

CIRCA

News *from* the University of Chicago Divinity School

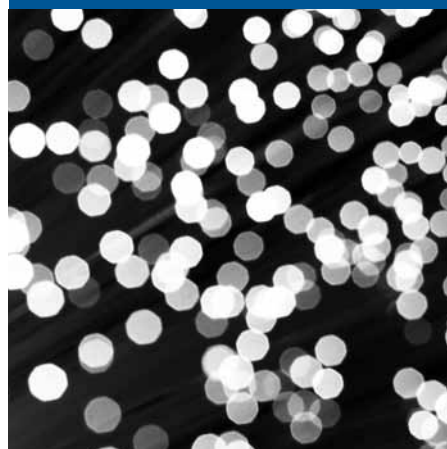
ON THE MORNING OF JULY ONE, TWO THOUSAND TEN, I BECAME THE TWELFTH dean of the Divinity School. Over the cool tiles in the entryway of Swift I walked through the row of black and white portraits of the eleven prior deans on my way into the office for my first meeting with the staff. When we had taken our places I began, “Since my deanship was announced by the President and Provost in February I have been eager for this moment, eager to get down to work.

But as much as I long to do that—to run through that door and into the thick of the deanly tasks ahead—I think we need to pause at the threshold for a few minutes, and talk about what this transition means.”

It is reflexively natural at first to think about the transition in personal terms, and what it means to carry out my vocation as a research scholar and educator for the next five years as the Dean of the Divinity School. In one sense I know precisely what that decision means—a dramatic change of course for me, which will require some significant realignments of my time commitments and teaching and publication schedules for two books in progress, a translation volume and commentary. But in another it is a perfectly reasonable extension not only of my own wish to contribute to the fullest scholarly discussion about religion, but also of the place of my own field of study—New Testament and early Christian studies—at this University. Two of the faces of former deans who peered at me from the corridor wall that morning were Shailer Mathews and Shirley Jackson Case, eminent scholars who in their day saw the work of a textual scholar as part of something larger, contributing to big questions of world and society. Since I was a student here in the 1980s, learning Greek from William Rainey Harper’s textbook, I have been acutely aware that this is a University founded by biblical scholars who cared about their craft and saw it as part of a University: a non-sectarian and non-apologetic, philological, historical and critical enterprise that demanded diligence, curiosity and unyielding honesty in the pursuit of knowledge on the basis of argument and evidence, not dogmatism.

But the transition this threshold marks is not so much about me as it is about an institution. Our Divinity School, fashioned by those biblical scholar visionaries back in the late 19th century, has organically

Letter from the Dean



This “graduate professional School” represents a unique alchemy, consistent with its foundational values but also transformed over time.

developed in the century-plus since in a way that remains distinct on the landscape of the academic study of religion in this country and abroad, a most uncommon

University-related Divinity School set smack in the middle of a premier research University. This “graduate professional School” represents a unique alchemy, consistent with its foundational values but also transformed over time. As a textual scholar I stand in the company of faculty colleagues who study the literatures of all the world’s religions, from rabbinic aggadah to Tibetan Buddhist Terma literature to Norse and Hindu myth. As an historian of ancient Christianity I join colleagues who focus on the history of all the Abrahamic religions, as well as those from the near and far east, from pre-Christian Europe, and beyond, whose approach to the tasks of historiography embraces social, cultural, intellectual and theological perspectives. As a student of religion I have colleagues who explore it particularly from the point of view of the human sciences and a host of theoretical vantage points, and others who ask how the world’s religions have and still might engage in constructive (as well as destructive) tasks for human life, such as philosophy, ethics and theology. All of these endeavors are housed in the single unique institution that is the University of Chicago Divinity School; the profession that unites them all is the task of speaking about religion in a manner that is deeply informed, uncompromisingly rigorous, critical and engaged.

Two figures animating this transition for me and for the School are not depicted in the hallway gallery of the eleven prior Deans of the Divinity School, although both served as Associate Dean. They are for me exemplary embodiments of the vision, scope and values of the School. Martin E. Marty (my advisor when I was a student in the M.A. program) remains one of the most influential scholars of religion in the world today. He represents the marriage of keen intellect and formidable knowledge with

Continued on page 16

Mitchell Named Dean

Professor Margaret M. Mitchell has been appointed the next dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School. Her appointment was effective July 1, 2010. Mitchell, an alumna of the Divinity School, joined the faculty in 1998. Her scholarship has covered a wide range of topics in the New Testament and early Christian literature, including the cultural context and religious legacy of those early texts.

The announcement was made by President Robert J. Zimmer and Provost Thomas F. Rosenbaum. “The University of Chicago Divinity School occupies a special place among its peers as a preeminent and unique place for the rigorous study of religion, past and present,” Zimmer and Rosenbaum wrote in a joint e-mail. “Professor Mitchell’s international scholarly profile, dedication to teaching and record of University-wide service make her a perfect choice to carry the Divinity School’s hallmark tradition forward.”

Mitchell is the author of four books, including *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* and the forthcoming *Paul, the Corinthians, and the Birth Christian Hermeneutics*, based on her 2008 Speaker’s Lectures in Biblical Interpretation at Oxford University. She is also coeditor of *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 1*. Some of her most recent work involved the exhaustive examination of the Archaic Mark, a 44-page codex once believed to date to the 14th century. Working with experts in chemical analysis



and medieval bookmaking, Mitchell’s team definitively proved the work to be a forgery.

Before coming to the University of Chicago, Mitchell taught at McCormick

Theological Seminary in Chicago. She received her bachelor’s degree in 1978 from Manhattanville College before coming to the Divinity School, where she received her A.M. in 1982 and her Ph.D. in 1989. Among her institutional activities, Mitchell has served since 2008 on the University of Chicago Women’s Leadership Council.

“What makes the Divinity School unique is the wide range of traditions, methodologies, dispositions and commitments that all come together here in a spirit of reasoned, critical debate,” Mitchell said. “We believe serious inquiry into the subject of religion requires a university context where all ideas are subject to rigorous standards of evidence. The Divinity School is a tough-minded, sprawling, lively, engaging and on-going conversation about what religion is and why understanding it is so vitally important.”

An advisory committee elected by faculty of the Divinity School recommended Mitchell to Zimmer and Rosenbaum. W. Clark Gilpin, the Margaret E. Burton Distinguished Service Professor and a former Divinity School dean, chaired the five-member committee. Gilpin said that “Professor Mitchell has established an international reputation for outstanding scholarship and understands the academic study of religion in its wider humanistic context. She is well-informed about the full range of scholarly questions pursued in the Divinity School, and she is passionate about the school’s distinctive character.”

Faculty News and Notes



Jeffrey Stackert Receives Templeton Award

Jeffrey Stackert, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, has been granted a Templeton Award for Theological Promise for his publication *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation*

(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). This book engages the conflicting iterations of divinely revealed law in the Torah and seeks to demonstrate the nature of and motivation for interpretive revision in these differing corpora and argues that the competition between pentateuchal authors paradoxically motivates both their radical religious innovation and their fundamental conservatism.

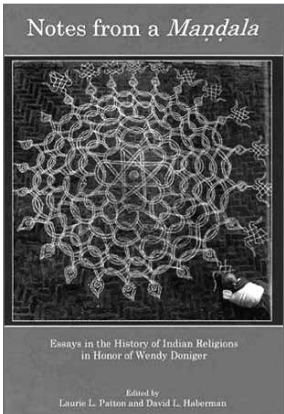
Stackert’s current research focuses upon the composition of the Torah and especially literary interactions with Israelite and non-Israelite sources in the book of Deuteronomy. One outgrowth of this research is a new book tentatively titled *After Revision: The Wake of Inner-biblical Exegesis in the Composition of the Torah*. This book will address what happened to textual sources after biblical authors employed and revised them for their own compositions. He is also working on several article-length studies on various issues in pentateuchal criticism, and is coauthoring a new handbook on Deuteronomy for the Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library.

Doniger Honored

In January 2010, Wendy Doniger’s 2009 book *The Hindus: An Alternative History* was named a finalist in the nonfiction category for the National Book Critics Circle book awards. Doniger is the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions. The book was a #1 bestseller in the nonfiction category in India in 2009.

Doniger is also being honored with the publication of a festschrift by her colleagues and former students. *Notes from a Mandala:*

Essays in the History of Indian Religions in Honor of Wendy Doniger was published in January 2010 under the imprint of the University of Delaware Press. This book was edited by Laurie L. Patton and David L. Haberman.



Peters Named Alumnus of the Year

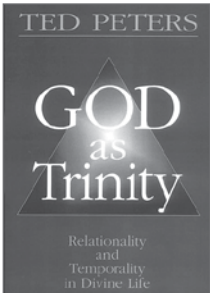
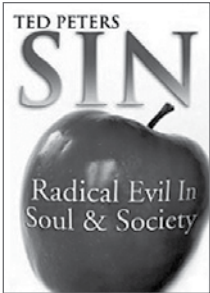
The Board of Trustees of the Baptist Theological Union has named Theodore F. (Ted) Peters the Divinity School's Alumnus of the Year for 2010. Peters, M.A. 1970, Ph.D. 1973, is Professor of Systematic Theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California.

Peters' areas of interest include systematic theology, science and religion, the evolution controversy, genetics and society, and bioethics. He is an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Peters received his B.A. from Michigan State University and his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

He was awarded the Joseph A. Sittler Award in Theological Scholarship from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in 2007 and was the 2009 Martin E. Marty Professor of Religion and the Academy at St. Olaf College.

The author of numerous books, Peters is currently coeditor (with Robert John Russell) of the journal *Theology and Science* (published by the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences in Berkeley) and served as editor-in-chief of *Dialog, A Journal of Theology*, from 1993 to 2007. Peters also serves as director of the Institute of Theology and Ethics

His books include *GOD—The World's Future; Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era; God as Trinity*; and *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*.



He has received four Templeton Book prizes, including for *Evolution: From Creation to New Creation* (with Martinez Hewlett) and *Playing God? Genetic Determinism and Human Freedom*.

The Alumnus of the Year award recognizes outstanding achievement by graduates of the Divinity School, and has been awarded annually since 1947. Past recipients include Peter Paris, Lisa Cahill, Robert Franklin Jr., and Jaroslav Pelikan.

Peters's lecture will address theological concerns that arise from recent genetic and technological advances: "If 'techno-visionaries' plan to take control of the next stage of human evolution (through guided changes in the human genome, cognitive and physical enhancements through drugs and nanotech implants, uploading human minds into computers, and crossing a threshold where our more intelligent progeny will take



the responsibility for creating a post-human race that will supplant the *homo sapiens* we have come to know), the theologian must ask: would such advances in human intelligence and prowess affect in any way our status before God, the *imago dei*?" □

Alumnus of the Year Address

Peters will deliver his address, "Can We Enhance the *Imago Dei*? A Theological Assessment of Genetic Alteration, Pharmacological Enhancement, Nanotechnology, and Transhumanism" at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 28, in Swift Lecture Hall.

A reception will follow.

Don S. Browning — Scholar of Marriage and the Family, 1934 – 2010

Don S. Browning, the Alexander Campbell Professor Emeritus of Ethics and the Social Sciences in the Divinity School and a leading scholar on marriage in America, died June 3 at his home in Hyde Park. He was 76.

Browning was born January 13, 1934 in Trenton, Missouri. He received his B.D. (1959), A.M. (1962) and Ph.D. (1964) from the Divinity School. He was an ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). From 1977 to 1983, he was dean of the University of Chicago Disciples Divinity House.

Professor Browning studied the influence of religion on American family life, as well as the intersection of psychology and religion. His early work focused on the integration of psychology and pastoral care. His second book, *Generative Man: Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1974.

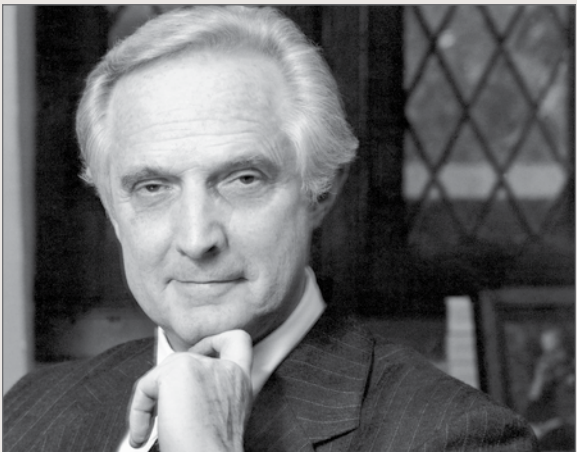
He was instrumental in the advancement of the practical theology movement, which emphasizes the integration of religious theory and religious practice. His 1991 book, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, is widely considered a classic in the field.

In 1990, Browning received a grant from the Lilly Endowment to start the Religion,

Culture and the Family Project. Over the course of the project, Browning examined the social implications of the decline of marriage. The research resulted in numerous books and scholarly articles, as well as a nationally televised, two-hour documentary, "Marriage: Just a Piece of Paper?"

Professor Browning, a longtime Hyde Park resident, was an avid moviegoer who loved spending time with his grandchildren and searching out local ethnic restaurants.

Browning is survived by his wife, Carol; his daughter, Elizabeth; his son, Christopher; and his granddaughters, Kristin and Lydia. □



Memorial Service

A memorial service will be held Saturday, October 23, 2010, 10 a.m., in Bond Chapel.

Tributes will be given by Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain and Professor William Schweiker, among others. A reception will follow.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Browning Family Fund at the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago. Donations can be sent to 1156 East 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60637. They can also be made online at <http://ddh.uchicago.edu>.

Faculty News and Notes

Robinson Awarded Tenure

James T. Robinson is now Associate Professor of the History of Judaism. His research focuses on medieval Jewish intellectual history, philosophy, and biblical exegesis in the Islamic world and Christian Europe; he is also co-leading this year's Martin Marty Seminar.

Margaret M. Mitchell Awarded Guggenheim

Margaret M. Mitchell, Dean and Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature, has been named a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow in the Humanities. The award, a powerful recognition of her work, supports her project to translate twenty-five of the late antique homilies of John Chrysostom (c. 349–407), as part of the series *Writings from the Greco-Roman World* (published by the Society of Biblical Literature and Brill). According to Mitchell, "Chrysostom felt an intimate relationship with the dead apostle Paul which virtually brought him to life in the reading and interpretation of his letters. Such a hermeneutic, a 'reading of resuscitation,' meant that in his private study and in the public study based thereon, Chrysostom was about the work of introducing the Paul we know so well to others" (*The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* [2002]).

Guggenheim Fellowships are intended for those who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts. The Fellowships are intended to further the development of scholars and artists by assisting them to engage in research in any field of knowledge and creation in any of the arts.

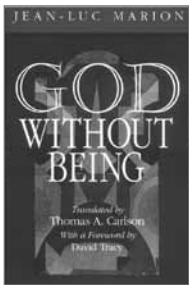
Dean Mitchell has deferred the award leave until academic year 2012–2013.



Marion Receives Named Chair

Jean-Luc Marion has been named the Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Professor of Catholic Studies in the Divinity School. Marion is also Professor of the Philosophy of Religions and Theology, succeeding David Tracy.

A member since 2008 of the distinguished Académie française, he is among the best-



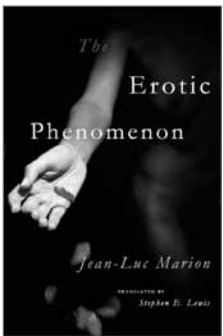
known living philosophers in France and is widely regarded as one of the leading Catholic thinkers of modern times.

He has published several books on Descartes' ontology, rational theology and metaphysics, focusing especially on medieval sources and using modern patterns of interpretation.

He is the author of *The Idol and Distance* and *God Without Being: Reduction and*

Givenness; Being Given: An Essay on the Phenomenology of Givenness; In Excess: Studies on Saturated Phenomena; and The Erotic Phenomenon: Six Meditations. He has recently published *Au lieu de soi. L'approche de saint Augustin* (first edition, 2008; second edition, 2009; English translation forthcoming). He is currently working on two books, one titled *Negative Certitudes* and another on the myth of Cartesian dualism.

Awarded with the 1992 Grand Prix du Philosophie de l'Académie Française, and the 2008 Karl-Jaspers Preis, he succeeds in his title David Tracy, the Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Catholic Studies and Professor of Theology and the Philosophy of Religions.



Coyne Appointed Assistant Professor

Ryan Coyne has joined the Divinity School as Assistant Professor of the Philosophy of Religions and Theology, effective July 1, 2010. Coyne studies both the history of Christian thought and modern continental philosophy. In the former field, he is especially interested in the history of Christian mysticism, as well as the relation between mysticism and scholasticism. In the latter field, his research interests include the development of the philosophy of religion, hermeneutics, phenomenology and deconstruction. He is currently working on a book exploring the role of Augustine's theological anthropology in the formation of Martin Heidegger's philosophy.

Coyne received his M.A. (2002) and Ph.D. (2008) from the Divinity School.

New Sightings Editor Named



Shatha Almutawa has been named the new Managing Editor for *Sightings*. Under the sponsorship of the Martin Marty Center, *Sightings* reports and comments on the role of religion in public life on our website and via email twice a week to a readership of over 7,000.

Shatha comes to *Sightings* after working in the Divinity School's Office of Communications and the University of Chicago Press. She has also worked at *CrossCurrents*, published by the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, and at *Inc. Magazine*.

She received her B.A. from Mount Holyoke College and her M.A. from the Divinity School, where she is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Judaism. Her research focuses on Muslim and Jewish philosophy, especially the work

of the tenth-century Ikhwan Al-Safa. She studies the use of narrative in medieval philosophical texts, and the cross-cultural exchange of philosophical and religious ideas through the medium of tales and parables.

Shatha is eager to invite international perspectives to *Sightings*, where she looks forward to taking part in the ongoing analysis of religion's presence in politics, business, education, the arts and the media.

Potential contributors should contact Shatha at DivSightings@gmail.com.

Read more about *Sightings* online at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/marty-center/publications/sightings>

Autumn and Winter Events



For calendar updates, please consult the Divinity School’s website at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu>. Access the most up-to-date events information, sign up for our events listserve (“At the Divinity School”), and get current news. Please see p.7 for detailed information on upcoming Marty Center conferences, symposia, and talks.

EVENTS INCLUDE

Alumni Receptions at the AAR and SBL Meetings

The Divinity School’s tradition of a Sunday night reception for alumni and friends at the AAR and SBL meetings continues. All Divinity School alumni and friends are cordially invited to join us at one or both of the receptions.

American Academy of Religion (AAR) Reception

Sunday, October 31 9:00–11:00 p.m.
Atlanta, Georgia



Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Reception

Sunday, November 21 9:00–11:00 p.m.
Atlanta, Georgia

For more information about either event, please contact Mary Jean Kraybill at 773-702-8248 or mjkraybill@uchicago.edu.



Memorial Service for Professor Don S. Browning

Saturday, October 23, 2010
10:00 a.m. in Bond Chapel

Tributes will be given by Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain and Professor William Schweiker, among others. A reception will follow.

THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER

Wednesday Community Luncheons

Eight Wednesdays per Quarter
12:00 noon–1:15 p.m.
Swift Common Room

Bond Chapel Worship

Every Wednesday *when school is in session*
11:30 a.m.–12:00 noon
Joseph Bond Chapel

LECTURE SERIES

Jewish Communities of the Second Temple Period

A lecture series bringing together new work by international scholars on formative aspects of Jewish life and identity in separate communities in and around Judea in the Second Temple period.

All lectures are scheduled to take place in the Common Room, first floor, at 4:30 p.m. A light reception will follow.

Cosponsored by the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies

October 4, 2010

“Jewish Calendars and Sects in the Hellenistic Period”

Jonathan Ben-Dov
Senior Lecturer, Department of Bible, Haifa University; Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU

October 25, 2010

“The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: A Case Apart?”

Sandra Gambetti
Associate Professor, Department of History, The City University of New York: College of Staten Island



February 1, 2011

“Markers of Identity in the Jewish Colony of Elephantine”

Alejandro Botta
Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, Boston University

February 28, 2011

“The Samaritans and other Troublesome Doubles from Jewish Antiquity”

Steven Weitzman
Daniel E. Koshland Professor of Jewish Culture and Religion, Stanford University

An Interview with Simeon Chavel



Simeon Chavel is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible. He began his appointment in Fall of 2009. Chavel discusses scholarly approaches to biblical literature.

CIRCA: You take both a literary and a historical approach to the Hebrew Bible. How do you determine when to ask literary questions of your source and when historical questions—and is there overlap?

SC: Because tradition had taken biblical literature to provide accurate factual accounts of the past, on the one hand, and to articulate timeless unimpeachable truths and principles, on the other, the initial, defining moments of modern critical study of the Bible were at once historical and literary. So for the seventeenth-century philosopher Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza and so for the nineteenth-century theologian Wilhelm Martin Lebrecht de Wette, fountainheads of biblical criticism, who distinguished between narrator or speaker in the text, a literary figure, and author of the text, an historical one. To recover the human dimension of biblical literature and to pursue it unyieldingly is to subject the text to historical circumstance and to release history to a more robust set of data and self-critical approaches.

The result remains complex. In Spinoza's case, the thrust created a new space for political theory and philosophy. In the case of de Wette, it developed a working hypothesis that serves still today as one of the basic points of departure regarding the relation-

ship between biblical literature and Israelite history: that Moses' speeches in Deuteronomy were composed in the seventh century BCE in connection with a religious reformation by Josiah king of Judah. However, a paucity of outside sources for the reconstruction of Israel's history skews the endeavor of re-contextualizing the texts of the Bible. Indeed, the historical events and circumstances to which scholars key biblical texts are those described in the Bible more or less as the Bible describes them. Additionally, the conflicting eighteenth-nineteenth centuries ideas of Romanticist privileging of natural origins and of biological evolution both played to the scholarly impulse towards schematization, leading scholars artificially and subjectively to realign biblical texts relative to each other, in accordance with their religious taste.

The combination of literary and historical questions and analyses and the debate about the most rigorous way to combine them remain at the heart of biblical studies today. My approach is deliberately non-dogmatic. A combination of personal interest, the anticipation of a substantial contribution, and the characteristics of the subject matter will shape my project. Often, whether the leading question is historical or literary, the argument I develop integrates literary and historical aspects.

“The combination of literary and historical questions and analyses and the debate about the most rigorous way to combine them remain at the heart of biblical studies today.”

“Critical study of the Bible keeps the Bible from becoming a form of idolatry.”

CIRCA: You've stated you would like to revivify the ideas and history of ancient Israel. Explain how the literature of ancient Israel can inform our understanding of contemporary issues.

SC: The past and tradition generally and the Bible especially have been, and continue to be, used to wield power, displacing rigorous, open debate by the discourse of authority. At worst, they serve as a receptacle of current ideas then held aloft as subjugating. The production of knowledge through the study of the ancient world—primarily its texts and paradigmatically for Western civilization the Bible—aims first to open up a self-critical distance between ourselves with our ideas and the past, then to bridge that distance with pan-human thoughtfulness. Through critical study of the Bible and ancient Israel we can replace an immobilizing discourse of identification by a more supple one of descent or even analogy. To recognize such distance allows us to take ownership of our ideas,

to be held accountable for our actions, and to open ourselves up to improvement. To put it in ironic biblical terms: Critical study of the Bible keeps the Bible from becoming a form of idolatry. As an anthology of Israelite compositions produced over a period of seven hundred years in places as far apart as Jerusalem and Babylon (in modern Iraq), and as an anthology that itself was “published” over time in several different versions, the Bible does not have the uniformity, consistency, and coherence of a composition. The mundane, pragmatic wisdom of Proverbs offers a different point of departure for ethical questions than does the holiness of Leviticus, which organizes all aspects of Israelite life around the idea of the immanent presence of God at a fixed locale in the people's midst. The incoherence of human experience delineated in Ecclesiastes speaks to the modern appreciation of the fragmentation of the individual and the constructed nature of one's story very differently than the historical vision and the great chain of

Continued on page 15

Marty Center News and Events



The Martin Marty Center builds on a long-standing conviction of the Divinity School that the best and most innovative scholarship in religion emerges from sustained dialogue with the world outside the academy. In all of its projects, the Center aims to serve as a robust circulatory system that strengthens, deepens, and extends scholarly inquiry by moving it through the deliberating bodies of the students, faculty, and public. — William Schweiker, *Director of the Marty Center*

Marty Center Conferences

The Martin Marty Center holds conferences throughout the academic year. To learn more about upcoming conferences, visit us online at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/conferences/>.

Politics as a Moral Question: A Conference on Process Philosophy and Political Theory

Thursday–Saturday, October 14–16, 2010
Swift Hall

In coordination with the Center for Process Studies in Claremont, California, this conference is designed to be a discussion between political thinkers who work within the tradition of process philosophy and thinkers who pursue political theory within other philosophical contexts.

This is a working conference; nonparticipants may sit in as observers.

For more information email Matt Petrussek at petrussek@uchicago.edu.



UPCOMING 2011 CONFERENCES

January 14, 2011

Comparing Religions: On Theory and Method

A conference in honor of Martin Riesebrodt, Professor of the Sociology of Religion

February 4, 2011

Conference to Honor Franklin I. Gamwell

Shailer Mathews Distinguished Service Professor of Religious Ethics, the Philosophy of Religions, and Theology

February 22, 2011

Irish and Jewish Identities: Links and Parallels

This conference will be of interest to scholars of Irish and Jewish history, as well as those studying Diasporas, nationalism and Joycean literature.

April 15, 2011

2011 Ministry Conference

April 18–22, 2011

Images of the Divine Conference

May 8–10, 2011

Theological Reflection and the Pursuit of Ideals

New Religion and Culture Web Forum Editor Named

Vince Evener is the new Managing Editor for the *Religion and Culture Web Forum*, the Marty Center's monthly online forum for thought-provoking discussion on the relationship of scholarship in religion to culture and public life.

Mr. Evener received a B.A. in History from Kenyon College and an M.A. from the University of Chicago Divinity School. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Christianity at the Divinity School. As a scholar, he engages in the contextual study of the theology of the sixteenth-century reformers, magisterial and radical, with particular emphasis on how traditional theological, exegetical, and mystical

concepts were creatively reworked to meet the intellectual and social crises of the splintering of Christendom. Themes of interest to Evener include individual and communal holiness, the valorization of life outside the cloister, the theological interpretation of history, and the meaning of suffering.

Mr. Evener brings to the web forum professional experience in editing and web-based outreach. Most recently, he was editorial assistant for the *Journal of Religion*, a publication of the University of Chicago Press. He is eager to serve the Martin Marty Center as it works to foster the engagement of scholars of religion with contemporary religious and cultural concerns.



Read more about RCWF at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter>.



Marty Center Fellowship Programs



A Report from the Wilson Teaching Fellow

Each year, the Alma Wilson Teaching Fellowship, made possible by a generous endowment gift, provides one advanced student in the Divinity School an opportunity for supervised teaching experience in the University of Chicago's undergraduate college. **Sarah Imhoff**, who received her Ph.D. in the History of Judaism this August, reflects on her year of teaching.

I'd like to say that it was the intrigue of the historical documents, or the perennial questions of identity, or even my own preparation that made the class excellent. But in truth, it was the students. When I taught *Women in American Jewish History* in the Autumn quarter of 2009, I assigned primary documents and secondary sources. The students wrote a short analytical paper on a single source and completed a take-home exam which examined a secondary source. The best moments of the class, however, were those that I could never assign: we had lively and challenging discussions where the students showed me not only that they had learned, but that they had taken a stance on how we could and should read the history of American Jewish women.

The class explored the role of women in American Jewish history and the role of Jewish women in American history. It had no "textbook," or even a book that would provide an overarching narrative of the history of Jewish women in America. Instead,

the class came to narrate its own story of how and why Jewish women's lives have changed over time and what that could mean for writing history. Along the way, we explored questions about what it has meant to be Jewish in America:

Are Jews defined by their religion? What does it mean to be a Jew? Is Judaism a culture, or an ethnicity? The primary sources we read suggested that, during America's history, these questions have had different answers. What does it mean that the definitions of Jewishness—to both American Jews and non-Jews—have changed over time?

The class never came to definitive conclusions; indeed, no group of students so astute and engaged could have. The sources of American Jewish history and women's history are entirely too rich to submit themselves to easy answers. Even the cross listing of the course—Religious Studies, History, and Gender Studies—hinted at its complexity. Nevertheless, the students neither became unmoored by the discontinuities and contradictions nor gave up trying to relate historical contexts to one another.

The course progressed both thematically and according to a rough chronology. The beginning of the course considered the experience of being a minority community and used the lives of early American Jews, mostly Sephardic in heritage, as a way to

explore this issue. During the next weeks, we studied immigration, assimilation, and "hyphenated identities" (Jewish-American or American Jewish?) as we read about the lives of mainly German-Jewish and Russian-Jewish immigrants during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We considered race, racism, and antisemitism in the United States using the turn of the twentieth century and Jewish relationships with African Americans as the historical context. We sought to understand Zionism and Israel in the context of the first half of the twentieth century, a

significant time of women's organization for supporting sustainable Jewish life in Palestine. Then we turned to look at ritual and religious experience, considering studies of twentieth-century religious women and their struggles to find a Judaism meaningful to them. We explored women's activism in seeking greater leadership by exploring Jewish women's participation in woman's suffrage movements as well as second-wave feminism in the 1970s. Finally, we

probed the meaning and place of "Jewish culture," looking at ideals of the home, consumerism, and social constructions of the Jewish woman in America. Although any of these themes could be traced all the way through American Jewish history, the hybrid thematic-chronological approach allowed us to explore Jewish women's lives throughout American history while also allowing us to grapple with many of the recurring "big questions" about American Jewish women's history.

On a cold November day, I looked around the classroom in the basement of the Gender Studies building. Every student was in attendance, and they brought insight and vigor to the analysis of Jewish women's relationships to American feminism. Taking a mental step back from the discussion, I remember thinking that some of my admiration for my students must have been reciprocated. That class session ended at 4:30 on the day before Thanksgiving, and none of the students packed up to leave even a moment early. □

— Sarah Imhoff, *Indiana University*



“... the hybrid thematic-chronological approach allowed us to explore Jewish women's lives throughout American history while also allowing us to grapple with many of the recurring “big questions” about American Jewish women's history.”

Marty Center Fellows 2010–2011

The Marty Center, continuing its emphasis on global interactions and aspects of religion, will have three senior fellows and thirteen dissertation (junior) fellows in the upcoming academic year.



This year’s Marty Center dissertation seminar is being offered in two sections, one led by William Schweiker, Director of the Center and Edward L. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of Theological Ethics; the other led by James T. Robinson, Associate Professor of the History of Judaism.

The Senior Research Fellows and Junior Dissertation Fellows, listed below, will participate in the seminar, which is designed to advance interdisciplinary research in all areas of religious studies. Dissertation Fellows will be required to present their individual projects not only within the seminar, before their peers, but before public interlocutors at a special spring meeting.

The seminar’s goal is to advance scholarship mindful of the public setting of all inquiry. The spring meeting helps participants articulate their projects in ways that will be intelligible to specialists and non-specialists alike.

Senior Research Fellows

Reid Locklin is Associate Professor and Programme Coordinator of Christianity and Culture at St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto. His project is “Advaita Mission, Christian Mission.”

Vasileios Syros is currently Visiting Assistant Professor at the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought and The College, University of Chicago. His project is “Jewish Political and Religious Thought at the Intersection of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period: The interaction of the Jewish and Christian political and religious traditions between the Mediterranean and the Alps.

Curtis L. Thompson will be working on a project tentatively titled “Dancing in God: The Relevance of Ritual for Conceiving the Divine Today.” He is Professor of Religion at Theil College in Greenville, Pennsylvania.

Senior Research Fellow Symposia

The Senior Fellow Symposia will allow each Senior Fellow to present his or her work in a public forum to members of the seminar, the entire Divinity School community, members of the University, and any interested persons.

All symposia are Thursdays from 4–6:00 p.m. in the Divinity School’s Common Room, first floor.

January 27, 2011
Vasileios Syros

March 10, 2011
Curtis L. Thompson



May 12, 2011
Reid Locklin



Dissertation Fellows

Of our thirteen dissertation (junior) fellows, eleven are Divinity School students and two are extradepartmental.



Anthony Banout, *Ethics*, “Islamic Modernism and the Possibility of Democratic Religious Freedom”

Elizabeth Sweeny Block, *Ethics*, “The Virtue of Conscience: Reclaiming the Significance of Freedom of Conscience for the Formation of Moral Identity”

Joshua Daniel, *Theology*, “Forming Faith: H. Richard Niebuhr and Paulo Freire on Moral Education”

Helen Findley, *Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations*, “Moveable Feast: The Place of Sekkyō in Meiji Buddhist Discourse”

Pierre-Julien Harter, *Philosophy of Religions*, “The Role of the Path in Gnoseology of the Abhisamayālamkāra Literature”

Elena Hartikainen, *Department of Anthropology*, “Ritual Hierarchy, Secrecy, and Public Discourse: Forming an African Religious Public in Brazil”

Karl Hefty, *Philosophy of Religions*, “The God of Appearance”

John Howell, *Religion and Literature*, “Civil War Literature and the Prospect of America”

Anne Mocko, *History of Religions*, “Demoting Vishnu: Ritual, Politics, and the End of the Monarchy in Nepal”

Seth Perry, *History of Christianity*, “The Bible and Religious Authority in Early-National America”



Benjamin Schonthal, *History of Religions*, “Regulating Religion: Buddhism, Pluralism, and the State in Contemporary Sri Lanka”

Michael Turner, *Religious Ethics*, “Does the Laborer Deserve to be Paid?: The Place of Desert in a Christian Conception of Distributive Justice”

Dov Weiss, *History of Judaism*, “Confronting God in Rabbinic Literature”

Ministry Program Update



“More recently the integration seminar for first-year M.Div. students has extended the meaning “integration” beyond the walls of Swift Hall to include a quarter of practical engagement with a local ministry or community.”

has extended this ministry to create The Gilead Project, ensuring quality pastoral care for those in need at Jackson Park Hospital while providing a unique, hands-on learning experience for seminarians. Student chaplains in The Gilead Ministry are professionally trained and supervised with the support and resources of both JPH and HPUC to offer care for those in acute medical emergencies as well as for those suffering chronic conditions: persistent poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, inadequate healthcare, and homelessness.

The founding director of this expanded ministry partnership is Rev. Wesley Sun, a licensed American Baptist minister who has served as chaplain and department director to several homeless shelters and hospitals in this city. Wesley completed his M.Div. at the University of Chicago before taking a position as a Lilly Resident at Hyde Park Union Church, under the supervision of longtime HPUC pastor and community advocate Rev. Susan Johnson, a Divinity School alumna and trustee of the Baptist Theological Union. Wesley has completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Education and will begin ACPE supervisory training while overseeing Gilead’s chaplaincy services and student interns. The Gilead Project hosted its first student interns this summer. Second-year M.Div. student Amanda Guthrie reflected on the impact of her work at JPH: “It really is an honor to spend time with so many patients and hear all of their stories and struggles. Their hospitality is overwhelming

A Homegrown Collaboration in Ministry

The ministry program at the Divinity School has long acknowledged the importance of collaboration as we educate and shape religious leaders. The M.Div. curriculum requires students to work at the confluence of historical and constructive studies and the human sciences, while the Divinity School’s situation at the heart of the university, in the midst of a complex and diverse metropolitan area, invites nascent professionals to hone their practice in conversation with a variety of scholarly disciplines, informed by a number of contexts for ministry.

Increasingly, innovations in the ministry curriculum are bringing these essential conversations to the classroom in more tangible ways. Over the past three years, courses in preaching, worship and pastoral care have been taught by teaching teams—Divinity School faculty, Ph.D. students, and practicing ministry professionals who model interdisciplinary collaboration as they help second-year students engage the ministerial arts. More recently the integration seminar for first-year M.Div. students has extended the meaning “integration” beyond the walls of Swift Hall to include a quarter of practical engagement with a local ministry or community. Two years ago colloquium students accompanied a team of prison ministers working in Cook County’s

Juvenile Detention Center; last year’s class studied the model of interfaith engagement employed by Chicago’s Interfaith Youth Core. During the current academic year colloquium students will engage the work of The Gilead Project at Jackson Park Hospital, a collaboration in ministry which itself has deep roots in the Divinity School and the wider University community. Through a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Hyde Park Union Church has provided chaplaincy services to Jackson Park Hospital for over a decade. Recently, the congregation



and whenever patients thank me for visiting a room, I make it a point to say that it is really I who am blessed to have met them. I am still discerning my vocation, but I know that the patients, staff, and colleagues here have made a great impression on me. The conversations I’ve had with them will continue to challenge me to push myself in my ministry.” □

— Cynthia Gano Lindner

Dean of Students Report



Enrollment

This fall, the Divinity School enrolled eighty-seven entering degree candidates (seven A.M.R.S., forty-six M.A., fifteen M.Div., and nineteen Ph.D.)

Convocations

Summer 2009

M.A.

Adam Lee Beitman
Gregory Howard Douras
Steven Michael Malone

M.Div.

John Marlow Edgerton
Ian Michael Gerdon
Daniel Andrew Puchalla

Ph.D.

Barbra Barnett
Meira Ziva Kensky
Zhan'ge Ni
Alexander Van Der Haven
Andrea Christina White

Autumn 2009

M.A.

Betül Avci
Nicole Renee Egley
Claudia Lynn Persico

Ph.D.

Amy Collier Artman
Carlos Andres Manrique
Edward Silver
Roger A. Willer

Winter 2010

M.A.

Teddy Kenneth Golder
John Arch Schroedel IV

M.Div.

Joleen M. Preuninger
Benedict Jules Varnum

Ph.D.

Maura Campanelli
Annette Bourland Huizenga
Elizabeth Ann Pérez

Spring 2010

M.Div.

Rebecca Ruth Anderson
Emy Natsu Cardoza
Brett Daniel Colasacco
Daniel Paul Cooperrider
Daniel Garrett Kuckuck
Jeffrey Thomas Lehn
Samuel Mendenhall
Beau Thomas Underwood

M.A.

Daniel Patrick Albertson
Abby Eileen Arganese
Mark Evan Beitman
Kelsey Marie Blomeke
Katrina Alexis Brooks
Gareth Collin Campbell
Nicholas Ethan Collins
Shannon Corinne Copp
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Ph.D.

Courtney Ellen Fitzsimmons
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Alan Thomas Terlep

College Graduates in Religious Studies 2009–2010

Nine students completed fourth-year B.A. papers in Religious Studies this year, led by the B.A. paper preceptor, Emanuelle Burton.

They and their topics are (advisors' names follow in brackets):

Avi Gurelik (R. Fox)
Nina Giviyan-Kermani (Lewis)
Miles Hopgood (M. Mitchell)
Tali Hurwich (W. Doniger)
Katherine Jasa (W. Gilpin)
Nicholas Johnson (M. Mitchell)
Benna Kessler (C. Lindner)
Catherine Stolar (D. Nirenberg)
Molly Zimmerman-Feeley (B. Lincoln)

Student Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

The John Gray Rhind Award

Jeffrey T. Lehn

The William Rainey Harper Dissertation Fellowships

Anne Mocko

Provost's Dissertation-Year Fellowship

Anthony Banout

Harriet and Ulrich Meyer Dissertation-Year Fellowship in Jewish Studies

Andres Tupac Cruz
Heather Miller Rubens
Dov Weiss



Some of our Ph.D. graduates are available for appointment. Their resumes can be accessed online at: <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/employment>.



The Dean, the faculty, and the students in the Divinity School extend their sincere thanks to all who support the work of the School. The following alumni, friends, and organizations generously contributed cash gifts during the 2009–2010 fiscal year (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010).

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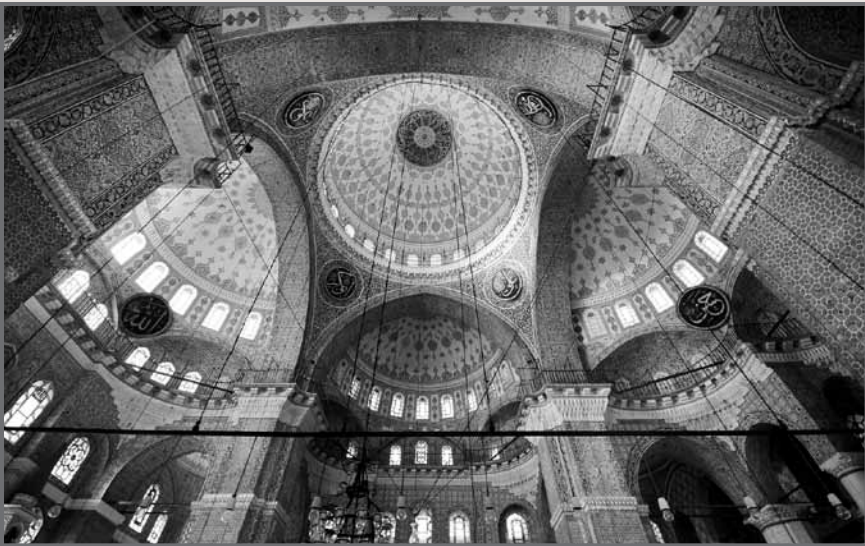
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Mellon Grant to support Islamic Studies on campus



The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has made a \$600,000 grant to the Divinity School to support the expansion of the study of Islam at the University of Chicago. The purpose of the grant is to bring to the University distinguished visiting professors, representing a wide range of topics in Islamic Studies, as well as to sponsor interdisciplinary symposia and conferences over a four-year period.

While the grant will be administered by the Divinity School, the program is self-consciously cross-divisional, and the Steering Committee includes faculty representatives from the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions, in addition to Professor Michael Sells of the Divinity School, who is the Principal Investigator.

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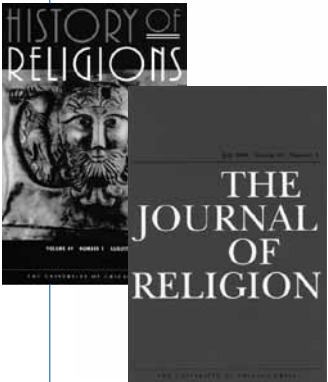
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Chavel Interview *Continued from page 6*

direct inter-connectedness championed by the Prophets. Turning and overturning the leaves of the Bible allows and encourages one ever and anew to revisit old questions with fresh perspectives.

CIRCA: How do you find the Divinity School as a place to do your research? In what ways do your colleagues and students here have similar and/or different objectives in their studies than those you worked with in Israel?

SC: Faculties at both universities aim to conceptualize the use of data, maximize the kinds of data used, and bring theoretical clarity to analysis. The Hebrew University has a rich, continuous tradition in Hebrew

“The Divinity School has a wonderfully supportive environment for attaining research excellence and a commitment to the education of future scholars, that such collaborative envisioning can truly flourish.”

Bible, one that comprehends the whole and locates it both in its ancient context and in the history of interpretation, which affords

its students an opportunity to forge a full synthesis and emerge truly well-rounded scholars. At the University of Chicago Hebrew Bible has been on “simmer” for the past few years, in a way that offers Prof. Stackert and myself the opportunity, in deep collaboration, to re-imagine the program against a broad view of developments in the field, and give it a certain shape that will help the students emerging as scholars to lead those developments. The Divinity School has a wonderfully supportive environment for attaining research excellence and a commitment to the education of future scholars, that such collaborative envisioning can truly flourish. □

The Hooding Ceremony 2010



Following graduation ceremonies, the Divinity School hoods doctoral graduates, a new tradition here as of June 2010.

The hoods are provided for Ph.D. students as a gift from the Divinity School in recognition of this outstanding accomplishment.

Dean's Letter *Continued from page 1*

public passion to talk about religion in all its manifestations in an astute and meaningful way. The Center in the Divinity School that bears his name, now under the directorship of William Schweiker, is one of the venues in which we continue to press—for ourselves and others—the issue of the publics and purposes of our scholarship, the value and significance of new knowledge into religion past and present.

Anne E. Carr, like Marty an alumna of the Divinity School, was the first woman to

be awarded tenure in the Divinity School—in 1977—a date still within arm's reach. Anne was a scholar of religion who took her Roman Catholic tradition as a center of gravity, but understood so well that the University context demanded—and rewarded—a critical conversation between past and present. Her groundbreaking work in feminist theology and activism on behalf of women in the Roman Catholic Church remains a precious and living legacy, even as she continues to be missed after her death in

February, 2008. As I finish this column, a luminous black and white photograph of Anne Carr striding through the front doors of Swift Hall is being mounted on the wall of my office, where I am now fully underway on those deanly tasks, on the other side of the threshold. ▢

Margaret M. Mitchell
Dean and Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature



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