeks to intervene. As a *homo politicus* one is to be bold and decisive, while as a *homo problematicus* one is to demand of oneself to be humble and ever on guard against one’s ideological vanities and ethical conceits.

It is said that Kafka viewed the world around him through a glass wall, standing apart as a keenly critical observer. From behind the glass wall of his mind’s construction, he cast a penetrating gaze disclosing the conceits and vanities that invariably overcome even the best-intentioned *Gutmenschen*. But Kafka’s glass wall paralyzed him, occluding and preventing him not only from engaging in social reality but also from establishing an amorous relationship he so profoundly desired. The ultimate *homo problematicus*, Kafka could not allow himself any commitments, political or otherwise. Buber would have recommended that he replace his glass window with a revolving door, constantly twirling in and out between the critical observations of a *homo problematicus*, and the decisive ethically and politically committed actions of a *homo politicus*. The challenge would then be to avoid vertigo as one spins in and out. I have undoubtedly over-extended the metaphor. ✕



D O N S . B R O W N I N G

Religion and Civil Society

In James Luther Adams, Abraham Kuyper,
and Catholic Social Teachings

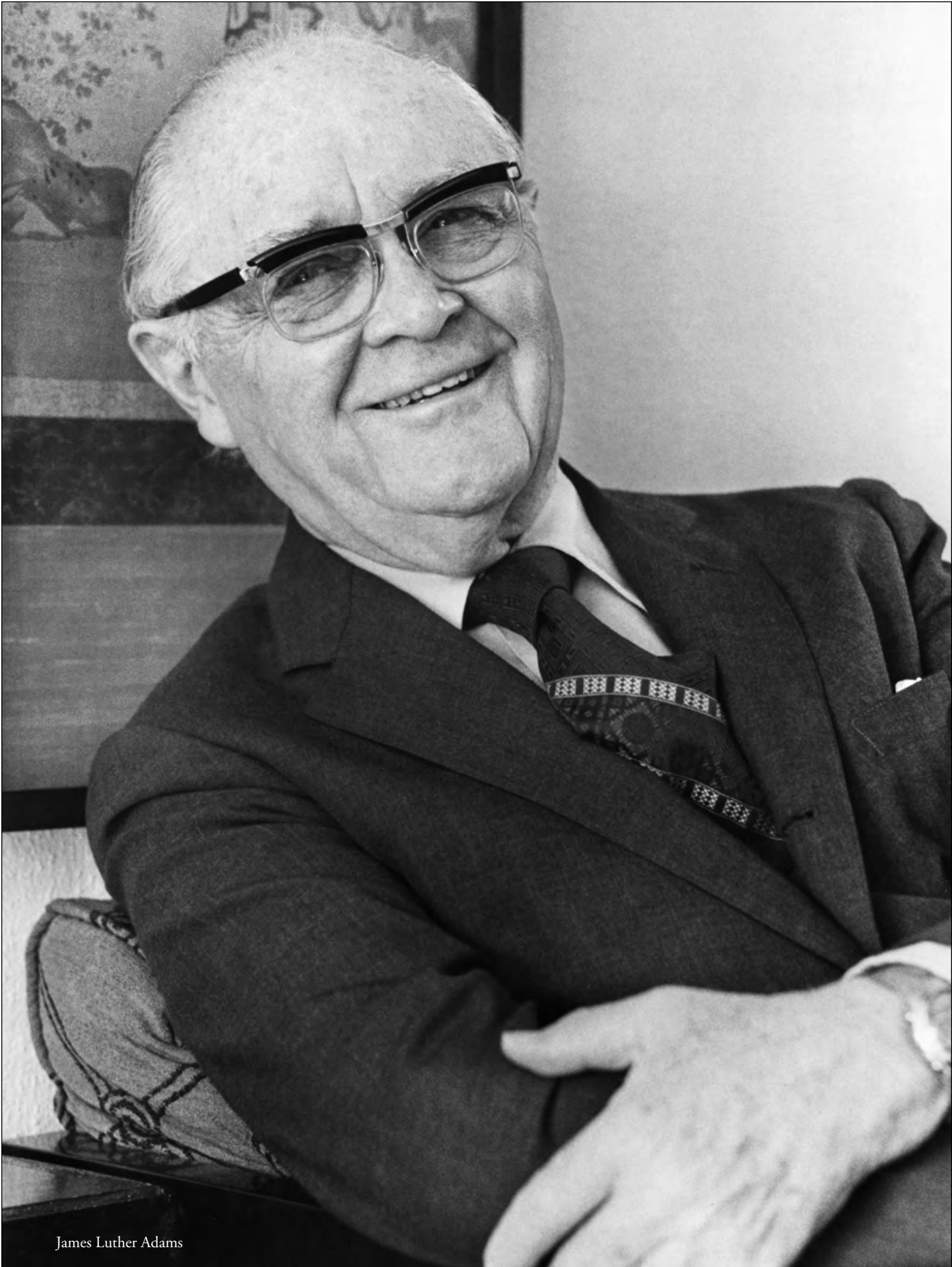
When I came as a student in 1956 to what was then called the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago, James Luther Adams was on sabbatical. We were told that we should look forward to his return. He was described as a great teacher, raconteur, and maker of home movies of colorful and famous German theologians. He returned, and I remember attending an event in Swift 106, packed with students, showing us jerky, flickering, hazy, yet arresting pictures of walking and talking luminaries such as Rudolf Otto, Rudolf Bultmann, and other famous German theologians and philosophers. Adams' commentary was fascinating, but few of us, because of our youth, left knowing much about what Adams was really about.

In fact, it was years, if not decades, before I began to grasp the stature of James Luther Adams. I never took a course with Adams. Shortly after he returned from his research leave, he was called to join the faculty of Harvard Divinity School. I did encounter Adams again when, after his retirement from Harvard, he returned to teach at Meadville-Lombard. In the autumn of 1972, I was asked to give six formal lectures on pastoral care at Meadville. These were my first invited formal lectures as a young professor and resulted in my third book titled the *Moral Context of Pastoral Care* (1976). Adams was in the audience when

I gave these lectures, and his sheer presence at first added to the anxiety of this early effort by an inexperienced junior professor.

I am not sure that the anxiety subsided, but very quickly I learned that Adams' presence would not in itself contribute to its intensification. I was surprised to see a warm if not beaming smile on his face—a smile that lasted throughout the series of six lectures.

I did not know the explanation for his smile. I just assumed that, in addition to being famous and widely admired, James Luther Adams was a very nice—a very



James Luther Adams

“...even more powerful were voices from what is generally conceived as conservative wings of Reformed Christianity...”

warm—man. And I think this was true. But there was more to that smile, and it took the occasion of these lectures to gain insight into his supportive and affirming countenance. I did not know it at the time, but I was probably saying things with which Adams mostly agreed.

In those lectures, I argued that in contrast to the alleged moral neutrality professed by much of contemporary psychotherapy and some pastoral counselors, caring practices always function in a moral context of relative degrees of adequacy that influence the therapeutic acts. Although secular psychotherapy and pastoral psychotherapy should temporarily bracket this moral context to give the client some breathing room to investigate forbidden as well as new feelings and experiences, I contended that this moral context was always there and lent stability and direction to the caring, counseling, and therapeutic process. I further argued that all counseling and therapy should aspire to go beyond the goal of health, as important as this is, and usher the client, patient, or parishioner into a viable and tested moral horizon. In the case of pastoral care and counseling in the context of a faithful congregation, this moral horizon should be shaped by elements of the prophetic tradition, first projected by the great prophets of the Hebrew scriptures and reformulated by the teachings and ministry of Jesus. Finally I proposed that the church should constantly be refining its moral context by becoming an ongoing community of moral interpretation and discourse. In saying this, I began to get close to what Adams was then writing about the role of voluntary organizations in modern democracies and how the church could be a primary example of their potential for transformative action.

Although I had some vague sense of Adams' position on these matters, I did not more deeply grasp it until years later. Adams' own writing on pastoral counseling and pastoral psychotherapy were in response to his Unitarian colleague Carl Wennerstrom's unfinished Ph.D. dissertation (due to his premature death). Wennerstrom had criticized liberal religion for being too rationalistic and failing to attend to the affections of anxiety, suffering, and empathy. In the book that Adams and Seward Hiltner edited in honor of Wennerstrom called *Pastoral Care in the Liberal Churches* (1970), Adams agreed with Wennerstrom that much of

liberal religion of their day was embedded in Enlightenment rationality and also modernity's promotion of technical reason and efficiency.¹ But he also faulted the modern pastoral counseling movement—as well as Freud, William James, and much of modern psychology—for their overemphasis on personal or subjective ethics. These movements and thinkers failed to understand the necessary dialectical relation between personal ethics and what Adams called objective or social ethics.² He believed that the pastoral counseling movement had led liberal churches to neglect the prophetic emphasis of the Hebrew scriptures and the Radical Reformation. He was all for reclaiming the affective, the personal, and the subjective, but he wanted these balanced with a vibrant social, objective, and prophetic ethic as well.

Adams saw this balance best achieved in voluntary organizations. He advocated people bringing their affections, subjective hurts, and emotion-laden hopes not only to the pastoral counselor but also to their voluntary organizations so that they could work with others in addressing the social conditions that often shaped both their suffering and joy, their pain and their sense of well-being. For Adams, chief among these various voluntary organizations was the church, but he was also interested in labor unions, service clubs, youth organizations, settlement houses, retreat centers, and citizen groups such as the Independent Voters of Illinois, an organization that he helped found when associated with Meadville-Lombard and the University of Chicago.³

From the 1960s until his death in 1994, Adams was one of our foremost interpreters and promoters of the role of voluntary organizations and civil society in modern democratic countries. But we should be reminded that he was not the only advocate and maybe not even the dominant voice proclaiming the virtues of these forms of social organization. Peter Berger and John Neuhaus in their *The Naked Public Square* (1977) gained attention for those organizations that they believed should fill the space between government and market, especially the massive new corporations dominating the world of business and finance.⁴ But even more powerful were voices from what is generally conceived as conservative wings of Reformed Christianity, particularly those championing the vision

“He was afraid of both hierarchical and lateral tyranny.”

elaborated by the turn of the century neo-Calvinist scholar, journalist, founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, and Prime Minister of Holland—Abraham Kuyper. His views are promulgated by the intellectuals associated with Calvin College, such as Nicholas Wolterstorff, Mary Stuart van Leeuwen, Max Stackhouse, and James Skillen of the Center for Public Justice, to mention only a few. These distinctively Reformed voices compete with the teachings on civil society and religion stemming from the Roman Catholic social teachings of Leo XIII, Pius XI and John Paul II. Adams is a distinctively liberal religious and Christian voice among these options. Skillen, Wolterstorff, theologians Max Stackhouse and Mary Stuart van Leeuwen, and legal historian John Witte champion, or at least research, a more Calvinist and Reformed perspective. And, of course,



Abraham Kuyper

the Vatican, and the scholars associated with it, continue to advance the concept of subsidiarity, which, as we will see, summarizes much of the Catholic position on the role of civil society and voluntary organizations.

Adams' Ethic for Voluntary Organizations

Because of the power of the organizations behind the Reformed and Catholic views, Adams' more distinctive liberal religious view has not been prominent in recent discussions, in spite of the worthy efforts of D. B. Robertson,⁵ George Beach,⁶ Ronald Engel,⁷ John Wilcox,⁸ and many other interpreters of Adams. It is my view that this is unfortunate, because he has much to contribute to the discussion. It is to the credit of the James Luther Adams Foundation that these lectures help keep Adams' distinctive views on these matters alive. He has something to say to all of these competing perspectives, but especially to the liberal religious and liberal Christian churches. These parts of our religious landscape need a deep understanding and strong voice on the role of voluntary organizations and civil society in modern communities.

Adams addressed Berger and Neuhaus, but he did not to my knowledge spill much ink over either the Reformed or Catholic views of the relation of religion, civil society, and the state. He respected what Berger and Neuhaus had to say, but he thought that the perspective they supported in the public conversation was too privatized and too associated with the defensive family values of the 1950s and 1960s.⁹

Like Kuyper and the Roman Catholic social teachings, Adams was interested in the appropriate separation and relative autonomy of social structures and institutions. He was afraid of both hierarchical and lateral tyranny. During his many trips to Germany as a young man, he had directly witnessed—sometimes at great personal danger—the Nazi dismantling of voluntary organizations or their absorption into Hitler's state apparatus.¹⁰ But he was aware of lateral tyranny as well—the possible distortion of government to the purposes of private economic gain or private family values at the expense of the poor or marginalized.

“...the affections needed the will to guide them...”

Voluntary organizations, the term Adams preferred over the often used concept of civil society, were marked by the freedom to both form and participate in a transformative moral mission. But sometimes, in Adams' writings, the distinction between voluntary and nonvoluntary organizations could get complicated. For instance, not all aspects of the state were for Adams nonvoluntary; centralized bureaucratic structures are not voluntary, but some lower-level state functions are closer to the everyday lives of people and have marks of voluntary organizations, such as local school boards supervising state-financed schools or state-financed health care with influential citizen advisory boards. From the standpoint of children, Adams saw the family as a nonvoluntary organization because children do not choose their parents, but from the perspective of adult couples freely consenting to form families, they were voluntary organizations and certainly so in contrast to bureaucratic governmental structures. Small businesses might be close to voluntary organization, as they were for Adam Smith, but corporations, especially when deeply embedded in state supports or regulations, might be seen as enemies of the voluntary sector.

Adams, like Kuyper and later Reformed thinkers such as Emil Brunner, was interested in sphere sovereignty—a view of society in which its major sectors would simultaneously follow their own unique moral obligations, cooperate with other sectors of society, but not be dominated or undermined by other sectors.¹¹ Adams was deeply aware, as were Kuyper and the Catholic social teachings before him, that the voluntary sector and indeed the family could be undermined by the power of the state or the technical rationality of the market and this at great cost to the democratic integrity of society as a whole.

Adams' theory of voluntary associations was multi-dimensional, possibly more richly so than Kuyper's or the Catholic teachings. It had several dimensions—a philosophical and theological anthropology, a theory of moral obligation or covenant, a theory of normative practices, an ontology that undergirded his view of time and history, and a view of the importance of context in shaping and fine-tuning human action.

First, his anthropology emphasized will and affections

over reason. As we saw in his commentary on the pastoral-care theory of Carl Wennerstrom, Adams was critical of overly rationalistic views of human nature, whether they be older Platonic or Thomistic views or modern views dominated by the veneration of technical rationality.¹² Human beings, Adams claimed, were shaped by their commitments, their promises, and their actions and these were primarily empowered by affections and will, i.e., what they loved and chose to serve. He had a deep appreciation for figures of the Scottish Enlightenment such as Francis Hutcheson and, at least on his theory of moral sentiments, Adam Smith. But he also claimed that the affections needed the will to guide them and, yes, they needed reason too, but a reason obedient to another dimension of the ethics relevant to voluntary organizations—a theory of moral obligation.

Second, when Adams discussed his theory of moral obligation he might, at first glance, sound like a species of Calvinism. But, for the most part, at least as I read him, he kept his distance from Calvin. He was, however, a kind of covenant theologian. But it was a covenant theology based on the Hebrew prophets and the radical wing of the Protestant Reformation—the Baptists and Puritans who used their covenant responsibility to God as leverage against injustice and moral distortions that they found in both church and state.¹³ Not unlike Kuyper and later Emil Brunner—neither of whom to my knowledge he ever invoked—Adams held that all individuals, groups, and even state entities had a covenantal responsibility to God whether they acknowledged this or not. This covenant morality demanded an ethic of justice and critique that also promoted individual and communal fulfillment. This covenant ethic was indeed more an ethic of mutuality among individuals and groups than a stark ethic of agapic self-sacrifice unmotivated by human inclinations toward health, general well-being, and other relative actualizations of given human potentials.¹⁴ For Adams, this covenant ethic should be the standard—the plumb line—guiding the actions of voluntary associations in civil society, partially because these groups had the freedom to search for the true meaning of covenant responsibility in the unique social and cultural contexts of their discourse and action.

The third dimension discernible in Adams' view of

“The context that most concerned him was the dynamic
of modernization.”

voluntary organizations was a theory of normative practices. Voluntary organizations should be about moral inquiry, free discourse, mutual criticism, and committed action. There were shades in this view of Henry Nelson Weiman’s ethic and theology of creative exchange.¹⁵ Adams believed God acted in and through these human exchanges. Had he been a contemporary of Jürgen Habermas, Adams would have been interested in his ethic of communicative discourse, but not without criticizing Habermas’ inadequate theory of the role of affections in shaping moral norms.¹⁶ Adams himself was a preeminent discourse activist, both in the many organizations to which he belonged throughout his life and especially during his Chicago years in his personal and professional relationships. Once, during a late night two-hour conversation at Gould Farm with psychoanalyst and social theorist Erich Fromm, Adams finally asked him, “What makes you tick?” When Adams had his long interviews with many European theologians and intellectuals, they doubtless sensed that underneath all his academic questions was the lurking presence of the essential one for him—“What makes you tick?” In the moral discourse of our voluntary organizations, we should bring what makes us tick into a communal effort to clarify our individual and communal ethics. Morality for Adams was mainly a dynamic communal process, not a matter merely of the individual moral integrity of the lone individual.

But the ethics of voluntary organizations also require an ontology. For Adams, it had to be an ontology of time and history. Since his early fundamentalist days and throughout his many transformations, Adams was preoccupied with the category of time—first the apocalyptic end of time but then later the time-laden character of finite human life and all its potential for ethical ambiguity and decision. Here Troeltsch’s historical theology provided Adam’s view of history,¹⁷ but Whitehead and Tillich provided the needed metaphysics. Whitehead’s philosophy of process supported a dynamic view of both nature and history.¹⁸ And Tillich’s distinction among *theonomous*, *heteronomous*, and *autonomous* human ethics gave Adams the needed critical view of how God could be related to history.¹⁹ These sources provided a dynamic ontology for his theology and ethic of covenant. Our covenant relation to God is not a static obe-

dience to an unchanging command of God but an act of discernment and interpretation whereby we constantly must rethink God’s demands in light of changing historical circumstances. Since idolatry was central to what Adams thought was sinful and demonic about human existence, a *theonomous* covenant ethic should constantly be on guard against elevating finite social and governmental structures of power into demonic absolutes dominating aspects of social life needing freedom and change. This was something he saw all too obviously in Nazi Germany but more subtly in collusions of government and corporations in American life as well.

Finally, Adams’ ethic of voluntary organizations was interested in the social and cultural contexts of their deliberations and actions. The context that most concerned him was the dynamic of modernization. Adams read Troeltsch’s neighbor, Max Weber. And although he was critical of Weber’s neglect of the morally transformative aspects of the Protestant Reformation, he did have sympathy for his iron-cage view of modernity.²⁰ This is the idea that modern life—from industry and science to government, families, and private life—was increasingly dominated by the cost-benefit, efficiency-oriented, means-end logics of technical rationality. This bias introduced a widespread instrumentality into modern life that obscured the status of humans as ends in themselves and children of God and not to be reduced to means to other ends. As we have seen, he even believed that aspects of the religious liberalism of his day were in the grips of modernity and its love affair with technical rationality. Voluntary organizations guided by a covenant ethic should be in tension with the dynamics of modernity, at least limiting and guiding them by a richer ethic but without completely dismantling them.

We will return to these several dimensions of his ethic for voluntary organizations toward the conclusion of this lecture. Adams, in his theory of voluntary organizations, gives us a wonderful positioning of a crucial fulcrum for the exercise of religious ethics in modern societies as well as a suggestive outline of what such an ethic should contain. But I believe there is more to be said about this ethic than Adams provided. I intend to suggest additions that might strengthen what he offered.

“This common grace continues after the fall.”

Kuyper on Civil Society

It may surprise you to hear me say that Adams and Kuyper have much in common and that it is fruitful to read them together. This is true in spite of the fact that Kuyper wrote a half century before Adams. They are both covenant theologians, although Kuyper drew more on classical Calvinism whereas Adams relied more on the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures and the radical wing of the Protestant Reformation. The more pietistic Protestant movements Kuyper thought were guilty of retreating from public life and prone to what he called “world flight.”²¹ Both men were promoters of what Kuyper called the sovereignty of the spheres of society and what Adams called the appropriate separation of the powers and structures of society. Each of them believed that the intellectual and theological life grew out of the affections, although Kuyper carried this into an implicit theory of natural law that Adams, as such, sometimes hinted at but never directly pursued. And finally, both of them saw reason as shaped by prior acts of faith often represented by what Adams called “metaphors” and Kuyper called world views or basic “life principles.”²² They each contended that some form of faith was inescapable for both the religious and the so-called secular points of view. Secularists too were people with some kind of faith.

Kuyper gave an address in 1880 titled “Sphere Sovereignty” at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam, which he was instrumental in founding.²³ and in his 1898 Stone Lectures delivered at Princeton Seminary.²⁴ Kuyper, like Adams, was reacting to two dominant trends that, if unchecked, would undermine advanced democratic society, i.e., the domination of civil society by the state and the dominance, and subsequent anomie, resulting from the rise of modern individualism. In the case of Kuyper, the first threat took the form of French state rationalism that he held undermined the special potentials and responsibilities of the spheres of family, religion, education, art, and culture. In the case of Adams, this threat was Nazism in Europe and the state-corporation collusion in the United States.

Their respective lists of what institutions should be included in civil society i.e., as voluntary organizations

somewhat differed, with Kuyper making more of the family than Adams, and Adams, as we have seen, sometimes listing lower levels of government as expressions of civil society. For Kuyper, each of the spheres of society has its own domain, possesses its own unique logic and ethical responsibilities, serves particular elements of human need and instinctual life, should cooperate with other spheres of society, but also be protected from undue interference from these other spheres. No sphere should dominate another sphere. Most decidedly, the state should not dominate the spheres of religion, the family, education, art, business, or science.²⁵ But these spheres in turn should not dominate the state. The state has a sovereign responsibility to monitor the interaction between the other spheres, their respective autonomy, and their respective limits. But this monitoring should not turn into heavy-handed coercion or manipulative influence.

Kuyper was a form of Christian humanist as was Adams. At times, one might be justified in thinking that Kuyper was more interested in the fulfillment of the finite human potentials of individuals, society, art, science, culture, and business than he was interested in salvation. Kuyper developed a well-articulated theory of “common grace.” This was the God-given grace that pervaded human life at the creation of the world. Life and creation were gifts of grace. And the gift of creation, outlined in Genesis 1: 27–28, gave us the spheres of society—the family, culture, the cultivating capacities of agriculture, science, and by inference the sectors of trade and business.²⁶ Kuyperians found in the doctrine of creation what they called the cultural mandate—the command and grace of God to develop and fulfill society and culture.²⁷

This common grace continues after the fall. God is indeed interested in saving the elect but equally interested in fulfilling creation and human flourishing. Kuyper posited a theory of human potentials that one might think came straight from the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow or Carl Rogers. It was about the importance of these natural human potentials and how God’s plan for human destiny entailed fulfilling these potentials as well as saving the elect of the church.²⁸ The elect could indirectly influence the finite spheres of civil society, as well as the

“...faith preceded and contextualized both reason
and the affections.”

state, in fulfilling these potentials, but they should not, as the church, directly dominate society, even the goal of society’s finite fulfillment.²⁹

Both Kuyper and Adams believed that in all of life, faith preceded and contextualized both reason and the affections. Kuyper spoke of “world views” or “life principles.”³⁰ By this, he meant that all intellectual and cultural life took place within the context of some world view or principle. He would have agreed with Adams that these take the forms of various deep metaphors—organic, mechanistic, hierarchical, covenantal, evolutionary, theistic—even symbols of emptiness, void, nothingness, or nonbeing.³¹ We either choose or are unconsciously socialized into these metaphorically represented worldviews, and they shape all of our more specific deliberative and affectional mental operations, both as individuals and as groups. Kuyper believed these worldviews were incommensurate. He also believed that state, society, and market should respect them. They deserved their own spheres of operation; secularists, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Protestants and Catholics should have their own institutions, places of worship, schools, cultural life, newspapers, and other means of communication. This led to the use of Kuyper’s thought to develop the so-called pillar system of society in Holland—the view that state neutrality and monitoring required it to support financially and legally the autonomy of these various pillars, their world views, and respective institutions. This was a step that Adams would never take. Indeed, critics of Kuyper today charge that he confused the ideas of spheres of society with the supposed need to give various world views their own spheres.

Catholic Social Teachings and the Concept of Subsidiarity

The word subsidiarity does not immediately suggest ideas such as the relative autonomy of various spheres of society or the idea of voluntary organizations guided by a higher ethic. Nevertheless, the concept of subsidiarity, using a different language and different set of metaphors, does convey many similar ideas.

We saw that both Adams and Kuyper believed in the rel-



Pope Leo XIII

evance of our instinctual and affective lives to the formation of moral norms, but they each also believed that our affections need refinement and direction from a reflective appropriation of the concept of covenant. Catholic social teaching also grounded ethics to some extent in the affections, but went further and elaborated aspects of our affectional lives into an explicit theory of natural law. Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI built their respective theories of subsidiarity on an Aristotelian philosophical anthropology, with its theory of affections, that was then also contextualized within the Christian doctrine of creation. In many ways, it was an anthropology about the roots of human care and investment. It was an anthropology of physical labor and also an anthropology of the family.

Because a human is also a rational creature who is, as Leo says, “aware of his needs and has foresight,” each human also has the fundamental right to plan, conserve, and enjoy

“Sharing is a human and Christian duty; but to have something to share is a fundamental human natural right.”



Pope Pius XI

the products of his or her bodily labor and the products of his or her bodily substance.³² The rational laborer is more than just needs and rationality; there is also the factor of self-involvement of the rational laborer in his or her work. The rational laborer is a self who leaves an “imprint of himself” on the product of his labor and, as Leo says, “becomes so completely mingled with it as to...become utterly inseparable from it.”³³ Here Leo is offering a critique of socialism: no one, including the state, has a right to separate the rational worker from the property that satisfies his needs and with which she has become self-identified. Oddly, starting from the same Aristotelian point of departure, the early Marx made much the same critique of capitalism’s tendency to allow employers to gain profits for themselves and thereby alienate the self-involved worker from the fruits of his labor. But Leo believes socialism is worse on this matter. The right to property, he taught, does not mean that workers should not share their fruits with others. Sharing is a human and Christian duty; but to have something to share is a fundamental human natural right. Hence, Leo, and forty years later,

Pius XI in his *Quadragesimo Anno*, used this argument to support the rise of labor unions, workers’ rights to a living wage, and government supports for the unemployed.³⁴

But this logic of needs, inclinations, rationality, and self-investment was applied by Leo to the sphere of the family as well. Just as neither the sectors of state nor market should do anything to alienate workers from their labor, neither should state nor market undercut family investments, especially the investment of parents in their children. Leo believed that both state and market were inclined to undercut families in the modern world, especially the natural inclination of parents to care for offspring that bore their imprint, image, and substance. The rational state sometimes did this through programs that transferred natural dependencies from the family to the state thereby inadvertently promoting the state, as did Plato in his *Republic*, as more competent to care for children than natural parents. On the other hand, the market can undercut parental care by absorbing both father and mother into demanding and poorly paid jobs that leave them little time and few resources to care for their children.

“...these diverse views provide a rich resource for a new ecumenical conversation...”

The assumption behind this line of argument was a theory of parental affections, gained largely from Aristotle and further elaborated by Aquinas. In his *Politics*, Aristotle wrote, “In common with other animals and with plants, mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves.”³⁵ We see this idea developed more in his critique of Plato’s *Republic* where Socrates argues that nepotism—the fundamental cause of divisiveness within a city—could be decisively lessened if the elite men of the city coupled and had offspring that were in turn raised by state nurses with neither parents nor children knowing their biological ties with one another.³⁶ Aristotle, however, believed that Plato’s experiment would fail. He wrote,

Whereas in a state having women and children in common, love will be watery; and the father will certainly not say ‘my son,’ or the son ‘my father.’ As a little sweet wine mingled with a great deal of water is imperceptible in the mixture, so, in this sort of community, the idea of relationship which is based upon these names will be lost; there is no reason why the so-called father should care about the son, or the son about the father, or brothers about one another. Of the two qualities which chiefly inspire regard and affection—that a thing is your own and that it is your only one—neither can exist in such a state as this.³⁷

Aquinas, or at least his followers, in several passages of Part III of his *Summa Theologica* and his *Summa Contra Gentiles* echoed Aristotle’s philosophical defense of the family against the early Plato’s example of state interference.³⁸ And this argument runs through the writings of Leo XIII and Pius XI as well.

For Leo, work and family expressed the core human affections and motivations of civil society. They form the affections of care, generosity, and commitment that, for Christians, should be analogically extended outward to all God’s children and not reserved only for kin and close neighbor. These affections should not feed a narrow economic and familial privatism but should instead serve as indicators of the natural rights of all workers and all families. Both state and market have obligations to support

—this is, give *subsidium*—to workers and families when in genuine need without, in the process, inadvertently undermining them.³⁹

This is the meaning of the Roman Catholic social teaching on subsidiarity, our third theory reviewed in this lecture on the relation of religion to civil society. It builds on an Aristotelian theory of the body, its investments, and its natural inclinations to labor and to care. But it acquired in Aquinas a combined theory of natural law and theology whereby the rational creature is led to analogically generalize his needs and capacities to others—a generalization process that is guided by the ontological assumption that all others are children of God, made in God’s image, and therefore equally deserve to actualize their natural rights. Neither state nor market grants these natural rights; they have existence and authority independently of state or market. Therefore, neither state nor market should do anything to undermine these rights but instead do everything possible to support these pre-existing rights and bring them to fulfillment.

Concluding Remarks

My plan is not to give an exhaustive comparison of these three views. I will champion no clear winner in a trumped-up race to determine which of them holds the best theory on the relation of religion to civil society. That is a larger task for another day. My main point has been to suggest that these diverse views provide a rich resource for a new ecumenical conversation on the relation of religion to voluntary organizations and civil society. As our society is now in a grand debate, if not overt conflict, over the role of government in solving our fiscal, energy, security, and health needs, the various factions involved in this controversy could profit by becoming acquainted with past conversations.

I implied earlier in my lecture that liberal religious accounts such as Adams’ have not been prominent in recent exchanges on this subject. In spite of the brilliance of Adams’ contributions, Reformed theological views feeding off of Kuyper and Roman Catholic views building on Leo XIII and Pius XI have been more visible. In the end, the liberal

“All three traditions have more work to do.”

churches should listen to all of these voices but still give special attention to Adams. Adams' heightened view of time and history and his appreciation for the critical historical method give Adams an edge for those who want to enter the conversation with the best tools of modern critical scholarship. Adams is better able to handle relativism without becoming relativistic, and in his use of the process ontology of Whitehead, Hartshorne, and Weiman, he is better able to anchor his emphasis on time and history in a metaphysics that recognizes that change, for good or for ill, is a fundamental feature of human existence. Adams' view of a changing world requires a radically ethical response best expressed through the social processes of voluntary organizations.

Of the five dimensions of Adams' ethic for voluntary organizations—his theory of affections, his view of human covenantal obligations, his concept of communicative practices, his process ontology, and his emphasis on contexts shaped by modernization—I think he would need to work most on his concept of the affections. It is interesting to note that all three of the perspectives I have presented—Adams, Kuyper, and Catholic social teachings—emphasize the role of affections in giving voluntary organizations and civil society their energy, and to varying degrees, some of their norms. Kuyper gestured toward developing his theory of affections into a concept of natural law. Catholic social teaching took this step and built a far more robust theory of natural law (now sorely in need of revision, I might add) based in part on the bodily affections expressed in labor and family formation, procreation, child care, and long-term intergenerational mutual care and commitment.

In attending to the role of affections in both the motivations and norms of civil society, all three of these positions struggle to elaborate a theory of premoral goods. Premoral goods are the largely natural goods of life such as food, water, clothing and shelter, friendship, family, pleasure, occupation, and social networks that contribute to human flourishing. But since premoral goods can conflict both within the individual and between individuals and communities, more directly moral goods, moral reflection, and moral norms are required to mediate between them. From my point of view, contemporary moral philosophy and theology are struggling more to formulate a theory of premoral

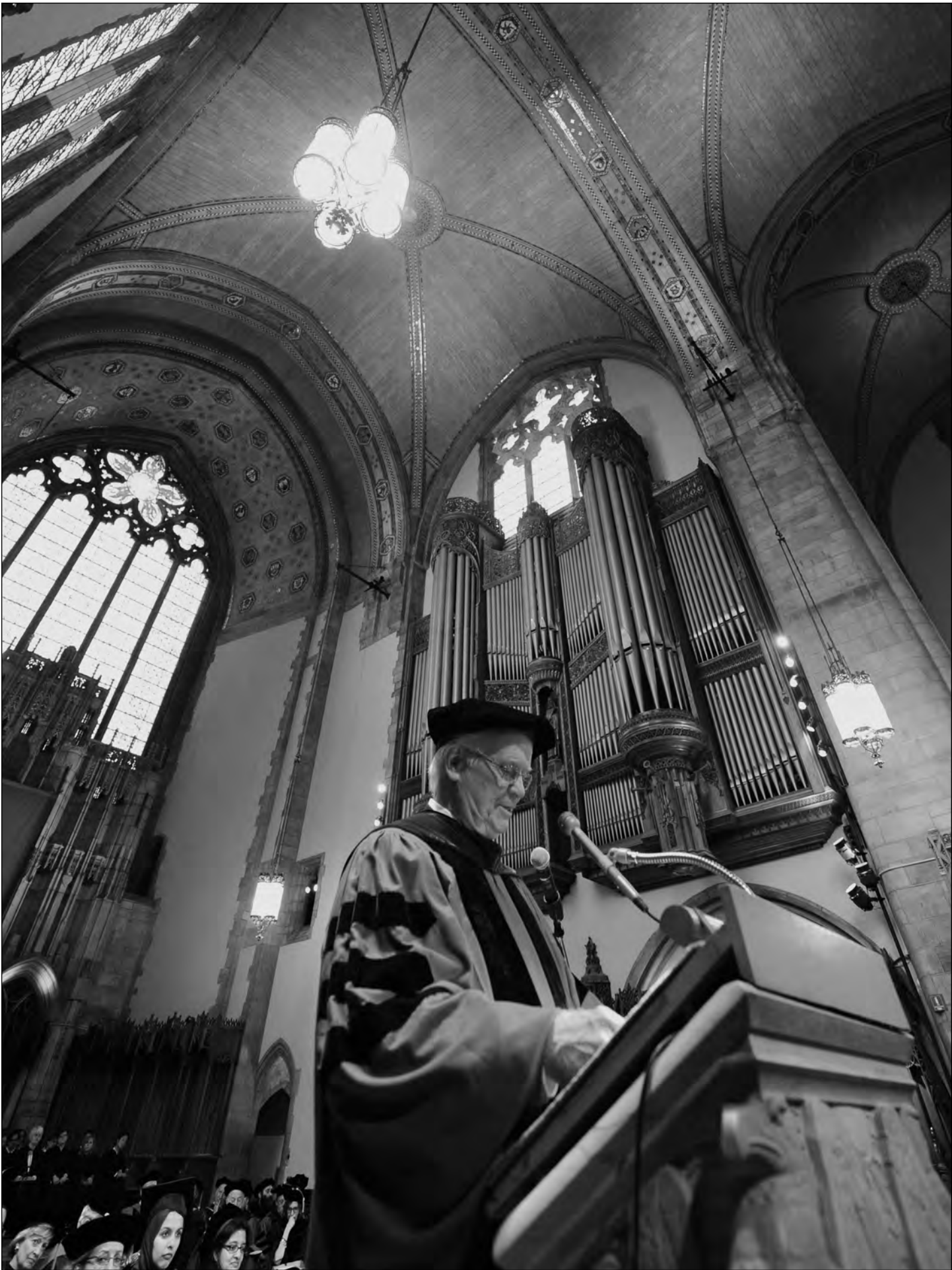
goods than any other aspect of moral theory. This is partially due to the challenges, both positive and negative, to traditional moral theory coming from economics, evolutionary psychology, the moral implications of neuroscience, and the new moral psychology. All of these new perspectives complicate traditional theories of affections, emphasize the automaticity of the affections, and push variations of David Hume's view of the subservience of human reason, deliberative powers, and covenants to our massive fund of value-laden affections.⁴⁰ All three of the positions I have reviewed honor the affections, and Kuyper and Catholic social teachings see them as giving preliminary form to our moral norms. But all three believe our affective moral intuitions need refinement by tradition, deliberation, reason, or covenants.

I conclude this lecture with this thought. A theory of the affections and the premoral goods they imply is the dimension of his ethics for voluntary organizations that the followers of Adams need to address the most. But it is a deficiency in Kuyper and Catholicism as well. All three traditions have more work to do. ✕

Endnotes

1. James Luther Adams and Seward Hiltner, *Pastoral Care in the Liberal Churches* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 177–187.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
3. James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, George Beach (ed.) (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1986), p. 17.
4. Peter Berger and John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984).
5. D. B. Robertson (ed.), *Voluntary Organizations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1966).
6. Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, George Beach (ed.) (1986); George Beach (ed.), *James Luther Adams: An Examined Faith, Social Context and Religious Commitment* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1991); George Beach (ed.), *The Essential James Luther Adams: Selected Essays and Addresses* (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 1998).
7. James Luther Adams, *Voluntary Associations*, Ronald Engel (ed.) (Chicago, IL: Exploration Press, 1986).

-
8. John Wilcox, "James Luther Adams: His Contribution to Christian Ethics," Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1977.
9. Adams, *Voluntary Organizations*, p. 218.
10. Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, p. 16.
11. Adams, *Voluntary Organizations*, pp. 225–235.
12. Adams and Hiltner, *Pastoral Care in the Liberal Churches*, pp. 177–178.
13. Adams, *Voluntary Organizations*, p. 230.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.
15. James Luther Adams, *Not without Dust and Tears: a Memoir* (Chicago, IL: Exploration Press, 1995), p. 231.
16. Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993), pp. 19–20.
17. Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, pp. 142–143.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 9; James Luther Adams, *An Examined Faith* (Boston, MA.: Beacon Press, 1991), p. 29.
19. Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, p. 21.
20. Adams and Hiltner, *Pastoral Care in the Liberal Churches*, p. 177.
21. Peter S. Heslam, *Creating a Christian World View* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 266–267.
22. Adams, *An Examined Faith*, pp. 243–259; Abraham Kuyper, *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* James Bratt ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), p. 481.
23. Kuyper, *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, pp. 461–491.
24. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1931).
25. Kuyper, *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, p. 467.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 188–189.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 481.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 484.
32. Pope Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum," *Proclaiming Justice and Peace: Papal Documents From Rerum Novarum through Centesimus Annus* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications), p. 19.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Pope Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno," *The Papal Encyclicals* (McGrath, 1981), pp. 415–440.
35. Aristotle, "Politics," *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (Random House 1941), Bk I, ii,
36. Plato, *The Republic* (Basic Books, 1968), Bk. V, para 462.
37. Aristotle, "Politics," Bk. II.
38. Thomas Aquinas, *Supplement, Summa Theologica* III (T. and T. Washbourne 1917) Q. 41, A 1; Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1928), III. ii.
39. Pope Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno," pp. 418–419.
40. For a good introduction to the state of the new moral psychology, see Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *Moral Psychology: The Cognitive Science of Morality, Intuition and Diversity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008),



MARTIN E. MARTY

On Laying Siege to Problems

T“That’s a *damn* interesting substance,” gasped a graduate student in physics as he heard our friend describe the substance in his project: “The self-diffusion of liquid sodium.” During late afternoons in 1954 this friend’s brother and I would drop in to his laboratory, briefly there to find ourselves surrounded by white-coat clad scientists. They sartorially shamed the two of us, who wore sport coats with the *de rigueur* worn leather elbow patches that helped us pass as philosophy and theology graduate students. From what little I could decipher from the conversations and scientific papers back then, liquid sodium in this experiment was a “damn interesting substance.”

Both as a graduate student and, later, faculty member, I observed that at this university most colleagues in the various disciplines, be they scientific, humanistic, or in the professions, regarded what they were doing as dealing with “damn interesting substances,” even if their specialties dealt not with material but categorical substances, *a la* Aristotle. Capturing their spirit was the confession of Nobel prize-winner Charles B. Huggins, the hyper-disciplined contributor to what we now profit from in chemotherapy. Huggins once reminisced how on the day of his and his colleagues’ break-through discovery, “we knew for sure that we had learned how to treat advanced prostate cancer. I was excited, nervous, happy. That night I walked home—one mile—

and I had to sit down two or three times, my heart was pounding so. I thought, ‘This will benefit man forever. . . . A thousand years from now people will be taking this treatment of mine.’”

Through family connections I later came to own the framed piece of Chinese calligraphy, familiar to all who visited his laboratory: “*To make discoveries is man’s calling.*” He had it paraphrased on a plaque for his laboratory: “*Discovery is our business.*” Not all of us could or would follow Dr. Huggins’ counsels all the way, such as when he urged his colleagues: “Don’t write books. Don’t teach hundreds of students. Discovery is our business. Make damn good discoveries.”

“...pursue discovery by converging on problems...”

In the discovery business, most of us who were in the leather-patch wearing, book-writing, teaching-students sectors of this university believed that discovery can go on in all areas. Right after World War II, I once read, a team from American universities visited Göttingen, Germany. Aware of the prestige and now substantial new investments in the sciences at that university, they asked why their guide for the day made no mention of law, the social sciences, and the humanities there. Göttingen, on the forefront in science, had also been world-renowned for work in philosophy, history, and theology. The host dismissed the topic: “Oh, the philosophers and theologians? They’ll never discover anything new over there.”

They do discover over there and here, however, so long as they deal, for example, with the mysteries of the human subjects in the disciplines and the professions. Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy warned against kinds of reduction which would rule out the potential for discovery. He wrote about a conceptual and practical problem: “The presence of one living soul among the three million volumes of a great library offers sufficient proof against the notion that the secret of this soul is to be found by reading those three million books.” The University of Chicago has been home for scholars across the disciplines who pursue discovery by converging on problems, and I want to stress that aspect of its pulse in this 50th convocation.

Many previous convocation speakers have addressed such convergences. Two of them reflected on the efforts of a university-wide Committee on the Problems and Scope of Graduate Work, which then-president Edward H. Levi, appointed me to chair. We decided to serve in part by attempting to discern the genius of The University of Chicago. We did not attempt to describe why we were better than other universities, but we did focus on how we seemed different from many. Aware of our limits and faults, I reminded colleagues of a word of the late possum-philosopher Pogo framed on my study wall. “We have faults which we have hardly used yet.” But this committee, focusing on the celebration of problems, also considered some virtues. Whether our report had any larger influence or not, our numerous afternoons of meeting did have influence on us, as reflected in two earlier Convocation addresses.

At the 343rd Convocation in 1973, Educational philosopher Jacob W. Getzels addressed “Problem Finding.” He spoke generically of universities as he had spoken specifically of this one: “The work of a university lies distinctively . . . in making explicit that which is yet problematical—in exploring enigmas still seeking formulation as *problems*, to say nothing of solutions.” He quoted Gertrude Stein: “Suppose no one asked a question. What would the answer be?”

At the 339th Convocation in 1972 Philosopher Richard P. McKeon spoke of the need to “preserve the genius of The University of Chicago, which consists in discovering and warranting significant knowledge and in making it relevant” to the life of humans, individually and in community. The genius of a state teachers college, one colleague mentioned, had been to produce the best possible teachers for the state, while a school of welding distinctively set out to graduate the best prepared welders. Here was McKeon:

The genius of The University of Chicago, when it was founded eighty years ago consisted in a unique set of answers to [basic questions], derived from the conviction that the discovery of knowledge is inseparably related to the transmission of knowledge, that research gives substance to and is stimulated by teaching, that the parts of the university are independent autonomous disciplines but integral parts of an interdisciplinary whole . . . The problem of where we are is whether we have continued that genius and how we shall extend it to the new circumstances and situations we shall face.

Then, in a passage quoted in the new anniversary booklet, McKeon summarized, “From the first, The University of Chicago has maintained a problem-oriented attitude in research, and it has tended to subordinate erudition and information to inquiry. . . It has tried to put its stress on problem-finding and problem-formulation, as a preliminary to problem-solution.”

Such an approach can sound problematically obsessive and grim, though that it has not been so for many is clear from the witness of colleagues like the exhilarated and exhausted Huggins on his breakthrough night of discovery.

“...at the university when we lay siege to a problem we haul out the figurative medieval siege instruments...”



Reducing the whole being of a university to “problem-finding,” of course, could also inhibit imagination and suppress wonder in many kinds of learning and discovery. French philosopher Gabriel Marcel addressed this issue by balancing the concept of “problem” with that of “mystery.” We recall discoverer Huggins or picture the “living soul” who is unexplained by three million books read in a library. Marcel introduced a creative metaphor, that of the siege:

A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can lay siege to and reduce. . . . A mystery is something in which I myself am involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as ‘a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity.’ . . . A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique. It is, no doubt, always

possible (logically and psychologically) to degrade a mystery so as to turn it into a problem. But it is a fundamentally vicious proceeding, whose springs might perhaps be discovered in a kind of corruption of the intelligence.

“Siege” first: at the university when we lay siege to a problem we haul out the figurative medieval siege instruments: the mangonels of research, the trebuchets of books, the balistas of argument, and the cannon of publication. As for “mystery:” let theologian Gordon Kaufman point to some dimensions:

‘Mystery’ has a fundamentally intellectual character, whatever its experiential overtones. It refers to bafflement of mind more than obscurity of perception. A mystery is something we find we cannot think clearly about, cannot get our minds around, cannot manage to grasp. If we say that ‘life confronts us as mystery,’

“Oh, God, no! Infinite is for you over
in the Divinity School.”

or ‘whether life has any meaning is a mystery,’ or ‘the fact that there is something not nothing is a mystery, we are speaking about intellectual bafflement. *In Face of Mystery* (1995)

Such “mystery” does not obfuscate problems, render reality spooky, or help colleagues pull categorical rank on each other, but is at home in laboratories, galleries, clinics, poetry classes, seminars, chapels, lectures, and dining halls alike. In many of these settings scientists and humanists at this university, in my observation, have long transcended C. P. Snow’s imprisoning old definition of their two cultures. I could illustrate this with some recall of ways I have experienced it, as with the late Norman Nachtrieb in numerous parking-lot seminars on the way to our work, when he tried to help me get excited about the problems of the self-diffusion of that “damn interesting substance,” liquid sodium.

I think of occasional social settings wherein another Nobelist, James W. Cronin, stunned me with a light-hearted discourse on the signal my bowties sent out: that the wearer loved symmetry. He taught me to be happy that there was believed to be not perfect symmetry between matter and anti-matter at the moment of the Big Bang. Because matter may have been one trillionth of a part heavier than anti-matter, there is something, and not nothing. Cronin had laid siege to a problem of measurement. No doubt later research has led to different equations. Maybe matter was two-thirds of a trillionth heavier than anti-matter. Please do not hold him responsible for what I reproduce from memory of a dinner conversation-turned-lesson.

In any case, many scientists here have been patient, not dismissing me as one of them is said to have done a student who complained and complained that at his high-tuition school he was not getting an answer to his question, “Why is there something and not nothing?” The professor finally lost patience after the hundredth complaint, and chided him: “Even if there were *nothing*, you’d be complaining.”

Or this exchange on an Aspen trail with the late David Schramm, a renowned figure among those who dealt with problems of the Big Bang. Conversation started with my awed mention of an entry in the *Oxford Companion to Chess*. There it was noted that “the number of distinct forty-

move games is 25×10^{115} , far greater than the estimated number of electrons in the universe (1079). “In the years since Schramm’s premature death the count on that number keeps growing. The latest guess/measurement I have read is that the number of possible chess games is ten raised to the power of ten raised to the power of fifty; “that is one hundred followed by a billion billion billion billion billion zeroes.” In the age of the Hubble, with discovery of billions of galaxies with billions of stars each, I asked him: “Can that sentence in the encyclopedia about the number of chess moves still be true?” He scowled and “counted” for a second, and answered, “Sure, there can be that many.” I responded: “In other words, ‘infinite.’” He: “Oh, God, no! Infinite is for you over in the Divinity School. We are just talking about a very, very large number.”

It is the genius of this university to make faculty appointments, select graduate students, assess curricular accents, amass resources, reward achievements, and give attention if not always to the mystery of the infinite, then to the very large number of problems to be found and addressed in the finite. Reckoning with that reality is a way to remain faithful to the genius of the founding of this university and the intention of the large number of convocations where speakers have focused on the problems laid siege to and the mysteries which excite. The motto of this university, whose origin some have seen as a problem and whose reaches others have reverently regarded as mysteries, remains in place at this anniversary: *Crescat scientia, vita excolatur*, where knowledge increases, life is enriched. ✕

Alumni News



LUCY BREGMAN, Ph.D. 1973, Professor of Religion at Temple University in Philadelphia, is editor of two recent publications: *Religion, Death and Dying* (Praeger Publishers, 2009), a three-volume anthology, and *Death and Dying in World Religions*, 2nd ed. (Kendall-Hunt, 2009).

PRESTON M. BROWNING, JR., Ph.D. 1969, has had his 1974 publication *Flannery O'Connor* reissued by Wipf and Stock (Eugene: 2009) with a new title: *Flannery O'Connor: The Coincidence of the Holy and the Demonic in O'Connor's Fiction*. Preston has also published a new book *Affection and Estrangement: A Southern Family Memoir* (New York and Bloomington: iUniverse, 2009). He continues to operate

Wellspring House, a retreat for writers and artists in Ashfield, MA.

ROSEMARY CARBINE, M.A. 1996, Ph.D. 2001, is Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Whitier College, and ELENA PROCARIO-FOLEY, M.A. 1986, Ph.D. 1995 is Driscoll Professor of Jewish-Catholic Studies, Iona College. They have published *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology: Shoulder to Shoulder* (Fortress, 2009). Procario-Foley is the coeditor and contributor of the chapter "Liberating Jesus: Christian Feminism and Anti-Judaism" while Carbine contributed the chapter "'Artisans of a New Humanity': Re-visioning the Public Church in a Feminist Perspective." Both authors contributed to the collaborative theological roundtables that conclude each of the three sections of the book (theological anthropology, Christology, and ecclesiology). The book is dedicated to Anne E. Carr.

MARY ALZINA STONE DALE, M.A. 1957, has recently published *When the Postwar World was New* (Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing, 2010), about her travels in Europe upon graduating from Swarthmore College in 1952.

THOMAS J. DAVIS, Ph.D. 1992, is Professor of Religious Studies and the Thomas H. Lake Scholar in Religion and Philanthropy at Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) School of Liberal Arts. He is the editor of *John Calvin's American Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

J. RONALD ENGEL, M.A. 1971, Ph.D. 1977, has been appointed Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Humans and Nature. The Center, which he cofounded in 2000 upon his retirement from Meadville/Lombard Theological School, pursues research and advocacy of ethically motivated civic responsibility for human communities in just and sustainable relationship to natural ecosystems and landscapes. His recent publications include *Governance for*

Sustainability (Earthprint, 2008), coauthored with Klaus Bosselmann and Prue Taylor, and *Democracy, Ecological Integrity, and International Law* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010), coedited with Klaus Bosselmann and Laura Westra.

THOMAS F. FREEMAN, Ph.D. 1948, has, since 1949, served as Professor of Philosophy and Coach of the internationally acclaimed Debate Team at Texas Southern University (TSU), one of nation's largest Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Dr. Freeman and the TSU Debate Team trained academy award-winning actor Denzel Washington and his cast in the movie, "The Great Debaters," and he was given the Leading Houstonian Award in May, 2009. The Texas Southern University Honors College was established during the fall semester of 2009. The Texas Southern University Board of Regents approved the designation of the new college as the Thomas F. Freeman Honors College.

HEIDI GEHMAN, Ph.D. 2005, has been appointed to a new position, Director of Academic Administration, at Princeton Theological Seminary She previously served as Associate Director for the International Ph.D. program at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, where she also served as faculty associate in Theology and Ethics. She has served as adjunct faculty at Fairfield University and Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

REVEREND DONALD E. GOWAN, Ph.D. 1964, the Robert Cleveland Holland Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, celebrated his eighty-first birthday with the publication of his new book, *The Bible on Forgiveness* (Wipf and Stock Publications, 2010). He continues to teach one course a year.

JOHN CLIFFORD HOLT, Ph.D. 1977, is William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Humanities in Religion and Asian Studies at Bowdoin College. He has recently published *The Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009).

SANDRA L. CRONK, M.A. 1970, has had her work published in *A Lasting Gift: The Journal and Selected Writings of Sandra L. Cronk*, ed. Martha Paxson Grundy (Quaker Press of Friends General Conference and the School of the Spirit, 2009). Her writing and ministry cross Quaker and denominational boundaries. Listening, obedience, and community are major themes in the selections included in this volume.

KEVIN LEWIS, Ph.D. 1980, Professor and Graduate Director of the Department of Religious Studies, University of South Carolina, has published *Lonesome: The Spiritual Meanings of American Solitude* (I. B. Tauris, 2009), an intellectual trek through the landscape of American music, fiction, art, and religion.

KEVIN MADIGAN, M.A. 1985, Ph.D. 1992, has been appointed Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard University, The Divinity School. He is an historian of medieval Christian religious practice and thought, specializing in high-medieval scholastic biblical exegesis and theology.

ALDEN E. MATTHEWS, B.D. 1946, retired (since 1986) D. Min. of United Church of Christ in Japan, and now living in Florida, published a book, *My Three Worlds* (AuthorHouse) in October, 2007.

WILLIAM J. MEYER, M.A. 1988, Ph.D. 1992, is Professor of Philosophy and the Ralph W. Beeson Professor of Religion at Maryville College in Tennessee. He has recently published *Metaphysics and the Future of Theology: The Voice of Theology in Public Life* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publications, 2010).

PATRICK NUGENT, M.Div. 1990, Ph.D. 1999, is currently Director of Major Giving at the Cincinnati Museum Center, which recently received the nation's highest honor a museum can receive, the National Medal for Museum & Library Service. This annual award is made by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and recognizes institutions for outstanding social, educational, environmental, or economic contributions to their communities.

ANNE E. PATRICK, A.M. 1976, Ph.D. 1982, William H. Laird Professor of Religion and the Liberal Arts, emerita, at Carleton College, now lives and writes in the D.C. area. She received the 2009 Ann O'Hara Graff Memorial Award from the Women's Consultation in Constructive Theology of the Catholic Society of America at the CTSA meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia in June, 2009.

ANNA PETERSON, Ph.D. 1991, Professor of Religion at the University of Florida, has published a new book, *Everyday Ethics and Social Change: The Education of Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).



JEFF B. POOL, Ph.D. 1994, is Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Berea College, where he also serves as Director of the Willis D. Weatherford, Jr. Campus Christian Center and as College Chaplain. Promoted to Professor of Religion in 2009, he has published two new books, the first two volumes of a three-volume study of divine suffering in Christian traditions: *God's Wounds: Hermeneutic of the Christian Symbol of Divine Suffering, vol. 1, Divine Vulnerability and Creation*, Princeton Theological Monographs Series No. 100 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009), and *God's Wounds: Hermeneutic of the Christian Symbol of Divine Suffering, vol. 2, Evil and Divine Suffering*, Princeton Theological Monographs Series No. 119 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

REVEREND DONNA SCHAPER, M.A. 1971, Senior Minister of Judson Memorial Church in New York City, has recently published two books, *Sacred Chow: Some Holy Ways to Eat* (Hansen-McMenamy Books, 2009) and *40-Day Journey with Howard Thurman* (Augsburg Fortress, 2009).

BENJAMIN D. SOMNER, Ph.D. 1994, Professor in the Department of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), recently published *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), which has been awarded the 2009 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award as the best book in the areas of Biblical Studies, Rabbinics, or Archaeology, written between 2006–2009. The Award recognizes and promotes outstanding scholarship in the field of Jewish Studies and honors scholars whose work embodies the best in the field. It was presented on December 20, 2009 in Los Angeles.

ANN TAVES, A.M. 1979, Ph.D. 1983, Professor of Religious Studies, and holder of the Virgil Cordano OFM Endowed Chair in Catholic Studies, is the newly elected president of the American Academy of Religion.

REVEREND JOHN R. VAN EENWYK, Ph.D. 1981, Clinical Director of The International Trauma Treatment Program, practices as an Episcopal priest, Jungian analyst, and clinical psychologist. He has received three awards in the last year, all for his work with other practitioners in overseas war zones, where he consults with them to identify, elaborate, and edit indigenous ways of treating trauma. The awards are: Humanitarian Alumnus Award, Colgate University Alumni Council; Social Issues Award, Washington State Psychological Association; and Lifetime Achievement Award, Thurston Council on Cultural Diversity and Human Rights.

DIANA VENTURA, M.Div. 2002, currently a Ph.D. student in Practical Theology and Spirituality at Boston University School of Theology, is an ethical reviewer for New England Institution Review Board and head of standardization for the Center for Biostatistics in AIDS Research at Harvard University. She recently published *Our Fractured Wholeness: Making the Courageous Journey from Brokenness to Love* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010). A reflection on her own and others' experiences living with and overcoming brokenness of all kinds, the book addresses difficult theological issues of suffering and faith.

NELVIN VOS, Ph.D. 1964, Emeritus Professor of English, Muhlenberg College, is the author of the recently published *Inter-Actions: Relationships of Religion and Drama* (University Press of America, 2009).

PAUL WIEBE, Ph.D. 1975, formerly a Comparative Religion Professor at Wichita State University, now writes comedic novels. His most recent book is *Christian Bride, Muslim Mosque* (Komos Books, 2009), “a (highly) fictionalized memoir” of his early years growing up in a Mennonite family and church community in Aberdeen, Idaho.

Losses

GORDON FAIRCHILD, B. Div. 1961, died of colon cancer on August 21, 2009. For many years a pastor in the Methodist Church, he later began a career in insurance. Fairchild was heavily involved in the civil rights and anti-war movements; he was also an ardent bird watcher, music lover, amateur naturalist and track and field aficionado. He is survived by three children—Randall Fairchild, Martha Fairchild, and Ginger Stimac—and four grandchildren.

THOMAS ATHANASIOS IDINOPULOS, M.A. 1962, Ph.D. 1965, died at his home in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 7, 2010. Idinopoulos was Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religions at Miami University (Ohio), where he conducted research and taught for four decades. From 1999–2006 he founded and directed the University’s Jewish Studies program. Upon retirement, he continued to teach as adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University. He was author or editor of a dozen books, most notably *The Erosion of Faith*, *Jerusalem Blessed Jerusalem Cursed*, and *Weathered By Miracles: Historic Palestine From Bonaparte and Muhammed Ali to Ben-Gurion and The Mufti*. A prolific scholar, he published over one hundred articles and book chapters in such periodicals as *Journal of Religion: Scottish Journal of Theology*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, and *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*. He served as consulting editor to the journals *World Affairs* and *Religion and Theory*. At the time of his death, he was completing his latest work, a biography and critique of philosopher Reinhold Niebuhr. He is survived by his wife, Lea, and sons David and Michael.

WILLIAM LAFLEUR, Ph.D. 1973, the E. Dale Saunders Professor in Japanese Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, died of a massive heart attack on February 26, 2010. Prior to coming to Pennsylvania, he taught Japanese intellectual history at Princeton University, the University of California at Los Angeles, and Sophia University, in Tokyo. Jacqueline Stone, Professor of Japanese religions and Buddhism at

Princeton University, wrote: “Besides being a scholar of extraordinary scope and imagination, Bill was also an exemplary teacher and mentor. His abounding sense of good humor, warmth of spirit and unflinching kindness toward his students will not soon be forgotten. William LaFleur was a groundbreaking figure in the interdisciplinary study of Buddhism and culture in Japan, and trained two generations of graduate students in these fields.” His research interests were primarily in two areas: Buddhism and the literary arts in medieval Japan and comparative ethics, particularly with regard to the ways the religious and philosophical traditions of Japan impact Japanese attitudes regarding sexuality, abortion, medicine, and bioethics. Among his books are *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literature Arts in Medieval Japan* (University of California Press, 1986); *Buddhism: A Cultural Perspective* (Prentice-Hall, 1988); and *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton University Press, 1992). He edited *Zen and Western Thought: Essays by Masao Abe* (University of Hawaii Press, 1985), recipient of a prize from the American Academy of Religion. LaFleur is survived by his wife, Mariko; a son, David; and two daughters, Jeanmarie and Kiyomi. He was the Divinity School’s Alumnus of the Year for 2002.

Criterion relies on your participation in keeping the Divinity School up to date on alumni professional accomplishments. Please e-mail us at terren@uchicago.edu, or complete and mail us the “Alumni News Information” form on the back page.

You may also update your contact information in the University’s online directory, which can be accessed from the Divinity School’s Web site, at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/alumni/>.

For information on alumni giving and volunteering opportunities, please contact Mary Jean Kraybill, Director of Development, at 773-702-8248 or mjkraybill@uchicago.edu.



Alumni News Information



CRITERION solicits your participation in keeping the Divinity School up to date on alumni professional accomplishments. We also invite letters to the editor. Please use the form below, or write to us separately, and mail to the address listed below.

Name / Preferred Form of Address (Ms., Dr., Rev., etc.)

Divinity School degree/s and year/s received

Address

Is this a new address?

E-mail address

School (and Department) or Organization

Professional Title

Recent professional news you would like noted in the next issue of *Criterion*, e.g., new position, promotion, book, grant. (Please include bibliographic information on publications.)

Criterion, The University of Chicago Divinity School, 1025 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637. Volume 47, Number 3 (Spring/Summer 2010). Editor: Terren Ilana Wein (terren@uchicago.edu). Copyright © The University of Chicago Divinity School 2010. Back issues are available online at divinity.uchicago.edu/publications/criterion/index.shtml.



Alumni News Information

The University of Chicago Divinity School





Swift Hall
1025 East 58th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637-1577

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, Illinois
Permit No. 8086

CRITERION